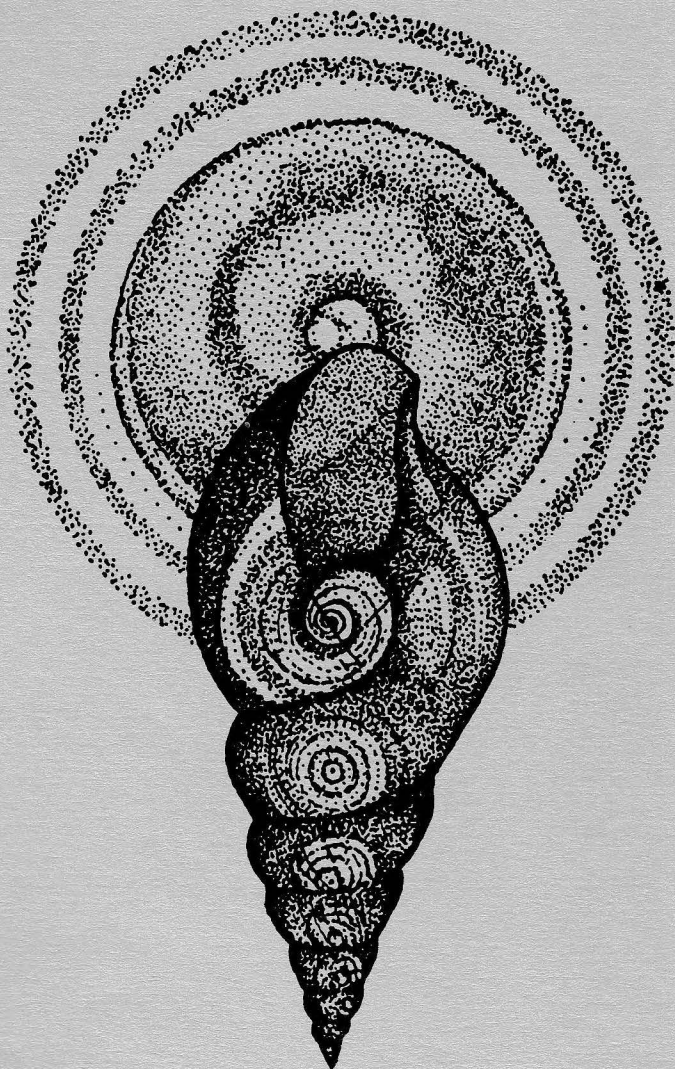
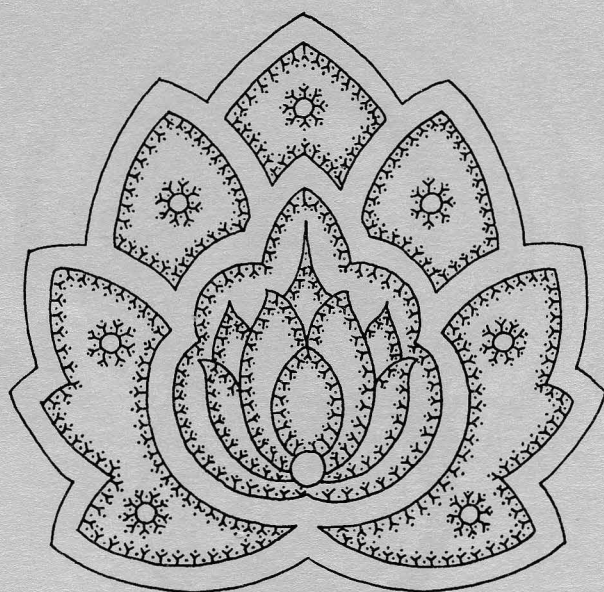


GURUKULAM

VOLUME V • 1989

SECOND QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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Cosmic Harmony

Reluctant to trade the beauty of a sunny Spring day for the lifeless world of desks in an artificially lit room, the students sat listlessly in geometry class. Few were paying much attention as the teacher announced that they were going to learn a theorem about triangles. Gazing longingly out the windows, they only half watched as he drew a right-angle triangle on the board, then marked the two sides next to the right angle as 'a' and 'b' and the third side as 'c'. Noticing their lack of interest he said, "Now, I realize this may seem to be boring stuff, especially when it is such a nice day outside, but the discovery of this relationship was very important to the development of mathematics as a tool for understanding the nature of the physical world. Geometry has played a key role in the development of science, and this is one of its basic tenets. Another way of looking at the situation is this: after I explain the theorem, you'll be expected to solve problems using it and eventually you'll be tested on them, so..."

By this time, most of the students had regretfully focused their attention on the board where he was now writing $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. "The Pythagorean theorem says that, for a triangle with a right angle, the square of one side plus the square of the other side will equal the square of the hypotenuse." One of the students asked, "What does 'pytha-gorean' mean?" The teacher replied, "The theorem is named after the man who first discovered it, Pythagoras. He was a philosopher in ancient Greece, around 500 years B.C."

Just then, the door of the classroom opened and three very oddly dressed people came in, two men and a woman. Their clothes were like simple robes loosely draped around them. The younger of the two men faced the class and said, "I am Aristaeus. I am honored to introduce my teacher to you, the renowned Pythagoras." When the older man smiled they

felt drawn to him despite his strange appearance. He said, "And this is my dear wife and student, Theano, a serious lover of wisdom, like myself." His demeanor somehow inspired respect, so no one interrupted him, but as soon as he finished speaking, several voices burst out, "What is this, some kind of a joke? Our teacher just told us Pythagoras lived in ancient Greece!" "Are you channeling?" "This is crazy!"

Their teacher was wondering if he should call the main office to report a disturbance or if this was an elaborate practical joke arranged by some of his friends. Something about the graceful way the three visitors stood there, unperturbed by the challenging questions, led him to decide that, whoever they were, they meant no harm. He, like the students, was intrigued to know more about them, so he invited them to have a seat.

The older man sat down and started to play on a stringed instrument he was carrying. The music was so soothing and engaging that everyone quieted down. He spoke gently. "Nature has many mysteries. Let's just say that we did live in ancient Greece and we are also with you here." Aristaeus said, "We came because we thought you would like to know more about what we taught and how we lived. Knowing that Pythagoras discovered a useful theorem tells you nothing about the way he approached Nature so that she revealed her secrets to him or how he dealt with other human beings so that they regarded him with reverence and created a dynamic school of thought which has influenced science and philosophy throughout history to the present."

Theano spoke then, "Pythagoras often played music to quiet people who were agitated. He even stopped an enraged man from committing murder to avenge his father by playing just the right tones to counteract his rage. He gained this ability by exploring the principles of harmony in the world."

"Maybe it was peaceful in ancient days, but our world is one of broken families, drugs, disasters and wars. What principles of harmony can be found in it?"

Pythagoras answered, "The same kind of unrest plagued those days too. I left my home and first school at Samos because of a terrible tyrant who ruled there. The various city-states were always fighting each other and they were rife with internal intrigues. When I went to Croton in southern Italy, I was warmly welcomed and asked to address the populace about improving married life. Our school flourished there for many years but the sentiments of the people changed and they turned against us, killing many of us and chasing the rest of us out of the country. Human beings can be really disturbed inside and in the ways they treat each other. We are seriously affected by what happens in our own homes as well as by what people are doing all over the world, but the universe is much more than that. There are universal principles of harmony which endure even when people are out of touch with them. The more we learn about them and tune ourselves to them, the more harmony we feel within ourselves and with other people."

One of the students who had been listening intently broke in, "I would sure like more harmony in my life, but what are these universal principles you are talking about? I've never seen anything about them on TV."

Pythagoras smiled gently, "Don't be confused by our big words. When we say that a principle is universal, that means it operates everywhere. So it has to be as simple as it is profound. I discovered a lot about the world by plucking a single string and listening to the sounds it made." Aristaeus held up the instrument he had been carrying. It had a single string mounted on a sounding box. Theano suggested that everyone gather around so they could see how the string vibrated when he plucked it. Pointing out that first the whole string vibrated, producing one tone, then the two halves vibrated

separately, producing another, slightly higher tone, then it vibrated in three and four parts, always with a slightly higher tone, she said, "These are the harmonic overtones."

When Aristaeus plucked the string again, then touched it just at the midpoint, then at the points between the thirds, etc., everyone heard the same sounds, more clearly, and could feel that all the sounds belonged with the first tone. Then he plucked the string and put his fingers down randomly, which caused the sound to go dead. Pythagoras said, "Just as many ways of behaving or looking at things are possible, the string can be touched at many different places. But harmonious sounds are produced only by touching the string where it naturally divides itself. Those sounds are harmonious with each other because they are in proportion: $1/2$, $1/3$, $1/4$, etc. The same principle can be seen in your life. Whether it is your diet or activities or relations with others, taking time to closely observe them will reveal that correct proportions give rise to harmony while incorrect ones produce discomfort, disease and disharmony. So the universal principles are not distant or strange. They are an intimate part of you. The more you get to know them, the happier and more peaceful you will be."

While Pythagoras was speaking, Aristaeus and Theano began playing music on their instruments which made the students feel like they were floating in space, part of a marvelous dance in which everything from particles to planets was moving in perfect coordination. Some time passed before they realized that the music had stopped and their visitors had disappeared. They looked at each other curiously, each wondering if they had dozed off during class, but afraid to lose the lingering sweetness by breaking the silence. So they sat quiet, smiling bemusedly, feeling sure that geometry class would never be quite the same again.

Nancy Yeilding

Svānubhavagīti Śatakam:
Experiential Aesthetics and
Imperiential Transcendence

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by
Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati



Verse 37

The sense of hearing and such faculties
descend from you
and graze among the world of pleasure objects.
Along with these come all other masquerading factors.
What a magical illusion is this!

When Śiva and Śakti act in unison, then alone does creation take place. Śakti is not outside Śiva. She is the creatress. The basic ingredients of this universe such as the monads of sound, touch, form, taste and smell are the magic wands of the creatress with which she is beautifying the three cities of the past, the present and the future; the objective, the subjective and the causal; above, middle and below.

If Śiva is Being, Śakti is Becoming. Being is homogeneous. Śakti is at once being and becoming. We may also say "the being that is tending to become." It is happening like magic. It is as if her nimble fingers are playing on the chords of the musician's nuances. From a humble grasshopper or cicada, hiding under a leaf or in the crevice of some bark, to the famous singers of the world, all are inspired to become part of a universal orchestration in which the air is filled with a musical melody. All ears turn to enjoy the magic of the sky reverberating in the middle ear of the listener.

Another wonder of the magician of creation is her polarizing power of attraction and repulsion. At the cosmic level the moons are glued to the planets and the planets to the stars. On the familiar home front a man and woman cling to each other in love and also periodically push each other away. Even more grand is the community game of the sun splitting its rays into all the varieties of the spectrum of colors that assign to every blade of grass, petal or flower, the sea and the sky, rocks and mud, such varieties of hues that are recognized by the eyes of the beholder as making a colorful world of exquisite beauty.

The addiction to life comes from still another bit of her magic. She is tastefully dishing out all items of enjoyment which no living being can resist. Finally she precipitates the love for continuity by providing that the fragrance of life be carried from each existential item for its regeneration in a future promise. This is done by making the fragrance (*vasana*) the most powerful dynamic of conditioning. Thus Śakti, residing in Śiva, enters into the multitudinous items of the miniature. This is incomprehensible.

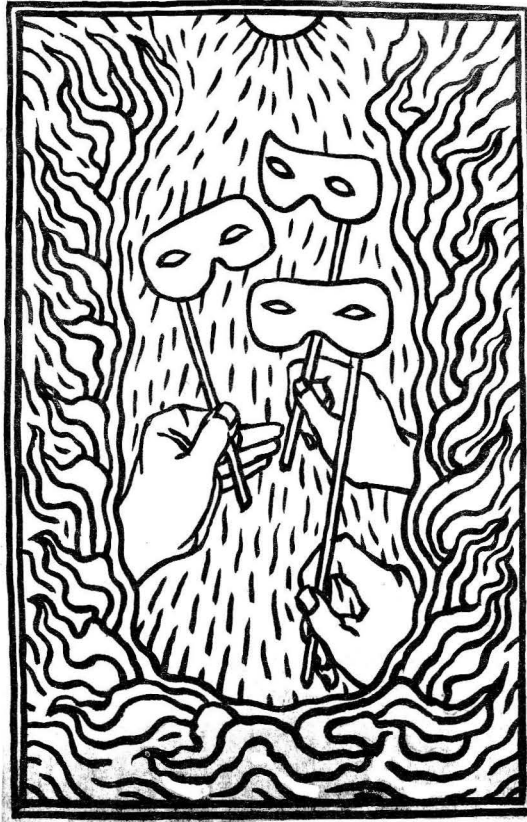
It looks as if the creatress is both responsible and irresponsible. The great songs that are sung are never preserved by her. In her sense of abundance a nightingale is only to make a small area of thicket resound with unparalleled melody. All the buds that have bloomed in the morning can be discarded in the evening as withered flowers. When such an attitude of irresponsibility and abandonment is shown on the surface, all care is taken to recapitulate all images of the world by depositing the essences into seeds so that everything which has disappeared can be called back. Thus there is total destruction and total restoration.

