



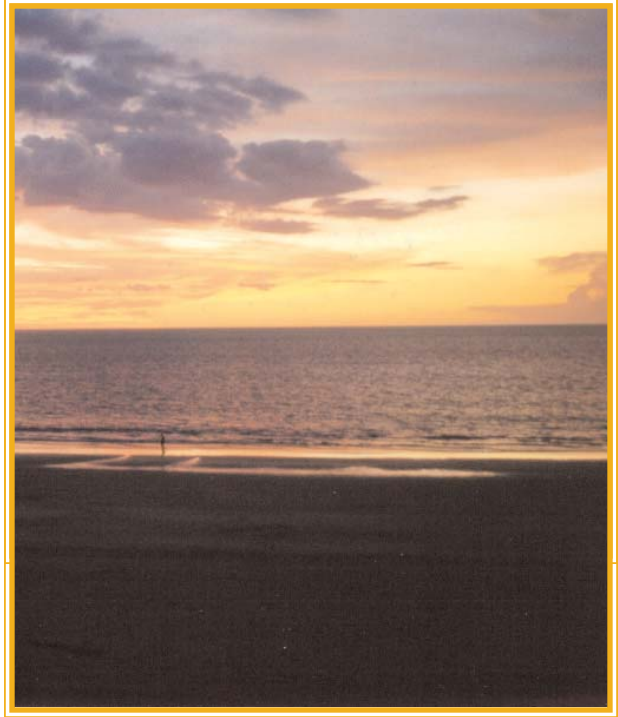
by Peter Freund

September 7, 2005

“Have you met the creator of the sunset?” he asked.

“Is there a sunset photographer with an exhibit?” I asked.

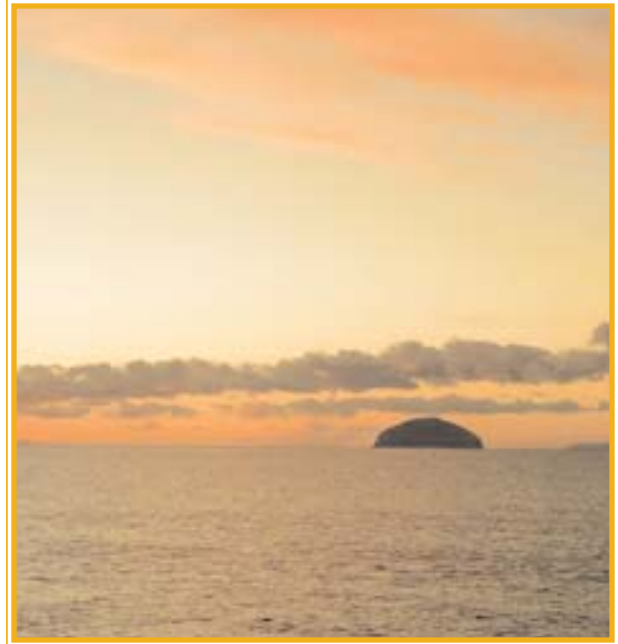
“No, no, not the photographer, the artist who actually creates the sunsets—he opened a booth here for the Artwalk.” The Artwalk was an assembly of local artists who brought out their wares one evening every month, in a festival atmosphere, and the whole community turned out to explore and assess their creativity and imagination.



He continued, “Did you see the sunset a few nights back? The sun lit up an entire bank of clouds with brilliant red and vermillion, and rays of light crossed the sky tying the whole world together in one brilliant show in which the sun plunging into the unknown reaches beyond the worlds, gave one final vision of its brilliance and power.” My friend was prone to poetic flights.



I played along. “Yes, I saw it too. I wish I had a palette like that to paint with. So many soft rich pastels, with innumerable shades which seem to capture the essence of light and the unboundedness of space, lighting up the intangible emptiness of sky with material form, so that the vacuum of sky fills up with the Light of God, exposing Heaven itself to our mortal eyes.”

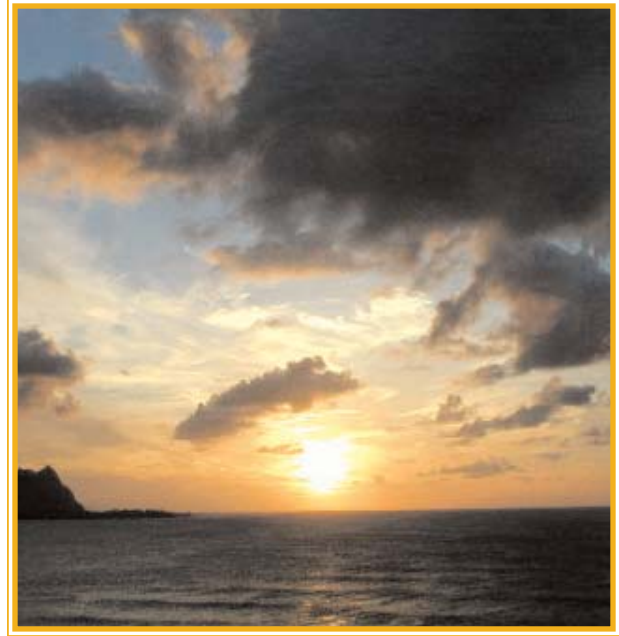


“Yes, that was certainly one of his best recent exhibits,” he said. “Do you want to meet him?”

