

**III Asatya Darsana,
A Vision of Nonexistence**

Verse 3

What expands here from darkness into a ghost to a coward—that world is seen by the wise as a dream-world of the wakeful state.

5/1/6

This is one of those verses where it is hard to match Nitya's commentary with the meaning of the verse itself. Nitya speaks of the death and resurrection of Lazarus, and of being and non-being as presented by Atmopadesa Satakam and the Gita. The connection is very subtle, associating death and non-being with the temporary condition of *tamas* (darkness), upon which our fantasies play out like a waking dream. Lazarus' emergence from the crypt of stones and the journey from the unreal to the real are represented in the verse by the wise who restrain their projections, thereby remaining spiritually "alive."

The class time was spent examining how we each project our hopes and fears onto the blank slate of the *gunas*, especially *tamas*, and since we have discussed the dynamic power of fear extensively already, we tried to focus on our hopes. Derrick Jensen, writing about the environment in *Orion Magazine* this month, advocates going beyond hope. He says, among other things:

False hopes bind us to unlivable situations and blind us to real possibilities.

Hope is in fact a curse, a bane. I say this not only because of the lovely Buddhist saying “Hope and fear chase each other’s tails,” not only because hope leads us away from the present, away from who and where we are right now and toward some imaginary future state. I say this because of *what hope is*.

More or less all of us yammer on more or less endlessly about hope. You wouldn’t believe—or maybe you would—how many magazine editors have asked me to write about the apocalypse, then enjoined me to leave readers with a sense of hope. But what, precisely, is hope? At a talk I gave last spring, someone asked me to define it. I turned the question back on the audience, and here’s the definition we all came up with: hope is a longing for a future condition over which you have no agency; it means you are essentially powerless.

A wonderful thing happens when you give up on hope, which is that you realize you never needed it in the first place. You realize that giving up on hope didn’t kill you. It didn’t even make you less effective. In fact it made you more effective, because you ceased relying on someone or something else to solve your problems—you ceased hoping your problems would somehow get solved through the magical assistance of God, the Great Mother, the Sierra Club, valiant tree-sitters, brave salmon, or even the Earth itself—and you just began doing whatever it takes to solve those problems yourself.

In the interest of fairness, I should add a positive note about hope:

HOPE IS A THING WITH FEATHERS

by Emily Dickinson

Hope is a thing with feathers
That perches in the soul

And sings a tune without words
And never stops at all.

And sweetest, in the gale, is heard
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That keeps so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land
And on the strangest sea
Yet, never, in extremity
It ask a crumb of me.

The dikker definition strikes a neutral pose between positive and negative: hope is the feeling that what is desired is also possible, or that events may turn out for the best.

So hope can sustain us, but it is also a product of our desires. This is the essence of the paradox of manifestation, or projection if you will. We create the world through our waking dreams, and then either long for it to improve (hope), or wish it would go away (fear). We're still very far from seeing and accepting things as they really are.

Moni told us of attending the funeral of a fundamentalist Christian over the weekend. She was upset because instead of eulogizing the deceased, the speakers launched into a series of harangues about The Enemy Out There, and how they needed to fight and defeat this Enemy. They were so caught up in their fears that their hopes for heaven would be thwarted, that they couldn't even remember why they were gathered together. What could have been a time of loving communion became harsh and ugly. Such paranoia reflects a complete lack of faith in God as well: if an all-powerful, all-knowing, loving Being can't protect you, you must be having some serious doubts. No wonder fundamentalists

demand to know if you believe in God or not: that's how their repressed anguish over their own doubts bursts out of its hiding place.

Here's another example of how hope spoils the broth. All my life I've had a strong desire to become an excellent pianist. The urge comes from my deep love of music, and certainly there is much to learn in this complex activity. But the hope of becoming better has very often taken me away from appreciating the wonderful moments of music as they happened right in the present. I incorporated a strong sense of dissatisfaction that spoiled some of the pleasure others have had in listening to me play, as well as my own. Over the years I've tried to replace this attitude with a more pure love of whatever comes out, but the shadow side is hard to evade.

Hope has a definite shadow element. So many people hope they will someday become spiritual, hope that they will be better than they are now. The shadow here is that to hope for those things they first have to believe they are not spiritual, not good enough. Vedanta attempts to convince everyone that they are already perfect, that they only need to throw off false notions like fear and hope to be more than they could ever hope to be. We are all the Absolute. Realizing this one truth convinces us that there is nothing to fear, and there is nothing we are lacking that we need to hope for.