When all these elaborations are against the principle of Śiva's homogeneity, it is a wonder that the Lord does not intercept and foil the sportive creation of the Supreme Lady. Like Aristotle's unmoved mover Śiva looks on, and Śakti performs.

Verse 38

The hallucinatory dust will cease;
Oh Light of Transcendence, You are veiled
by the dust of finitude.

When the veil of finitude is lifted,
You will shine forth as pure light.
The smoke that ensues from that conflagration is also you.



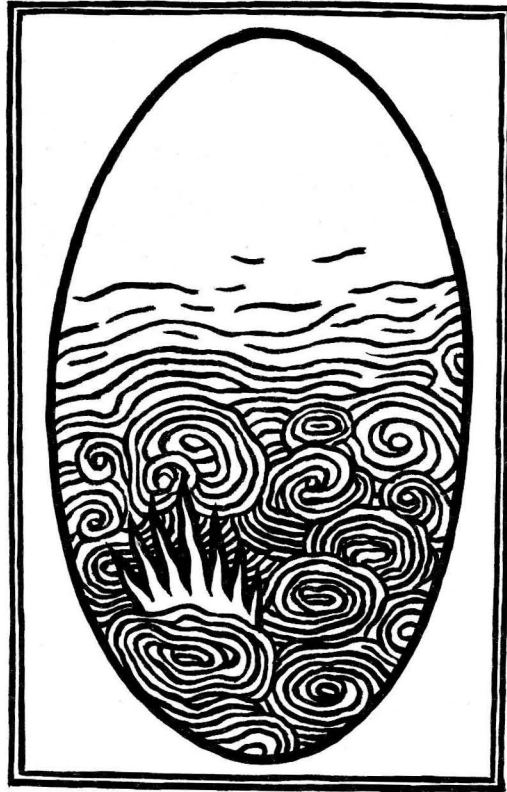
The veil of phenomenality is a cleverly designed masquerade with countless millions of tiny holes marked on differently shaped heads. These are the human eyes, the animal eyes, bird eyes, and the eyes of rodents and fish. The one eye that is looking through all these eyes allows each head to see all other forms except the Being that looks through that particular head. The seer takes a dramatic pleasure in denying the true self and proclaiming the multitudinous existence of the truly non-existent beings. Such is this fabulous arrangement.

Even in the same body the one life is perceiving itself and the so-called "other" with varying devices. Through the ear it hears, through the skin it touches, through the eye it sees, through the tongue it tastes, through the nose it smells and with the mind it comprehends. Are there separate perceivers behind all these devices? No, it is the same perceiver.

The single transcendent eye behind this hallucinatory vision automatically multiplies the visionary into a million forms of immanence. Like a dreamer creating out of the magic mirror of his own self hills and dales, cities and forests, all kinds of comely and wierd beings and projecting dramas after dramas, You, the one meaning of all meanings, take pleasure in creating a world where only You are. You thereby make us all false witnesses of this passing show of Your masqueraded joke. With pretentious particles You generate gases and liquids and sol-

ids and enwrap Yourself with them.

One day when You, in Your infinite mercy, allow us to see the real state through Your third eye, then what would we see but the infinitude with no form, no body, no name? But in that smokeless fire of realization, can this little device of a human organism hold on to its physical reality without smothering and disappearing as smoke from the cremation of the phenomenal? Oh Matchless Magician, who can adequately describe all the jokes You are into?



Verse 39

Oh Smoke, Oh Dust, Oh Outside, Oh Inside,
Oh Rain that fills the external, Oh Immanence,
Oh Transcendence, Oh the All-linking Mid-reality,
be compassionate, make us happy from inside.

Verse 40

Without inside and outside You are shining forth
as the all-filling plenum.
In your all-comprehending eye
the grand show of this universe is but smoke.
You even think of it as a vengeful veiling of the real.

The smoldering smoke of the volcano is a deceptive fire which projects the worst negativity of the all-consuming brilliance. When firewood is ignited, before the flames leap up the sky is filled with dark or white smoke. In the Upanishads the smoke of variegation is called *sudhūmra varna*. It is said to be one of the seven tongues of fire. The others are *kali*, the fire that issues forth with thick dark smoke; *karala*, the fire that burns like an all-devouring monster; *manōjava*, the speed with which the light travels; *visvaruchi*, the cosmic taster; *sphulingīni*, the fire that bursts out into a million sparks; and finally *nilalōhita*, the blue-red flame which also means the essence of the spectrum. The smoke that is spoken of here is the alpha principle of fire. Śiva, the grand dissolver, shatters all cohesiveness.

When particles of smoke are a little further apart, it is treated as dust. Both smoke and dust are descriptions of extension. The two extreme points in extension are "here" (the inside factor) and "there" (the outside factor). "Here" is the most intense form of relationship, the immanent. The outer is "the receding" into which one transcends. The chasm between "here" and "there" is not left at the mercy of a vacuum. That is also filled with the Absolute. Hence Śiva is also the reality that separates.

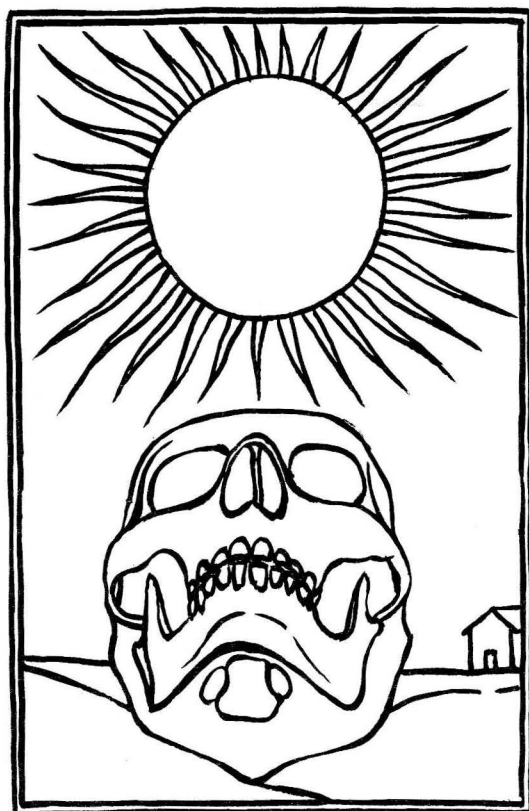
Such a vivifying catastrophe of diffusion can spell the most painful devastation of all. May that not happen. Have pity on us. Receive us into You to share undisturbed peace. Śiva is *śankara*. *Śam* means happiness. *Kara* means giver. *Śankara* means the giver of happiness.

There is an ambivalence in the polarization between Śiva and Śakti. Śiva is said to be adorned with the ashes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is affirmation. *Tamas* is negation. And *rajas* is confusion. These are the three principles with which Śakti functions. As Śiva is adorned with the ashes of the triple powers of the Mother, he is the insider. As Śiva is never affected by the real or the unreal, he is the transcendent.

There is a dichotomy in the assigned powers of Śiva and Śakti. It is for Śakti, the Mother, to fill in every niche with the multifarious designs of decorative beauty. A simple glance from the corner of Śiva's eyes renders all creation into vanishing smoke. This is the great yin and yang of the interplay that is going on forever, of alternating appearance and disappearance, of that which is and that which is not, that which is is too transparent to be seen, and that which is not is deceptively demonstrative. Hence the Qur'an proclaims, "If you have seen it, it is not Allah."

Verse 41

Oh how butter melts away. Even so, Oh Lion Man,
 You are sure to do away with the phenomenal
 which you do not favor.
 As you have done in the past, the present also,
 You will turn into ashes in the flames
 you wield with resolution.



Seeds lying in the granary will remain the same for a long time. If one falls on wet ground, the life sleeping within the seed will wake up. Bursting its outer cover, the sprout will come out to begin its purposive life on earth. Similarly if a chicken egg is incubated, in twenty one days the egg shell will break, and a small chick will come out. A similar incubation happens to the sperm that is entering into the ovum of a female womb. In hundreds of thousands of life forms on earth, a very elaborate process nurtures the very many species we see and leads them through the various stages of maturation.

The transformation that happens for an embryo to become a fetus and for a fetus to become a fully grown child may look like a simple event. But volumes can be written on the development of each limb and each vital part of a body as it evolves from its embryonic stage to its maturity. If we look at any one single organ like the eye or the hand, its creation is like the manufacturing of a high quality machine unattended by any human resource. Day and night an ongoing organization is carried out with the right channeling of electrical impulses, the consolidation of bio-chemicals, and the expertise of designing every bit of the physical organism that is then interrelated and coordinated with the whole to last for the appropriate functioning of a body and mind throughout a period of almost one hundred years.

One look at our own bodies will fill us with the awe of seeing all the ingenuity that is put into our systems. Hair that grows on our heads, the strong skulls in which our brains are safely encased, appropriate apparatuses to see, hear, touch, taste and smell, devices to send commands to the limbs, the symmetrical arrangement of the two hands, the formation of five fingers, the tip of each of which is protected with nails, the flexibility with which wrists and elbows are made - any

part of the body can be seen as the product of great engineering skill, as if the generator of the body has full knowledge of how a person is going to use each part of his or her body for the accomplishment of the purpose of his or her life.

In course of time the skin with which the entire body is wrapped begins to become rough and contracts, itches and becomes painful. Various parasites enter into the body undetected and gnaw their way into the vitals and weaken the strength of the body. Soon the body becomes like a colony of such parasites. The marrow of the bones decreases. The tissues of the lungs become filled with mucus, and various kinds of bronchial diseases set in. Salts and alkalines become like rocks in the urinary bladder or kidney or gall bladder. If you enumerate all the diseases which one person gets during a lifetime, that will not constitute even one percent of all the diseases which humanity gets. Most people have multiple diseases. Hospitals are on the increase everywhere. That does not mitigate the scourge of diseases. Thus all these life-forms which have come into existence with the careful manipulation of every cell in their bodies are undone by the same life principle which has built them up.

What a paradox is this -- the most compassionate God creates, and the same God, like a veritable enemy, tortures, mutilates and kills without any regret. Recipes which were relished at one stage in life are later looked upon as poisonous and the cause of killer diseases. Every item of pleasure that was taken for granted turns around and like an ungrateful betrayer demands its price. All the actions in which we have prided ourselves and all the enjoyments for the securing of which we have sacrificed everything turn out to be the gateway to the scourges of disease and death. The money accumulated by years of toil is to be spent to pay medical bills. The great ideals for which one has lived the major part of ones life look illusory and worthless as one lays on ones bed in bitterness and frustration, waiting for death.

One who has supported many and befriended all, when crippled with disease and old age, is forsaken without anyone to care. One day, after the escaping of one final breath from the lungs which were working like a bellow for several decades, others will cast the body away as a filthy mass to be buried or cremated before it starts stinking. With what care and fond affection this body was pampered with tonics and vitamins and kept fit through exercise and balanced dieting. All this was useful for a short while. There is no time to ponder over all the vanities that were lavished upon this body. It is to be hurriedly sent for its disposal.

The ears which have listened to the finest songs, the eyes which have been fed with ever so many exquisite forms of beauty, the mouth that has lavished kisses upon others and received love in return -- all these are burning in the cremation pyre. Oh God why did you take so much pain to make every bit of it so beautiful, and why do you now so heartlessly burn it into ashes? The drama is over, and all that has gone into the sky is a curling wisp of smoke, and what is left on earth is this handful of ashes. Why do you make such a terrible waste? Has beauty no value in your eyes? Oh God, tell me for sure, are you our friend or are you our enemy? These questions will never be answered.

(Continued in next issue.)

Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

XX

*Smaller than the smallest and
greater than the greatest,
the Self dwells in the heart
of every creature.*

*One who is not bound by
obligatory acts and freed
from suffering sees the glory
of this Self by the grace of
the all-sustaining one.*

Mantras sixteen through nineteen gave a succinct presentation of the nature of the Self as symbolized by the monosyllable AUM. The next three mantras show the paradoxes one necessarily faces when trying to grasp its meaning with the help of ordinary ratiocination. The present mantra indicates that the real nature of the Self is not to be understood by logical reasoning. However, it reveals itself to one who is not bound by obligatory rituals, which always have desires at their back. The revelation comes through the grace of the all-sustaining One, which is none other than the Self or the *īśvara*.

Logical reasoning requires something to be reasoned on by a subject. Here, the subject or the Self itself is the object of knowledge, so there is no objective knowledge as such. Instead, Self-awareness is an experience of the merging of the subject and the object in the non-

dual stuff of consciousness. This is not an intellectual conviction, but an interior vision. This vision is called *darsana* in Sanskrit, which can be translated as "philosophy". That philosophical visualization is here preferred to logical reasoning is indicated by the word *paśyati* (is seen). Such a visualization transcends the paradox natural to logical reasoning.

