

GURUKULAM

VOLUME III • 1987

FIRST QUARTER



GURUNJALAM

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GURUKULAM

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Two Ways of Talking

*We have this way of talking, and we have another.
Apart from what we wish and what we fear may happen,
we are alive with other life, as clear stones
take form in the mountain.*

Rumi

"We have this way of talking," which is inherently practical. We use language to understand and relate with the world around us. Nouns signify and classify; verbs reflect the changing and changeable nature of ourselves as well as all that we perceive and interact with; adjectives and adverbs mirror continuous elaboration. The practical way of talking is a tool, a skill, an approach that serves us well, enabling us to discover many things, meet many needs, satisfy many desires. This way of talking aids in our many activities aimed at obtaining "what we wish" and preventing "what we fear may happen."

The education children are given at home and at school is geared towards enhancing their facility in this way of talking, fostering greater flexibility, breadth and clarity in both comprehension and expression. Our pursuits as adults further develop our skills, particularly in our chosen fields of interest, vocational and recreational. Unfortunately, the specifying nature of this way of talking also leads to difficulties in communication. When we are ignorant of another's language, whether of a different geographical area or a different field, misunderstandings can easily arise, creating a seed-bed for conflict and hostility.

"This way of talking" is not sufficient expression or reflection of all that we are or all that the world is. So "we have another." We have exercised it less, explored it less, listened to it less, but it has always continued as an option for us all, and the dynamic practice of a few. This language, the mystical, seeks to express the essential nature of life, the "other life" we are alive with. We all have moments, or more, characterized by utter clarity, where our blinders fall away and no particular thing is so real to us as an all-embracing unity in which all things and our own beingness merge. This expansion of our narrow sense of self brings a release of fear, a sense of completeness which has the dynamic quality of love. Intuitively we know and we know what and how we know.

But when we as individuals, or collectively, seek to convey that knowledge with our usual way of talking, confusion reigns. Categorizing nouns, acting verbs and elaborating adjectives and adverbs are inadequate to express unitive reality. Specificity violates the nature of that reality, resulting in fractions between different religions and philosophies. And vagueness provides a context for delusion and illusion in which individuals and groups profer and seek to acquire powers beyond the normal reach

of human faculties, pursuing exotic ways of manipulating "what we wish and what we fear may happen."

Honest communication of the "other life we are alive with" requires another way of talking. The mystical has its own integrity and forms of expression where potent symbols are used to awaken another's intuition of the same vibrant reality. Visual images and music are emphasized, even when words are also used, conveying to the reader far more than their surface meaning. When Rumi tells us "we are alive with other life, as clear stones take form in the mountain," the inner brightness or encouragement we feel can't be explained by a mere analysis of the words and symbols he uses. But in answer to his song and his vision, an affirmation arises from the core of our being. It thrills us like the whisper of a great secret or the recovery of a buried

treasure. Whenever we hear the musical compositions, see the artistic creations or read the writings of mystics, we are reminded of this other way of talking which we all have. The language may be foreign, archaic, obscure, yet somehow it strikes a chord of familiarity in us, as we resonate with their experience.

This other way of talking does not attempt to manipulate or accomplish, it is simply an outpouring of love and wonder. In our practical words we ask, "What is its purpose and value?" Like a tide, it can carry us beyond the barriers which divide us from each other, which hide our true nature from ourselves. We are reminded that we are more than our wishes and fears and the tangled web of actions they lead us to. *We are alive with other life as clear stones take form in the mountain.*

Nancy Yeilding

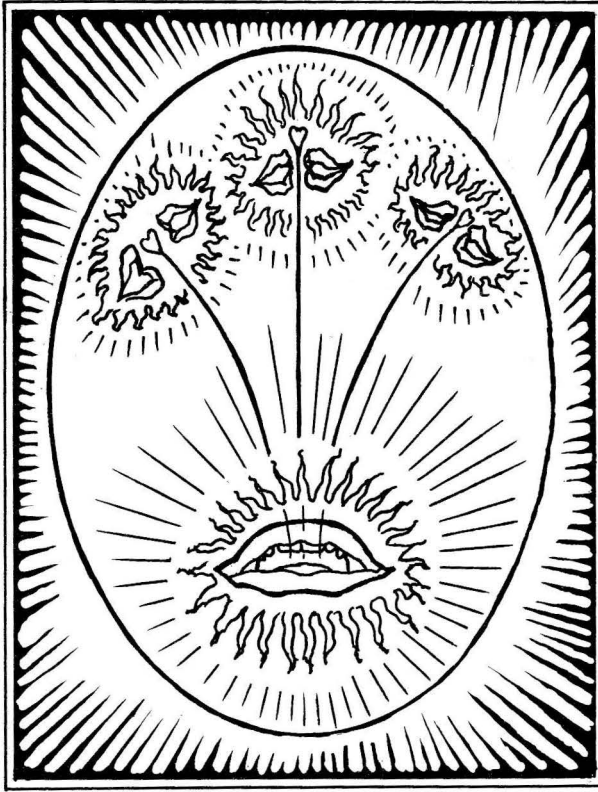


Jalaluddin Rumi was a 13th century Persian mystic. The translation quoted here is by John Moyne and Coleman Barks.

The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati



Ninth Mantra

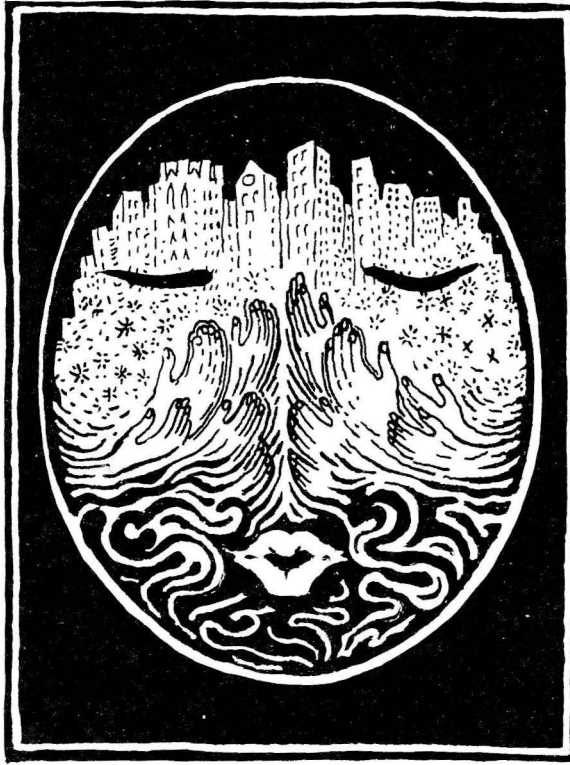
*jāgaritasthāno vaiśvānaro 'karaḥ prathamā mātrā
āpterādīmatvād vā āpnoti ha vai sarvān
kāmanādiśca bhavati ya evam veda*

The "A" stands for the waking state where the Universal Man is the first substance because of obtaining or being the first. He obtains all he wants and becomes first, too, who understands thus.

Pain and pleasure are the dual principles by which a living organism is steered through the stream of life. Pleasure prompts acceptance and pain impells avoidance. Transaction is the continuous process of acceptance and avoidance with several degrees of compromise between them. The first tool a human child has to call attention to its wants is making a vocal sound. In other words, an open mouth is the gateway of human transaction. The impulse to avoid is often demonstrated by refusing to speak. In this *mantra* the act of communication is symbolized by the sound "A". For a person who wishes to participate in the wakeful program of the gross world, there is a surrounding community of people and hundreds of programs of action to which one is led either by natural inclination or by social obligation.

Man is only one of the many species of social beings. Whales, elephants, lions, caribou, wolves, dolphins, monkeys, human beings, crows, bees and ants are all social beings who live and participate in their respective groups with instinctive or conscious acceptance of their rights and responsibilities. The sociobiologist who studies the social behavior of species is sure to appreciate the general principles that govern all these beings in a similar way. It is as if one Universal Person is expressing himself or herself through the group behavior of the species and the individual behavior of each member. One common cause which brings members of a species together is hunger. Most of them hunt together and distribute the catch or spoil. As man has developed his faculties much more than the others, he farms and produces a variety of consumer goods. Thus hunger and thirst ~~have~~ become the invisible force which strings all members of this species into a Universal Person. The human family is like a single matrix with countless cooperative units endlessly working for the collective good of all. Except for some man-made restrictions such as national boundaries, there is nothing which stops a person from extending his interest to the farthest corners of this globe.

The only requirement for a person to relate with another is the ability to communicate. The foremost means of communication is the tool of word power. Word power can be limited to a few sound signals of approval or denial or it can be made most effective with the extensive vocabulary of all spoken languages. Wakeful consciousness accompanied with its attentiveness brings us to such a wide world of possibilities. Any person who knows this knows that this is the first quarter of the total significance of man's life on earth, and that he has a role to play there. His thoughts, his words and his actions are all of utmost importance, and he fulfills his role by making his functional presence most relevant and appropriate to the situation in which he is placed. The seer of the Upaniṣad is not asking us to think of the wakeful world as an illusory appearance of no consequence. Instead, he wants us to live as fully as possible the wide range of values that ~~are~~ relevant to the wakeful world which forms the first quarter of the Absolute to which we organically belong.



Tenth Mantra

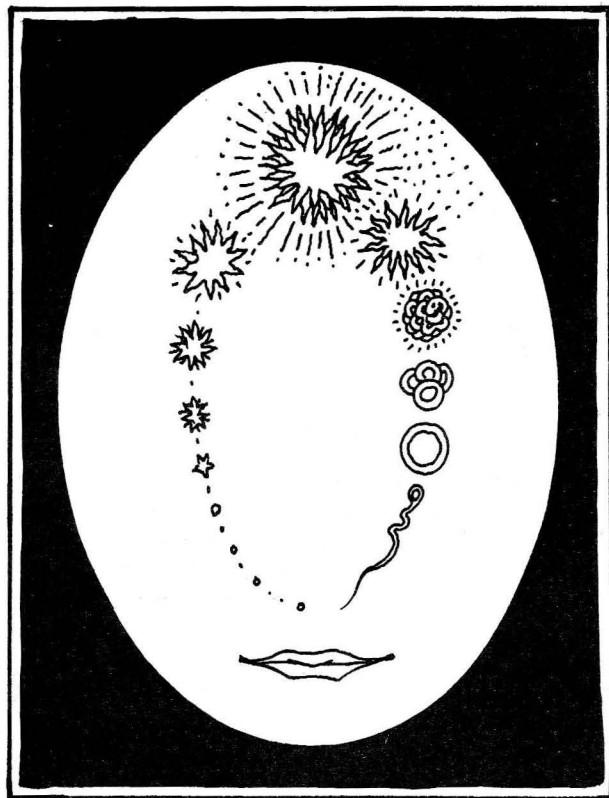
*svapnasthānah taijasa ukārodvitīyā mātṛā utkarṣād
ubhayatvādvā utkarṣati ha vai jñānasantatim samānaśca
bhavati nāsyabrahmavit kule bhavati ya evam veda*

The "U" stands for the dreaming state, which is the luminous one, the second substance, because of superiority or from being intermediate. He leads wisdom generations and becomes one of sameness too. None ignorant of the Absolute could be born in the family of him who understands this.

Every idea is a word receptacle which holds the essence of what has been and what will be. Dreams occur like the germination of the future in the present. Actualization of those seeds is what is seen around us as the human dwelling, ranging from hutments to skyscrapers, and all the edifices of human achievements, such as cities, roads, bridges and machinery of every kind. What is achieved is then withdrawn again into the imperishable memory of the past. Recorded memories are like countless millions of tragedies and comedies hiding in ambush on library shelves, popping into the minds of people again and again. The spirits of human dreams wander around with their subtle bodies and act upon human consciousness like wisdom bacteria, or

the "little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump." No man can read a poem or a play or watch the unfolding themes of a drama without himself transforming into a poet, a storyteller, a playwright, and all the characters whom he confronts. Thus, between the objective world of facts and the deep unconscious is placed the grand theme of transmuting the harsh and unwieldy matter of physicality into the delicate petals of a blooming mind that can waft its fragrance through millenia of human history. Such is "U", the domain of *taijasa*, the god who walks amongst us with a million faces, a million hands and a million feet. Because of the masquerade he puts on, we recognize this face only as Vyasa and Homer, Valmiki and Dante, Da Vinci and Michelangelo, Newton and Einstein, Beethoven and Tan Sen, Li Po and Basho.

We have no way to look into the ability of the lower animals to recall the memory of their species, but it is evident that even the simplest among human beings has a treasury of the finest memories. Those who are aware of the gift of this and several other talents should not dismiss their threshold of consciousness as the rashes of an itching brain. Instead, we should recognize our co-creatorship with *īśvara*, the untiring creator of the stars and flowers and birds and galaxies. Such is the inspiration we get from this wonderful Upaniṣad which shows us the riches of a life that can be whole and overwhelmed with wonder.



Eleventh Mantra

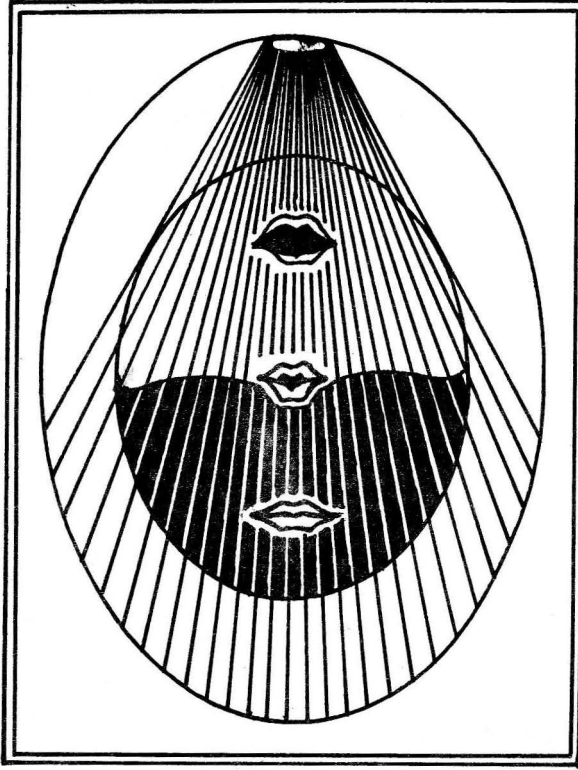
*susuptasthānaḥ prāṇīḥ makāraḥ trtīyā mātrā
mīterapīrīvā minoti ha vā idam sarvaṁ apītiśca
bhavati ya evaṁ veda*

The "M" stands for the well-dormant state, the knower,
which is the third, because of ascent or from descent.
He verily ascends or descends into everything,
who understands this.