* * *

7/5/16

Asatya Darsana verse 3

What expands here from darkness
into a ghost to a coward –
that world is seen by the wise

as a dream-world of the wakeful state.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

Here what a coward finds through darkness
To be like a looming ghost,
That same is seen to be by the wise
Like a dream-world of a waking state.

Last night featured a fine gathering of an even dozen of us. Summer is a time for wandering, but several wanderers made it in, including Prabu back from camping in Montana, and Andy and Bushra back from their second home in Mexico. Combining our mental fortitude all together, we were able to wend our way to the focal point of the verse, subtly clothed as it is in Narayana Guru's allusive language. In this one, the Guru is providing us with profound practical advice for our spiritual progress, if we can make out what his intention is. I challenged the class to express the meaning of the verse more plainly, and we spiraled gradually inward from a cloud of theoretical dust into a vague thought nebula, condensing at last into a flickering proto-star on the verge of igniting as a shining sun.

The Lazarus myth from the Bible is the centerpiece of Nitya's short essay, where Jesus raises him from the dead. Many Christians take this literally, but it also makes a lovely symbolic image of spiritual enlightenment.

Deb opened the discussion by invoking Bergson, equating his pure duration with Jesus' eternal life. We break up duration into bits of time by separating out various specific shards, and in the process we lose touch with that eternal essence. Converting life to a series of steps creates ordinary time and space. In the spiritual view, Jesus is calling Lazarus, apparently just another deadbeat

caught up in endless details, to surrender to the greater life and reenter his beingness.

Paul was raised on the Bible, which tends to be presented in terms of becoming rather than being. Like Lazarus, in other words. Only when Paul took LSD in college did he discover a much clearer mirror to understand the spiritual truths contained in a veiled form in his family's chosen scripture. After that he explored several of the major religions, finding a similarity of the core message in all of them.

I too had thought that Jesus couldn't have simply spoken to Lazarus and convinced him to change his ways. Usually we can talk with stuck friends for years and not get very far, if anywhere. Soma has the knack of near-instant conversion, of raising the dead from the tomb of their fixations. The Bible never does say how the miracles were performed, only that they were performed, and so for thousands of years the faithful have been speculating, adding their preferred theories on top of the text. Banality prevails in many quarters. Probably precisely because there is no certainty, nothing spelled out, devotees cling all the harder to their timid personal interpretations, more grounded in wishful thinking than anything substantial.

Deb summed up that we are being instructed in this verse to identify with the total. Paul added that that was the idea of Baptism as he understood it: to go from a piecemeal perception to immerse in a wholesale understanding.

While true enough and well said, all this is familiar territory. I suggested that the Guru is hinting at very practical advice for how to bring the transformation about.

Jan began the sharper focusing, saying that we are being directed to go into the fear and darkness, to confront it and learn what it is and how it oppresses us. She was recently visiting with her elderly mother, who is in the early stages of dementia, and all she wants to do is deny what's happening to her. Jan touched off a

lengthy examination of dementia and how to cope with it. It is definitely a major source of anxiety and misery these days, a ghost it is hard to face up to.

I did note that according to recent studies the kind of directed thinking we do in class is one of the best ways to hold dementia at bay. The studies also cite studying music, learning a second language, healthy diet and exercise—all the usual suspects—as helping prolong mental acuity. And the chosen practice must be in place before the degeneration begins.

Where Jan's mother is in the earliest stage of dementia, Scotty is caring for an advanced case. He described the challenges and the bizarre perceptions dementia induces. There is a fine line to walk to help the patient keep calm by not worrying over fuzzy details, while at the same time not permitting dangerous or unpleasant behavior.

Moni supplied a neat conclusion to the discussion, thanks to her working with people with various degrees of mental imbalances. She recommended that in all challenging situations you have to take a proper, balanced position. You don't give up or get upset by what the person says or does (within reason). Your steadiness helps them to remain as unconfused as possible.

Deb remembered Peggy's wonderful poem about her ailing mother she shared a few years back, and here it is again:

Self and Memory
Peggy Grace Chun

As my mother's Alzheimer's disease slowly melded her brain
and melted her ability to orient via identity,
I suffered after each visit, sitting in my car weeping.
She suffered deeply also, grasping at flickers of fond memories,
panicking when she'd look in a mirror,
drawing maps of relationships, losing them.