It is usual to specify the size of something in the attempt to understand it quantitatively. Such a way of understanding is normal with logical reasoning. But to say that the Self is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest is a contradictory statement. The size of an object is determined to be small or big by comparing it with the size of other objects. Absence of comparable objects makes it impossible to determine an object's smallness or bigness. No object is big or small by itself, bigness or smallness being a relative notion, and only objects with common features can be compared. The Self, or Knowledge pure and simple, is so unique that it has nothing in common with anything. Determination of size is irrelevant in understanding the nature of the Self. Or, if we have to state the nature of the Self in quantitative terms, we can demonstrate the meaninglessness of quantifying it by saying that it is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest.

Even when we think that the Self is very subtle we are aware that knowledge or consciousness is all-inclusively expansive. Those who visualize consciousness itself as the Self see the indivisibility of the holistic Self. If we close our ey-

es and try to grasp the scope of our awareness, we realize that our consciousness has no limitation. If there could be something outside the scope of awareness, that would not be knowledge. Rather it would be non-knowledge. Even knowing that it is non-knowledge is knowledge. In short, nothing can be outside the amplitude of knowledge. It can have no inside or outside. This conviction is not reached through ordinary reasoning. A contemplative outlook or rather "inlook" is needed for this to become crystal clear. All these are implicit in the Upanisadic words *mahāto mahīyan* (greater than the greatest).

Everyone experiences the Self as their individuated soul. If we ask where this soul is seated, we would be at a loss, even though poetically we could say it is seated in the heart. We are not able to say definitely whether the soul is seated in the body or the body in the soul. Still, we experience it as the incessant spurting of the stream of consciousness. That is why Narayana Guru defined the Self as, "That which knows, seated in the dark." The seat of the Self is allegorically mentioned here as a cave (*guha*).

The hoary Indian culture and the growth of the teachings of the Upanisads are rooted in Vedism. Ritualistic fire-sacrifice is the main tool of Vedic injunctions. These rituals are performed with worldly and other-worldly gains as the end in view. Those who are spellbound by desires are called *kāmāhātas* (those who are hurt by desires) in the Upanisads. They never feel satisfied in life. Life becomes a continuous experience of satisfaction only for those who have no desires and are satisfied with whatever is gained by chance. They are freed from the trap of relative actions and results and live in the world of absolutist wisdom. The wisdom of the Self presented here is the consummation of this understanding. Such knowers of the Self always live free from the obligation of rituals.

Such wisdom is not attained by everyone. A yearning to discriminate the

Self from the non-Self occurs very rarely in rare individuals. This element of chance is the sustaining principle (*dhāta*) not only of wisdom but of the entire universe as well. So this *dhāta* is also called *īśvara* (the all-governing principle) which the wise one visualizes as the stuff of the Self as also of everything.

So the chance element which affects wisdom could be considered as the grace of the dhata or the all-sustaining God.

According to the Indian system of medical science, the body is constituted of seven elements which are called *dhātus*: fluids (*rasa*), blood (*rakta*), flesh (*mamsa*), fat (*medas*), bones (*asthi*), marrow (*majja*), and semen (*sukla*). A healthy body with a favorable combination of these seven components is essential for the sustained effort needed for the attainment of wisdom. Such a healthy condition of the body also could be considered as *dhātuprasāda* or grace.

XXI

*Sitting still, it moves afar.
Lying down, it goes everywhere. Who, save myself, is fit to know that effulgent Being who rejoices and rejoices not?*

This mantra shows more aspects of the paradox inherent in the Absolute or the Self. It is not a logically coherent statement to say that something is sitting still while moving far away. We always experience the fixed existence of the Self.

But at the same time it is conscious of objects which are spatially and temporally distant. In other words, knowledge is capable of reaching anywhere while being fixed at a point. Philosophically speaking, "here" and "there" are spatial notions and "now" and "then" are temporal notions. Space and time are only two axes of a frame of reference devised by knowledge to aid in comprehending the se-

quence of events in life. The vertical relation of events results in time-consciousness and their horizontal relation results in space-consciousness. Stated conversely, it is consciousness itself that is experienced as time-consciousness and space-consciousness and also as the opposing notions of "here" and "there" and "now" and "then". Thus our ordinary experience and philosophical speculation testify to the statements, "Sitting still, He moves far away. Lying down, He goes everywhere."

Every living being craves for happiness. But no one experiences happiness as pure enjoyment. Joy and suffering alternate in life. There is a value notion which measures and evaluates one experience as bringing joy, another as causing suffering, and still another as causing indifference. This value-consciousness itself is neither joy nor suffering nor indifference. It causes all these experiences and it transcends all of them. A wise one

(*jñānin*) always sees this witnessing value-consciousness, which is nothing but the *ananda* aspect of the Self, in all the joys and sufferings of life. This cools down our affectivity and makes life an incessant experience of happiness which is beyond joy and suffering, or which is joy and suffering at the same time. In other words, knowledge sees its own self-effulgence in the experience of joy and suffering. All this is envisioned in the words *madāmadam devam* (the effulgent Being who rejoices and rejoices not).

This knowledge is not to be sought out from somewhere else, as it is the content of the seeker himself. Hence it is asked, "Who is fit to know that as apart from myself?" The words could also mean, "Who, other than myself, is fit to know it?" Both senses enshrine the vision of the Self to be known as the knower itself.

(Continued in next issue.)



The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patañjali's *Yoga Śāstra*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sutra II:1

*tapah svādhyāyēśvara
pranīdhānāni kriyā yogah*

tapah: self-purification
svādhyāya: self-study
īśvarapranīdhāna: and continuous
contemplation on *īśvara*
kriyā: action, practical
yogah: yoga

Self-purification, self-study and continuous contemplation on *īśvara* constitute practical yoga.

When a desire comes to our minds, it is immediately followed by a question: "Is it possible to fulfill that desire?" If it is possible, we get the answer, "It is attainable." Attainment in Sanskrit is *siddhi*. The attainability of what is desired resides in its means. The means for attainment is called *sādhana*. The person who endeavors to exploit the means of attainment is a *sādhaka*. The action or discipline that is implemented to actualize the attainment is *sādhana*. Thus, the possibility, means to be exploited, the aspirant who acts, the discipline or procedure of action, and attainment are five inter-related factors.

The second section of the aphorisms is called *kriyā yoga*. In that, the word *kriyā* comes from the root *kṛ*, which means to act. The aspiring student is expected to adopt three steps in his action program. They are *tapas*, (burning away

of negative factors which hinder ones spiritual progress), *svādhyāya* (engaging in a thorough-going study of oneself), and *īśvara pranīdhāna* (entering into attunement or at-one-ment with the nature of ones higher Self, *īśvara*).

Tapas is a purificatory function. The biologic matrix to which our sensory and motor systems belong and the inner dispositions of the individual's personality are impressed with various negative conditionings. To purify gold, it is melted at a high temperature which burns away the dross. Although the literal meaning of *tapas* is burning, it is to be taken in a metaphorical sense. A colored state can be decolored, a conditioned state can be deconditioned.

A preceptor who has an insight into his disciple's personality flaws can expose him or her to situations which can change old habits; in their place new and harmonious functions can be instituted as habitual choices. The culturing process of life as a whole is painful. That pain is often experienced as something similar to a conflict or neurosis. In the present case, already existing pathological states are therapeutically corrected and the system as a whole is morally and spiritually replenished and nourished so one can live a well-examined life with values which are spiritually homogenized. When such corrections are made in body and mind the cogitating faculty becomes more efficient and its power of comprehension becomes clearer. Precision increases.

When ones own nature is becoming

more and more evident to oneself, the imperfections of the social person will become more and more clear. In its place *īśvara*, that is, the universal person not afflicted with the love/hate dualities of physico-social life, will be accepted by the aspirant as a better model for imitation or identification.

The word *īśvara* is derived from *īś*, which literally means ruling from within. The life of an individual is not an amorphous chaotic structure that comes from the randomness of the physical world. It has a goal to achieve and laws to abide by. The innate law of everything that governs, controls and maneuvers it to function for the purposeful attainment of a given goal is *īśvara*. If one knows there is such a guiding principle in his or her life, life becomes all the more dear and an incentive comes to live as correctly as possible. Thereafter, the lower aspect of the self will always be in resonance with *īśvara*, the higher Self. That *īśvara* is looked upon as ones true teacher or preceptor. Relating always with that *īśvara* to develop insight into the meaning of ones life combines both the purificatory and educative aspects. This chapter is specially dedicated to giving a functional understanding of ones physical, social, moral and spiritual dimensions so that a four-fold harmony can be established to perfect ones discipline as a yogi.

According to Vyasa, the unitive mind described in the first part of the aphorisms of Patanjali is given here as the goal to be attained by adopting the discipline of *kriyā yoga*. A man who has lived for a long time with an undisciplined mind, allowing himself to be conditioned with indiscriminate social habits, cannot easily wean himself from his established habits. Such a person may see that the aloneness postulated by Patañjali's yoga cannot be easily attained. To make the discipline yield the desired result, the method suggested here is of a three-fold nature as already mentioned above: purification, self-study, and continuous contemplation of *īśvara*, the supreme model.

Inner impurities and spiritual absorption cannot go together. Diehard habits are the breeding ground of spiritual obstacles. If a seed is allowed to grow, in course of time, the stem of the plant will branch off and bring forth leaves, flowers and seeds which belong to that particular species. In the same manner, each individual has many innate tendencies which can sprout. Hence, on the one side, new negative tendencies should not be encouraged to implant themselves in ones personality formation and those which are already established, like parasites, are to be rooted out meticulously.

Just as we observe the world with our five senses and eradicate our wrong notions about things in our ordinary studies, we can adopt another field for study with another methodology. The field chosen here is ones inner life which is to be examined in the light of ones preceptor's direction and the science of unitive life recommended by authentic books like the Upaniṣads and *Yoga Śāstra*. Further, precise understanding is to be established about ones own self by making ones words, thoughts, and actions concur with each other. The preceptor spoken of here is not a social person but the innate light of ones own self and its voice. To begin with it is to ones advantage that an experienced person explains how to familiarize oneself with the voice of the spirit. For this, see our commentary on verse eight of Narayana Guru's *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, in *Neither This Nor That, But AUM*.

Sutra II: 2

*samādhi bhāvanārthaḥ kleśa
tanūkaranārthaś ca*

samādhi: absorption
bhāvana: bringing about
ārthaḥ: for the purpose of
kleśa: afflictions
tanū karanārthaḥ: for attenuating
ca: and

For the purpose of bringing about absorption and attenuating afflictions.

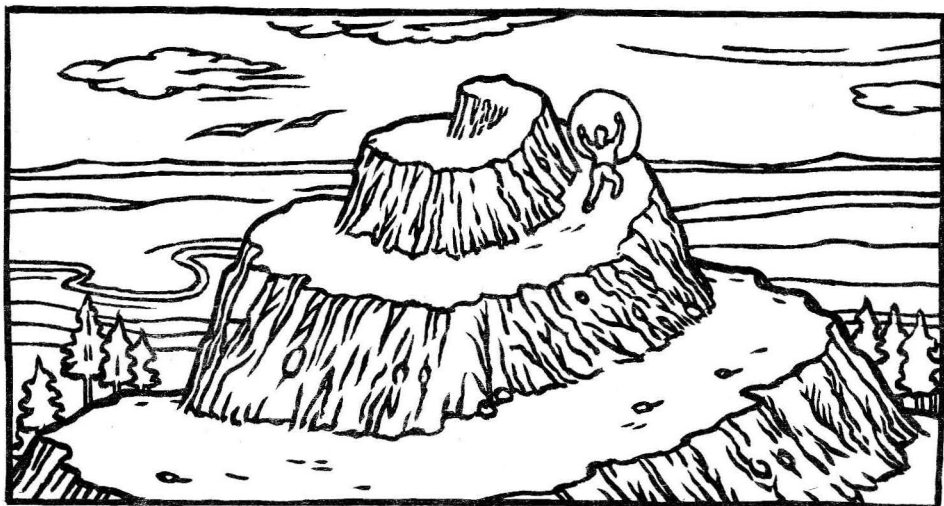
In the Bhagavad Gita yoga is described as sameness. The natural state of water is to be a pure and clear liquid with a surface like a sheet of glass. But a certain property of water makes its molecules very unstable and its surface is mostly uneven with tremors, ripples or waves. Our consciousness is also like that. It is easily provoked and thus loses its transparency as well as restfulness.

Both Eastern and Western people have classical examples to illustrate the restlessness and cyclic function of the mind. The Greeks have the legend of Sisyphus and the Indians have the story of Naranatubhrrantan. As a punishment Sisyphus was condemned to roll a stone up a hill, the stone always escaping him near the top and rolling to the bottom. No one punished Naranatubhrrantan; he was pushing the boulder just for the fun of it. For Sisyphus it was very painful; to Naranatubhrrantan it was a sport. The summit of the hill is the symbol of victory, while the valley represents failure. Unlike Sisyphus, Naranatubhrrantan was a philosopher. He wanted to illustrate how difficult it is to ascend to the summit and how easy it is to fall to disaster. So, after painfully pushing the huge stone to the summit, he would let it roll down the hill. Then he would clap his hands and laugh hilariously to draw the attention of people to the fact that lazy bums are bound to fall, just like the stone.