After a day's tiresome work when our limbs fail and our mind fades out, we go into the lap of sleep. Like a pilgrim tired of the world's oddities, we seek refuge in the peaceful haven of God's mercy. Time comes to an absolute pause in deep sleep and thus is devoid of any event. There is no memory to recall. However, when a person wakes up after a short or long period of deep sleep, he or she does not lose his or her self identity. That means the stream of consciousness which characterizes life does not altogether leave a person in the state of deep sleep. In all alternating and cyclic functions there comes an inevitable pause like Max Planck's "constant H." This pause is absolutely necessary for the rejuvenation and continuation of all pulsating energy systems. When living beings mature, the uniqueness of each species is gathered into the seed or sperm or ovum, to wait as an incipient principle until nature gives it the green signal to proliferate. The consciousness that functions at such a critical juncture is not a passive onlooker or a conditioned reflex. It is a secret lobby of life where the Omnipresent Omniscience exercises the divine power of a god to act with a well-designed and far-sighted ingenuity as the one executor without a second to whom is entrusted the entire responsibility of programming life.

Life is deprived of all its power to sense and cogitate when it enters into this dark room of programming. When the same life energy emerges from such alternating anesthesia it regains its conscious agency to act as a fully informed courier or executor. For this reason, the sound "M", the terminating syllable of AUM, is compared to a measuring vessel which receives into it a measure of withering vitality during sleep, and then measures out into the wakeful an equal quantity of replenished energy for another wakeful thrust. The living organism is like a colony of billions of autonomous living units which are held together, controlled, ruled and functionally coordinated by this unifying principle of a paradoxically inconscient consciousness. The same corporeality which is miraculously effected in each individual organism is further extrapolated into what may be called a universal mind of intrapersonal and interpersonal coordination of the highest order. Such an inconscient consciousness which is constantly engaged in the structuring of this universe should be called the supreme *dharma*. No individuated being can ever aspire to escape the magnetic domination of this perpetual *dharma*. The only exception is when

transcendence happens in the white heat of the individual's mystical merger with the inner freedom and spontaneity of the cosmic principle which can be *dharma* and *brahman* at the same time.



Twelfth Mantra

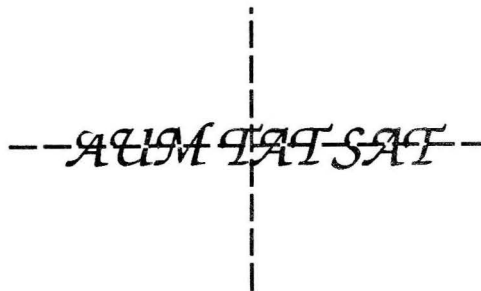
*amātraḥ caturtho 'vyahāryaḥ prapañcopaśama
śivo 'dvaita evamonkāra ātmaiva samviśatyātmanā
ātmānam ya evam veda*

Free from substantiality, the Fourth is outside discussion, calmer of the manifested, numinous is the non-dual one, which is even the AUM, the Self itself. He enters the Self by the Self who knows thus.

If psycho-biology is treated as a study of a living organism with a behavioral pattern animated with consciousness, there are several factors that constitute the subject matter of our study. First of all there is subjective consciousness which includes sensations, mentations and emotionality. Secondly there is a network of neural interconnectedness. Thirdly, there are many chemical and biochemical interactions which

cannot be fully discerned. Finally there are a number of typical and atypical behavioral reactions which have socio-historical significance. All these aspects are governed by specific laws which are intrinsically connected with general laws which govern the universe as a whole. All functions in an organism are directly connected with a pulsation of energy which is quantifiable at least in principle. The unit measurement of a quantum of energy is called *mātrā*. The variegations in the quantum are responsible for the distinction between one experience and another. For this reason all dualities such as heat and cold and pain and pleasure are described in the *Bhagavad Gita* as the variations that inevitably happen in the transient matrix of the organisms and their environments as part of the eternal flux of becoming.

The experiential horizon of any significance to the individual is limited to the measurable field within which an organism's motor-sensory system can operate, and the orientation of each event is consequently strung to the antecedent and the consequent with a string of memory which has the special quality of being perennial and unceasing. This mysterious omnipresence that shines from within every bead of experience is *ānanda*, the central locus of *atmān*, the Self. *Ānanda* is like light. No one can alter the speed of light. It can be intercepted and thus its saturation can be affected. From the invisible to the brightest light, there are several shades of obscurations. In the physical world of reflected and refracted light we get many optical illusions. The same is also true of *ānanda* when it is experienced within the altering states of consciousness already described as the wakeful, dream and deep sleep. The phenomenon does not make the whole story. There is also the numenon, light in itself, *ānanda* through and through. The fourth and last immeasurable silence that follows the articulation of AUM is suggestive of a final plunge into the numenon where there is nothing to quantify and nothing to measure. This is the merging of the dew drop in the sea.



Katha Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

XXI.

O Nachiketas, there has been doubt on this question even among gods from yore. This is not easily understandable. This basic principle is so subtle. Please choose another boon. Do not press me to answer it. For my sake give up this one.

Death concedes the greatness and uniqueness of the question asked by Nachiketas. By the same token he also wants to test the competency of Nachiketas for this wisdom. The ancient myths show how this problem has confused even the gods from time immemorial. How could its solution be understood by human beings? Such being the magnitude of the problem, is the present seeker capable of overcoming all the inherent difficulties? The question is very subtle. Is his understanding so penetrating and ingenious? All this has to be ascertained by the Guru before the teaching begins. If the seeker is not in earnest, he will back out on hearing of the difficulty he has to face. But if he is a sincere seeker, he will persevere on hearing of its nobility and subtlety.

XXII.

O Death, you say that there has been confusion even in the minds of gods of yore. You also say that it is very subtle. Such being the case, there is no other teacher of wisdom comparable to you to teach me this and there is no other boon equal to this.

By this *mantra* Nachiketas finds his true Guru in Death, and he proves himself to be a fully competent disciple. It would naturally be hard for men to find solutions to problems about which it is said even the gods are doubtful. Death knows the secret of this wisdom. Death also knows that this fundamental truth is not easily knowable. This makes Nachiketas fully convinced that Death knows what he wants to know, and so he finds a true Guru in him. His words, "There is no other boon equal to this one" show that his quest for wisdom is intense and can't be satiated by anything else. This kind of thirst for wisdom is the most vital requirement in a true disciple (*sat śiṣya*). The *mantras* which follow show that Nachiketas is fully equipped with the other qualities which ensure his competency such as discrimination between transient and eternal values, a sense of detachment, etc.

XXIII.

Choose centenarian sons and grandsons, many cows, elephants, gold and horses. Choose a great extent of land. And you yourself live as many years as you desire.

XXIV.

If you think it equal to the third boon, choose the wealth and long life now offered. O Nachiketas, be the ruler of this extensive land. I shall also make you the enjoyer of all desires.

XXV.

Whatever desires are hard to attain in the world of mortals, ask for all those desires as you please. These lovely maidens with chariots and lyres are indeed not usually attainable by men. Bestowed from me, be waited on by them. O Nachiketas, please do not ask for the secret of death.

The third boon chosen by Nachiketas concerns the wisdom of the Self. He knows the seriousness and uniqueness of the boon chosen. For this reason he holds on to it. In these three mantras Yama tries to dissuade him by offering worldly attractions. A happy family life with long-living sons and grandsons, as well as all wealth necessary for it, is offered. Gold is offered as reserve funds to safeguard the future. Elephants and horses are offered as symbols of pompousness. Even rulership of an extensive land, the highest attainment (that can be aspired for) in worldly life, is offered by Yama to dissuade Nachiketas.

XXVI.

O End maker, what you have offered will not be existing tomorrow. These also cause wasting away of the vigor of all the senses of man. Even the entire life is trifling indeed. Thine be your horses, dance and song.

This mantra is the reply of Nachiketas to the offer made by Death. It makes it clear that Nachiketas is fully aware of the transience of the worldly aspect of life and, for that very reason, of the meaninglessness of desiring objects of enjoyment. It also indicates that Yama (Death) himself is the cause of the transiency of the world, he being the End-maker (*antaka*). How a Guru and the Absolute are identical will become clearer as we proceed with this study. In the next mantra Nachiketas proves himself to be a genius. In short, Nachiketas is evidently a fully competent student. Such a student or seeker is called *uttamādhikari* in Sanskrit. There are also disciples of the middle grade *maddhyamādhikari* and of the low grade *mandādhikari*.

XXVII.

Man is not to be satisfied with wealth. We shall have wealth when we see you, i.e., when we realize the truth taught by you. We shall live as long as you rule. So this is the only boon to be chosen by me.

We have already seen how mature Nachiketas sense of detachment is. But his relinquishment is not a willful and designed one. For a normal life, wealth and long life are necessary. If Nachi-

ketas accepted the alternative boon, he would have to be satisfied with that and nothing more. But to gain the boon he has chosen, he needs to have the blessings of the Guru. Guru and God are not two here. In the philosophical sense and also in the mythical sense, the present Guru is the God of Death. Those who are blessed by the Guru-God attain whatever wealth and life are necessary, unasked for, along with the attainment of Wisdom. The wealth and life-span gained in such a way also bring the contentment of knowing that they were gained by God's grace.

In the words of Nachiketas we can see his well-founded belief that those who take their stand on truth will not have to seek anything else, and all their necessities will be squarely met as a natural process. That means the vertical and horizontal aspects of life do not stand apart in one's life. They become mutually complementary and non-dual. A profound question contains a major part of its answer. This statement of Nachiketas is one of that kind.

XXVIII.

Having reached the abode of the undecaying immortals (like you), which decaying mortal who is placed on earth, after knowing the transient nature of the wordly pleasures of beauty and delight, would delight in gaining a long life-span?

There is no better teacher of the secret of death than Death himself. Death is deathless. Nachiketas has chosen an *amṛta*, immortal one, as his teacher. Philosophically, the Guru is to be understood as being beyond birth and death. If one asks for something from a place, it should be the best that place can offer. If a mortal reaches the abode of an immortal, the best thing he can ask for is immortality, especially a seeker like Nachiketas who is fully aware of the momentary character of the pleasures to be gained from beauty and other delights. So he prays not for a long life-span, but for immortality.

XXIX.

O Death, that noble wisdom about which they still have doubt, tell me that. For the very reason that such a teaching remains very secret, this Nachiketas has no other boon to choose.

Nachiketas stands firmly on his decision even though he is fully aware that he is asking for a wisdom about which the gods of heaven still have doubts: it is very hard to imbibe. In spite of this, he recognizes that it offers immortality. Now Death need not doubt whether Nachiketas is properly qualified to make this wisdom his own and he begins his teaching in the next *mantra*.

(Continued in next issue.)

Man has to fulfill his life according to his own nature without being stifled or suffocated. Bread and freedom resolved into unitive terms of a central value spell Happiness. When each man is happy, all mankind is happy; where there is general happiness of mankind as a whole, each man has his happiness secure.

Nataraja Guru

During the summer of 1983 Jim Rosen worked,
mostly at night, on a painting of the mother
and child. I had his permission to let myself
into the studio to look, mornings after he'd
gone home.

Sometimes I'd see a crown
removed; restored; removed. A hand
blown out like a light, then brought back.
Nothing on earth grew like that.
All night for a half-inch tilting of the head,
the puppet motions, one hand
attended to, the other still.
The child stood in her arms, his own arms out,
ready to fly up or run
on the air to her face.

Sometimes going back up the hill
I'd see my friend, T-shirted, on his porch
for a first look at the day. He'd wave,
I'd wave, letting one gesture go
and the hand, made new, return.

I visited Jim's studio after the painting
had been removed. Pinned on the walls
were two or three dozen studies in pencil
and watercolor on paper.

Now they are lovely. A host of angels,
no child to guard. But not really faithful.
They're free, they move a little in this tide
of lights and appearances coming from outside.

David Leedy

The first poem has previously appeared in *Plains Poetry Journal*, the second in *Studia Mystica*.
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The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patañjali's *Yoga Śāstra*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sutra I:4

vr̥tti sarūpyam itaratra

vr̥tti: with modifications

sarūpyam: identification

itaratra: elsewhere (at other times)

At other times, the identification is with the modifications.

This describes an imperiential state differentiated from the experiencing of mentation. According to behaviorists, the impact of the external world is received in the form of stimuli from objects



of perception. The objects are experienced outside the central nervous system as the presentation of certain sensations which are easily associated with memories of the past and prospective imaginations in which the perceptions have some role to play. When there is no one to relate with, the only thing one can do is return to ones self or remain as ones pure being. That is the only time the individuation of consciousness becomes bereft of conditioned states or the assumed colorations of the special significance of a given moment. Pure consciousness is self-luminous. It does not lose its power of knowledge simply because it is cut off from illuminated objects. When there is nothing to know, knowledge knows itself. This pure state of the Self is called *puruṣa*. In the previous *sūtra* the seer is said to be established entirely in the Self. In such a state there is no conditional knowledge. In this *sūtra*, that state of the pure Self is compared to the state of a mind stimulated by the various inputs that come through sense organs.

A question of both epistemological and methodological import can be raised in this context. When a person experiences an object of perception, does the light of the *puruṣa* leave the boundaries of the body and go to the object for the purpose of illuminating it and becoming identified with the object illuminated by the Self? Or, as modern physical scientists believe, is the brain simply being conditioned by the electrical and chemical consolidation that happens in the central nervous system as a result of the incoming

stiluli? According to Vedanta, the light that shines within is the only light by which the entire world and all living minds are illuminated. That is the one and only Self. There is no special cleavage anywhere in the universality of existence, knowledge and the value of its beingness. The Vedantin therefore thinks that the time and space where a thing is experienced is exactly where such experiencing is happening. This is quite contrary to what modern scientists postulate. In Yoga, the fact of perceptual experience is looked upon as an indescribable phenomenality which can be seen in the relationship between a magnet and iron filings. All that one needs to know is that there is an irresistible interaction between them. Even so is the intrinsic relationship between the seer and the seen.

Physical science deals with objects like persons, tables, chairs, hills, dales and rocks. In principle they are all supposed to be manifestations of matter. However, nobody apprehends anything as matter in itself. Because the tangible properties of an object have a direct impact on the senses, the experiential confrontation is given a priority of recognition. Only through a secondary deductive inference does one surmise that all things are created out of matter. In the discernment of the pure light of consciousness from the modified entities that bear name and form, there is a similar incomprehensibility of the Self. One of the four aspects of the inner organ, the judging and cognizing faculty known as intellect or *buddhi*, dominates the field of reasoning. It assumes the position of the Self by designating the central focus of reasoning consciousness as "I", and, for all practical purposes, effaces the distinction between the ego and the Self. Consequently, the Self hides behind its own light and projects its false identification with the ego.

The original aphorisms of Kapila are unknown. The present *Sāṅkhya Pravacana Sūtras* are said to be composed by Pāṇcāsikha, the disciple of Āsuri, who was a direct disciple of Kapila. According to Pāṇcāsikha, *darsāna* is a word that describes the nature of the pure Self.