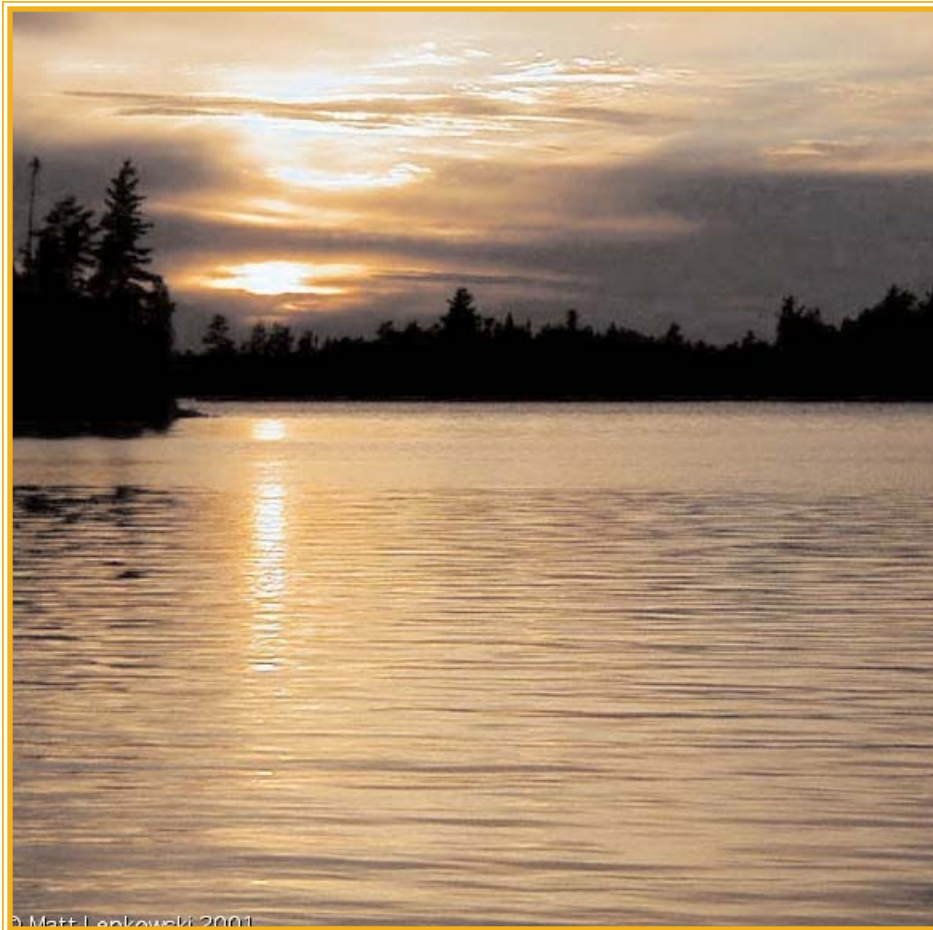


“Now wait a minute, you are saying that there is an artist right here in Fairfield that is using the Iowa sky as a canvas, and displaying his works for free for everyone to see, every evening? Does he use the tall corn for his easel? Does he gather his colors from the bright variegated rainbow that shows itself after a sudden shower? Do the wind and the rain serve as a paintbrush for him, as he shapes the clouds and filaments of light to our delight? Does he measure his perspective and foreshortening from the sun, the moon and the planets?”

My friend realized that I hadn't bought into it. He would say at other times that I was too much given over to the scientific world view, and was blind to the sweet tender inner core of beauty in life all around me. Molecules, atoms, fine particles — so boring, so dead:

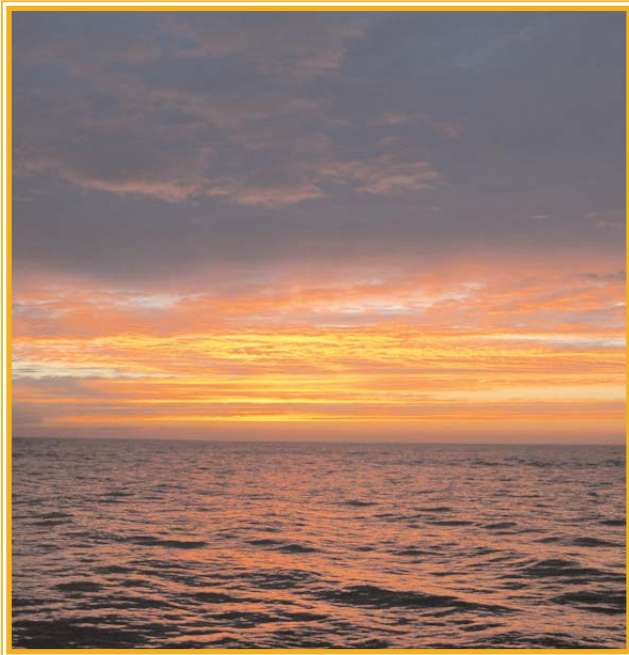


These were not the makings of the world, he would say, these were only concepts, and he would complain that I wasn't using my whole



brain, or I would be able to see the infinite glory of the Divine shining in every object. And he would try to awaken me to the hidden values of perception by pointing out their quiet majesty, but I could only listen politely. I couldn't really see...

“Yes, yes, but you sound so cynical,” he said. “You’ll sing a different tune after you meet him—we’re almost there.” We had been walking towards the downtown square where the Artwalk was laid out. We came to the outskirts and picked up a brochure listing the exhibits of the month. My friend pointed to one of the entries, it said unassumingly, “Sunset Artist,” and gave an address.



We wended our way there, past displays of painters, potters, weavers, digital artists and website creators, and finally came to the building which had been renovated as a gallery, with one floor taken over by the display of the “Sunset Artist.” We signed the registry, and moved into the first room with a group of strollers from the evening Art Walk.

All at once, the room became dark, and we heard the chanting of the primordial sounds of Atharva Veda, the ancient teaching of pure knowledge belonging to the Vedic tradition of India.