Trying to reach the summit has three stages. First is *tapas*, exerting oneself physically and mentally. The second is understanding ones own resources and applying ones abilities to the best advantage. That comes under *svādhyaṃya*. The third is fixing ones goal on the summit and attacking the problem by getting into a constant dialogue with the Absolute, *īśvara prañidhāna*. When these three disciplines go hand in hand, you are disciplining yourself with *kriyā yoga*.

It is easy to imagine. It is a little more difficult to explain to another what you see in your imagination. It is even more difficult to act according to your word. That is why action is given primacy in the self-discipline that is recommended: *kriyā yoga*. *Kriyā yoga* has a positive goal. It also has a negative goal. The positive goal is to bring yourself into a state of equipoise and imperientially obtain absorption. When mind is not disturbed by conditioned states, absorption naturally comes.

Physically and mentally we experience many distractions. Take the organs of action for example. Some people cannot articulate words the way they should be articulated. Some people irritate others as soon as they open their mouths. We see some people using their hands with great dexterity to paint, sculpt, or play musical instruments, while others have very little coordination between their



eyes and hands. They fail to create anything. There are great gymnasts who can run or perform acrobatic feats, and some people cannot even stand on their two legs. While most people have control over their excretory organs, some are like leaking bottles. Every person is supposed to increase the species, but, unfortunately, some are impotent. Like that, in the sense organs also, many diseases can come such as being hard of hearing, insensitive to touch, blind, unable to taste or smell. How many precious lives are lost in the pathological world. To retrieve those lives from their tragic situations and make them whole we need healing and therapeutic measures. At least for some people, *kriyā yoga* is of no significance until they are restored to normalcy. The secondary goal of *kriyā yoga* is therefore to adopt ways and means for healing and correction.

Sutra II:3

*avidyāsmitā rāga dveṣa
abhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ*

avidyā: ignorance
asmita: egoism
raga: attachment
dveṣa: hatred
abhiniveśa: lust for life
kleśāḥ: the afflictions

The afflictions are ignorance, egoism, attachment, hatred and lust for life.

The Absolute as an idea is conceived of as the Supreme Truth, one without a second and unconditional. As just a statement, this has only a rhetorical significance. As individuals, our attempt is to experience the Absolute within the limitation of a living organism in which everything becomes conditional as soon as we try to comprehend it with our minds or senses. A person is separated from the external world by the skin that is wrapped around his or her body. The skin is our sense organ of touch. So if anything regis-

ters its presence through the sensation of touch, we treat that stimulus as external to us. The corresponding sensation is felt as an inside factor. All such sensations and accompanying judgements have a direct and immediate reference to the individual's central locus of consciousness which he recognizes as "I am." When that I-consciousness relates itself to an external source of stimulus, three kinds of responses arise from ones ego or I-consciousness. They are: like, dislike, and the volition to control the stimulus that is creating like or dislike. These are all caused by a veiling principle which obstructs one from knowing reality as it is in itself.

From the first and second sutras we presume that our origin is the Supreme. We are compulsively shorn from that and come to identify with the psychophysical organism. Consequently we think of ourselves only as members of a society, all conditioned alike, with the physico-chemical and physiological properties of a living body. Thus we are subjected to two misfortunes. One is our ignorance of our true Self. Second is identification with many conditional states. In the next sutra we will make an analysis of the other obstacles.

Sutra II:4

*avidyā kṣetram uttareṣām
prasupta tanu vicchinodārāṇām*

avidyā: nescience,
ignorance of reality
kṣetram: field
uttareṣām: for the others
prasupta: dormant
tanu: attenuated
vicchinna: alternating
udārāṇām: expanded,
fully operative

Nescience is the field for the others, whether they are dormant, attenuated, alternating or expanded.

Nescience (*avidyā*) is like a breeding ground. Egoism, passionate attachment, hatred and infatuation grow in the field of nescience. Each of these afflictions has four states: dormant, attenuated, alternating and expanded. The dormant condition is that in which the obstacle is present in a latent form. It is like a seed waiting for a favorable environment to express itself. The attenuated condition is similar to a sprout coming out of the seed which has little strength to assert itself. It gets strengthened according to the stimulus it gets, gaining or losing momentum as the situation becomes more or less favorable. The alternating aspect is very much like ambivalence where two forces such as attraction and repulsion are alternately dormant and active. The fourth aspect is a fully operative stage where egoism, attachment, hatred and infatuation become fully assertive.

When a person is in deep sleep he does not know who he is or what he wants. He has no idea of his likes or dislikes. Others also do not get any visible signs of that person's inner state of being. Deep sleep manifests in a person only for a very short period. Mind easily slips away from deep sleep either to wakeful experience or dream experience. The dormant state of the four aspects of nescience can be compared to the state of deep sleep. All potentials of personality expressions are residing within and are only waiting for the individuated consciousness to enter into a more congenial atmosphere. When the inconscient state of deep sleep exists, the ego has no awareness and therefore cannot will to act. The ego is devoid of any experiential enjoyment. But when volition and affection are operative, the obstacles also come to the forefront and become a personality feature of the individual.

In *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, there is a story of a fisherman and a genie. The fisherman went to the sea and cast his net. When he pulled it in there was a jar in it. He thought it was a treasure but when he opened it, a genie came out and threatened to kill him.



Similarly, there are many dormant tendencies in us which are likely to bring the four kinds of obstacles. They are like genies in jars, waiting to get out. Each of the four obstacles has four stages, so there are sixteen possibilities of exposing ourselves to different obstacles.

In Western psychology it was Kurt Lewin who introduced topological psychology for the first time. Unfortunately, he died before he was able to give it a full exposition. He gave the following example to explain the dormant state of obstructive tendencies. Suppose there are two people who are great lovers or two who are inveterate enemies who happen to be in a place, both masked in an unidentifiable form. If they do not talk and only sit around, the presence of the lover or enemy will not have any impact on the mind of the other. It is like all the possibilities remaining dormant and inexpressive. That does not mean that the people concerned do not have within them the propensities to feel attached or hateful. It is this theme which is developed in a humorous and tragic way by Shakespeare in his plays, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Comedy of Errors*.

Suppose a man starves his sensuous appetites for some time, causing his urges to become weak. If a tiger is exposed to starvation for a long time and has no power even to get up, it may look at its prey with a sort of indifference. But if it

is given a little more time, it will gather all its strength and pounce. Similarly, by merely starving ones appetites, deep-seated urges will not leave a person. When the environment becomes favorable, they will return with added vigor. Based on this theme, Rabindranath Tagore wrote the story of a *sannyāsi* who thought he had transcended all of Nature's allure during his solitary meditations but found he had no taste for solitude after his hand and heart were touched by a young woman seeking his solace and protection from a cruel world.

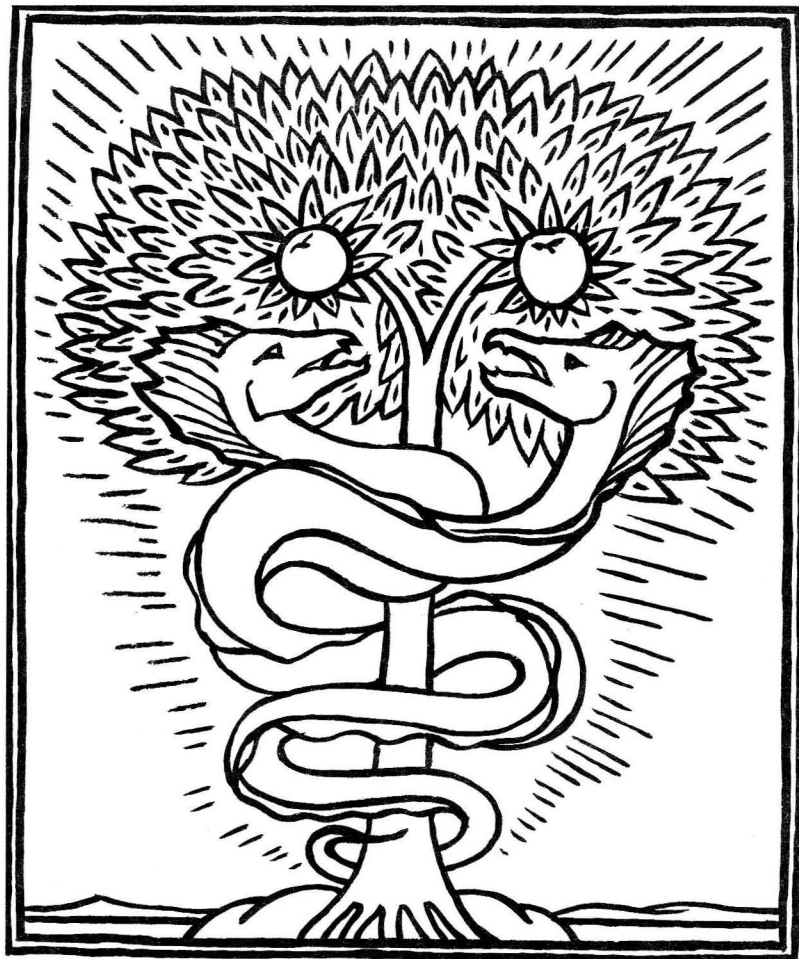
In the Bhagavad Gita (II:59) it says: "Objective interests revert without the relish for them on starving the embodied

of them. Even the residual relish reverts on the One Beyond being sighted."

Most of the urges in us are like two-headed monsters. Two opposite tendencies come and we are dragged alternately in one direction and then another. This becomes vividly manifested in the case of schizophrenia. Even the very word schizophrenia shows a similarity to the Sanskrit word for alternating, *vicchinna*.

The last aspect resembles the generosity of a philanthropist. Here, however, it is not positive. It is the negative aggressiveness with which an urge or tendency asserts itself.

(Continued in next issue.)




Mysterious Mountain/Magical Cloud

*This ancient form of
intuitive grace, the
perfect metaphor for all
man's endeavors – this
endless climb. And
upon whose shoulders arises
that magical cloud; and
is drawn, ever-expanding, to
greet this mysterious mountain.*

*From straight up north
the cold I feel here
taunts me with exhausting
wind. It steals into
my aching core and makes
me weak and full.
Limbs, finally, strained
beyond all limits, and
through the pain that will
always beckon, it suddenly
lifts me, inhaling all
thoughts of gravity.*

John Buchanan



When I remember the days with Nataraja Guru, words hardly come to my mind although he used to orchestrate words in a super symphonic manner from early morning till late at night. The dearest memories I have of him are kept in that secret casquet within my soul which is mainly filled with silence.

Then, if I become a little more attentive to the details, these memories become mostly visual and Guru's silhouette fills my mind...





So human, so graceful,
So Beautiful, Indeed, a great dancer, Guru Natwarji
Salutations to him, again and again.

So LETSHERT. ॐ नमः

Excerpts From: Autobiography of an Absolutist

Nataraja Guru

Walking the Corridors of the University

Paris, Paris! This name has endeared itself to modern man in many ways. Its charms have attracted many a globe-trotter, and to repeat the name brings to mind a cluster of associations that cling together almost into a persona. Paris has a female personality which one never fails to sense on entering through its walls. Besides the Cathedral so-called, some fashionable *Notre Dame* mentally occupies the core of Paris, trotting the pavements at a quick high-heeled pace. It is the woman and not the man who is respected in Paris, and if anywhere in the world the word "Madame" gains meaning in modernism, it is in Paris that its high-water mark gets recorded every time you utter the word. The aristocratic bourgeois here takes off his gloves to shake hands with a mere servant woman, which is not done anywhere else in civilized cities.

To love Paris is to respect Woman, irrespective of her faults which might be more glaringly revealed in the night-life of Montmartre than anywhere else in the respectable world. Thus it is that the *amour* of Paris is *pour toujours* (for ever). Like the thing of beauty which is "a joy forever" as Keats would say, *Paris Toujours* is the slogan natural to the mouth of young dandies or old flirts. Much intellectual life has also to be associated with Paris, dating back to the Fall of Rome, after which for centuries soldiers, priests, sailors and philosophers have jostled and rubbed shoulders in what is called *la vie de Paris*. Even the *concierges* and charwomen are respected like vestal vir-

gins there. Such was the Paris that in the autumn of 1928, I walked into, unconscious yet of her charms and her claims to be worshipped by a votary from a far-off shore that was suckled on strange, "pagan" and "barbarous" cults and customs.

Life in the Latin Quarter

"See Naples and die" goes the saying, but the smells and sights of actual Naples might be repulsive. After alighting at the Gare de Lyon, I was conducted through the streets of Paris by an Indian friend who later became famous as a physicist. It was still early in the morning and the autumnal sun was hardly visible in the dull air. The shops and boutiques were opening and trams and the Metro were only beginning to wake up the lazy giant city from its prolonged slumbers of a busy previous night. Most of Europe is still dead drunk at eight in the morning, and the carpet-beating of some willful man on a fifth-floor balcony only makes the sleeper turn to the other side to get his lost forty winks again. The polite policeman of Paris breathes mist like fiery horses and the wayside vendor begins to arrange his flowers or stockings with a yawn. The waitresses too shake off their slumbers as best as they can before the revelers begin again with glasses clinking, and pavement cafes begin to work in full swing through the day into the recesses of the night.