Like Kant's thing-in-itself, *darsāna* is pure knowledge knowing itself. Any shade of horizontalization that specifies knowledge becomes *khyāti*. *Prakhyā* is derived from *khyāti*. A clear or distinct cognition of the specific is *prakhyā* which refers to the modification of *buddhi*. In the explanation of the second *sūtra*, reference was made to *prakhyā*, *pravṛtti* and *sthithi* – the horizontalization of knowledge whereby it stabilizes the agency of a crystallizing ego which is set into motion of creative function in response to the initial horizontalization. Thus the status of the knower changes into that of the doer. The instrumentality of the operational ability that is assumed by consciousness becomes an aid to individuated consciousness. The horizontalized cognizing power depends more and more on the instrumentality of mind for carrying out purposes that aid in increasing the pleasure items that are continuously annexed to the sphere of consciousness and in avoiding painful situations. Thus, *pravṛtti*, or instrumental consciousness, becomes by and large a defense measure of consciousness. In this way a simple unit of *puruṣa* becomes a complex manifestation. Vijñāna Bhikṣu gives the following analogy to the instrumentality of consciousness which ensues from itself: "As a magnet, by drawing to it a piece of iron, does some service to its owner and thus becomes, as it were a treasured possession of the owner, so does the mind serve its master, the *puruṣa*, by drawing to itself the objects around it and presenting them to *puruṣa* and thereby becomes, as it were, the very self of the *puruṣa*."

If cognitive consciousness is only one of the modifications of consciousness, who is the conscient being? In its role of discerning the validity of what is given, from where does the intellect obtain the norm to measure and for whose sake does the intellect discern? The biologic significance of these questions cannot be slighted. The life that has organized itself with many psychosomatic structurings of various energy forms and energy sources as the body-mind complex has to serve as an instrument to carry out a central purpose

around which every bit of this organization clings. What is normal in the course of life is to seek nourishment, help the organism to attain its full maturity, replicate ones kind, and establish a harmony which tends to become more and more satisfying as it attains a maximal degree of perfection. Everything happening in the organism has a rightful place in its scheme. Hence the question, "Who is the beneficiary of the organism's growth, maturity, replication, understanding and satisfaction?" The most plausible answer is that there is an I-consciousness which plays the most central role, an "I" that is identical with the Self. Even unconsciously, all people say "I doubt, I know, I love, I am happy, I am unhappy, etc." Is that "I" causing mental modifications or is the "I" a superfluous idea that is projected on each unit of modification for the purpose of orienting each unit of mentation?

When we look upon the central piece as a seer, a cognizer, a witness, we distinctly see two aspects: the seer seeing and the seen unfurling like a series of pictures, or even as a continuous event that is being presented from an unknown entity, which, having been seen and appreciated, never leaves the seer. In that process, the seer is provided with a world that is increasingly enlarging in the variety of its several dimensions. A continuous correlation is established between what is already known and what is newly apprehended. Also, an unsatiated expectation arises which is always looking for new experiences. The seer and the seen are like an unending warp and woof that are continuously woven into certain accepted patterns intermingled with totally novel and unique impressions. What exactly is this modification? What is it a modification of? Like many criss-cross ripples making and unmaking patterns on the surface of water, modifications arise and subside as part of a flux, yet the depth of meaning of each passing moment is preserved forever. What masterminds this mystery? The whole thing is simply called *vr̥tti*.

One of the most intriguing questions a yogi has to answer is how the *puruṣa* or

pure Self lends itself to manifest as a personal ego in the individual. The personal ego, *aḥam*, or I-consciousness, makes many identifications which are contrary to the nature of *puruṣa*. In identifications such as "I am pleased, I am sad, I am frustrated, etc.," the phenomenality of certain modifications is owned by the ego and that, in turn, amounts to the *puruṣa* being held in bondage. In Vacaspati's gloss, he offers two traditional analogies to explain this. When a transparent crystal, which has no color of its own, is placed adjacent to a hibiscus flower, the crystal also looks red. The color looks as if it has been introjected into the crystal. Actually, no color has gone into it. It is an illusion caused by the proximity of two entirely different things. Similarly, pain/pleasure identifications of consciousness come as a result of the *puruṣa*'s proximity with nature, or *prakṛti*, where all dualities abound. The other example given is that of a person looking into a soiled mirror which makes the image look vague, blurred and stained. Actually, the face that is reflected in the mirror is not the least affected by the stains on the mirror. Darkness is not a quality of light but light enables the identification of a object through the contrast of the illuminated part with the unilluminated. Similarly, the *puruṣa* also comes to distinguish phenomena through name and form.

One marked difference between Indian thought and Western thought is the absence of systematization in Indian thought and over-classification in Western thought. The *Yoga Śāstra* of Patañjali and its many explanatory elucidations can be treated as a text which is religious, philosophical, psychological, disciplinary, or a compendium of injunctions to be remembered. No one can say where metaphysical thinking stops and descriptive psychology begins. In Western thought, classical philosophers will not brook the inclusion of psychologizing in metaphysical reasoning, while the school of psychology insists on scientific precision and will not allow any introspective or subjective idea to be included as valid data along with factual events

and figures that are considered respectable by scientists. In an interdisciplinary study like the present one, these distinct approaches of the East and West make it very difficult to maintain an overall methodology that will do justice to the claims of both Western science and Indian mysticism. However, when there is a sameness in the subject that is approached and the goal that is aimed at, a scheme of correlation with functional clarity can be successfully employed.

The main process to be understood is the selection of one interest out of a plethora of possibilities on which attention is focused for a considerable time. In the Western outlook, an objective world of independent reality is assumed to be existing "out there" even though we do not know anything about it. So-called objectivity and demonstrative proof are derogatively spoken of by Sir Arthur Eddington as idols of the scientist who swears by them. The Indian pantheon of gods begins with Brahma the creator, creating world after world in the attempt to approximate aesthetic perfection. It is out of nothing, by mere wish or word, that he creates. This archetypal symbol can also be seen in the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament. In fact, both Eastern and Western mythologies accept the creative power of the word and the word materializing into matter. However crude this imagery is, it has a powerful message to give. From the very outset of human life the apperception of each situation is assessed by an individual as a context of need and fulfillment. That means individual consciousness is unfurling itself with a plan, a scheme or protolinguistic vision.

The so-called external stimuli is the raw material out of which the creative artist, who is very active at the nucleus of consciousness, has to fashion a world of rich and varied forms, each symbolizing a deeply cherished value or fear of the individual. Only a fragment of a physical factor goes into the creation of an otherwise mythical elaboration of names, forms, relationships, values and meanings. The creator emerges out of the act of creation; the knower emerges out of the act of knowing; the enjoyer emerges

out of the constantly changing scenario which is continuously making demands on ones sensory observation and faculty of judgement to evaluate the passing show. This is the problem that is presented in this *sūtra*. Even elements like water have to change to fit into the scheme of things, becoming vapor, droplets or ice. This is also true of the psychosomatic system – an external environmental factor and an inner law of conformity have to come to a term of agreement through the mysterious function of a global homeostasis. We will have occasion to explain this as we go further.

Sutra I:5

*ṛttayaḥ pañcāyāḥ kṛṣṭa
akṛṣṭaḥ*

ṛttayaḥ: modifications
pañcāyāḥ: five-fold, of five kinds
kṛṣṭa: uneasy (painful)
akṛṣṭa: easy (not painful)

The modifications are five-fold, uneasy (painful) and easy (not painful).

Modifications of consciousness are both spontaneous and labored. We have already seen that consciousness is stream-like. Therefore, it is only natural for it to



move from one form to another. The difference between the spontaneous and labored can be easily recognized by examining two states of mind, the seeing aspect and the looking aspect. When the mind is passive and there is nothing engaging our attention, the panorama of the external world is presented to our senses. Without effort, we become aware of forms that are seen, sounds that are heard, and the tactual sensation of the warmth or cold of the air outside. On most occasions, these sensations are easily recognized without any discrepancy.

We get into a different frame of mind when we look for something such as in the attempt to isolate a special kind of bacteria in a sample of sputum or blood placed under a microscope. Then ones attention has to be focused with effort so that the right object may be clearly seen. One cannot focus ones attention on an object under study and go into a reverie at the same time. Many young students complain that when they study for an examination and want to master a piece, they feel sleepy and have to labor their brains to be attentive. If a person wants to present a controversial thesis before a learned audience, and if that person sees a rival who has disgraced him several times before in the audience, he may lose all confidence and be unable to present a formidable argument in favor of his thesis. These are occasions where the modifications of mind become labored.

The body is not to be understood as a mass of flesh and bones, and the mind as a vaporous epiphenomenon. The psychosomatic system is like a well structured and fully organized device in which there are several ingenious faculties operating in liaison with several communications carried out by the influx of energies through the sensory system and outward flow of energies through the motor system. The passage of a certain energy from the body limits to an interior faculty can be compared to a person finding his way through a jungle or a grassy meadow. When that person or several others walk on the same path many times, it becomes as clear as a well laid-out road. A similar kind of culturing

process happens in the passage of energy through the neurons. The electrochemical consolidations that are made as a result of stimulation and the commands carried out by the motor system all register impressions. Many internal alignments are established. In Yoga this is called the culturing of the psychosomatic system through various kinds of programming.

All programs are not consciously received or performed. To meet its biological needs, the body itself carries out several functions preliminary to the conscious performance of an act. Thus, half of the culturing process happens in the unconscious depth of the psychosomatic system. In most cases the terminus of these inner operations is marked by the illumination of a awareness where one becomes conscious of the result of a performance. This conscious process engraves several permanent features in our minds. Yogis call this the *karmāsaya* of the organism. When the process culminates in the conscious recognition of a perception or an action performance of the presentation of a value, it is called *khyāti*. *Khyāti* is a comprehension of the qualities of the object presented to the organism.

Even when a person is in utmost trouble such as being exposed to intense physical pain, social pressure, moral shame, guilt, restlessness, frustration or depression, there is one spark of consciousness which is unaffected by any of these states. It simply reports: "I am now in this state." In that particular point of consciousness there is no pain, no fear, no anxiety. It is like a neutral witness faithfully reporting to the person concerned, "This is what is happening now." It is not a belabored finding. It is steady, consistent and faithful. It has only the clarity of pure certitude, just like in mathematical logic. It is a pure subject. Its counterpart can be in pain, fearful, sentimental or hilarious.

A division can be made somewhat between the judging witness and the subject considered by the judge. The witnessing consciousness is also the validating consciousness. It is as if the painful and

the not painful streaks of consciousness are running parallel with intermittent emphasis, sometimes on validation and sometimes on affectivity. Events are not registered on a clean slate. Each time a centrifugal reverberation is created in the psychosomatic apparatus, all the latent culturings of the past are stirred and the most relevant of the potencies that have been acquired surge into dynamic operation. This, in turn, creates new potencies to come to fruition in the future. If the painful, *kliṣṭa*, tendencies are slowly weaned off, the neutral witnessing consciousness, the *akliṣṭa*, can shine forth in its full effulgence. Such is the view of Vyasa about *vṛtti*-s, modifications.

Vṛtti, as the word suggests, has many implications. It is an operation in the time-space continuum which structures the several ensembles of the present. The sense of the present is generated by *vṛtti*. The present in Sanskrit is called *vartamānam*. *Vartanam* is existence; *mānam* is measuring. *Vartamānam* is the occasion provided for direct perception and evaluation. *Vṛtti* is also suggestive of repetitive function, *avartti*. It is also the centripetal closing in from all sides which preserves an impression for future reference, *avṛtti*. It is also suggestive of a vortex that is formed in consciousness, a circular motion of repetitive thinking. In that sense it is *avartini*, a whirlpool. In the formation of a *vṛtti* a centrifugal reverberation which spreads out physically and emotionally occurs simultaneously with a centripetal containment of the experience within a certain limit. From all sides a closing in happens which, in physical terms, amounts to the consolidation of both the electrical and chemical energies involved in the reverberation.

Sutra I: 6 & 7

*pramāṇa viparyaya vikalpa nidrā
smṛtayah*

pramāṇa: real cognition,
right knowledge
viparyaya: unreal cognition,

indiscrimination
vikalpa: imagination,
verbal delusion
nidrā: deep sleep
smṛtayah: and memory

Real cognition, unreal cognition,
imagination, deep sleep and memory.

*pratyakṣa anumāna āgamāḥ
pramāṇāni*

pratyakṣa: direct perception
anumāna: inference
āgamāḥ: and verbal testimony,
competent evidence
pramāṇi: are the valid norms of
real cognition

Direct perception, inference and
verbal testimony are the valid norms of
real cognition.

In the previous sutra we were told that there are five modifications of consciousness which include the painful and the nonpainful, *kliṣṭa*, and *akliṣṭa*. They are enumerated here as *pramāṇa* (real cognition), *viparyaya* (unreal cognition), *vikalpa* (imagination or verbal delusion), *nidrā* (deep sleep) and *smṛti* (memory). The first modification spoken of here is a spontaneous function coming from the witnessing consciousness which gives certitude of the nature of the thing perceived or even the idea thought of. Valid testimonials of methodology are called *pramāṇa*. *Prama* means certitude. The definition of *pramāṇa* is *pramākaranam kāranam pramāṇam*: the cause by which one arrives at certitude is the right method, *pramāṇa*.

In the empirical world, certitude is more or less a conventional common consent which most members of a group give to the description of an empirically experientiable object of knowledge. For instance, it is generally agreed that salt has a certain taste which is agreeable when moderately used in certain dishes. When a pinch of common salt is shown to a person, he usually recognizes it to be salt. He can even distinguish it from a spoon of sugar. In the empirical world,

such knowledge is valid. When something is understood here and now, as others would also understand it, that is considered to be right perception. In Sanskrit, describing a thing as it is in there here and now is called *vathartha*.

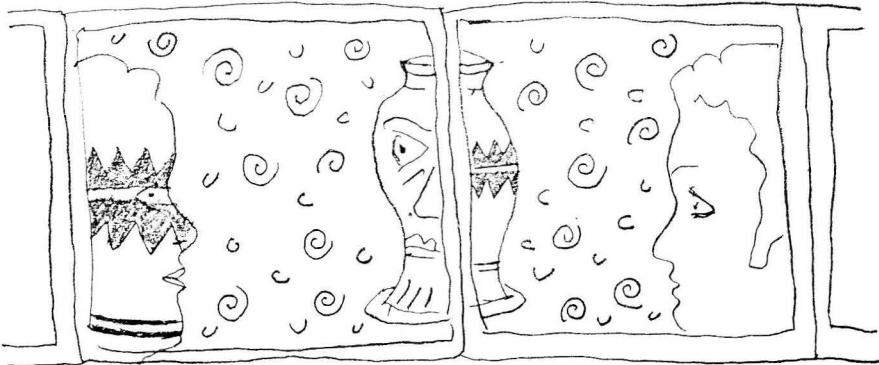
There can be a superior understanding of the same pinch of salt if you know the chemical constituents of its molecular structure, technically called sodium chloride. A scientist can push it even further to the extent of seeing the molecules in their primary atomic nature and seeing even the atoms as electrons flying around a nucleus. The electrons, protons and neutrons can be further reduced to a mathematical entity which can be called the ultimate truth of common salt. When we arrive at such knowledge, it no longer has any empirical value but it has a high scientific recognition as the ultimate knowledge, *paramartha*.

Thus, between empirical validity and ultimate knowledge, there can be several shades of understanding. The static norms of the physical world cannot always give a precise understanding when they are applied in a changing world where all the finer elements of matter are in an eternal flux. To meet this challenge, geometry and algebra are put together and mathematicians have arrived at new instruments of normative measurement such as scalars, tensors, etc. Whether it is mere empirical apprehension or mathematical and philosophical comprehension, the field where judgement takes place, the cognitive function, is not painful. It is *akliṣṭa*. For this reason, the modification of conscious-

ness catalogued here as *pramāṇa* is considered non-painful.