भ॒द्रमि॒च्छन्त॒ ऋ॒षयः॑ स्व॒र्विद॒स्तपो॑ दी॒क्षामु॑प॒निषे॒दुरग्रे॑ ।
 ततो॑ रा॒ष्ट्रं ब॒लमो॑जश्च जा॒तं तद॑स्मै दे॒वा उ॑प॒संन॑मन्तु १
 सहृ॑दयं सांम॒न॒स्यम॑विद्वेषं कृ॒णोमि॑ वः
 अ॒न्यो अ॒न्यम॑भि॒ हर्य॑त व॒त्सं जा॒तामि॑वा॒घ्नया॑ १
 अ॒नु॒व्रतः॑ पि॒तुः पु॒त्रो मा॒त्रा भ॑वतु॒ संम॑नाः
 जा॒या प॒त्ये म॑र्धु॒मतीं॑ वाचं वदतु॒ शान्ति॑वाम् २

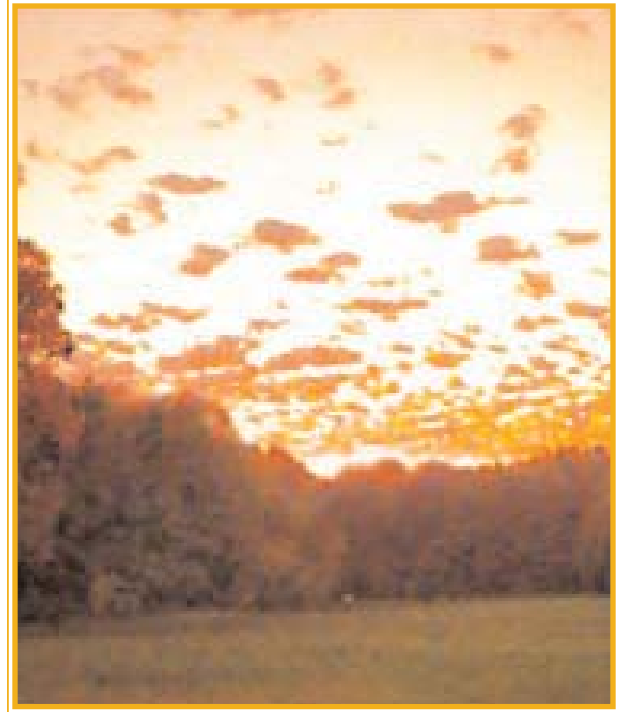


We listened to the sounds of the recitation, first in the dark, and then a light show began, with sophisticated laser lights, prisms, and mirrors. The room had become a theater. The charming even magical sound of the Atharva Veda faded away, and now a voice was explaining the light show.

“The source of the sunset is the Law, the constitution of life, the eternal law which governs life everywhere. The law governs life from within a single point, from within every point. Where the point becomes a line, where the line is a field, a straight plane without boundaries, there is the structure of Veda,” the voice intoned.



“There is the Constitution of the Universe. Where from one single point, the Law generates circles, cycles of motion and return, there the Natural Law is engaged in carrying out the eternal steps of progression which construct the steps of evolution in the most orderly way. Infinite order, perfection of form, unlimited beauty, the liveliness of all possibilities is ordained by the Constitution of the Universe.”



In the light show, we saw the point, vibrating with the potentiality of sound, expand and become a line, and the line shot through the room, from side to side and from side to side, over and over, and that line became a sheet of light:

One flat plane without ripples or boundaries, an expanse of pure light, pure is-ness. And we were right in the middle of it, as if participants, feeling as if we ourselves were that one ray of light that had expanded and become an unbounded unrestricted plane of light extending everywhere.



The point was inside each one of us, and the line flowed out from our own point, and the field was merely the extension of the line, and we were the source of it all.



मा भ्रा॒ता भ्रा॒तरं॑ द्वि॒क्षन्मा॑ स्व॒सार॒मु॒त स्व॒सा
स॒म्यञ्चः॑ स॒व्र॒ता भू॒त्वा वा॒चं व॒दत॑ भ॒द्रया॑ ३
येन॑ दे॒वा न वि॒यन्ति॒ नो च॑ वि॒द्विष॑ते॒ मिथः॑
तत्कृ॑र॒मो ब्र॒ह्म वो गृ॒हे सं॒ज्ञानं॑ पु॒रुषे॑भ्यः ४
ज्या॒यस्व॒न्तश्चि॒त्ति॒नो मा वि॑ यौ॒ष्ट सं॒रा॒धय॑न्तः स॒धु॒राश्च॑र॒न्तः
अ॒न्यो अ॒न्यस्मै॑ व॒ल्गु व॑दन्त॒ एत॑ स॒ध्वी॒चीना॑न्वः
सं॒म॒न॒स॒स्कृ॒णोमि॑ ५

The strains of Atharva Veda returned, but now we felt that Veda was reverberating inside us, that it was our own melody, our own intelligence singing, reverberating, creating the infinitely diversified ever-evolving values of light from that single point of intelligence deep inside us that was ever the same.



The ambient lighting came back on, and we were invited to step forward into the next room, for the next display. Everyone was silent as if personally reflecting on the infinite possibility of unlimited creative potential that had been revealed within a single point, that seemed to spring from deep inside every one of us. As we shuffled into the next room, I whispered to my friend, “That was awesome. But how does he scale it up to fill the whole sky?”



My friend whispered hurriedly that he didn't think the artist had to scale it, but rather, he created everything from one point. I wondered how that would work, but didn't have time to come to any conclusion before the second exhibit began.



The second room was dedicated to the sun. This room was set up like a movie theater. We were barely seated in our chairs when the lights dimmed and a new show began. Immediately in the background we heard Vedic chanting.