Le Quartier Latin is where all Parisian life converges to reveal its most unconventional liberties. Past the University area, where blonde girl students can



Montemarte, Paris

be seen walking arm in arm with their jet-black counterparts from the interior of the Dark Continent, or sipping *cafe noir* on high stools in restaurants, one reaches the Porte d'Orleans, where fish and rabbits hanging upside down are displayed alongside chic shops with flowers, roasted nuts or newspaper vendors. All this makes for the busy life of the more common Parisian. The latest Paris cries can be heard here as in the days of old. I finally went off the Boulevard to a smaller side street where I was to live, No. 5 rue Marie Davy, 14th district. My kind hostess, Madame Morin, was expecting me. This lady was a friend of Indians, many of whom have enjoyed her hospitality during many years. Finally, her love of India took her to Delhi, where she still lives, broadcasting in French for All-India Radio. To have become such a mouthpiece must have been in her *karma*, this or a prior life. Such thoughts do not sound strange to an Indian mind, though it might rub a Papist the wrong way.

I had a room to myself which belonged to Jean-Jacques, then about twelve, the son of Madame Morin who was staying at a boarding-school. In that room, sitting up many times on autumnal mornings that carried the foretaste of the winter to come, I formulated the contents of the thesis I was going to write for the Sorbonne University. Many tentative skeletons were made and torn up before

something satisfactory emerged. The agony of finding shelter, learning a language, paying for my lodging and board, finding guides or friends, were still uphill points for me to climb and reach if possible. Faith alone was on my side then. I felt much helplessness and ignorance keenest at this time of my life, and to Madame Morin goes the credit for giving the attention which is still appreciated by this man who is "ever yours truly," no other than a *satya dharman*, a lover of truth trying to walk in its path.

The Subject That Has Remained Dear To Me

"The Personal Factor in the Educative Process" was the title of the thesis I was going to submit to the University. Even before going to Paris I had made up my mind in this matter, as I have always been of the opinion that the core of education consists of proper rapport between teacher and taught. This principle has been understood through all times in India, as even a peasant woman to this day would strongly vouch for when she asks her child to touch the feet of a passing *sadhu* or itinerant teacher. From learning the alphabet to wisdom, this *Guru-sishya* (master-pupil) relation counts, and this belief, tacitly accepted by millions for ages, needed to be restated in a revised form for moderns to understand. The subject had enough research features which involved psychology, pedagogy and philosophy. The whole theory and practice of Indian education had to be revalued and restated. This topic, that touched the core, would, I thought, command a basic interest that would not pass away quickly.

Modern education under the New Education Movement started by Dr. Adolphe Ferriere, Dr. Edward Claparede and Dr. Pierre Bovet, whose personal acquaintance I had already made in Geneva, while at the Institute Jean-Jacques Rousseau where I had completed short courses already, had given me enough modern ideas in education to give flesh and blood to my study of the role of the

Guru. Taking the dust off the feet of a Guru, walking the dusty roads of India, has been a *geste* dear to the Indian mind even before the great Buddha's days when it was fully recognised; and the unique character and personality India possesses to this day, is owed to this respect for Guruhood.

To analyze this regard and give it, if possible, a new lease of life was to be my contribution through my thesis. I am sure the idea is dear to India still and perhaps will remain so whatever else changes and passes. At least that is a hope even if all else should be lost. Whether in early "negative education," later adolescent "natural education," midlife "pragmatic education," or "idealistic education" before death, the bipolarity between teacher and taught holds good as a law. Nature's pages could substitute the Guru in a sense and a living guide represent the Guru ideal, but these are partial aspects of the total situation in which a full osmosis could take place between the two poles. Both gain equal transparency in the end, when the Absolute vision is complete. Such were some of the implications of the subject I had chosen.



Nataraja Guru, 1920's

I Meet My "Rapporteur"

The nights began earlier and lasted longer, and this gave me a strange sense to which I was unused and which I cannot describe in words. It had an element of Self-realization which made it interesting to me as I sat one evening in a Metro that emerged from underground, where it properly belonged, to pass above the houses and roads in the area of Paris where the Eiffel Tower raised its head and was visible like a ghost from far-off through the misty atmosphere lit up with blurred lights. The Trocadero and the triumphal arch passed by and I was being conducted to the study of Professor Wallon by my good hostess Madame Morin.

Wallon was the name of a young professor of the Faculty of Letters of the Sorbonne who was to be my *rapporteur*. Madame was my interpreter in French and I readily handed in the abstract in French that I had prepared. He scanned the items and turned the pages silently for some time. He seemed satisfied, then added that Indians were "sentimental" generally, but the thesis had to be "objective" and "critical." I knew already that these words were dear to the modern Western mind. Demonstrable, operational, pragmatic, scientific and realist are other modern words which are dear to the West, and anything that even smells of the *a priori* is at once suspected and thus repugnant. The modern man forgets that all speculation is immersed in truths taken for granted as *a priori*. Whether as axioms, postulates, theorems, riders, corollaries, or lemma, all depend on the principle of the *a priori*.

I took up the challenge of the professor from that day, and have tried to fulfill the requirements of the critical approach in all my speculative writings. A science must have its due proportion of both speculation and criticism, which together bring up the total knowledge situation in the progress or procession of thought, speculative or scientific. It was thus that I struck another bargain in my life-long research of the Absolute.

I Celebrate My 50th Birthday

The humdrum events of life sometimes attain tragic heights while at other times they fall flat into the world of commonplace banalities. From being a superman to falling low in the world of sensuous slavery there is a vertical amplitude within which life oscillates.

With the sun rising on one side, while the full moon was setting in the west, I stood half naked after a bath at four in the morning in a foaming stream near a cascade. From the top of the hill where I stood at this still small hour, I could see the silver-grey outlines of the cascade beginning to be lit up by the pink fingers of dawn. The mountain-tops lay partly in shade, like giant gods on a watery expanse that the morning mists lent semblance to. I had a favorite disciple with me that day, and hardly suspected that he would later make an attempt on my very life. I had slept in a hut with him, preparing to celebrate my fiftieth birthday, in a place ten or twelve miles away from the Gurukula.

We had walked there the previous afternoon while wild water buffaloes watched us as we wended through thickets of medicinal herbs on barren undulating ground. Gentians grew there in spring which had not yet fully arrived and the red clusters of rhododendrons contrasted with the deep green leaves on their antique stems as we observed in passing. I remember clearly all the details of the day previous to my birthday, on which I decided to make a new beginning in my life, though rather late, after touching the zero point already indicated.

Life has many beginnings of higher ambitions and resolves in never-ending series. I might have been a Failure so far, with a capital letter, but such an absolute failure as a careerist had the potency of success with compound interest, as hoping against hope I have always believed. The last shall be the first. The chain reaction of the splitting of the atom in the bomb explosion involves a geometric pro-

gression which, though in principle only a process, ends in a sudden overt event of negative significance to humanity. Contemplation leads up to a similar verticalized culmination, and every failure of this kind is to be counted as a double negation that spells a success that fully succeeds in itself for itself and by itself. Efforts cancel out in its pure dynamic becoming. The "unmoved mover" and the "pure act" conspire here into the neutrality of the Absolute that is non-dual. As Narayana Guru says (*Darsana Mala*, VI:6):

Fire burns, the wind blows,
Rain showers, the earth supports,
Rivers flow, and ever the One
Remains alone and still.

On my fiftieth birthday I was still a man of subdued and subjective interests. None of the various vocational caps that I had tried on fitted me, and I left them and stood on a hill-top to celebrate this half century in my own original way, exposing my skin to those luminaries which represent the overt and the innate eyes of cosmic consciousness. Agony was being sublimated into a sense of utter abandon then. I made certain resolutions at that moment, which may be said to mark the turning to the top half of a figure of eight that my life's unfoldment represented just at that moment. More ambitious programs were coming ahead. The contemplative spirit, however, lives through these alternating phases in the balanced way indicated above.

Five Birthday Resolutions

To write a book about the Guru, to found a center in the West for the teaching of Brahmagvidya, to lecture in the States on One Religion, to complete still further my education both Eastern and Western, and to study the programs of the United Nations and UNESCO so as to be able to form ideas about world unity, were the main items of the five-point birthday resolution that I made for myself on my fiftieth birthday.

As an overall decision I re-dedicated

myself that day to follow a more thoroughly absolutist way of life, renouncing more emphatically all relativistic affiliations. Although I had hitherto willfully put a stop to careering in the usual sense, careers had still seemed to come to me, but thenceforth they finally fell off without clinging to me anymore.

I Decide To Go To The U.S.A.

At the time the birthday resolutions were made as related above, I hardly knew how they were to come true. Steeped in poverty to the point of not knowing how to live without starving for the next week, it was an impossible dream to think of going to the United States. But the Tao has its own way of turning impossibilities into possibilities. The switch for such happenings is on what is often referred to as the "other side," the *para* (transcendental beyond). All that I could gather together was about five hundred rupees from sale of a bit of land that had come to me through partition of my mother's properties.

Meanwhile I was in touch with Dr. Henry A. Atkinson of the Church Peace Union in New York. This body was to hold a World Conference of Religions in New York in 1948. I had befriended him in Geneva in 1932 or so, when I participated as a Delegate and Member of the Central Committee of the World Conference for Peace Through Religion under the auspices of the Carnegie Foundation. This valuable contact had persisted and I was invited to attend the World Conference at New York, as an Indian delegate, representing the universal teaching of brotherhood -- the Guru Narayana's movement.

The letter from the World Conference for Peace Through Religion reached me after I had taken the decision to go and before I had found the money for the costly trip. The date of the Conference was approaching and I had difficulty in obtaining shipping accommodation to reach New York in sufficient time for the event.

At the last moment I had to decide on an air passage, at least as far as Geneva, in

order to catch the boat called the SS Washington, if I remember rightly, sailing from Cherbourg to New York. More than a couple of thousand rupees had to come to me, which I did not actually have when I wrote to the shipping agents in Bombay, Thomas Cook and Sons, to fix a passage quickly by air or surface route, whichever was most easily available.

A Fairy God-Mother Comes Into the Picture Again

If the fairy god-mother previously referred to was from an unknown clime and a far off shore, it was a lady who could claim blood relationship with me who came into the highly improbable situation in which I found myself in early 1948. The travel agents had asked for a deposit in advance to negotiate my passage which was still difficult to arrange in those post-war conditions. I did not really know where the two thousand rupees was to come from. But, strange to say, just at that time the wife of the poet Kumaaran Asan happened to visit the Ooty Gurukula and readily promised to advance the amount needed without any difficulty. Years later she even waived her claims and what was meant to be a loan was made into an outright gift.

The motives for such generosity cannot be easily analyzed, especially as this lady was related to me on my father's side. Other blood relations, even the most near, had disadopted me for my abrupt and absolutist ways, but there is some absolutist factor which the Tao itself seems mysteriously to employ in my favor. My intimacy with the late poet, who like Shelley suffered the nemesis of a watery grave somewhat prematurely in the most promising period of his life as a poet, must have had at least something to do with the throw of chance in my favor. All thus went well and I remitted my passage to Bombay in time without any hitch.

When I think of how naturally all this happened without my having to press any button anywhere, and especially as I was not in touch with any relations

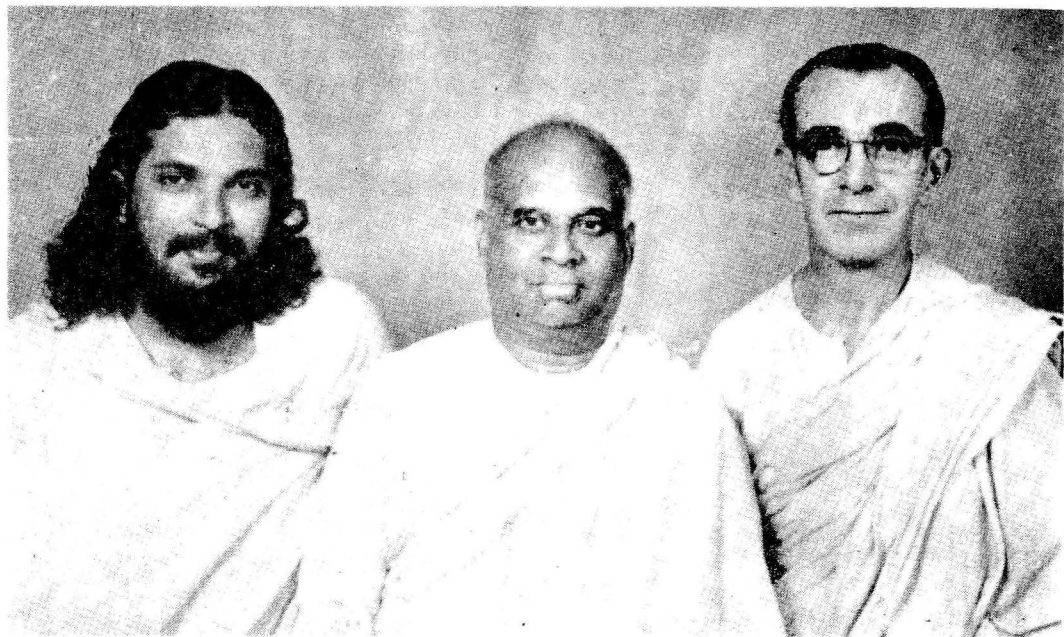
for many years, I cannot, even as a confirmed sceptic, but feel that there are many chance happenings hereunder not spoken of in the work-a-day philosophies, rather than any cut-and-dry causes and effects in the more evident and usual manner. The world is a mixture of vertical and horizontal elements.