A certain person claims he is God. Most people, on rational grounds, will straightaway dismiss that claim as a hallucinative obsession. Do we know God so that we check with all aspects of the person concerned to verify the veracity of his claim? We do not. Two entities are involved which need to be observed and examined. The person before us has an objective, physical body that can be perceived. God is a philosophical notion which can be understood only in terms of subjective conceptualization. As we move from a percept to a concept, even when that concept is a direct counterpart of the perceived object, all the details of direct perception are dropped and a generalized idea is accepted which has only the essential marks of the object already perceived. When the percept comes as a stimulation through the organs of perception, it activates the memory tags of corresponding concepts which otherwise remain dormant in causal consciousness.

In Western psychology, causal consciousness is identified with the unconscious. No perceptual identification is possible without the percept being instantaneously paired with its corresponding conceptual image. Neither the ancient sciences nor the modern sciences know where and how concepts are so conveniently stacked that their memory tags can be pulled. After developing the study of cybernetics we began to imagine that there should be something similar to memory cards held in the folds of the brain. So far, this claim has not been



substantiated with proof of any biochemical substance that shows evidence of undergoing chemical changes in a one-to-one correspondence with everything perceived, registered in memory, and retained for recall.

In the most recent findings about the neurophysiology of the brain, researchers have come to the conclusion that there are no photographic mental images or tonal acoustic images configuring the brain which have any correspondence to the objects and sounds outside. New molecular theories have been put forward, assuming there are reverberations of certain hypothetical nets in the brain which make some sort of a magical presentation of certain patternal designs which are experienced as the awareness of forms or sounds, etc. For a detailed study of this phenomena in terms of physiological psychology one can look into Warren McCulloch's *The Embodiment of Mind*, Richard Thompson's *Introduction to Physiological Psychology*, *The Self and Its Brain* by Karl Popper and John Eccles, and William R. Uttal's *The Psychobiology of Mind*. None of these studies are conclusive because the direct study of the human brain has been very meager.

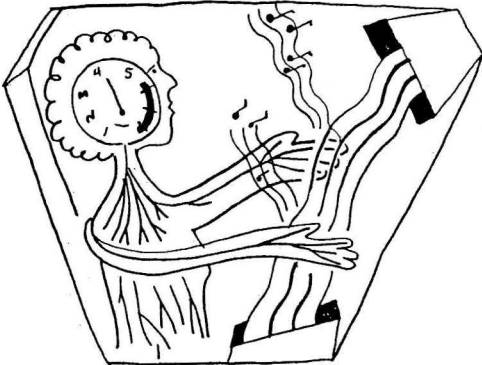
Eastern schools have an entirely different way of approaching the study of the phenomena of memory storage and recall. In the Indian approach, the individuated Self (which in Yoga is called *puruṣa* and in Vedānta, *ātman*) is understood to have four alternating states, each with its distinct focus of consciousness. In a crude way their alternation is analogous to the changing of gears in an automobile. In Western physiological psychology, the closest we come to this idea is the shift from cortical to sub-cortical functions. The four alternating foci are: the world-generating consciousness (*viśvātmā*), creative subjectivity (*taijasātmā*), causally retentive de-structured consciousness (*karanātmā*), and all-witnessing omniscience (*turīya*). They proceed from the gross and physical to the transcendental. Instead of tracing the occurrence of an experience from the provocation of a neuron of the physical

body such as of the retina, eardrum, skin, etc., the Indian always goes from the most transcendent to the causal, from the causal to the regenerative or recreative, and from the regenerative to an actualization at the concrete level. This is a discipline never attempted in the West. Therefore, both its methodology and application should be studied minutely to gain a general understanding of the scheme we are speaking of here. The difficulty involved was put in a poignant manner by Bertrand Russell when he said "You cannot make a clay model of Spirit." But from childhood we have always been presented with models to aid us in understanding ideas. We see, understand and then believe. Now the order is to be reversed. Most people are not even familiar with the pure state of consciousness which is said to be what one imperientially becomes in a state of total absorption, *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

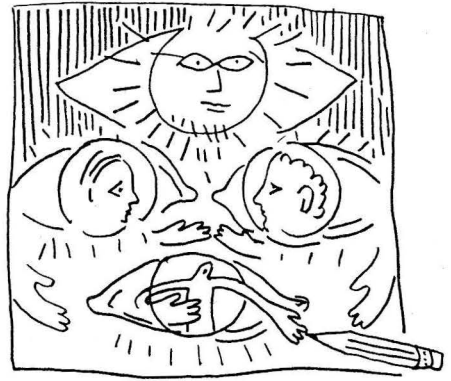


The transcendental state has reference to pure, total absorption. The first stir in that is to be imagined as the nucleus of individuation whereby a vortex is formed in the otherwise calm and serene indivisible consciousness. In the continuation of individuation, the first major principle that comes into vogue is the time factor, the sequential movement which can be progressive or regressive. In a sequential manner, ideas arise, not with words as such, but as configurations in which the essence of all the five faculties of perception are blend-

ed in a holistic occurrence. This is the causal consciousness entering into the subjective realms of a self-creating world of images. Pain/pleasure conditionings of these images act as an incentive to look for the pleasurable and avoid the painful. From there on a more horizontalized actualization of consciousness arises to relate the subtle inner organs to their corresponding organs of physical perception. Now our psychophysical equipment is ready to select external stimuli to structure a world of interest with positive, negative or indifferent value significance. The result is the registration of a perception at a physical level.



The certitude of what is experienced is not limited to the physical or physico-chemical source of the energy that is highlighted in an act of perception. It always has reference to the total need of the person which is a historical summation of all the evolutionary processes involved in the formation of each individual. That is why a return to the source, *pratiprasava*, is the most important theme to study in Yoga. The *viśva* (actualizing), the *taijasa* (imaginative), the *avyākṛta* (causal) and the *sakṣi* (witness) come in a graded manner. The most difficult part is to find in the neutral witnessing consciousness a negative streak that accounts for the furtherance of the causal, the imaginative, and the actualizing propensities of a living organism. In spite of the universal sharing of concepts and meanings, an individual's conceptualization is a highly specialized, unique phenomena. It is that uniqueness that causes two people to come to variant inferences. To remedy



this variance in inferences, deductive or inductive, a second opinion is sought in the records of authentic wise people. In the Semitic religions, revelations take the place of word testimony.

Every perception is a challenge. At most what comes from the external world is a quanta of energy that can tickle a few receptors. The mind is required to interpret the source of that energy and formulate a meaningful picture. The massive source of the radiation of light, the sun, which exists millions of miles away from earth, and the tiny little eye of a mango fly receiving that light, which triggers its program of the day, are in a mysterious bond of polarization. How big the sun, and how minute the eye that sees it! From the eye's seeing comes the very significance of the universal functioning.

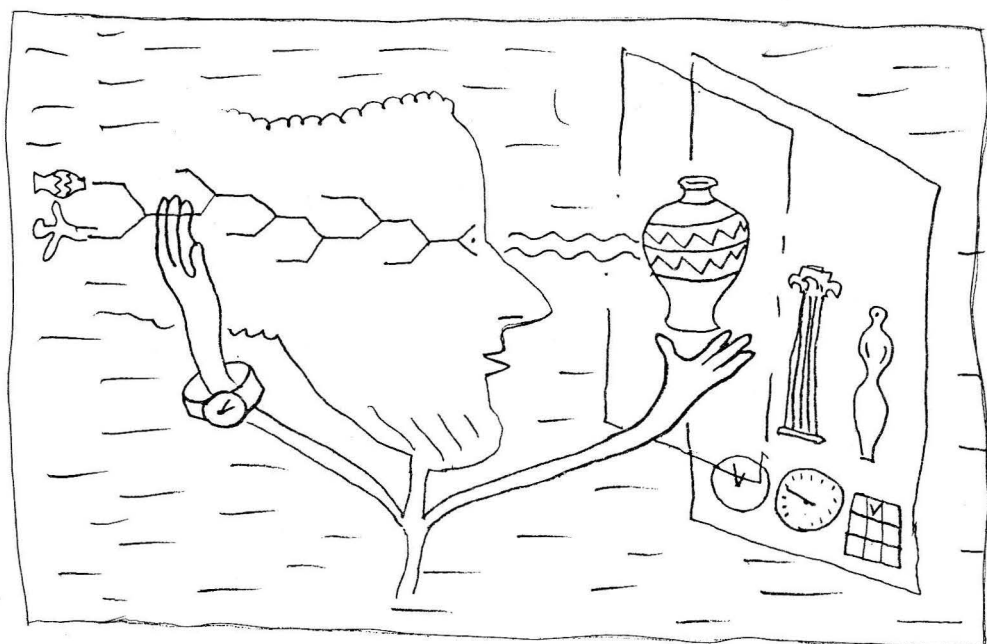
We can understand this better when we place ourselves in a particular situation. What is presented before us may be only a small object such as a book or a pen. The book or pen cannot hang in empty nothingness. They are to be placed in a spatial setting with several adjacent entities. There is always a total picture to serve as an appropriate background for any object we perceive. The luxury of such extensive observation, which the mind makes in full resonance with things existing outside, is only a fragment of our active perception. We remember and bring in a portion of the past history of the pen and book which can sometimes be taken as far back as the hypothetical big bang with which the universe started. Similarly, the pen a person holds to

write a prayer on world peace can bring to that person's mind the unpredictable and unexplored future of mankind.

Considering the vastness of the awareness that is appended to every tactual recognition, it is easy to see that we perceive little and infer a lot. There is nothing called pure perception. It is the quality of a concept with its inferential richness that gives meaning to every percept. Narayana Guru gives us an example to understand this very strange occurrence that is happening to all of us every day. A person enters a room for the first time and sees a pot. Instantaneously, he recognizes that the pot belongs to a very ancient age. It is easy to understand that a person can perceive the form and color of an object placed before him. In the present example, however, what impresses the viewer is the antiquity of the pot which he apprehends along with the perception of the pot. Guru gives another example. A person sees a tree in a dream and thinks that it is a very old tree. Here even the perception is only a subjective imagination. Even in imagination, a temporal assessment is inferentially carried out. What exactly is happening in the faculty of perception when such enormous details of inferential reasoning are also included?

Inference becomes even more complicated when we pass on from formal inference to dialectical reasoning where a person is obliged to hold good to his or her own inference as well as inferentially, intuitively or instinctively knowing what his or her mate or rival is seeing and inferring when placed in the identical situation. These are issues too complicated for an experimental psychologist. The theoretical physicist has an advantage over the practical physicist. Similarly, the experimental psychologist needs the collaboration of an intuitive philosopher at this level. It is for this reason that inference is complemented with the valid testimony of a master mind.

A mirror is a transparent glass piece with silver paint on one side. You can hold it facing any direction, up to any object, and see in it a true reflection of the objects before it. Although this is a very great miracle, we take for granted that a polished surface can reflect objects because of our familiarity with it. As we look through five windows of perception, there is an invisible mirroring agent which synchronizes the pictures coming through the five sense organs. The synchronized effect is what we call perception. For want of any clear comprehension of the event of synchronization,



we postulate a mind and believe that it is functioning behind the senses. It is as good or bad as believing that there is a God who is managing the universe from behind. If one believes in ones mind, there is no reason to disbelieve in God, because both hypotheses belong to the same order. As external organs can be clearly seen and verified, we know that the synchronicity of data, the selection made in structuring, the inflow of energy and the ensemble that is configurated are not attributable to any one sense organ. For the sake of convenience, we postulate an inner organ. So mind is called an inner organ.

The cognizance of an object is not merely the passive witnessing of a figure, because it is accompanied by many bodily changes such as emotional upheavels, or experiencing anxiety, fear or confidence in confronting a situation. The most important factor to reckon with in Indian psychology is the recognition of the primordial function of the Self as the perceiving and coordinating agent behind all perceptions. Take, for instance, a middle-aged person who has difficulty in reading or seeing when he holds a book at a normal distance. By holding the book far, or perhaps near, he can correct his vision. Nowadays, vision is corrected by glasses. Do the glasses have any power

to read? The glasses do not see anything. If there is dirt, moisture or grease on the glasses, the person cannot see clearly. It is important to have a proper prescription. And yet glasses are only an accessory. What we call our external eyes are also accessories. Even the mind which is supposed to be gathering data from all the senses and putting them together into a meaningful configuration is not the seer. Its function can be tampered with with the use of alcohol or any stimulant of the brain such as mind-blowing drugs. The actual source of knowledge remains elusive. To overcome this difficulty in explaining the function of the mind, the inner organ is further divided into four aspects on functional grounds: search, comparison with previous conditioning, decision-making and value-affectivity. In the concept of the inner organ, the organic interrelatedness between physical, chemical and biological operations and the elusive impact of members that congregate in the reception of the same stimuli are all to be taken together. In this joint venture, we see helpful insight as well as defective functioning. The next aphorism refers to the defective functioning which adversely affects the bonafide of perception.

(Continued in next issue.)

This pen,
 an extension of what's pushing up,
 through, and out
 It's ink flowing through the tip
 just as these thoughts flow through
 this hand.
 The breathlessness;
 The humming low-voltage tingle
 surrounding a high-tension line.
 Vibrating....
 Pulsating...
 through all the physical connections
 to form again
 in a line—————
 Across a page; across a space; across a time.

Steve Weckel

Wonder Journey With a Wandering Guru

Nancy Yeilding

The next day we finally drove up the curving mountain road to Ooty, past coffee plantations and arecnut trees entwined with creepers, morning glories, hibiscus, Mexican sunflowers and flame of the forest all growing wild, craggy rocks and waterfalls. Along one stretch of the road monkeys sit on the rock retaining walls or jump up and down the cliff, babies tucked up to their mother's chests. The heat of the plains climbed with us to Burliar, a small town of scattered huts and a few food stands lining the road which marks the official entrance to the

Nilgiris. There boys approach all the buses and cars, selling packets of fresh cinnamon, nutmeg, cumin and cardoman. Tropical growth slowly gives way to eucalyptus groves and scattered elm and evergreen trees, tea plantations and red-clay hillside terraces where potatoes, cauliflower and cabbage are grown.