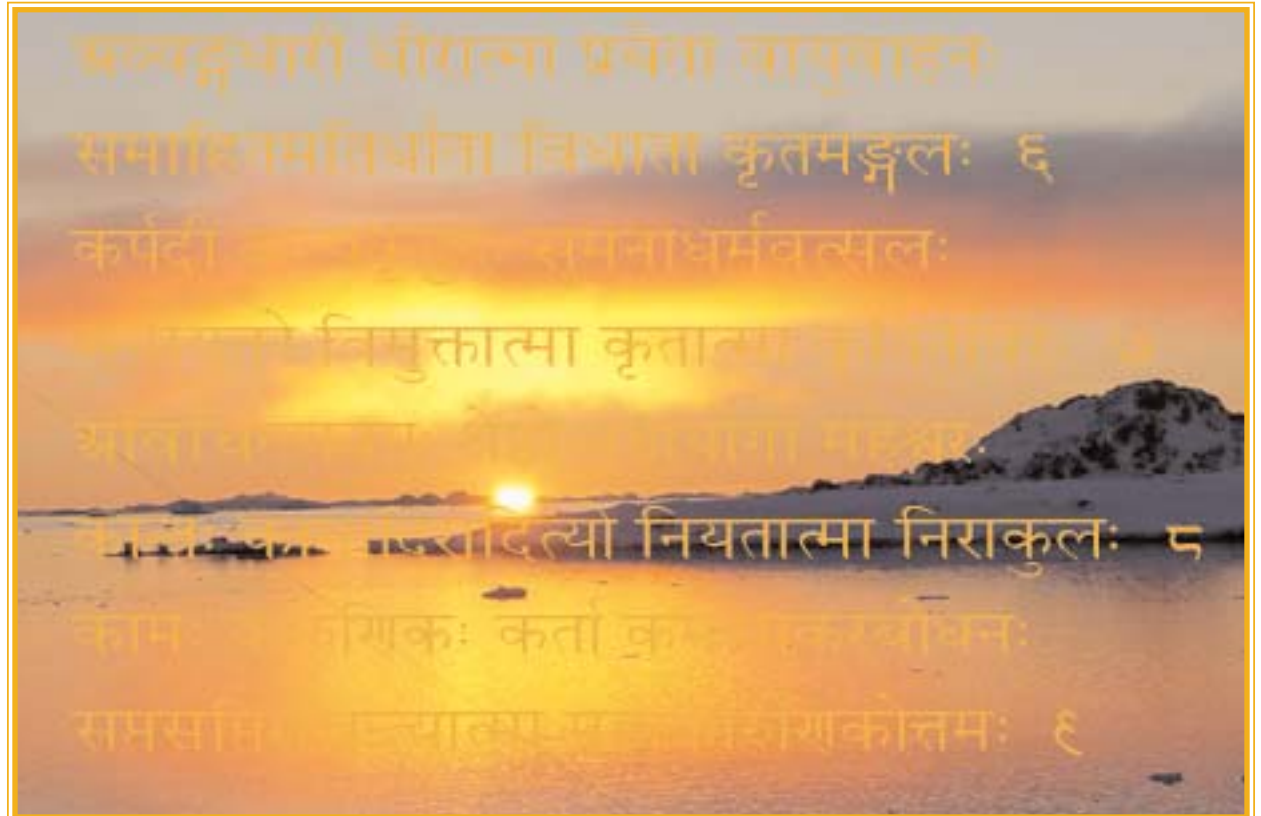


विश्वजिद्विश्वजित्कर्ता विश्वात्मा विश्वतोमुखः
 विश्वेश्वरो विश्वयोनिर्नियतात्मा जितेन्द्रियः १
 कालाश्रयः कालकर्ता कालहा कालनाशनः
 महायोगी महाबुद्धिर्महात्मा सुमहाबलः २
 प्रभुर्विभुर्भूतनाथो भूतात्मा भुवनेश्वरः
 भूतभव्यो भावितात्मा भूतान्तःकरणः शिवः ३
 शरण्यः कमलानन्दो नन्दनो नन्दवर्धनः
 वरेण्यो वरदो योगी सुसंयुक्तः प्रकाशकः ४

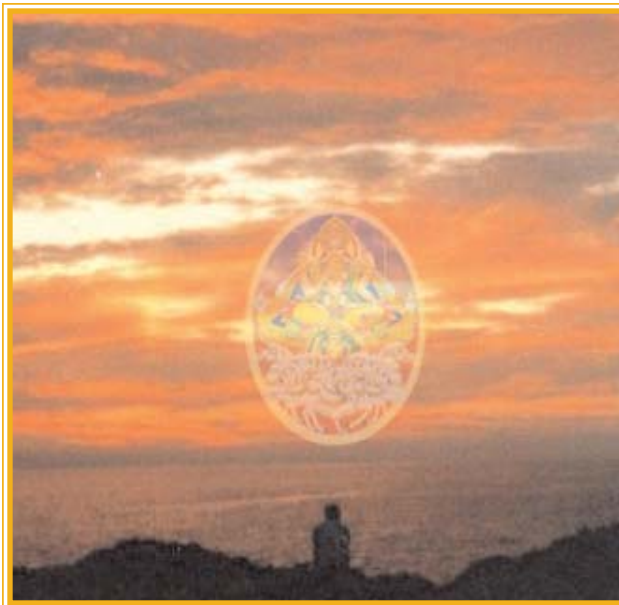
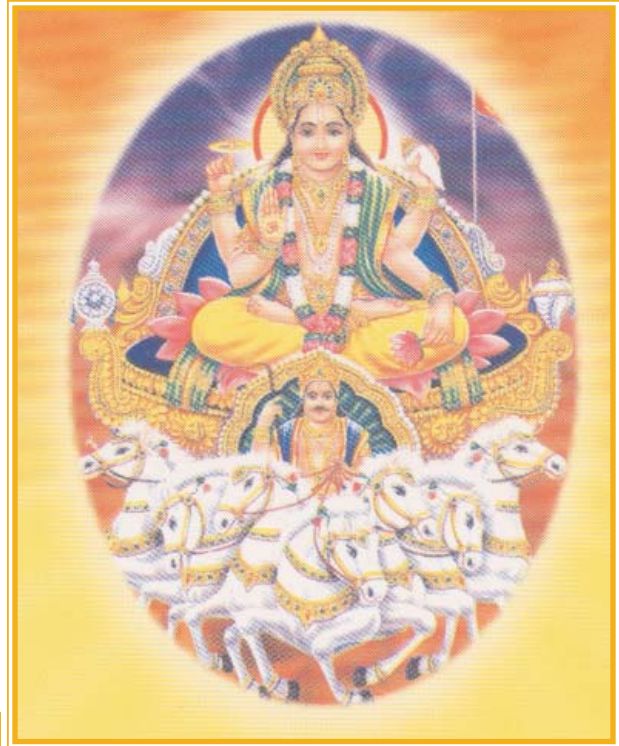
I recognized some names of light, and the Maker of Time, and the Destroyer of Time, and surmised that this was the Thousand Names of Surya, a traditional Vedic recitation in praise of the sun.