A Friend and Disciple From Boswell's Land

John Spiers, who by this time had lost the mother who had adopted him and had finished with the odd offices he held during or after the war, arrived at the Gurukula at Fernhill soon after. I still lived in the original tin bunk with papered walls which I had erected in the eucalyptus grove in 1934, though it was nearing 1948. John and his adopted Indian boy, Sandy, about fourteen years old, and two others of his age were put in the new building and in the cottage that had been built on the Gurukula's grounds as years went by. a cook with his wife and child who had worked with John came too and fitted into the life of the Gurukula for some time, sharing the partitioned kitchen.

Inmates thus increased and with Soman, Sivan, Balan, Vijayan and Raman coming in soon after, breadwinning for the increased family became more and more difficult. John was always known for his open generosity, a natural corollary of absolutism, and had known enough hardships and changes in his life that adaptability to even the worst of circumstances was nothing to him.

Begging and borrowing, with the lowest point of even stealing by the half-starved boys in dire need, became a boast or joke sometimes overlooked, condoned or reprimanded. Necessity knowing no law, was the mother of invention or resourcefulness, and all morality was capable of some accommodation and adjustment within limits of permissible error. Honesty seemed a luxury meant for the respectable high-class "haves," for whom such morality was advantageous, rather than for the down and out "have-nots" to whom it was often a high luxury. Moral standards sometimes had to be thrown into the crucible to melt and be made into new models. Absolute morality thus remains an ideal only to be approximately attained hereunder. Respectability tends



Nitya Chaitanya Yati, Nataraja Guru, John Spiers, 1950's

to be thrown to the winds, as morality alternates between its relative and absolute limits. Cowardly consciences tend to be unstable, while even with most honest men some gentle alternations exist.

How we again faced the situation is not clearly to be recollected at this distance in time, though we did survive even this time, with pawning or selling some precious or semi-precious presents or heirlooms, for which we explored the bottoms of trunks each week to pay the grocer's bill, is a story I cannot tell in detail. We can only promise that we did not commit highway robbery, but, within certain tolerable moral limits, we survived some of the hardest days. Stewed vegetables and potatoes substituted regular rice and curry, and some time later I even heard that the boys subsisted for a week on dates alone which someone had given to John while I was away in the States.

I Take Off For Europe En Route to the States

Such humdrum details of life deserve to be forgotten quickly. Life however, has other moments which are more interesting and worthy of being treasured in memory. My first flight in a TWA Constellation from Bombay to Geneva was an experience in itself. Starting at ten in the morning we flew over the sea and desert lands alternately with sparse vegetation when we came to the tropical belt of the earth. Flying below the clouds most of the time, there was more to see on the way than in the modern international flights in jet planes that get lost above the clouds. At best you can enjoy the lunches served and the pretty air hostesses who sometimes smile with gilded angelic smiles while they flit up and down corridors or gang-ways.

After several hours of flight over thickets of underwood and desert stands bordering on oceans, whose billows, tier on tier, looked like ripples in a teacup, we landed at dusk at an airport near some oil wells in Saudi Arabia. Black and turbaned Arabian cooks served a meal of

baked beans in tomato sauce, which was perhaps the standard meal approved by TWA, and notables rubbed shoulders in the canteen for about half an hour before the plane took off again after the usual bells and signals, which drill everyone went through religiously in the interests of their own safety.

Asaf Ali was returning from New York just then, alighting from a plane bound in the opposite direction, and was seen at the same dining room. A young Parsi lady going to see her relations in the Geneva Embassy and a Tamil woman alighting at the Saudi Arabian port to join her missionary husband were the persons I talked to. The former young lady seemed to be somewhat in distress, travelling alone and anxious about finding her friends when she reached Geneva. I had to be chivalrous and allay her anxieties which was a role not altogether unnatural for me to fulfill as I was a sort of a gallant myself though remaining a *tyāgi* (renounced). I remember other pretty ladies in distress to whom I have felt a parental concern or have been a knight errant. These are natural dialectical counterparts, who can belong together happily as birds of passage or as fellow passengers in a plane. That friendships thus made are often of the least lasting nature only adds to the free and easy content of human fellowship.

The Lights of Cairo Are Seen Late at Night

Near midnight the denizens of terra firma must have been disturbed in their slumbers when our plane circled over Cairo following light and sound signals from the ground to guide its eagle wings onto the runway. A logarithmic spiral with a golden number implicit in its proportion, supported by the notion of a time-space continuum of a summation of differential and integral elements, must have been respected by the mathematically minded soul of the pilot, whose sense of a graceful landing, without bumps, must have been wedded to the delight of correct mathematical calculations of split-second pre-

cision in the instruments that he controlled or responded to alternately from ground or sky.

The magic city lay as an illuminated carpet below, with blinking lights of different colors here and there. Cairo was a state of mind as well as a starlit world of Alladin's lamps. Sitting cosily within the plane without disembarking and obeying the red and green lights or the flashed signals, even this magic city was soon left behind and we were heading drowsily for Rome. Passports were collected and handed back at each place we touched, with queer marks on some pages which were not unlike the hieroglyphs of the world of mummies and sphinxes. Taking some aristocratic Italian signora and her bambino on board in Cairo, the dawn took us to Rome. Lack of lira currency and exchange facilities kept me from taking a cafe-au-lait at the airport.

Rome's azure sky and ruins with memories of a thousand years passed through my mind, wherein wars were waged for the expansion of the Empire now fallen into the disrepute of more prosaic days. Tiberius Gracchus and his son stood out with Caesar and Brutus in my reveries which went as far as the cradles of Christianity in Crete and Syracuse. The night flight was full of rich dream content and when the day dawned we were passing over the countryside of Naples and Florence, and I peeped through the porthole to locate Capri and Anacapri.

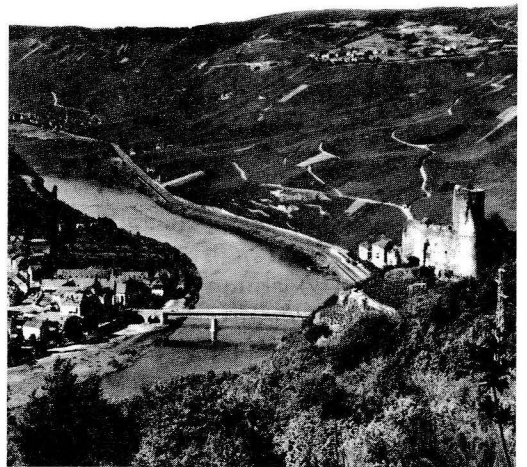
At about nine we were nearing Switzerland and could see the characteristic greenery that contrasted with the dry and dusty Egyptian areas. Steeper, gabled, red-roofed dwelling places and farmyards brought into the picture the touch of Europe. The summer blue of the sky was like a sigh of relief for the Europeans who had survived many days of winter. The housewives beating their carpets or shaking their sheets from balcony windows gazed with joy at the bright sky, while the more sunbaked lands praised instead the shade of trees. Like gnomes and angles, or like *kinnaras*

and *gandhārvas* of Indian lore, the human spirit is happy at different levels of light or darkness, above or below the clouds, and hastens from one level to another to seek favorable environments. These quasi-celestial personifications only represent the cravings of the human soul for differing degrees of happiness available to man when released mentally from earthy bonds. Robin good fellows and fairies exist in this sense, and each fit into the value worlds proper to each whether called hob-goblins or gnomes.

Landing From the Air Over Geneva Again

Chalets and villas, with farm houses interspersed, were bordering on blue lakes and vineyards, and the light greenery that covered the spring buds was turning darker as all the thickets and bushes were overladen with flowers galore, which would turn to fruit or seed in the glut of summer with its own riot of color. Red poppies and blue cornflowers showed through the tall grass yet to be mowed and straw-hatted girls in summer clothes fondly gathered and bundled them up. Such was the scene through which the luxury autobus, with glass top and sides, took us from the airport to the center of the city several kilometers away.

It felt like a second home-coming to me when I reached this city associated



European Vineyards in Spring

with Jean-Jacques Rousseau – the seat of internationalism through decades and centuries. The placid blue lake and the high jet of water near the principal bridge joining the two parts of the town nestling amidst the Juras Alps brought some strange consoling associations to my mind.

The colorful spectacles through which I had looked at the same scenes twenty years before, in 1928, were changed into more mellow, almost achromatic tones, when I viewed it again in 1948. The eidetic content of values changes from one pole to the other, within the phenomenological frame of reference, within which even empirical life not yet fully contemplative has to move. Mellowed by maturer years, Geneva was still interesting to me as a place where I could surprise old friends with an unexpected visit, which in itself was a joy, like that of hide-and-seek of which children can never miss the joke.

* * * * *

Bolder Flights Into the Unknown

I am at the threshold of my seventy-fourth year and have now finished telling my own story almost up to this point. I have crossed the tragic line that separates retrospection from a prospective and a free adventurous vision.

My birthday is only like a milestone planted, if it could be at all, in a forward flowing Time which in proportion to the lucidity of inner vision could point its arrow both ways as the wind that bloweth where it listeth. The sky can finally find no motion fixed in the infinite past and the future to some principle that knows change. The future and past, when pushed forward or backward by our imagination must attain a nominal limit which like a Euclidian point cannot have any dimensions.

Mystic and Axiomatic Thinking

How do we know this: Because we do not or cannot know anything otherwise. Like $A=A$ we attain here to axiomatic

thinking which is neither a priori nor a posteriori. Like the truth of man's mortality this is not within the scope of laboratory demonstrations, while still remaining fully scientific in validity.

Having devoted several hundred pages of writing to the story of my past life, let me turn to some bold flights of the "alone to the Alone" and indulge in random reveries free from retrospect. Like the light of an electric torch in a mist, the future is amorphous and clears only to the extent that the torch can penetrate.

One feels like a prophet here faced with an apocalyptic agony or frenzy as when Jesus raved about razing the stones of Jerusalem. One thinks of doomsday and has to go beyond death before this mystical exaltation can be felt within one. The actual events of the future are there in virtual and undeveloped form as in a raw film or photo-slide, but the events happen to us when we have our turn to meet them in pure or inner or qualitative space and time treated together.

By now I hope I am justified in explaining in this manner after having written for three or four decades on allied subjects. Between the rueful regret of the past and the frenzied adventure of future conquest, life is a process of double correction and travail which, when freed and made transparent to itself could spell out that immortal joy promised in all the great scriptures of the world.

My life has been in this sense a constant promotion from the regret of retrospection to the joy of the advent of future days. Seated back to back the regretting and the joyful faces of the Self have ever remained a double-headed Janus moving in the eternal present, carrying its own "mobile image of eternity."

Yogic meditation is nothing but the recognition of the union of two aspects of the Self in reciprocal, complementary, compensatory or fully cancellable relationship with each other. Beatitude is the absolute resultant where subject and object merge into one and the same matrix or mother liquid. Otherwise pictured



Nataraja Guru, 1970

like a crystal or double tetrahedrons base to base, consciousness clings to a vertical parameter within the Absolute Self and like a vermicular helicoid living being, now goes up to the omega point or downward through the zero to the original alpha point which is the lower ontological limit of pure being.

This parameter itself could shrink from both ends and become that Light of all lights filling all possible times and spaces remaining still conceivable or experienced as a universal concrete alternating between the model of a color solid with the incipient phenomenal aspects implied at some moments but rising with every cosmic respiration into the whole brilliance of pure incandescence, effacing its own structural outlines at other moments.

The Tragic Dividing Line

Between name and form, substance and attribute, time and space or energy and matter, there is a tragic line that

separates the one Absolute Value horizontally while the vertical logical parameter passes without contradiction penetrating the separating film between the above pairs of conjugates. The Self and the non-Self, cause and effect, reality and appearance, have between them the indeterminate principle that introduces a tragic element into an otherwise intelligent life that man could have at his command. All the great scriptures of the world have the teaching of this truth at their core as a secret which is both esoteric as well as exoteric. Belief and scepticism have to go hand in hand for the discovery of this absolutely significant Value.

During four decades and a half, from 1923 when I finished my usual educational career in India, I have travelled, studied, taught, made speeches, held discussions and written many pages to justify what I assert boldly now in what I have just said above. The reader must clear for himself the vagueness or the tall claims or gener-

alizations if any herein by referring to the explanations I have given in various contexts in my life-long writings.

The Problem of Squarely Facing Death

Death has a central and structurally total position in the center of what is called life. All true contemplation has to take account of this factor which no-one can by-pass. The vertical parameter as a road goes past this city of death. It has its origin in the womb of the Mother as its alpha point, leading through the zero point to the culminating doomsday marked out at the omega point on the plus side of the vertical axis.