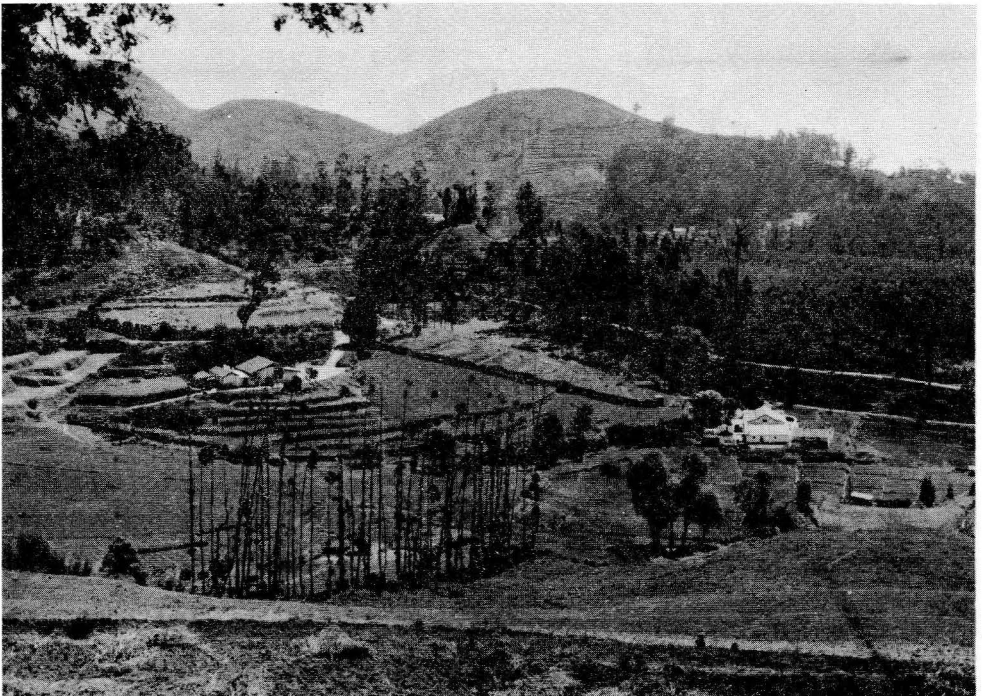
As we climbed up the mountain, gratefully breathing in the fresh cool air, Guru said, "We are getting closer and closer to my soul. After the intense days of travel and talks, like Jesus, we are returning to the mountain top for reflection." As



we rounded the corner of the last hill and the Gurukula came into view—driveway lined with eucalyptus, kitchen, cottage, prayer hall, a grove of evergreens on top of a small hill—my eyes filled with tears of gratitude. Gratitude that this place is, the product of Nataraja Guru's dedication and perseverance through ridicule and poverty, and gratitude that, as Guru's home base, it endures as a refuge for society's misfits and incubator to transform them from discouraged seekers to encouraging seers. To those who must spend all or most of their time far from here, Guru's letters (dozens each week) bearing life-saving guidance, consolation and inspiration, are like beams of light radiating from this mountain top in all directions.

This is my home base, too, whenever I am in India, and when I am not, I am anchored here with Guru in spirit. To periodically come here to lay my head down, break bread, and engage in wisdom pursuits with Guru and fellow disciples is a source of recurring joy and sustained gratitude. This is true despite the

physical hardships of life here, especially those caused by lack of water. After years of being forced to rely on very bad water delivered by truck or carrying water bucket by bucket up the hill from our neighbor's well, this year many friends contributed to create a roof-rain collection and storage system. After we arrived and were greeted by full-time residents Vinod Vyas, Margaret and Vinaya Chaitanya and their four children, unloading everything, and having tea in Guru's room lined with a wonderful library, I walked up the hill past newly planted peach, pear and fig trees to the main storage tank as large as a small swimming pool, and saw water pumping from the lower catchment tank to our holding tank next to the kitchen. Then, able for the first time to use water abundantly without having to think of every bucket to be carried up the hill, I enjoyed a hot (bucket) bath. Eventually, pipes will be laid from the storage tank to kitchen and bathrooms and we will have gravity-fed running water, an almost unbelievable luxury.



Having not fully recovered from bronchitis before we started our trip, Guru had a relapse the day after we arrived at Ooty. For four or five days he was in bed with fever and congestion. But, as usual even in his illness, his caring continued as though he was cradling in his cupped palms the souls of all of those gathered around, responding to the inner questions, hopes and fears of the young people who were arriving one by one—with answers, projects and books to look into. At one point Guru said to one of the boys who had come for the first time, "You asked what the East-West University of Unitive Sciences is. It's this—people from East and West sitting around the Guru's bed, sipping coffee and thinking great thoughts." Instead of responding to illness or other physical suffering with depression or self-pity, which is so very easy, Guru maintains a steady balance which becomes an even deeper meditative peace the more suffering comes.

At random times over the days he was sick, Guru spoke about God, each time in one or two sentences, planting a seed for reflection. First he said, "We call God *daivam*, meaning light, the principles that inform the universe, but we also have to understand God as the darkness that obscures the laws." I thought of how this can bring patience and forgiveness for oneself and others—when both light and darkness are recognized as part of an infinite scheme in which each of us play only a small part.

Another time Guru said, "God is a situational *ātma*-sphere. (*Ātma* means the Self, which is also the Absolute.) When we wake up in the morning and it is raining, we have a different attitude and programs than when the sun is shining. God is always surrounding us as changing situations." He added, "My illness is recurring because I have been going on traveling and giving talks. But I have to, because God is an *ātma*-sphere. God's will is like a vacuum whose pull can't be resisted. When I agreed to succeed Guru, it wasn't to have a life of comfort. Jesus often said, 'Suffer ye', and God's will led him all the way to the cross. Succeeding

Guru meant accepting unlimited liability for all." No one watching Guru over a period of time would ever doubt the truth of these words, as his comings and goings and activities are so clearly not motivated by what will be most comfortable or pleasing to him. He is often fatigued and illnesses come and go, but he continues to place all his capacities at the disposal of a grand scheme, the outlines of which are only rarely glimpsed by others.

Finally, we were reading an article by Douglas Hoffstadter on aesthetics, in which he wrote about "spark" as both a noun and a verb in the realm of creativity: as a noun when describing an electric leap of thought, and as a verb when talking about one idea sparking another. Guru said, "Nataraja Guru always gave the example of certain signs inside train compartments. Next to the window 'lock' is written. Before 10:00 p.m., it is a noun, but at night it becomes a cautionary verb. On the side wall, 'step' is written. Until you wish to get into the upper bunk, it is a noun, but when you want to climb, it is a directing verb. We need to understand God not as an object sitting somewhere but, as Buckminster Fuller said, as a verb, a functional reality."

What is the importance of this distinction? What difference does such an understanding make? If, in one's mind, God is segregated from the totality as an independent entity, then various qualities and motivations vis-a-vis other beings and things can be attributed to him, her or it. This gives scope for the tragic experiences of delusion, guilt and religious hatred, such as: "It is God's will that we wipe out those infidels; I am suffering because of my sins—God is punishing me; God has chosen us as his special people; I am martyring myself for God; God is my secret lover, etc." However, when God is understood as the ever-unfolding totality, all qualities, motivations and actions, clear and mysterious, are necessarily included. It opens us to experiencing ourselves as fully integrated with our fellow beings in the cosmic functioning of an on-going creation, steering past the duality that spawns intra- and inter-personal disease.

The Gurukula is a microcosm which provides a context in which many individuals, inspired by Guru's self-less and ever-permutating creativity, gain concrete experience of the interweaving of their energy and vision with many others in a world-wide cooperation. The several young men who had come to stay at the Gurukula for the first time were working together to empty out the dregs of one of our water tanks so it could be cleaned before it was re-filled by the imminent rain. One of them came into Guru's room and Guru asked about their progress. He replied that they had stopped work because they were waiting for Vinod to fix the pump to empty the tank and then they would clean it. Guru said, "This is a very important thing for you to learn. Nataraja Guru taught me not to wait for anything. You should never just sit and wait, but always give a positive content to life. If you say to me, 'I worked on emptying the tank for some time, and now I want to read', or 'now I want to sit with you awhile', that is fine. You are giving a positive content to your time. But don't let the moments become dead, lifeless, because you are waiting for something to happen."

Immediately, dozens of incidents came to mind in which I had observed Guru living this teaching and modeling it for those around him. Long train and plane journeys become opportunities for teaching accompanying students or learning by drawing out the fields of interests and expertise of fellow passengers. In a hot, crowded airport after 24 hours of travel without sleep, facing a six hour delay before our plane would depart, when others were sitting almost in a stupor and inwardly groaning at the thought of the long wait, Guru walked to the airport post office, purchased a stack of post cards, and began writing poems, short notes and drawing sketches of nearby people to send to friends who would be delighted. Not only did he make his moments interesting for himself and those around him, but also used them to send little sparks of interest to others. Then he spread out his shawl on the floor, and lay down for a short nap,

demonstrating the companion option to giving time a positive content- depositing it, as he once described it.

Although this is a very simple teaching, its impact is very profound. Even without being directly stated, the strength of Guru's consistent example naturally affects others. Seeing him filling each moment, they also find that life offers far more opportunities than they realized for creativity and sharing when time is not wasted in waiting.

One afternoon, shortly after his recovery, Guru was visited by a young businessman, Girish, who had many questions about how to be happier, more peaceful and successful. As he questioned with intensity and great earnestness, the answers he evoked from Guru were very meaningful. In response to questions about the difficulty of charting a course for one's life that does not meet the expectations of one's society, Guru replied, "Do not look into the social mirror and then think that is what you are. You should have an inner estimation of yourself and the value of what you are doing. Of course, it is possible to be self-deluded and make mistaken judgments. In order to avoid that, you need a confidant who is detached. If you learn to strike a root in the universal order, that gives you stability. For me, stability comes from constantly being guided by memories of what Nataraja Guru said and did in various situations. When you sit firm on your own truthfulness, your own trust, you can face any encounter."

"When I was a young man in the Varkala Gurukula, many students from the nearby college would come to sit with me during their lunch break. The girls would come to listen to the stories I was telling and boys would come to be near the girls. A scandal arose in which I was said to be implicated in an affair with one of the girls. The principal forbid the students from coming any more. I told Nataraja Guru about it and he immediately took me to the principal, asking for all the teachers and students to be called. He point blank asked the girl concerned if she loved me. She said, 'Of course I love him. All the girls and boys do'. Guru

asked about the rumors and she replied, "This story has been spread by one of the teachers who wants to have an affair with me and is jealous." That was the end of the problem. If you are honest you can face anything. Your own conscience should be your real mirror, not the social mirror."

When Girish asked about how to gain more inner stability, Guru said, "There are three simple things you can do to bring more peace to your mind: Do not pay too much attention to your body; do not carry contradictory ideas from books; and do not care too much what the world says."

The next questions were about whether being in business and making money is bad and about being generous. Guru replied: "You should understand your role as a businessman as that of a facilitator. You are trying to bring the right thing to the right people at the right time. You should not involve yourself in the manufacturing of needs but in understanding and meeting the real needs of people. The Gita talks about three kinds of gift-giving: *sattvic* which is giving the right gift to the right person at the right time; *rajasic* which is giving with an ulterior motive; and *tamasic* which is giving out of vanity, without regard to one's own security. Gaining money should not be your goal. It is only the reflected glory of a value. Wealth, *dhanam*, should be for the happiness of all concerned. Nataraja Guru spoke about the good of all and the general good. These two should always go together as your goal. The good of each individual should always be included as well as the general good. That means your own and your family's happiness should be included in the good of all."

"You should not squander your money. When you have an upcoming expense, earmark that money and set it aside in your mind as if you don't have it. I learned this from Nataraja Guru. Once I saw that he had some money with him. Then someone came and asked for money but he said he had none. As this wasn't his usual way, I asked him why. He said, 'That money is needed for our tax

payment next week. So in my mind it is already spent and I do not have money to give.' I practice this. If money is earmarked, it is as if I don't have it. But if I have above and beyond that and someone comes with a legitimate request, I will surely give. You should always keep a margin in mind for the unpredictable. Then if you have extra, you should freely give to the right person. Another teaching which Nataraja Guru gave about money is that you should plan projects which require funding so that they proceed bit by bit, not requiring money in a big lump sum."

From money, the questions moved to marriage and family life. Being the age when Indian parents start to get restless about arranging their childrens' marriages, Girish was having misgivings about entering the web of responsibilities, restrictions and dependencies which that path entails. Guru responded: "You have to understand that the cycle of marriage and family has been going on for ages and is a very powerful vortex. If you are near it, you have to be strong. To avoid it, you



have to resolve to be different, but not to go too far from normalcy. You need to have full consciousness of what is happening to you and around you at all times so you and others don't get caught in the web. That may hurt a little, but mostly you can do it if you are always conscious of eventualities. It is also possible in marriage not to have a sense of being bound if you groom your wife and children not to be overly dependent on you, while still maintaining a responsible relationship."

The conversation then turned toward a near disaster Girish had suffered through in his business, having made a series of advances to a business partner in the U.S., the last of which was not returned on schedule. As it was a large sum, it would have been ruinous to his business. As the delay prolonged, he became very agitated, unable to sleep because of his anxiety. He said his initial reaction, after the payment was finally made, was never to trust anyone or take any chances again. But now, after time passing, he saw certain possibilities for good deals unfolding and was tempted to participate. He talked about only making deals when all aspects were fully known and safe. Then Guru said, "Being in business necessarily means taking certain risks. But you should trust someone only after you have had sufficient experience to really know them and their way of dealing. In any situation, you are only given 50% of the data; everything can't be fully known and safe. But you can have trust in universal benevolence. That will quiet your mind so you can get a good night's sleep which means you will have better judgment the next day."

"You can be businessman and also be your own detached consultant. That means developing a continuous dialogue with the Absolute or the Unknown. The Gita describes this as a dialogue between your lower self and its dreams, fears and expectations, and your higher Self which is limitless, serene, detached, your best values. If you relate your lower self to that every day, you can transcend the limitations of your lower self. You should never let yourself down, even if all others

are criticizing you. Even if you don't approve of what you have done, you shouldn't reproach yourself so much that you think you are a lost case."

"I have four great mantras which help very much when things are going bad. First I say 'It's O.K.'. If the problem persists I say 'What of that?', then, 'I don't care', and finally *AUM TAT SAT*—'That is how it is (so accept it)'. Nataraja Guru once said, 'I am now at the peak of I-don't-care-ism'. Don't wait for the world to give you a promotion. You should periodically give yourself a promotion—see new reasons to credit yourself."

"There is a source of wisdom which will open to you more and more as you trust it. I always have a sense of someone just behind me with the right answer. The more I put my trust in that, the more lucid it becomes to me."

Seeing that Guru was fatigued by so many questions while not fully recovered, Girish left, after getting Guru's permission to return in a few days. He came at the agreed-upon time, again full of sincere questions. This time he wanted to know about meditation.

Guru began with making a distinction between the meaning of meditation in the East and the West. In the West it is used to mean deep pondering on any subject such as in *The Meditations of Descartes*. This is different from meditation, *dhyānam*, as understood in Indian philosophy, which literally means there is no flicker in the mind.

Guru continued: "The Bhagavad Gita says that meditation happens when the mind is free of *sankalpa* (calculation) and *vikalpa* (hallucination). Just like we need sleep to replenish our energy, the mind needs to have periods of peace even while wakeful. This is a positive investment for the mind which requires a state of leisure to sustain its health and replenish its strength to deal with problems. It enhances the mind's precision and tenacity. Meditation is also similar to sleep in that we cannot make it come. We can prepare for it, but it has to come on its own. To prepare for it we need to understand three aspects of meditation:

its physical format, spiritual dimension and practical application."

"First, sit upright with your head, neck and spine in a straight line. You should sit comfortably and steadily so that your mind becomes only a monitor to keep your body steady. Sit crosslegged if you can do so comfortably or use a chair if you cannot, but don't recline on it so that you fall asleep. Your mind should not be engaged in any assigned activity. Thoughts will automatically come anyway. Usually memories are immediately hooked onto thoughts and the mind is filled. Instead of allowing memories to hook onto your thoughts, dismiss each thought as it arises. Think 'I don't care' and dismiss it. At first, ideas will come popping up. But if you stay with it, after three or four days they will slow down. Eventually the flow of thoughts will cease. Then you will have come to the state of *dhyānam*, meditation."