As the recitation continued, we saw dimly on the movie screen, a landscape taking shape. Gradually the sky brightened. Forms flickered across the screen as rays of light began to shoot through the sky. And then the rim of the sun became visible. The golden orb of the sun, rose up through faint mist, illuminating sparse clouds, and shooting streams of light in all directions. It felt like the recitations of the 1000 names of Surya were taking form in the brilliant life-bestowing golden sun.



Now the sun, shining in the sky, began to be seen in a different light, as if we could see the finer details of its structure. And rather than seeing sunspots and convection waves on the surface of the sun, we saw a deeper structure, the primordial form of the sun as a handsome youth, seated on a chariot drawn by eight white horses. As the sun moved through the sky, we were able to appreciate the sun both ways, as a fiery golden orb,



Now a voice began to explain that as the sun stretches out his rays, he creates the space of the solar system from within himself. Now we see the rays of light stretching out and illuminating the earth, the moon and the planets one by one.

and coexisting within the light of the orb, as an embodied impulse of lively intelligence, with so many manifest structures of intelligence responsible for administering the entire solar system with perfect orderliness: unlimited organizing power localized as the sun and his glorious chariot.



The sun is the totality; it is the knower and the known, and the process connecting the two. He is the performer and the fruit of action, and the action which connects the two. He is the subject and the object, and the verb implementing the action flowing from one to the other.



He is inside and he is outside, and he is the stream of life which flows eternally in cycles of dynamism and silence, connecting the inner and outer in one grand wholeness. The evolutionary progression of the chariot of the sun passing through the sky creates the theater of the world.

All the props and characters of the play we see in that theater are the different expressions, the different layers or shadows of the infinite totality embodied in the sun. The sun is the All, the Great, the Brahman.



We learned in the light show in the first exhibit, that from a point, the line emerges, and the line creates the field, and then the unmanifest field gives rise to all possibilities; now we learn that in the same way, from the single point of the brilliant sun, the planets are born, and the theater of life unfolds, ever the expression of a single point, unfolding in cycles of action and return in the eternal self-referral consciousness. That one point, possessed of infinite dynamism, reverberating with unlimited possibilities is the same one point, the source of all potentialities past, present and future, the meeting point of Being and Becoming, the core of our own Being.



The sun and all the worlds are created out of the organizing power of a single point, and that point is not distant, it is that point which is the center of our own existence. That totality of existence and intelligence, the infinite never-ending horizon of possibility is our own Self. The point from which the universe unfolds is within us. We are each one of us the embodiment of totality, universal intelligence.



The movie concluded by emphasizing that the knowledge of the sun and the vast solar system could be gained only by realizing the knowledge of the inner self; Self-knowledge was the key; by learning that one thing, the Self, by which everything else is known, we engage the infinite organizing power of Nature to work for us, and live Totality in daily life.



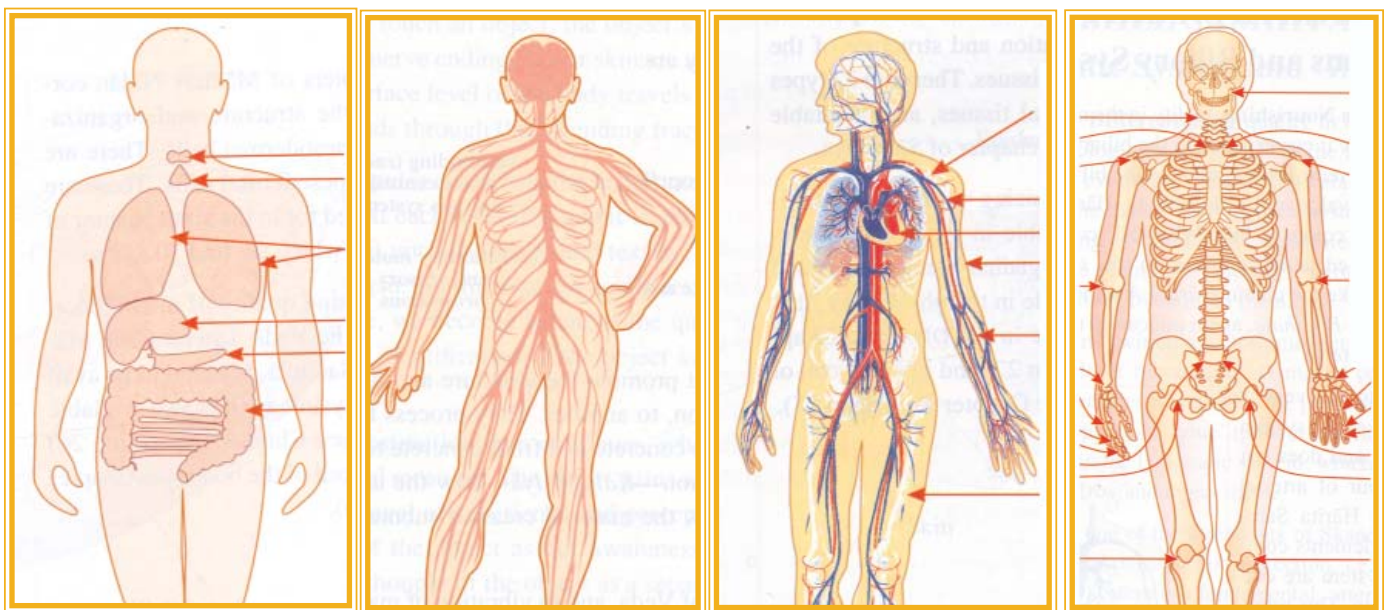
The lights came back on, and I said to my friend, “That explains how the artist expands the point to the world scale.