Spirituality has to be both apocalyptically positive and regretfully negative alternately at one and the same time if it is to be true to the Absolute which is some times called the Most High God. Whether personified or thought of impersonally, God and Absolute are to be understood as interchangeable terms. A horizontal tragic line however divides the totality of forms from names or the geometrical truth and its algebraic counterpart. It is as in the Pythagorean theorem which proves in two ways that the same certitude of the Absolute is involved whether through name or form, the algebraic approach or the geometric. The normative Absolute is the point where both of these meet and where the paradox of life and death reside together. Vertically there is life and horizontally there is death.

Such in short is my own philosophy formulated at the end of my active outer life and the beginning of a fuller inner contemplative absolute life. In my writings I expect hereafter to be less conditioned in what I have to say by my own background and history so far. Even Narayana Guru who has been my guide in life will be allowed by me to fade more and more faintly out of view into the background of yesterday's hundred thousand years, and even prospectively he shall loom less and less significantly in my vision of the day of all days that is to dawn for me or is ever dawning with its

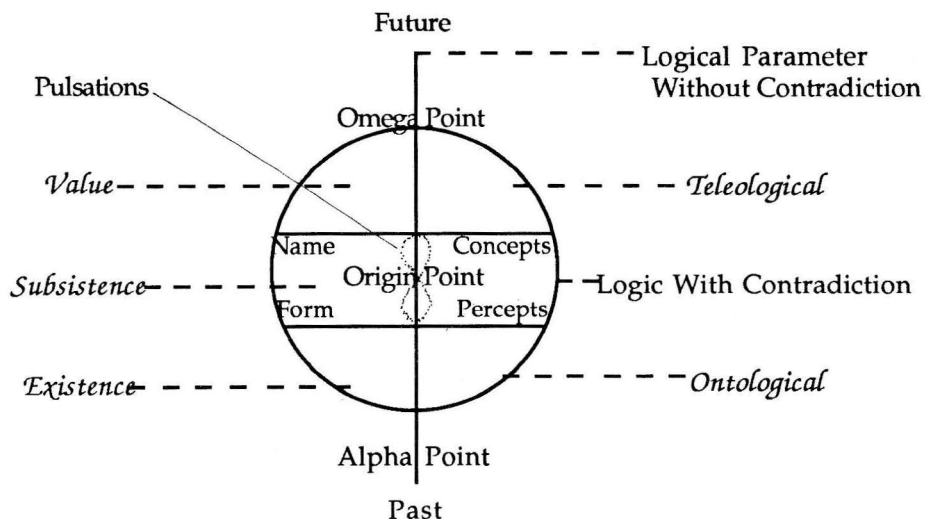
red glow ever within the mental horizon.

The Matrix of the Universe

Matter, mother, matrice, all could refer to the same world ground of Hegel or the emanation of which vertices could form themselves in the cosmogony of Descartes. Bergson's flux of creative becoming in which the *elan vital* could operate is another. The world of modern physics, which presupposes decimal digits or points of numerals of six integers and where the exponents could range from quantities, functions or factors or obey laws or respond to equations or graphs from zero through unity to n or $-n$, all these speak a language into which quantum mechanics, Maxwell's equations and Einstein's three bold visions of the physical world have to be fitted. The entropy and negentropy of thermodynamics, exosmosis and endosmosis of biology and implosions or explosions of energy as referring to particle or super-novae which have between them a one-to-one correspondence, complementary, reciprocal, compensatory, reversible or cancellable against each other, bring in a new vision of the universe. Double notions of conjugates such as time and space, matter and energy, whose variety and uncertainty are referable still to mathematical laws expressed by formulae based on probabilities or graphs with cartesian co-ordinates as their common basis -- thus we speak today a new scientific language which could be understood by a Russian or an American irrespective of geographical or linguistic frontiers.

Such are some of the suggestive features of modern knowledge into the correct and revised content of which old wine has to be put into newer and newer bottles to help the understanding of present-day humans so as to make them feel free through a truth both experienced as well as conceived.

At the omega limit we have the unknown and the unknowable; at the alpha limit we have the source of all things in their original matrix which is homogeneous in content but follows the outline of



the Self that alone can grasp or experience it. Concept and percept thus condition and limit each other in this matrix which is both physical and metaphysical in so far as it implies a logistic matrix, where semiotic processes can live and move.

By way of concluding the situation to which we have so far kept company as reader and writer together, let me be allowed to sum up schematically the bare framework which we have tried to justify and understand in respect of the Absolute as the highest significant Value in life. The following figure and indications are self explanatory.

Into the static figures we have to supply the dynamic aspects of the *motor scheme* in which life is a process with a double assertion and a double negation involved. The paradoxical still remains to be solved by inner experience. Here imagination and intuition have to work hand in hand to bring the goal of human understanding within the grasp of the seeker. Peace or happiness describes the goal.

The Dynamics of Spiritual Progress

Life is a pulsation that can conquer the future or clarify the past with its lucid transparency when all opaque factors of dross are banished by a boldly determined will to understand. The two limits with which life's values, ontological or teleological, are confined, snap their hold and the spirit moves about within

its amplitude to range within the field as structurally outlined below. Transcendental exaltation can neutralize a down-to-earth apodictic certitude and both result together in a normative inner experience of truth. This truth is not elsewhere nor at another point in time. It is already with us. We have only to assert it vertically and deny it horizontally. The various phases of such an inner dynamism will be seen in the verses of the Guru's major works which we have translated and commented upon profusely elsewhere.

Life is a dynamic spiritual progression through fields of beauty, joy or freedom. A secret Gaussian curve is implied in such a progress to the goal. This takes place in a spiral ascent or descent within the colorfully transparent tetrahedron or dome of life refracting or defracting values that end in events pleasing or unpleasant.

Each event implies the meeting point of occasional probabilities with their corresponding descending possibilities to be conceived individually or collectively or both. At the existence level the event could be a thing of beauty, at the subsistent level it could be a pearl of truth to be understood inwardly, and at the top value level it could represent a price with which to measure all other lesser values in life. The soul ascending the vertical parameter within the color solid of crystal could be a vermicular figure like that of an airplane propeller. Both action and retroaction have to be thought of

Wonder Journey With a Wandering Guru

Nancy Yeilding

The car shuddered as it strained up the steep hill at Kanakamala, its wheels slipping in the crumbling red clay gravel, but finally the gears engaged and we slowly made our way to the top. As we drove across the plateau, rocky and barren except for a cashew tree or thorny bush here and there, I was thinking that it was the kind of terrain that would make a farmer cry. Just then Guru remarked, "It is the uselessness of this place that makes it useful to us." We originally acquired it at a very low cost when there was nothing here but the cashew trees and a pile of rough-hewn building blocks which are reputed to have come from a small temple to the Goddess which once stood near the southern edge of the plateau. Through the great efforts of Tellicherry friends devoted to Guru, the pile of blocks was transformed into a small cottage with a place for an altar, small library and living quarters and another building nearby to serve as kitchen-dining area and store-room. There is also a large cleared area in front of the rise on which the cottage stands. Each time Guru comes for a long stay, it is covered with sand for a floor and given a coconut palm thatch roof to provide a place for classes. This time, as we drove up, I noticed potted plants hanging from the edges of the roof – a touch of beauty and creative caring brought to the Gurukula by its current resident manager, Kasmin, a young lawyer turned philosophy student. He came running to greet Guru along with a dozen or so other young men who had gathered there in anticipation of Guru's two week's stay

and twice-daily classes. Among them there were musicians, *ayurvedic* (traditional Indian medicine) physicians, and university students, all willing to stay in floorless, coconut thatch huts, bathe and wash their clothes at springs at the base of the steep hill, and keep company with vipers, mosquitoes, scorpions and centipedes.

Although Guru and I had it much easier, with rooms in the cottage and water carried up for our single-bucket baths, Kanakamala was still a very demanding place to live – with the heat and a seemingly endless stream of visitors, mostly children of the neighborhood, coming to stare at us through the windows of the cottage, often making us feel like monkeys in a cage at the zoo. But every bit of discomfort was more than worth it because of Guru's classes and the unique beauty of the "golden hill" (*kanaka* – gold; *mala* – hill). Spreading out in all directions is an ocean of coconut trees, spotted here and there with islands of pale green rice paddies. Beyond it to the West is the Arabian Sea and to the East, the coastal mountain range. Every day, the sunrise from behind the mountains and the sunset into the ocean are grand performances for which we have front row balcony seats. Breezes come in from the sea, sometimes as gentle puffs and sometimes swooping up the hill. In their currents, iridescent butterflies and dragonflies describe intricate patterns while hawks serenely glide overhead.

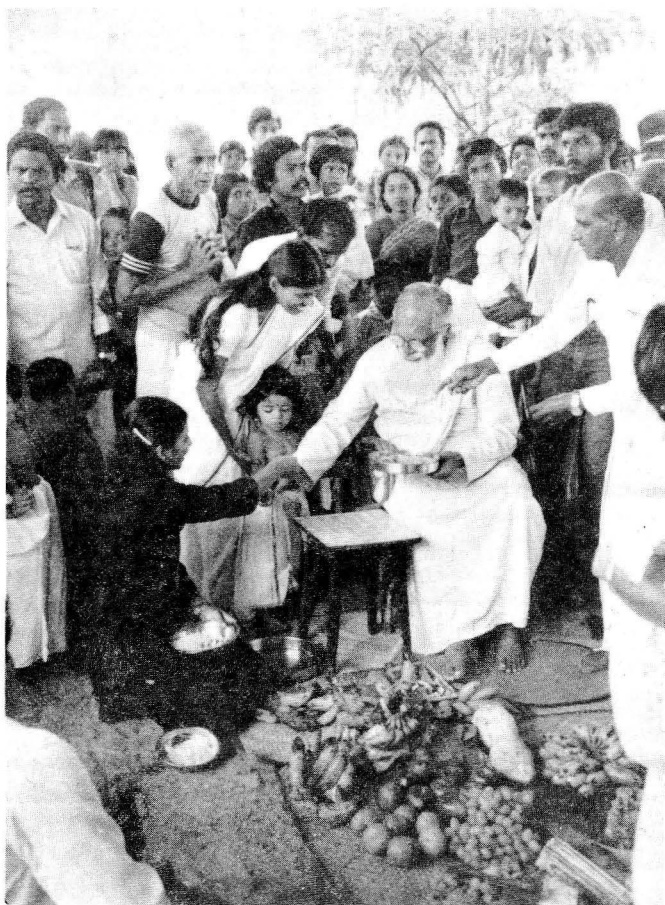
We settled in and then ate dinner on the front porch while we watched the sun turn into a fiery red ball just before it slid

out of sight. In the gentle twilight, one of the young musicians began to play on the stringed instrument which Guru had just given him, a *vina*. As he played, the flowing notes seemed like the distilled essence of the exotic beauty surrounding us.

Over the last decade, whenever he has been in India and his health has permitted, Guru has timed a stay in Kanakamala with the celebration in late October of Vijāyadaśami Day. This is one of a series of days dedicated to Devi Puja, worship of various aspects of the Goddess which honors the Goddess of Wisdom, Saraswati. On that day, books are dusted and shown reverence and pre-school children are initiated into the written word by a revered elder, teacher or Guru. If word spreads that Guru will be in Kanakamala, hundreds of families make

the climb up the steep hill to have their freshly scrubbed and bedecked children initiated by him.

The simple ceremony consists of Guru gently clasping the child's hand, guiding it to trace letters in a tray of rice decorated with flowers and fruit. The first letters they trace are those of the mystic syllable *AUM*, followed by an invocation to Ganapati, the elephant-headed god. The invocation of Ganapati is considered to bring auspiciousness to any undertaking. Mythologically he represents the removal of obstacles as well as the creation of the conditions for success through true humility. After the writing, Guru presents the child with a banana and the child makes an offering to Guru of rupees wrapped in a green leaf which has been thrust into his or her hands by a relative standing nearby to give instructions.



Although the inherent content of the occasion is that of reverence for wisdom and the peace and harmony it engenders, the actual experience is one of bedlam. Gurukula members try to protect Guru from being suffocated while families - children, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles - push and shove to be first in line and to have a good view of the proceedings. Everyone talks and laughs simultaneously. The small children are nervous, many of them petrified by the prospect of a "strange old man" holding their hands. Screaming kids are often pushed towards Guru while he alternately tries to reassure them and requests the parents not to force them.

This year over 200 children were expected, so K.V. Anandan and Kasmin worked hard to bring some order by asking each family to register as they arrived, and calling their names one by one, as well as having the young people of the Gurukula nearby to moderate the crush of the crowd. As I watched child after child approach Guru, each in their own unique way, with devotion and affection, timidity or bold curiosity, giggling, crying, squirming or standing petrified, and he responded to each with sweet patience and gentle humor, the grace of the occasion emerged. As his soft voice again and again chanted the ancient words, and traditional offerings of fruit and incense created a heap of abundance at his feet, the value of wisdom teaching was being honored, despite all the commotion.