"At first, many find it difficult, so an aid is given. You reduce the focus of your attention from the many activities of your body-mind system to a single rhythmic motion—your breath. Watching the inhaling and exhaling of your breath will pacify your mind and it will become composed. At the beginning a usually restless person who starts sitting

quietly may become drowsy. Don't worry if this happens to you. After a week or so, you'll become more attentive. Then, when thoughts start coming, don't add your memories to them. Peace will come."

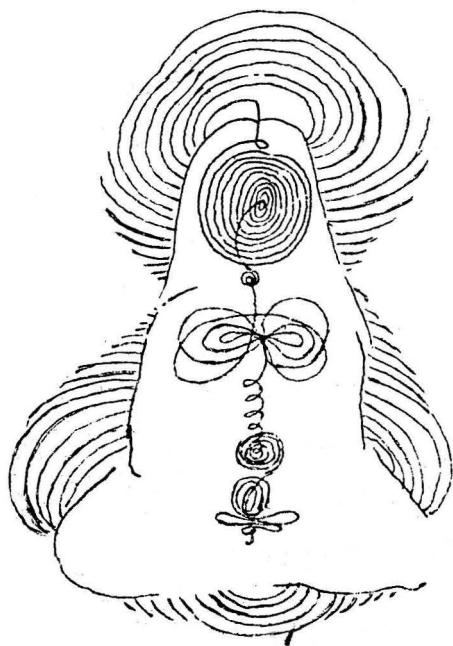
"Your physical body has a counterpart, a power within you that is always awake. There is an agent seated in your unconscious who is overseeing your heart beat, your respiration, integrating the operation of all your autonomic functioning. Through this practice that power will become more and more known to you. Your inner intelligence and physical self will get more and more into alignment until your spiritual aspect and physical aspect are interlinked as one function with two phases."

"This raises your awareness about your expenditure of physical, vital, emotional energy in your daily activities. Even when you talk, you spend much more energy than you need. So you can see how you can keep your energy expenditure at a minimum."

Girish responded, "But won't that give a competitor an advantage, or give a customer the feeling I am not interested, if I am not giving my full attention?"

Guru replied that there is a way of relating and keeping the interest of the other while still maintaining a meditative awareness and reducing your energy expenditure. He said that someone in business needs detachment, a stance of being prepared to lose, while doing your best not to. In response to questions about disagreements with others, Guru said, "You need to develop certain strategies, such as agreeing on minor points and setting a tone of cooperation before tackling the major issues."

Then he told a story about disputes in Ceylon between Catholics and Buddhists during his stay there. He suggested that each side meet with a detached person. Everyone agreed and requested him to perform that function. First, he met with the aggrieved party, the Catholics, and listened to all their grievances. Then he met with the Buddhists and heard their replies. Guru made a list of fifteen minor issues and set up a meeting with representatives of both sides. Slightly



modifying the demands of both, Guru was able to get agreement on all fifteen points in the first session. When the session ended, the news was released to the press that there was positive agreement on all fifteen. That set a tone of conciliation throughout the country. In that atmosphere, they tackled the major issues the next day, with great success.

Guru said that one needs mental leisure to develop such strategies and make them successful. "It is not by taxing yourself and brooding over a problem that success will come. First, think of the issue to be resolved. Then think that there is a light in you, your deeper Self, which is capable of tackling the problem. Then take some rest. A creative response will come from within you."

"There are four ways in which the mind functions. The first is the most common. It is *cinta*, where the mind is in a whirlpool of worries, either regret about the past or anxiety about the future. Next is *vicāra*, which means specifically guiding the mind. To lift it out of its circular motion, you guide it in a linear fashion, from a minor premise to a major premise to a logical conclusion. This is the way of cool reasoning. But it is a horizontal activity of the mind, taking place on the surface. You are dealing with facts divorced from their deeper value implications."

"There is a deeper way of pondering called *mānana*. In that there is a vertical descent and ascent of consciousness. We see this in inventors, in scientists who make unique discoveries, in creative artists. They go from the known factors to the unknown, allowing the gravity of the situation to take them to a great depth from which inspiration carries them to a great height."

"Finally, there is *dhyāna*, transcendence, in which you go beyond all specific modulations of consciousness."

Questions continued to focus on how to handle conflicts. Guru replied: "Conduct yourself in such a way that you don't generate controversies. If one is raised, try to give some excuse to avoid an immediate confrontation so you can settle down first. If the other person persists in

making an issue, blow a little hot, then go cool."

Girish: "What if someone is saying something which I vehemently disagree with?"

Guru: "Don't rudely interrupt. Wait until they get a little bored and are looking for a fresh breeze. Then bring in a new subject and slowly work it back around to what they were saying, in a modified manner. You can thus give a correction in an accommodative way. If you convince someone that their position is known to you, they will not try to press it on you. So put some energy into understanding the other's position and letting them know it. You can also take a discussion from the abstract to the concrete by bringing in a factual example to support your claim. You should also remember that conflict is inevitable. Nataraja Guru says that in any true situation, paradox lurks at the heart of it. Another approach is to say, 'I agree, but that is not always true.' These are all practical applications of meditation."

When Girish started to criticize his ego as a source of conflict between himself and others, Guru replied, "You shouldn't belittle your ego. It is most central to you as your I-consciousness to which you have to relate everything. You need that central experience of 'I am'. But one's ego can become pathological, either so filled with fear that you can't cope with the ego of another, or overly aggressive and dominating. Both generate an unhealthy situation of top dog/ under dog instead of equal collaboration. To have a healthy ego, you need to take away its social coloration and retain it only as a philosophical entity, a central focus of consciousness which gives orientation."

"Instead of always assigning an agency to your ego of the knower, the doer, the enjoyer, i.e., 'I know, I will do, I want, I suffer', you should think that it is incidental that knowledge comes through you, that you are doing a certain thing. Then the thrust of your ego will not be hatred or fear of anyone. You will function normally. This term Ego came from Freud. He spoke of the Id, the Ego, and the Super-Ego. We all have a child

in us who is instinctive, full of desires, the Id. The Super-Ego stands as the father, representing law, ethics, the religion of your parents. The Ego as mother stands between them, wanting to be kind of the child and maintaining loyalty to the father. When the Ego suffers, that makes the body suffer, too. The mind's suffering is transferred to the body and becomes physical disease."

Then Girish wanted to know about how to handle business partners. Guru said, "You have to be very consistent in your relations with a partner in order to maintain your character. 'Character' means consistently being guided by the same norm in making choices throughout your life. You need to have a normative notion of the Absolute and make your central stand on truth, goodness and beauty. Relative factors can change from time to time, if they have no direct bearing on your central norm. But that norm at the core of your personality should never change."

In response to questions about *swadharma*, actualizing one's innate potential, and how he came to be a renunciate, Guru replied: "At the age of

14 I was inspired by the life of the Buddha. I was never drawn to the life of a family man; I didn't want to limit myself to my family or any narrow, relativistic group. Despite having certain fears and anxieties, and relatives pestering me to marry, that never struck a chord in me. Something else was already shaping my destiny. Our life unfoldment has genetic and cultural influences; there is something beyond our control which is pulling us toward it. At the same time, we each contribute to what we want to be."

"Once my father asked all of his children what they wanted to be. First he turned to me as the eldest, but I couldn't put it into words, so I was silent. Then Father turned to the others. One sister said she wanted to be a doctor. Father said she would become a very successful doctor. My other sister said, 'A teacher' and my brother 'a farmer', and Father said they would (and indeed they have). Father turned to me and asked again, but I still couldn't say, so he became irritated and said, 'Then you will not be anything.' Sometime afterward, Father was reading the life of Buddha to



us. I asked, 'Can I be like him?' My mother said I could. Then I asked how and she replied, 'By living a more disciplined life.' I asked her if she would help me and she agreed."

"Very early the next morning she called me to get up. When I resisted and complained, Father reminded me, 'You said you wanted to be like Buddha.' Mother took me out to the well and poured bucket after bucket of cold water on me until I was awake. When I came in and saw my brother and sisters still sleeping, I felt good to be more clean and productive. At noon I was seated at a separate table and fed vegetarian food only. When I saw my brother eating fish and relishing it, I felt a certain disappointment. But over the years, the life of a sannyasi (renunciate) came to me more and more. You should listen to your inner voice and tendencies and they will tell you what you want to become."

Girish's final question was about the fate of suffering people and what one should do. Guru said, "We are always looking for any chance to change injustice; we will try to create revolution whenever we can. But in the meantime we don't cry over it." Girish asked, "We read about what people are suffering in South America, in South Africa, Lebanon-war, repression, torture-how do you deal with that?"

Guru replied, "I don't. I am glad I wasn't born there. I do everything I can to change it." I asked, "How do you stay peaceful inside in the face of such cruelty of human beings to each other?" Guru said, "Don't feel guilty about it. Try to change it whenever you have a chance. But, in the meantime, accept that is how it is, AUMTATSAT."

Guru had begun the conversation speaking about the physical and spiritual aspects of meditation and their practical application. Then, in answer to the questions he received, he unfolded a scheme of the mind's functioning and personality structure, healthy approaches to inter-personal relationship, finding one's placement in society, and relating oneself to the world community. In the process, he exemplified the application

of an awareness lifted from the confusion of competing values to the height of an absolute norm, a perspective which fosters both compassion and inner stability in the face of the sometimes tormenting facts of life.

Guru's answers to the questions about human cruelty confirmed my growing understanding and teaching that peace comes from acceptance of even what initially fills us with horror. This acceptance is not self-satisfied indifference to another's fate. Rather it is an understanding that these things *are*, they are a part of our world, our human experience, and, while we should take action to change them whenever possible, our being subsumed in guilt or fear is disturbing to us while being helpful to no one else. This is a balance rarely struck in American society where general indifference and helplessness are punctuated only rarely by persons with a wide range of genuine caring. And they often suffer from a heightened sense of guilt or fear about humanity's darkness which necessarily vitiates their clarity of thought and resulting effectiveness of action.

It is unlikely that Girish was able to absorb and apply all the teachings Guru gave him right away. But he listened carefully and will experience the meaning of Guru's words growing over time as he turns to them for guidance. One of the hallmarks of the guru principle is this generous sharing of wisdom wherever there is sincerity in the seeker. Releasing energy from attempting to satisfy societal demands, from the myriad facets of family life and, most importantly, from preoccupation with his psycho-physical self, provides Guru with well-springs which flow abundantly wherever there is an opening.

(Continued in next issue.)

Coming Full Circle:

A Look at Spirituality, Ecology and Feminism from an Herbalist's Perspective

Carolyn Eden

My fondest childhood memories are not of vacations, playmates and Easter bunnies, but of the time spent with black-eyed Susans, Queen Anne's lace, blue chicory flowers, silky milkweed, and all the other plant-friends that grew wild in the fields, along the roadsides, and in every nook and cranny where I lived. My playgrounds were the wheat field, the rows between corn stalks, along the creekside, in the acres growing wild, and up in the limbs of trees. I can still feel the reverence which filled me one Spring day when I came upon a Jack-in-the pulpit in the midst of a patch of new purple violets under bushes at the edge of the schoolyard during recess.

That feeling of reverence is one of the ways in which spirituality and herbalism interweave in my life. The reverence is felt in honor of the interweaving itself, the interconnection between all things that provides the right mixture for a Jack-in-the pulpit to grow in a patch of violets to delight the mind of a child. It is felt for each and every thread that makes up life's intricate design, and for the source from which all the different threads for the weaving derive their particular texture and hue. In this sense, of course, spiritual is a word that could and does apply to any and all aspects of life. One reason my relationship with plants and my role as link between their healing powers and those who wish to be healed holds a special place in my life is because the spiritual is so easy for me to see within those relationships.

Another reason I relate spirituality with my role as an herbalist is because my affinity for plants was inborn, something of the Divine made manifest to and

through me. The actual learning of herbalism came later in life, but the herbalist came into this world as part and parcel of who I am. It was not so much something to become but rather something to allow to be.

When the time was right for my training in herbalism to begin, my teacher passed on to me not only the practical knowledge of the plants and their uses but the spirit with which to approach them. She taught me according to the traditions of the Native Americans, whose ways do not separate the spiritual from any aspect of their lives. When I gather herbs with my teacher, the gathering is the culmination of a ritual which begins with fasting and includes meditation, purification with the smoke of sage and cedar, prayers to the four directions, the Earth Mother and Sky Father, and communion with the grandmother plant in which permission to gather from her clan is asked and during which an offering to her is made. When I gather alone, I create my own rituals, but they have at their core this same essence of respect and gratitude, an honoring of the herbs as sacred gifts generously provided for our sustenance, the maintenance of our health, and as medicines for healing our wounds and our ills. Without this, I could not call myself an herbalist. With it, I know that the herbs are gathered, dried, prepared, and administered with love. I have witnessed over and over again the power of this love in combination with the healing properties of the plants, which I also consider to be love, to perform what are nothing short of miracles. Part of the miracle is watching someone be not only physically healed

but awakened to or reminded of that interconnectedness and oneness of which I first spoke; a realization that helps draw closed the wound of separation with which so many of us are afflicted in this modern world.

Just as spirituality and herbalism are sometimes two words with one meaning, I find that "ecologist" and "feminist" are aspects of being an herbalist that are not separate from the spiritual, or from each other. As an "eco"-herbalist, I recognize and have great respect for the delicate balance which Nature so gently and vigorously maintains on both a grand and microscopic scale. To my herbalist's eye, I can see it is not by accident that yellow dock grows within inches of the stinging nettle and also acts as antidote for its sting, or that plantain grows just about everywhere and heals just about every cut, scrape or insect bite that might occur in our day-to-day lives, or that in every inhabited corner of the world, no matter what the climate and conditions, the plants needed for food, healing and shelter take an appropriate form for survival and growth.

Part of my training as an herbalist has been to learn how to help maintain or even enhance that balance in my gatherings and wanderings, to be caretaker as well as enjoyer of the planetary garden. I was taught not only to honor the plants on a spiritual level when gathering, but also to take a practical look to see what is offered for the taking and what is asking to be left behind. Only in a medical emergency would I consider harvesting plants in a manner that would threaten their survival. In general, I hesitate to gather every member of any plant family on any given square foot of earth. Ideally, after gathering, it is not at all obvious that some flowers, leaves or even roots were plucked from the earth's bouquet. When my gathering does leave a visible hole, it is only with plants that will be even more lush a few days or weeks after the pruning, or with plants that are so prolific they border on nuisance and are very soon naturally replenished.

To my herbalist's heart and mind, it is painful, frightening, and nearly

inconceivable that this crucial and benevolent balance of nature is unrecognized, dishonored, exploited, and brutally threatened and assaulted by the governmental, military, environmental and economic policies of this country, as well as others, all around the globe. The threats and assaults are many—use of pesticides, strip-mining, coastal oil drilling, clear-cutting of forests, asphaltting, toxic and nuclear waste disposal, air pollution, water pollution, damming of streams and rivers, use of nuclear power plants, and construction, testing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The list grows longer, more thoughtless, and more devastating every day.