“The solar system, extending from the sun to the earth and beyond is simply a measure of the organizing power of the point at the center of everything. But what are the mechanics of diversification? How is it that no two sunsets are ever the same? We have a lot of elements, but there is still the main trick, how to put everything together into one sky-consuming vision of breath-taking beauty.”



Now a curtain opened and what seemed to be a puff of smoke emerged from the next room. As we filed in, we saw a small placard with a title: Body is the microcosm of the universe.

Here we were faced with a life-sized human model, reminiscent of the animatronics of Disneyland and other theme parks, only this model was transparent so that one could see all the organs of the human body.



The exhibit in this room began with what had become by now a familiar theme: The organizing power of a single point gives rise to infinite diversity through steps of sequential expansion. Now the single point was to be the first word of Rik Veda. Rik Veda, the most ancient and revered textbook of the ancient Vedic civilization, kept alive through recitation generation after generation by the Vedic families of India, begins with the sound “a.”

अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् । होतारं रत्नधातमम् १
 अग्निः पूर्वेभिर्ऋषिभिरीड्यो नूतनैरुत । स देवाँ एह वक्षति २
 अग्निना रयिमश्नवत् पोषमेव दिवेदिवे । यशसं वीरवत्तमम् ३

अग्ने यं यज्ञमध्वरं विश्वतः परिभूरसि । स इद् देवेषु गच्छति ४
 अग्निर्होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चित्रश्रवस्तमः । देवो देवेभिरा गमत् ५
 यद्भ्रु दाशुषे त्वमग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि । तवेत् तत् सत्यमङ्गिरः ६
 उप त्वाग्ने दिवेदिवे दोषावस्तर्धिया वयम् । नमो भरन्त एमसि ७
 राजन्तमध्वराणां गोपामृतस्य दीदिविम् । वर्धमानं स्वे दमै ८
 स नः पितेव सूनवेऽग्ने सूपायनो भव । सचस्वा नः स्वस्तये ९

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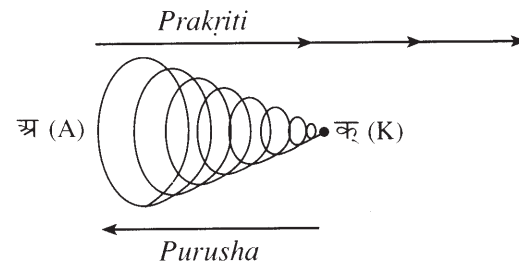
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The sound “a”, familiar as the first letter of every alphabet in the world, is that one single point from which the infinite organizing power of Nature generates through sequential symmetry breaking all the innumerable diversities of relative Creation.

We focus in on the sound “a”, and see the “a” collapsing to “k” through eight somersaults.

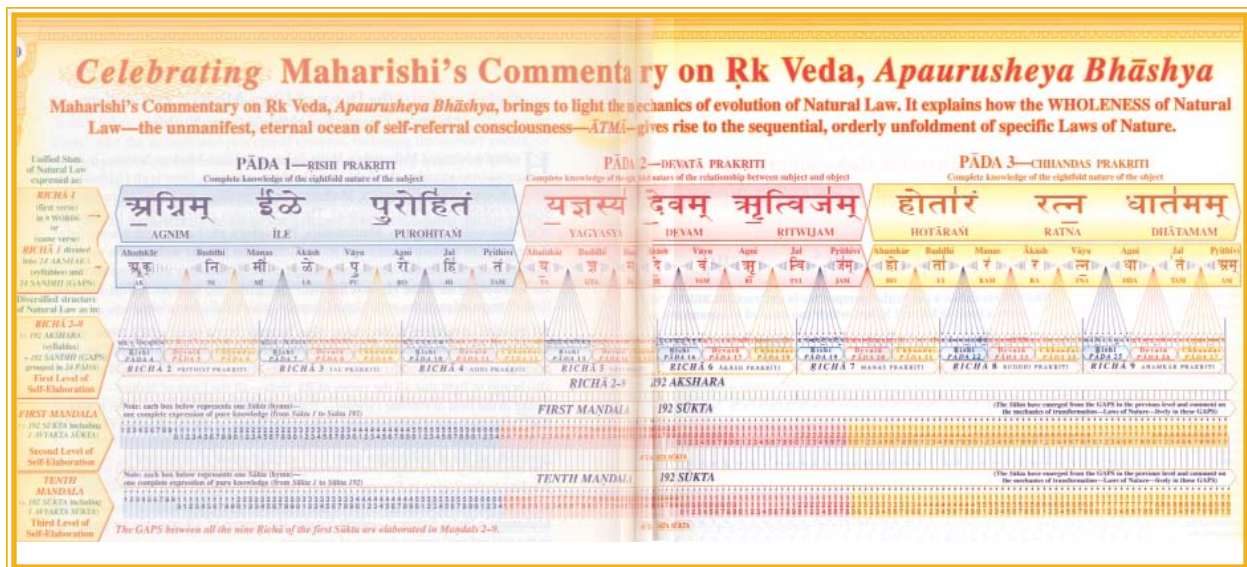


प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः

Prakṛitiṁ swām avashtabhya visṛijāmi punaḥ punaḥ

(*Bhagavad-Gītā*, 9.8)