When the list had finally been completed and the crowd had thinned out, Guru sat quietly for a moment, pausing before climbing the steps up to the cottage for a much-needed rest. Then he surprised me with a mischievous grin, asking, "Nancy, would you like to be initiated, too?" I laughingly agreed, and everyone standing around enjoyed the joke as I knelt down so he could take my hand and guide it through the rice. Jyothi stood near to play the role of mother comforting a frightened child, while her father put leaf-wrapped rupees into my hand at the end. As we all laughed, I also remem-

bered Jesus' words, "Except ye be as a small child, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven," and felt blessed by the spirit of renewal and re-dedication.

Guru's class that evening was a commentary on the meaning of such occasions:

Just as in a year we have changing months, days and hours, we have changing memories that come and remain in our minds for some time before fading away. Sometimes a memory is significant for a day or for several days. Each country and region has special, recurring memories such as Christmas and Good Friday which come from the depth of our social consciousness or collective unconscious. They are the reawakening of a myth, a deeply engrained mystical concept which enriches us. In the collective unconscious there are nuclei of archetypes which can weave around themselves confections of poetry, allegories and metaphors. These are what we call myth.

The Vijāyadaśami myth is one of these tap-roots of culture which go deep into the core of mother earth to bring us nourishment. It is a many-faceted myth in which the Goddess takes many forms. First she comes like a bride decorated with jewelry. This is the occasion of glorifying all riches -- everything is beautiful, charming, graceful. This is followed by the Devi seen as Durga, the tamer of death, an inaccessible protective device for the child growing in the womb. Then comes the terrible day of delivery, of pain and blood, when the child is born out of darkness, symbolized by Mahākali. After the child is born, the Mother again becomes gracious and beautiful, the goddess of wisdom, Saraswati.

We live in a body which decays, but on the day of initiation, the imperishable word comes into the perishable body through the Guru. After that, we grow in wisdom. From that day, the imperishable word AUM leads us towards perfection. Each Vijāyadaśami Day is a promise to us to take us across to the other shore of wisdom.

(Continued in next issue.)

Record Reviews for Big Ears

Fred Cantor

Portland, Oregon, may be a little off the mainstream for touring jazz musicians, but those of us who live here have had a chance in the last year or so to hear both Bennie Wallace and Dr. John (aka Mac Rebennack) perform live. Now all of us have a chance to hear both of them playing together on Bennie's new album *Bordertown* (Blue Note 48014). This is definitely a fun record. Both men share a sense of funkiness, playfulness, and humor that shines through everything they play. As one might expect from Dr. John - who also produced this album - there are lots of wonderful New Orleans rhythms and even a rollicking vocal. We get Bennie's wonderful phrasing and unique sound. The arrangements aren't credited but you can tell Dr. John had a big hand in mixing up the gumbo.

You can't ask for a better bass player than Eddie Gomez, and he performs well here, getting right into the spirit of things. I can't say the same for guitarist John Scofield. I admit that I have never been a real fan of his playing, but he sounds like he's trying to keep up, rather than really contributing to the session. While he was in Portland, Bennie was playing with Jerry Hahn, and the wonderful interplay between these two may also be making me disappointed with John Scofield. There are several drummers listed, all of whom do a good job.

The sound on the record is clean and well-recorded, about what you would expect from an expensive New York studio. The mix is good (by that I mean unobstrusive). I had an opportunity to record Bennie's appearance here, and I miss some of



the breathiness of his blowing and the leanness of his tone, which is recorded a little "wet" here. Still, it's the music that counts, and there's plenty of things here to sink your ears into.

Sangoma is the new recording of Miriam Makeba. In her notes she tells us the *sangomas* are the diviners and healers of her people, and the mediums for their ancestral spirits. Although she has dedicated the record to her mother, it also speaks to and for the ancestors and all of the people who are struggling in South Africa against apartheid.

And what a powerful voice! A magnificent combination of emotions - pain and suffering, yes ("cries from the heart") - but also hope and even celebration. Ms. Makeba says, "My favorites are the songs that celebrate the mysteries of our spiritual lives." This spirit pervades her vocals throughout. The production is not quite as honest, being given to us once again through an array of digital delays and processing devices. Eventually this trend will shift (I hope). What is appropriate for Paul Simon might not be needed with a voice like Makeba's. Such personal music should not sound like it was recorded in a huge cavern. Nonetheless, the voice carries us on and lifts us up (WB25673-1)

One closing note for this column: the new album from the Four Tops, *Indestructible*, has Aretha Franklin and Levi Stubbs singing together. "Nuff said! ♦

Book Review

Fred Simpson



Grammatical Man, Information, Entropy and Life, Jeremy Campbell, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982.

Grammatical Man by Jeremy Campbell is a frustrating book. It is filled with interesting ideas but lacks a cohesiveness to tie the ideas together. I picked it up expecting to learn about information theory, a phrase people use but never quite define. On the surface *Grammatical Man* appeared to be an appropriate introduction. Jeremy Campbell is an Oxford graduate who at the time he wrote was working as Washington correspondent for the *London Standard*. That combination seemed likely to produce clear and understandable writing. Annie Dillard, author of *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, is quoted on the back cover as saying "I loved every minute of *Grammatical Man*! It synthesizes all the most interesting aspects of contemporary thinking, showing where linguistics meets physics, where mind meets matter. This is grand stuff, and Jeremy Campbell makes it plain." While the book definitely covers many aspects of contemporary thinking, it was not easy to read and the very diversity of the subject matter gave rise to questions as to just what it was really all about.

Discussions range from entropy to information theory to linguistics to DNA to the brain and Aristotle's approach to biology. Research from diverse disciplines is drawn together to provide a synthesis for laymen. Campbell brings together the accounts of mathematicians, physicists, statisticians, philosophers, biologists, chemists, zoologists, and assorted others in an apparent attempt to give us

an explanation of something that's never exactly clear.

The general theme is that life and the universe are based on structure and purpose rather than randomness and accident and that while over time, the universe becomes ever more complex, the world is not traveling toward chaos. He starts by defining entropy as the natural tendency toward randomness and disorder. While arguing that the principal of entropy applies to social relations as well as thermodynamics, he urges that the classical view of entropy (structure and purpose are the exception and confusion the rule) overstates the case when applied to the social sciences. He proposes, based on information theory, that while confusion is natural, order is also natural and that randomness and information (the opposite of randomness) co-exist as balancing forces.

Campbell defines information as the opposite of randomness. Information is order and structure. Information theory has to do with how information is passed from one entity to another and from one time and place to another. There is discussion of the problems and potentials of conveying information via such diverse modes as the traditional forms of language, coded language, radio and TV signals, computer networks and genetics.

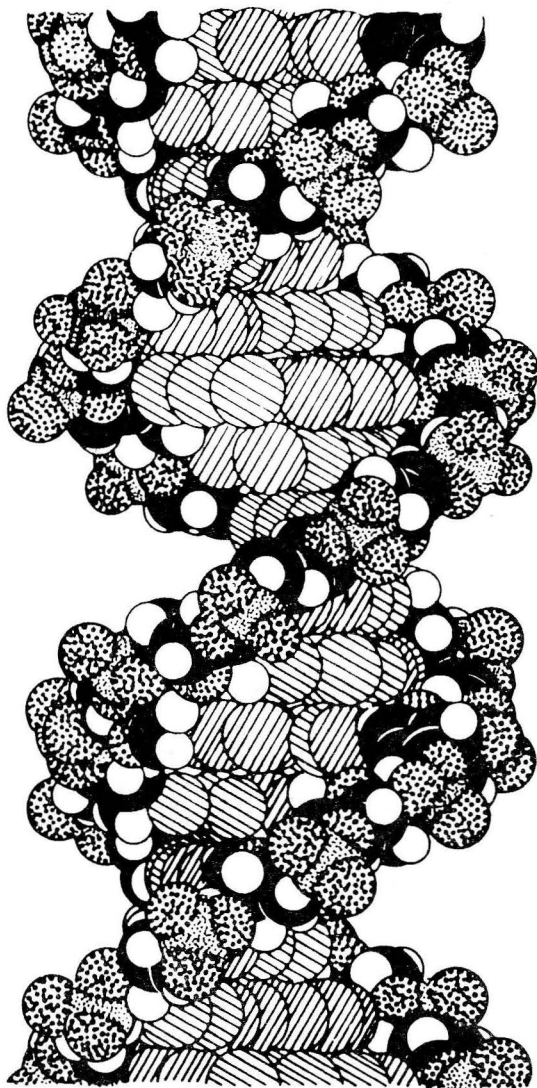
The discussion of DNA and the way DNA passes information provided high points for me. To Campbell DNA carries an extremely complex message in a very reliable yet compact and flexible language. It is the instruction set within the seed from which each being develops. There is flexibility for diversity, and yet randomness is overcome by definite rules

that reliably produce new beings and new varieties of beings generation after generation. The information encoded in DNA is the mold or the potential from which life is actualized.

In a sense it seems closely analogous to the concept of the *karu* mentioned by Narayana Guru in the first verse of *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* (*One Hundred Verses of Self Instruction*). There the *karu* is presented as the primeval cause, the "nature that is naturing." While he never quite says it, Campbell certainly suggests that both the microcosm and the macrocosm are the actualization, the un-

folding, of a grand design which becomes ever more complex and interesting through time and that information is the nature of it all.

In spite of the book's difficulties, the interesting perspectives it presents offer the reader a great deal. I found myself drawn back again and again to read a new section or to re-read a previous section. While I found the book frustrating in that it never quite tied things together in a manner clear to me, the book will certainly be rewarding to readers interested in fresh perspectives on life, language and the universe. ♦



East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



In April, Narayana Gurukula, Fernhill, hosted an "Interdisciplinary Conference of Physicians" attended by physicians of Ayurvedic, homeopathic and allopathic medical traditions. The entire month of May was devoted to the "Festival of Music and Art," described by Guru Nitya in his invitation as follows:

In the month of May people from all over India flock to the Nilgiris, the Blue Mountains, to take shelter from scorching sun and to enjoy the cool breeze of Udhagamandalam, Ooty. This is a time when nature is most abundant in her generous display of the finest flowers. We celebrate the month of May with twice-daily performances of music, dance, art and theatricals, with artistes drawn from all states of India and also from our neighboring and far-off countries.

We think it is a narrow view to integrate people on the basis of closed nationalistic patriotism. Our real claim on the responsive hearts of our brothers and sisters should be by enhancing the beauty of their souls which can flower forth through art, especially through music and dance. A country may spend a lot of money for political and nationalistic propaganda with the display of the

specimens of that particular country's achievement in art and culture by organizing festivals of that nation in other countries. However, the true benefit of art comes only when it can come into the life a person who was hitherto not exposed to the hoary tradition of his or her own land, and of mankind in general. That is the main reason for our organizing this festival in a little known village on the outskirts of Ooty, where thousands of people have been lost for a number of years in the dark dungeons of their hutments into which not a single ray of educational enlightenment or spiritual hope has ever shone to rouse the lost and unwanted children of our sacred country. We are making an appeal to our friends in the various states of India to come out from their socio-economic imprisonment to gladden the hearts of some of their fellow beings who do not know where their own brothers and sisters live and how they foster the civilization of mankind with their soul stirring music and rhythmic placement in the dance of life. We invite you dear friends to contribute to the grace and beauty of this wonderful occasion. What we ask from you is not your material fortunes, but a glad sharing of

your talents, your love and your ability to generate jubilation in a country which is otherwise smoldering in pain, anguish, poverty and the darkness of illiteracy.

In addition to inspiring music and dance performances by renowned artists and Gurukula students in North and South Indian classical and folk traditions, as well as original compositions, Scott Teitsworth and Fred Cantor of Narayana Gurukula, USA, brought Western classical and jazz traditions stirringly to life. Visitors to the Festival also included Sri Shashilal Kashyap and Smt. Urmila Kashyap and Smt. Anita Kashyap from Narayana Gurukula, Singapore, with beautiful sitar performances from

Urmila and Anita.

Our project of re-publication of Nataraja Guru's major works is well underway, with the release of his *Autobiography* and *Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita* both expected in June. Both are being printed by All India Press and can be ordered from Narayana Gurukula, Fernhill.

Narayana Gurukula, Singapore, is now located at Stamford Arts Centre, 155 Waterloo Street.

Study groups at Narayana Gurukula, Portland, and Island Gurukula Aranya, Bainbridge Island, USA, are being inspired by Narayana Guru's *One Hundred Verses of Self Instruction*. ♦



*O fair one, banish the enemy with light!
And prepare for us broad pastures free from fear!
Ward off hatred, bring us your priceless treasure!
O bountiful, shower blessings on the singer!*

Rig Veda VII. 77.4



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44: Drawing by Sebastian Varghese



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2016 Oct 18

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The Word of the Guru
The Search for a Norm in Western Thought
Vedanta Revalued and Restated
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Towards a One World Economics
World Education Manifesto
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God: Reality or Illusion?
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Other

Dhyāna Mañjuṣa
East-West University Prospectus and Yearbooks
Nataraja Guru's 90th Birthday Souvenir
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