It is in this respect that feminism has its importance in my life as herbalist. The mind-set and institution of patriarchy advocates for and perpetuates the attitudes and actions of "dominion over the earth" and the "conquering of nature" which presently threaten the ecological balance and possibly the continuance of life as we know or can imagine it on this planet. Sometimes when I look up into the sky, I wonder if there are other planets revolving around this same sun that were once lush with life, and a species that destroyed itself by falling too far out of balance. We know for certain that such destruction has happened to once great civilizations on this planet. On one level I look at the excesses and imbalance as part of the eternal flux, the two aspects of the Tao, just another time around in the cycles of creation and destruction. On another level I strongly believe that we have a say in determining the future, that it truly is possible to make the conscious choice and to create a life of harmony on all levels. I see that feminism offers tools for constructing a path in that direction, by providing critical analysis of what has led us to this precarious point, methodologies for restoring and maintaining balance in all modes of life, and visions of a world that lives and grows in harmony with itself.

The heart of feminist thinking is not new, but rises from the ancient wisdom and ways which were prevalent before

patriarchal dominance and values became the norm. These ways included an honoring of nature as a living manifestation of the Great Mother, the Goddess, the Divine Feminine. During the period when patriarchal religion and thought spread throughout most of the world, the Goddess-honoring cultures were violently destroyed. In the attempt to maintain power over the conquered, all representations of the Feminine were seen, consciously and unconsciously, as a threat. They were first labeled, and eventually believed to reside, on a continuum somewhere between valueless and evil. Thus the valuing and revering of nature's inherent worth was replaced by the dollar value of ownership and profits. Instead of a force to honor and to attune one's life with, nature became an object to be dominated and exploited, the earth a parcel to be cut up and sold. The feminist voice speaks out not only to reclaim the rights and honor of women, but to offer a timely revaluation to a world sorely in need of healing itself, of opening to and receiving the regenerative healing power of the Feminine.

In my own life, feminism has played a large part in my awakening on all levels. As an herbalist, I feel extremely grateful to feminism for reaching a hand back across the dark abyss of male-dominated medicine to the "burning times," and pulling the practices of natural healing and the spirits of the women who were its practitioners out of the ashes, off the gallows, and out of hiding. I do not go out to gather herbs or mix up a remedy without being aware that had I lived in another time, I would have risked my life by doing so. Even today, I risk fine and imprisonment.

Yet the boon, if it can be so called, of being oppressed is the bond that forms with others who suffer the same oppression. When I gather herbs or mix up a remedy, I feel the feet that have walked the paths before me, the hands that have dug the roots and turned the herbs to dry. The connection with the generations of women who have gone before me, and those who presently guide me and walk by my side, courses through

my veins and resides deep within my soul. I have been able to find my place in the thread that has remained unbroken for thousands and thousands of years through times of peace and times of fear and suffering, the fibers made up of a woman taking the hand of a woman taking the hand of a woman. It is not solely but certainly with great thanks to the feminist movement and women all over the globe, whether they be writers, teachers, historians, healers, artists, poets, musicians, mothers, students, witches, sisters, daughters, political activists, comedians, friends—that I have rediscovered and revalued the herbalist within me.

Feminism has helped me sift out the chaff of the patriarchal myths, projections and objectifications which were superimposed upon me and internalized by me. It has helped me connect with who I was before I was "educated" to deny, fear, mistrust and dislike what is of the Feminine, hiding me even from myself. By helping me in the process of self-discovery, feminism has also helped me in the rediscovery of the Goddess. As it was within my relationship with plants as a child that I first knew the love of the Goddess, so it is that in helping me recreate a loving relationship with my inner girl-child, feminism has helped me begin to discover again the presence of the Goddess within nature, within life, within myself.

Thus it is by clasping the hand of spirituality that feminism completes the "spiritual eco-feminist" circle. By teaching us to reclaim and revalue the Feminine, feminism provides the tools and chance to bring our lives and our planet into greater balance, to open to the Goddess in all Her manifestations, to welcome and honor the Goddess within ourselves.



Musical Mandalas

Scott Teitsworth



We have been using the idea of the mandala in this column as a metaphor for the dynamic world of created music. Every musical composition has its rightful place in such a symmetrical system, where the sum total of musical gestalts makes a meaningful picture. By calling this a mandala there is the implication that the appreciation of the whole can lead one to a deeper understanding of the underlying spirit.

By limiting our mandala to music we have made a single bifurcation in the most general possible category, sound. There can be music and so there must be non-music. Today we will examine the mandala of sound, with the expectation that a mandala consisting of the most general, undivided subject matter will give us the most complete insight into the neutral verity of the substratum of creation, otherwise known as the ground of all.

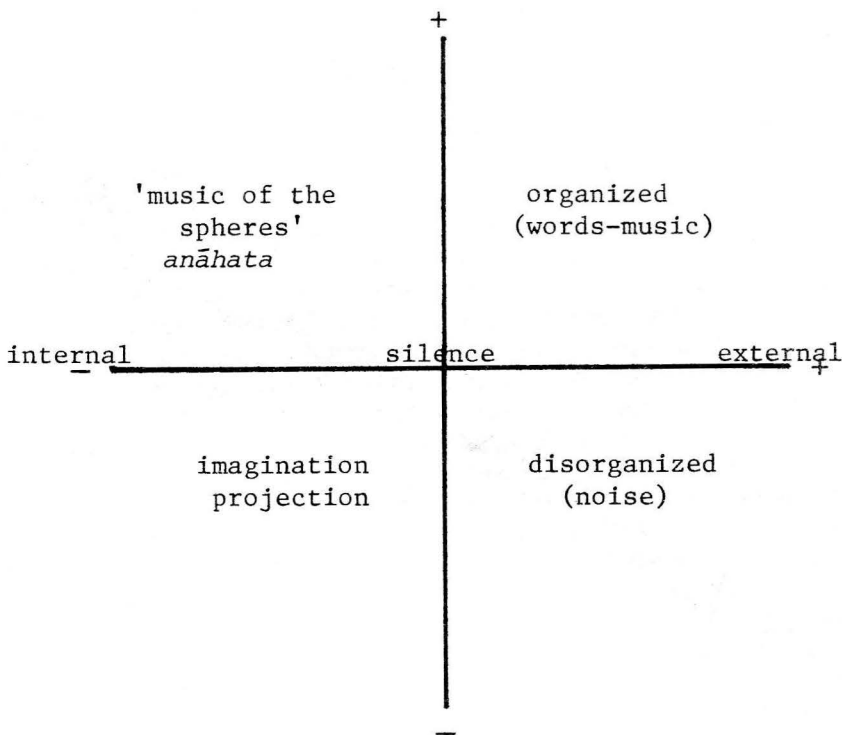
Originally the intent was to discuss silence as an absolute counterpart to music and its parent, the totality of sound. We take silence for granted as a commonplace occurrence in our world. When music and noise, the usual term for non-music, cease, there should be silence. But who among us has ever experienced it?

Last summer I spent two months at the Fernhill Gurukula in India, a mountaintop retreat where I expected to probe the depths of silence. I stayed alone in Nataraja Guru's tiny meditation hut apart from the main buildings. Under the benign influence of Guru Nitya and the contemplative setting, I sank deeper and deeper within myself. With the mind quieted and the ear unattended, imagine my surprise to hear at the very core of silence a tone—a whirring electric

aum which became louder even as I became more quiet and absorbed. It was as though the chorus of insects from the South Indian jungle was being performed within as well as without. Later on, as we travelled through the lowlands, I could not distinguish whether the sounds I was hearing were coming from my own being or from the surrounding countryside.

Of course the Indian *rishis* had identified and named this internal sound long before. It is the *anāhata* or the unstruck sound, present within everyone. And so there really is no silence within creation, for as the external sounds quiet down the internal sound swells into consciousness. Silence is only a philosophical postulate, like the mathematical zero, whose value lies in its symbolic connection to pure, uncreated Spirit. Like the unmanifested Absolute of Indian philosophy, it is the foundation of the world, in this case the world of sound, but it is not to be identified with anything found in creation.

Sound taken as a complete whole, with all its aspects shown in their proper relation, forms a mandala that implies a neutral center of silence. The accompanying graph, based on Nataraja Guru's original scheme of correlation, provides a skeletal framework for understanding the seeker's personal sound mandala. On the objective side we have put the external sounds, divided into organized (words and music) and disorganized (noise). On the subjective side are the actual internal sounds, such as the *anāhata*, and the projected sounds of the imagination. The perfect stillness of the void is placed at the intersection of the axes, so volume must increase in all directions toward the periphery. All sound vibration has a



THE SOUND MANDALA

place in this scheme. When the totality of sound is conceived in this way, one's awareness is naturally drawn to the point of equipoise, absolute silence.

Most of our conscious awareness is centered in the double positive region of music and word production, but this is only a small part of the world of sound. There is so much satisfaction to be found in listening to the beautiful noises of creation, internal as well as external. So few people stop to really listen to the sounds of wind in the branches of trees, to the splash of rain in puddles and on rooftops, the crackling of a campfire, the slicing of a shovel into rich earth. Our eyes and our social mind force the ears into taking a back seat. But a good number of our greatest poets and composers have taken their best inspiration from the wonderful sounds of nature. By quieting their internal dialogue and closing their eyes they allowed themselves access to new and original regions of awareness. While this is commonly called 'sinking into silence', it is actually a sinking into quietude, permitting the gentler sounds of

the world to educate consciousness.

It seems the composer we are discussing today goes under the nom de plume of Nature. I cannot recommend any specific performances, but I can suggest some places to look for them. One needs to first cultivate quiet within the mind; only then can these sounds be heard. And while there is a certain chaotic exuberance to the sounds of city life, the softer harmonies of the natural world are some of the hidden treasures of our universe.

Do you remember mornings when you were up before the sun contemplating the dawn? You will recall the hush, as if the world were holding its breath and straining to stand still. Then with a soundless roar light tumbles around you. Trees rustle and birds begin to sing, gently at first, then more loudly. Soon the distant thrum of civilization, cars, machines, voices, swells into an almost shocking density of noise, inundating the peace of the morning. Light and sound continue to swell far past the point where you are sure they have reached their

maximum, their intensity almost painful. You must shut some of it out, it is too much. Reengaging your everyday mind, you rise and return to your life.

If you have done such a thing you know how noisy and distracting the day's background really is. This is one reason I love the night so much. I feel sorry for the millions of people who, out of fear of the dark or merely convention, shut themselves up in their houses every night. Outside, when the light has faded away and most creatures are asleep, Mother Nature is waiting to embrace anyone who will come to her. The music I most recommend is the soul music played as a dialogue between your heart and the world; it sings most loudly in the dark. Have no fear to step beyond the glare of light, leave the torch shut off, go into the womb of the night. The narrow beam of a torch will draw your awareness down to a pinpoint, so use it only for safety, as little as possible. When you are surrounded by darkness your more subtle senses and instincts come to the fore. Each of us has a guidance system that usually only blind people use, but it is easy to develop. And without effort the world of quiet sounds opens up to you. As a gust of wind approaches, you hear it far off tickling the trees, follow its motion across the fields, know the moment it will strike you with a gentle buffet of sound. That distant fairy music: it is the plashing of a tiny stream that during the day is unnoticed, now its sound carries for a hundred meters. On the next hill a dog barks. Then her friend at the neighboring farm chimes in, followed by one way, way beyond. They are passing the news now that the air is so much freer of noise. Again the wind. It is the voice of the night whispering to you from every leaf and branch, and it becomes a wonderful confidant who joins you on every excursion. The importance of sound notwithstanding, the moon with its cycling face bedaubed with luminous clouds, the dancing planets so near in the scheme of things, stars in anthropomorphic constellations, even occasional galaxies and shooting stars, are a visual feast that it is a shame to ignore.

Whatever the sensory excitement of the night, it is so easy to experience the uplifting of the spirit when we abandon our exteriorized persona to listen and feel in the darkness. Black air enshrouds and embraces you just like a Mother gathering you in, and your heart expands in all directions to meet it. Your meditation is screened off from the world without the need to be closeted away behind closed doors. Seeking the center of the mandala of sound we have gone deeply into the quietude, cycling toward the midpoint of the true silence of the void. If we can establish a bipolar relation with this point of neutrality, perhaps we will be invited in.

Although I commend the actual night, it is the symbolic version which is the door to the harmony of union. We must dispense with the busyness of the wakeful world of daytime and close our exteriorizing mind off from its ten thousand attractions to plunge into the spiritual night where we can contemplate the Absolute. Whether or not anyone still remembers why, most religions make this point early in their cosmologies. The ancient Greeks are an excellent example. Out of the original Void, called Chaos, came Erebus (primeval darkness) and Nyx (night). Their mating produces Aether, the most subtle of the physical elements, symbolized by sound, and Hemera, day. Chaos' only other direct offspring is Gaea, Mother Earth, symbolizing consciousness.

In the Judeo-Christian cosmology, we well remember how the Earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep before God said Let there be light. All these traditions are giving the same mandalic message: if one seeks equipoise or truth, one must travel inwards from loudness to softness and from softness to stillness. There are many such paths, and one of the most beautiful is through the music of sounds. No better way of putting it has ever been than the Gita's verse 69 of Chapter Two: What is night for all creatures, the one of self-control keeps awake therein; where-in all creatures are wakeful, that is night for the sage-recluse who sees. Aum. ♦

Narayana Gurukula Book Reviews



The Search for a Norm in Western Thought by Nataraja Guru.
Mangala Press, Varkala, India, 1986.

As it emerged from the theological dogma of the Middle Ages, western philosophy inherited the unresolved paradox that lay at the core of Greek tragedy, where the twin worlds of immanence and transcendence find themselves tantalizingly close yet never meshed. Greek drama gave voice to the problem: the alternately dynamic and faltering footsteps of humankind are out of synchronicity with the divine rhythm that gives them sustenance. Plato and his rebellious student Aristotle spoke this conflict most clearly in the world of philosophical discourse. And though their voices were muffled for many centuries by the Church the argument was reawakened by the European Renaissance. The dialogue then was no longer phrased by choruses or defined by the ethos of tragedy. Rationality took the lead and the paradox was seen in the pull between *a priori* and *a posteriori*.

On this stage of conflict, Nataraja Guru begins to trace the search for the certitude that has underlain the various philosophical schools. As a philosopher himself, Nataraja Guru is well-versed in the different arguments as well as familiar with their historical backgrounds. His study begins with the nascent independence of scepticism that occurred following the decline of theological authority over philosophical speculation. Though liberating initially, scepticism had its own limitations - it cast its "lengthening shadow" and Nataraja Guru examines how its definitions helped to determine the scope of inquiry in the West, what metho-

dologies and axiologies were encouraged and which ones shunted aside. From the beginning note of scepticism grew the two major themes of idealism and rationalism. Nataraja Guru explores these developments and the specific ideas raised by Hume, Berkeley, Descartes, Leibnitz, through to Kant, Eddington and Bergson. As he does so, he continuously brings the focus back to the central problem that each philosopher is trying to elucidate: on what ground do we stand? The core paradox, centered around the duality of this world and That, still remains (even if unacknowledged) and what Nataraja Guru does in this book is show how each philosopher's work is an attempt to resolve the contradictions implicit in this paradox and to create a ground of certitude.