Now the different steps of the Apaurusheya Bhashya of Rig Veda, the self-created or uncreated commentary of Rik Veda, are explained. We see that the first pada, and the first richa arise from the collapse of “a” onto “k”; and then from the gaps between these 24 syllables, the 192 syllables in the richas 2 through 9 emerge. From the gaps between these 192 syllables, the 192 suktas of the first mandala come out, and from the gaps in the 192 suktas, the 192 suktas of the tenth mandala arise.



The first sound “a” contains within its own structure, as the rays of its organizing power, the sequential expansion of its nature into the pada, the richa, the sukta, the mandala, and the whole of Rik Veda. It’s like a perfect poem, so perfect that the whole flow of it is contained in the first sound.

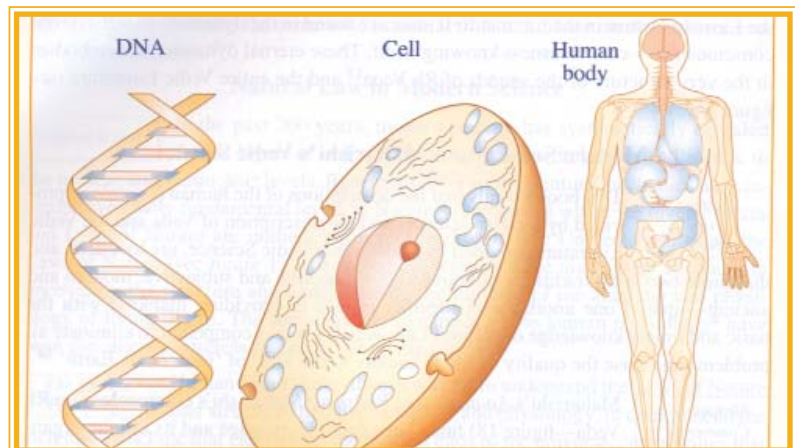


If you could just grasp the first sound for all of its detail, then you could follow all the following steps as the inevitable transformations and expansions of the possibilities contained in perfect orderliness in their seed form in “a.”

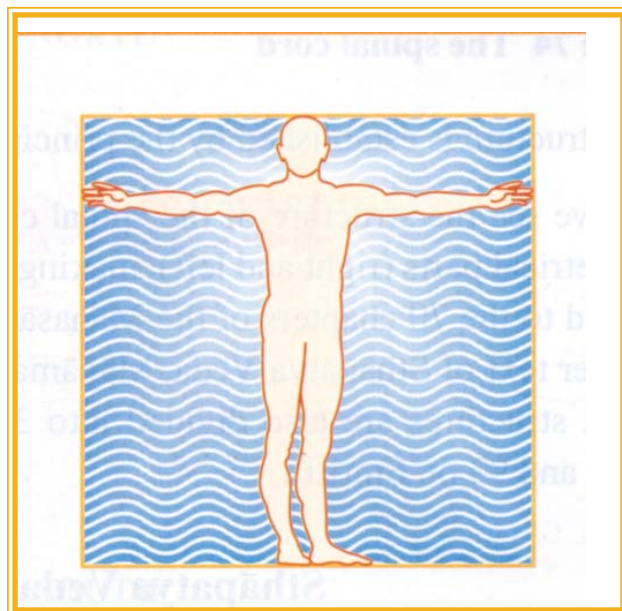
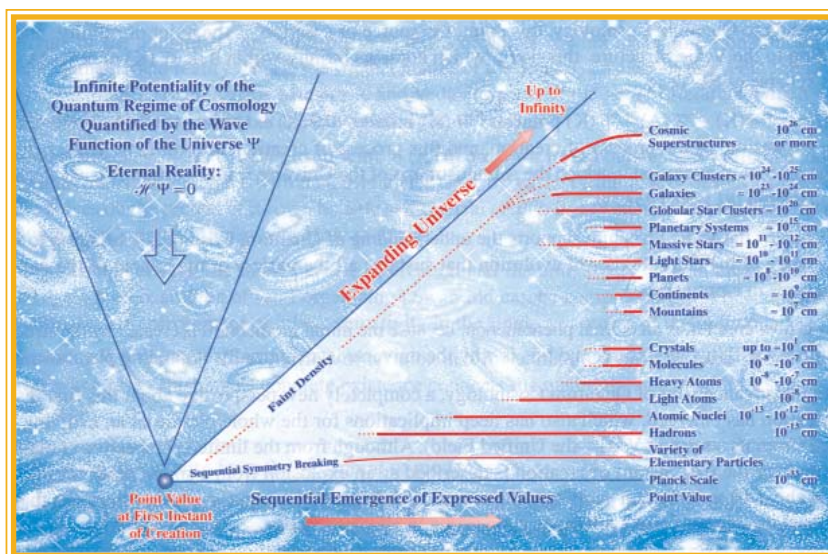


This was all very intellectual; and yet at the same time, it was a wonder that the ancient text had been analyzed and found to contain such a perfectly orderly structure. But what the exhibit presented next put the whole into a remarkably new light.

