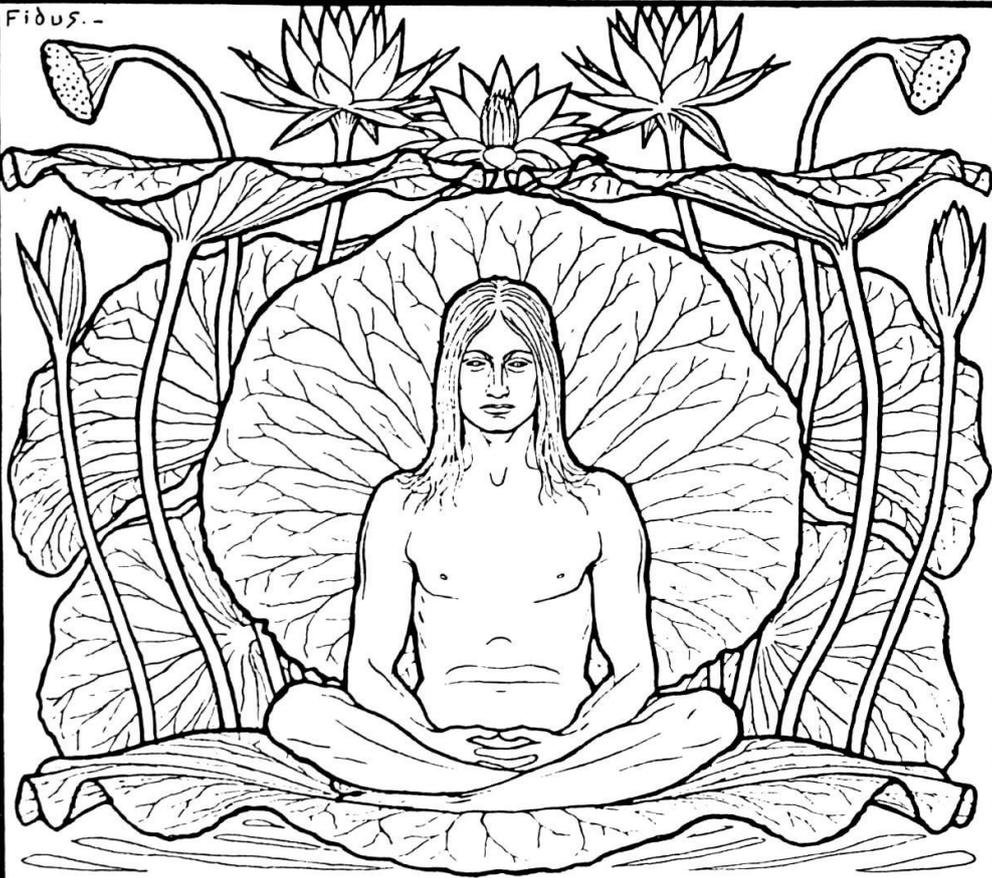


Fidus.-



ḤḤAGAVAD GITA

ODER

DAS HOHE LIED VON DER UNSTERBLICHKEIT

AUS DEM SANSKRIT INS
ENGLISCHE VON EDWIN ARNOLD,



INS DEUTSCHE ÜBERTRAGEN
VON FRANZ HARTMANN

VERLAG VON WILHELM FRIEDRICH · LEIPZIG

Dieser Buchtitel, die Übersetzung der ‚Bhagavad Gita‘ durch den locarneser Theosophen Franz Hartmann, gezeichnet von Fidus, verbindet Gusto Gräser mit Hermann Hesse und der Theosophie. Im Jahre 1907 haben Gräser und Hesse in der Felsgrotte von Arcegno dieses Buch gemeinsam gelesen. Damit öffnete sich für beide das Tor zum geistigen Osten.

THE HERMIT OF ASCONA

Hermann Hesse in the Woods, Rocks and Cave

For Millie Wolfe Fischer and Gordon Kennedy

This booklet tells the story of Hermann Hesse's stay with Gusto Gräser in the mountains near Ascona during the summer of 1907. It does so with photos of the place where this occurred and with citations from poems and other writings of Hermann Hesse, mainly from his report 'Among the Rocks. Notes of a Nature Man' first published in 1908.

There he tells how he tried to live like a natural man and hermit going naked in the woods, sleeping on the ground or in a hut made of brushes and leaves, fasting for days and weeks or living from water, berries and the fruits of trees, trying in this way to get near to the heart of nature and to win insight in his own. All this in following the example of Gusto Graeser who showed him the way. Together with Graeser he read the holy scriptures of the Indians, the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita.

Living like a Yogi, fasting and meditating, he aimed at enlightenment. But in contrast to Graeser he hadn't left and couldn't leave behind him the security of home, property, family and reputation. Instead of getting clear and silent in his mind he lived through a storm of dreams and hallucinations where good wine, cigars and a warm bed lured him back to his former life. Illuminations, he says, I had none. Instead of new insights I had found sickness, weakness, bitterness and longing for home. So the only consequence could be to break off this experiment and go back to his family and to civilization.

Nine years later, in 1916, he returned to Ascona and to Graeser and now underwent a fundamental change in his convictions and his view of life as we know from his novel 'Demian'. Once more Gusto Graeser had become his friend and guru, but now in a less literal, in a more philosophic and spiritual way. After having suffered for a number of years being separated from Graeser and his own deeper longings he was now more ripe to hear and accept the message of his friend. In 'Siddharta' he gave a second circumscription of his experiment as a hermit, his striving for holiness and his discipleship to a venerated master and friend. Up to his last book, the 'Glass Bead Game' this remains his prevalent theme and for the rest of his life Ascona-Arcegnò and the rocks and woods nearby meant for him the secret home and aim of his soul. As he put it in 1917:

"Here is my Holy Land. Here for a hundred times I went the silent path of introversion to my inner self. And go it now and never will it end."