To establish certitude there has to be a framework within which to work, and this framework is erected on the norm that Nataraja Guru refers to in his title. It is not a norm of averages or standard behavior but a foundation that functions as a central reference point of understanding and clarity. The norm is both the meeting ground of different aspects of a given situation and the guide or rule by which these aspects are judged and regulated. To know the norm in each philosopher's thought it is necessary to examine his assumptions and implications as well as his stated theses. This is the course Nataraja Guru follows throughout this book. What he elucidates is the reference that each of these particular norms has to an absolute norm and how each particular certitude is a description of one aspect of the Absolute. For Hume this norm was Human Understanding, for Hegel it was the Idea, for Bergson it was intuition, and for Plato and Aristotle it was mind and time together.

Before he takes us through the step-by-step development of this study, though, Nataraja Guru knows that we as contemporary readers must come to terms with the words themselves. Both 'Absolute' and 'Absolute Norm' are suspect concepts to the modern mind, implying a closed philosophical system. It is one of those ironies of history that what actually denotes the most inclusive framework comes instead to be considered as a narrow philosophical attitude. This mistake has been made for a variety of reasons, the most significant of which is the placement of the Absolute in company with many other competing schools of thought, each vying for position and authority. The Absolute that Nataraja Guru reveals in this work is not a relativistic competitor. It is a ground of reference where particular possibilities find relation and complementarity. And this is where the original paradox of immanence and transcendence is resolved. The paradox exists because its opposing sides are in fact related, they are each other's complements. When the two aspects are seen separately, as divorced entities, we find ourselves in the well-known dilemma of modern philosophy: conflict adrift in a sea of doubt. But when the Absolute is seen as the ground where these polarities meet and give meaning to one another, then synthesis can take place. As Nataraja Guru himself writes, there is a "subtle reciprocity and mutual interdependence" between the specific constituents of the Absolute when seen in proper relation and position.

The key that Nataraja Guru uses to clarify the individual philosopher's partial understandings is structural analysis. Rather than taking each idea separately, he is able to place them in a coherent pattern of development and relationship. One of Nataraja Guru's strengths is his grounding in two different systems of structural analysis. The first is the precise structuralism of modern mathematical thought. The definitions and positional placings of algebra and calculus, and the further subtleties of modern physics, are all employed by Nataraja Guru to trace the inner logic of

philosophical argument. Supporting this mathematical structuralism is the more archaic one that underlies traditional Indian philosophy and esoteric literature. In this structuralism, logic finds a key role, but so do intuition and metaphor. Nataraja Guru's skill is that he is able to wed these two structural approaches into a cohesive pattern.

A metaphoric description of the Absolute Norm that is elucidated in this book is given in the *Māhābhārata* in the story of the brahmin who needs water. Traditionally each family had its own well from which it drew its water. A flood occurred and all the wells were submerged in one expanse of water. Yet the brahmin, unable to accept the totality of water stretching in every direction, would paddle his canoe out to his own well and drop his bucket down into his well to draw up "his" water. In this series of essays, *The Search for a Norm in Western Thought*, which originally appeared in the magazine *Values*, Nataraja Guru uses a firm academic analysis to put us in the position where we can make the intuitive leap beyond the restricting limits of "our" well and "our" water to the all-encompassing Absolute which inundates and relates all points.

Deborah Buchanan

Memorandum on World Government by Nataraja Guru and
Memorandum on Self-Government
 by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati.
 Mangala Press, Varkala, India, 1986.

For an excellent example of benevolent and efficient government one need look no further than one's own body. Countless cells and numerous organs are constantly performing a myriad of complex functions. The digestion of food, the regulation of body temperature, the replenishment and circulation of the blood, and the replacement and disposal of old cells, the preservation of synaptic patterns

enabling memory and habit to operate, and the autonomous blinking that lubricates the eyeballs are but a few examples. To accomplish this miracle of regulation no outside coercion is necessary. For the most part even disruptions within the natural harmonious functioning of components are dealt with naturally by the same inner system. From a subatomic particle to a galactic system, everywhere we find this same inner ruling principle at work maintaining order and maximizing creative evolution. It is in recognition of this wondrous and pervasive natural order that throughout history sayings have arisen such as, "Good government is no substitute for self-government," and "He or she who governs least governs best."

Somewhere our species has gone terribly astray. Our notions and forms of government have become so misguided that now the greatest atrocities are committed by the very governments which should be preserving the natural harmony and peace which resides at the heart of the "world order." We have not only become self-destructive as a species, but worse yet are like a cancer poisoning the earth's surface and threatening all life forms. Humankind has now arrived at a dire crossroads and stands uncertainly beneath a dark cloud of ignorance and alienation. Yet darkness has no substantial existence of its own. It is merely the absence of light. It is that light, referred to above as an inner factor, which is to be our only saving grace. If at all there is to be world peace, a cooperation of all parts for the good of the whole and an operation of the whole for the benefit of all parts, the way can only be lit by the light of understanding and compassion which resides within the heart and mind of each individual.

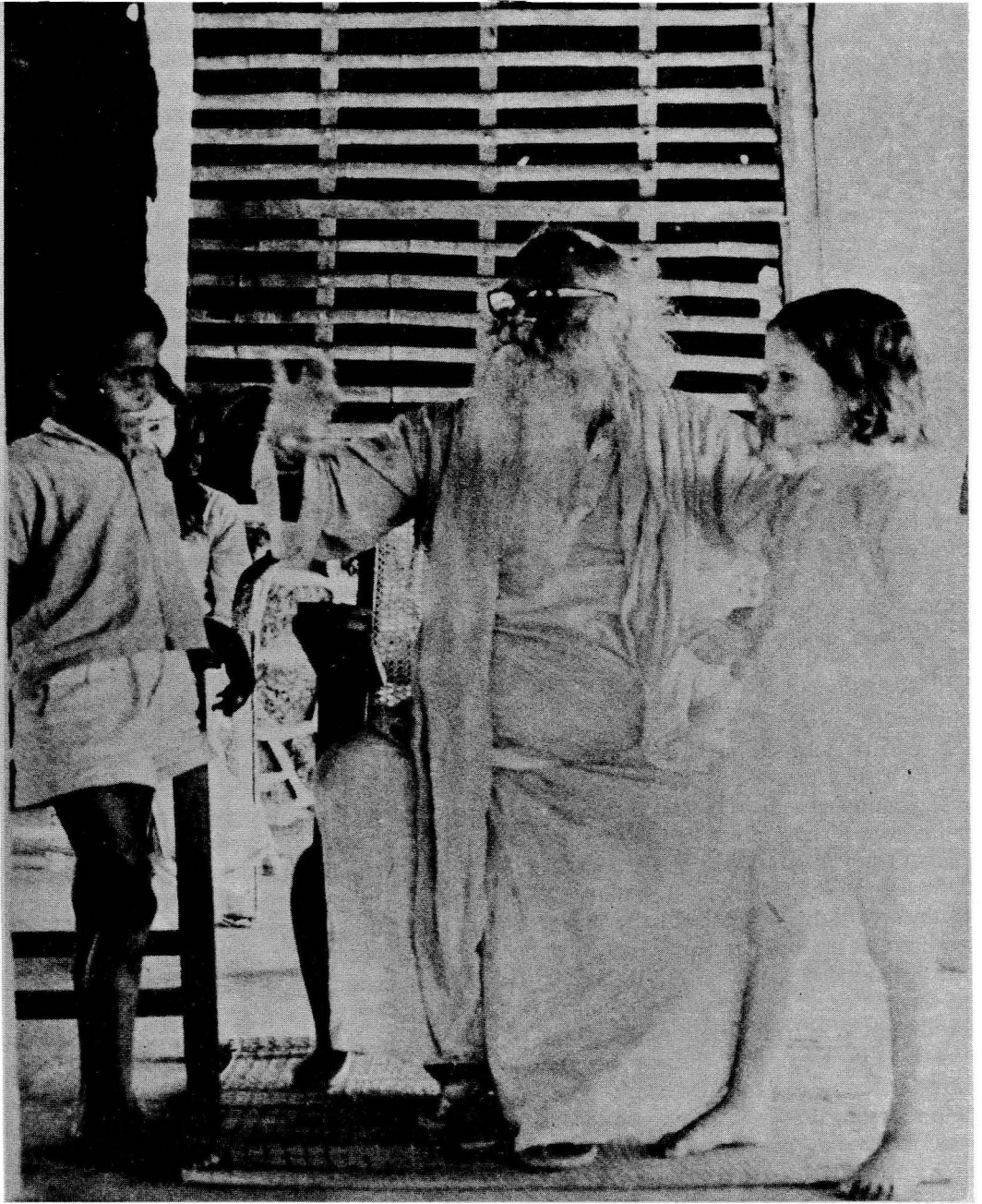
The two memoranda presented in this book are not so much blueprints as they are treasure maps. Their intention is not so much to direct as it is to indicate a certain source of clarity and power within the individual, each of whom can then become a model of self-government and identification with all. Like the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump,

the pinch of wisdom offered herein is intended to exert a subtle influence whereby, in the words of Nataraja Guru, "Order emerges as with magnetized iron filings from non-magnetized chaos."

A marvelous symmetry and complementarity exists between these two inspirational essays. In Nataraja Guru's *Memorandum on World Government*, through a discipline called geodialectics, one is led to see one's own self in the entire world; whereas in Guru Nitya's *Memorandum on Self-Government*, through an equally rigorous discipline of definitions and reflections, one is led to see the entire world in one's own self. In this manner these two essays strike a dramatic blow at the number one cause of both strife between people and degradation of the very environment which is our only life support. That "public enemy number one" is, quite simply, *alienation*, the feeling of separateness. If you can imagine the chaos and destruction that would ensue if the right hand refused to attend to the wounds of the left hand because it was "alien" or if the heart refused to pump blood to the stomach because it saw the stomach as "other," you get a picture of both the current state of degeneration in the world "body politic" as also of the implicit means for its correction.

These two timely memoranda are neither by nor for armchair philosophers. Their authors' entire lives are testimony to the possibility and impact of making these insights the cornerstones and guiding principles by which to live day by day. Now it is our turn. We cannot wait for a messiah or even realistically sit back and hope for a conversion on the part of the current set of so-called world leaders. The revolution demanded by these memoranda is the one referred to by the Buddha as "the turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness." It is there we must locate within ourselves the true seat of world government just as it is within the world at large that we must extend and exercise self-government.

Peter Oppenheimer



Nataraja Guru

The Philosophy of a Guru

by Nataraja Guru.

Mangala Press, Varkala, India, 1986.

The phrase, "the philosophy of a Guru," quite naturally calls to mind the wisdom which a teacher conveys to his or her students in person or in written philosophical texts and compositions. But if we remember the literal meaning of philosophy, "the love of wisdom," we get a much broader understanding, which especially applies in this case. It is difficult to read the word 'philosophy' without automatically picturing the dust clinging to old volumes or hundreds of pages filled with dull black print. But the word 'love' inevitably opens the door to the realm of feeling, of value-content, and we are drawn into the dynamism of interaction.

In this book, Nataraja Guru introduces us to one of the major philosophical compositions of Narayana Guru, *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, or One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction. Although it is based on *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, it presents a very different approach than that taken by Nataraja Guru in his commentary, previously published by Narayana Gurukula. Here, the verses of the composition are used to explicate the major principles of Narayana Guru's philosophy, as representative of the philosophy incorporated in the Guru-principle wherever it manifests. From the outset we are made aware of the inner experience of the Guru as an ardent lover who has become intimate with the realms of knowledge. There, the truths of science and the truths of mysticism come together, revealing the wonder which is ever-capable of generating the depth of interest and height of fulfillment known as the love of wisdom.

In this work, Nataraja Guru places the Guru's philosophy in the context of modern thought. Even a few pages reveal a scope of scientific and philosophic knowledge so vast that it can initially be dizzying. But, as he presents his topic step by step, dizziness is replaced with an upsurge of inner brightness and energy in the reader evoked by Nataraja Guru's clarity and steady enthusiasm. This is not the passion of a proselytizer nor the infatuation of a convert. Rather, it is the dynamics of the love of wisdom in action. For him, the word of the Guru is not a static entity, but a vibrant, living process which he invites and guides us to enter.

He shows us how that process resolves the doubts and paradoxes which have always plagued the eternally re-enacted human quest for meaning. As individuals, cultural groupings, religions, societies and nations, we have again and again confronted the antinomies of life. And today, humanity seems to have reached the peak of the possibility of destruction due to conflicting ideas and experiences. We are in urgent need of an approach which offers solid ground to those seeking to go beyond conflict without, at the same time, instituting totalitarian restraint. Throughout human history, lovers of wisdom have persistently sought after a guiding light and we have been blessed with many who have been successful, who merge with it and become radiant beams, lighting the way for others.

Here, Nataraja Guru very clearly and precisely outlines the fundamental principles of that search and attainment. He has thus presented us with a much needed road map which is accurate and well-defined and, at the same time, permeated with the joy of arrival.

Nancy Yeilding

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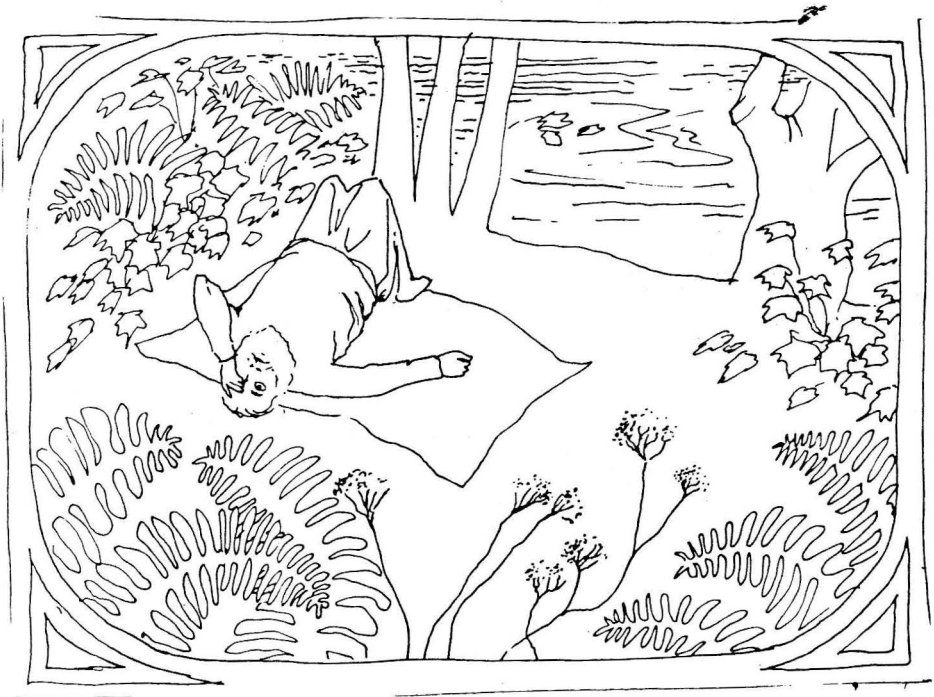
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