The different Mandalas or books of the Rik Veda were shown to represent the intelligence of the different organ systems in the body. As these different organ systems were enumerated, they would flash on and off with colored lights as the corresponding Mandalas of Rik Veda were being recited. Total knowledge of the human physiology is contained in Rik Veda; the Veda is the Creator of the body.

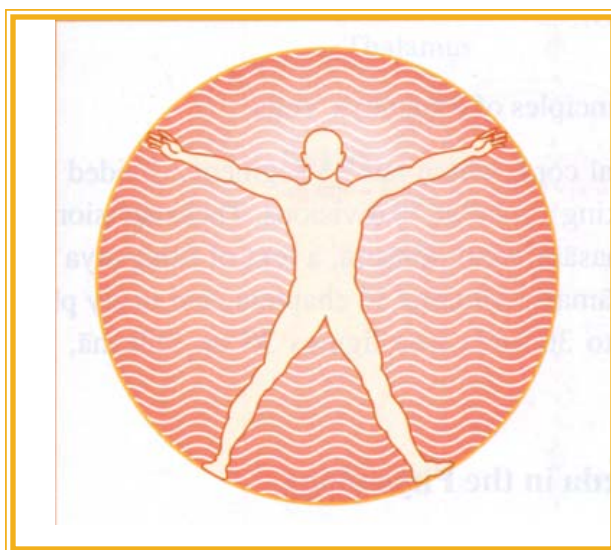


Now the point comes back about the infinite organizing power contained in the point: Based on the principle of sequential unfolding, the total knowledge of the human physiology is contained in even the first syllable of Rik Veda.



For even more detail of expansion, the movie explained, there are 40 branches of Vedic Literature which explore the intelligence of every fiber in the physiology. The body is made of Natural Law; the body is made of the infinite organizing power of Natural Law, the same infinite organizing power which is lively in every point of Creation.

The body is an image of the cosmos; a microcosm of all the intelligence that is there in every point of creation: Now, the movie explains, we have the key to the creativity of Nature, the secret of the beauty of the sunset, insight into the extraordinary versatility and power of the sunset artist:

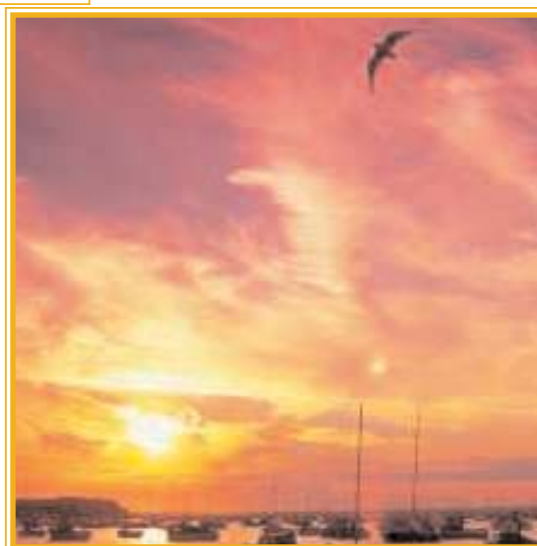


The Sunset Artist is putting into action, setting in motion the intelligence of Total Natural Law which is the birthright of every individual on earth. Every individual has the potential to create on the cosmic scale, because all the laws of nature that function in harmony to create the beauty of the sunset are already functioning to create the harmonious and coherent functioning of the human physiology.



Total Natural Law can be harnessed to serve the creativity of the artist on whatever scale he or she wants to express, whether small or large.

The recitations returned, and now the movie reviewed all the 40 branches of Vedic Literature and the different aspects of physiology correlated with each. A panoply of beautiful sunsets, one after the other assuaged our desire to see the beautiful work of the artist, whose mode of creativity had now been exposed to our scrutiny.



Then out of the abstraction of various brilliant skylines, the form of the narrator came into view. The narrator said simply that the Sunset Artist was there in the audience watching the movie with us. He bowed to the genius and technique of the brilliant Sunset Artist, and then faded away into another fiery and glorious sunset onscreen.



The lights came back on, and now, the familiar strains of Atharva Veda accompanied us as we filed back onto the street, and continued our perusal of the booths and exhibits of the Fairfield artists.

स॒मा॒नी प्र॒पा॒ स॒ह वो॑न्नभा॒गः स॒मा॒ने यो॒क्त्रे॑ स॒ह वो॑ यु॒न॒ज्मि
स॒म्यञ्चो॒ग्निं स॑प॒र्य॒ता॒रा ना॒भि॒मि॒वा॒भितः॑ ६
स॒ध्री॒ची॒ना॒न्वः॑ सं॒म॒न॒स॒स्कृ॒णो॒म्येक॑श्नु॒ष्टी॒न्त्सं॒व॒न॒ने॒न॒ सर्वा॑न्
दे॒वा इ॒वा॒मृ॒तं र॒क्ष॑माणाः सा॒यं॒प्रा॒तः सौ॒म॒न॒सो वो॑ अस्तु ७

Somehow, the cinematographer's trick didn't take us in. We didn't look around at each other, wondering who was the secret Sunset Artist amongst us. We were thinking each one of us to himself, "I can do that." Making a sunset is not such a big deal. Start with a point, extend to a line, then one flat plane. Then all possibilities lively at every point.



The canvas is ours. The palette is ours. Each of us has the creativity and organizing power inside of us, to bless the world with our beautiful creations, on any scale. There is nothing that we cannot create. The universe is ours.



I thanked my friend for taking me to see the Sunset Artist. I hoped he wouldn't remind me of any of my doubting remarks on the way in, because now I was truly a believer in the Fairfield Sunset Artist.