We grasped and flailed together,
until one day I came for a visit and she said,
“I have no idea who you are but you’re just lovely.” And I said,
“Shall we walk in the garden?”
From that day forth, our suffering ceased, no longer orienting
via identity
but rather connecting via our deeper selves in the present
moment.
of course, she could no longer safely or freely interface in the
broader world,
so I’m not recommending Alzheimer’s disease as a path to “Be
Here Now.”
But that remarkable shift we shared
remains my sacred foundational axis...
in life, in love, in art, in the grocery check out line... in standing
side by side
quietly peering at the garden’s beauty
where only that delicate purple iris exists.

(Gurukulam Magazine, Fall 2013)

Andy has recently been “accidentally” drawn to Navajo painting, and read a fascinating book about them. Their essential world view centers around what is roughly translated as “walking in beauty,” but he found that what this really means is something along the lines of growing old and staying in balance. It is akin to the Sanskrit *sat*, existence. If you are having a bad time, your *sat*, your existence is challenged. Your reaction—your bewilderment or confusion—may cause you to lose “walking in beauty,” and that is the ghost of this verse.

I recently came across a quote from Nikola Tesla, reminiscent of the *karu* of *Atmopadesa Satakam*: “My brain is only a receiver, in the Universe there is a core from which we obtain knowledge,

strength and inspiration. I have not penetrated into the secrets of this core, but I know that it exists.” It strikes me as an excellent orientation, similar to “walking in beauty.”

The drift of our sharing prompted Nancy to recall a Rumi poem she saw on a café wall this week:

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

— Jellaludin Rumi,
translation by Coleman Barks

I closed the class with what I felt Narayana Guru was most trying to convey with this verse. First we should notice the symmetry of the writing. In the first half misunderstanding rises up like a cloud from the darkness and is given a frightening shape by

the way we conceptualize it. In the second part the wise examine the shape and discover it is not as real as it seemed at first blush. By doing so its fearfulness is annulled.

The Guru is asking us to perform something he was himself an expert at: self-examination. So much of our thinking is adding form to the formless, and we do it in ways that often terrify us, or at least delude us. Worry us. The very kindhearted Guru is gently suggesting that we could frame our clouds of unknowing in much more positive ways. As long as we are alive we will spout propositions, but why should we freak out over our own imaginings? Most of what we think comes directly from our tenuous suppositions rather than factual input.

So here's the practical instruction of Darsanamala 3.3: take the time to look carefully and critically at your thoughts, especially those that bother you. Notice that for most of the class we talked about other people. We are experts at criticizing, analyzing, instructing and dismissing the shortcomings of others, but not so good at honestly taking on our own presumptions. As Paul said, peace comes when you no longer struggle to hold on to your beliefs. We could stop battling other people about their (idiotic!) beliefs and just take a vacation from our own. We could have an amazing class if we stuck to our own foibles. I wonder if we could pull it off....

As an example of what is meant here, during the closing meditation I wondered how people reacted when they heard about "the wise" in the verse. How many of us automatically assume that wise refers to someone else? I have observed that most of us naturally place ourselves at the bottom of the pecking order, sure that the wise are the great souls we read about in books or who live far away in the corridors of power. To Narayana Guru, we are all the wise ones. He is talking to us here. He isn't teasing us with what better people than we have accomplished, he wants us to stand up on our own. Now. What isn't wise about people who have

spent big chunks of their lives studying Vedantic wisdom texts deftly explained by the crème de la crème? Projecting wisdom elsewhere is a cop out in a way. “Let the other people work at being wise—I’m not that interested.” There is even a sordid ego ploy at work, because that apparent self-deprecation is a cover for the ego’s self-assurance. It will actually take some serious work to dismantle that stultifying edifice. But please do. It’s extremely important.

The Gurus keep trying to turn the arrows of our intent back toward our own hearts, and for the most part we deflect them. This is a perfect example of how hard we work to carefully preserve our mediocrity, even in the face of the splendiferous explosion of Word wisdom in these books we presume to study.

This is but one of a thousand examples we might investigate. We hear “the wise” and we picture Hypatia, Buddha, Jesus, Teresa de Avila, anyone but us. Thus the message is lost. Narayana Guru is saying, “Don’t you want to be wise? Aren’t you already? Can’t you do what I’m suggesting?” He is infinitely gentle about it, but that’s what he wants to get across. Of course, if we don’t take his suggestion, he will only smile and move on. But his technique was successful enough to inspire the transformation of an entire region of the globe by those who thought they could and should.

Perhaps we should close this first part with an unnamed poem by (very wise! very far away!) Rumi that really resonates with the verse:

How can we know the divine qualities from within? If we know only through metaphors,

it’s like when virginal young people ask what sex feels like and you answer, “Like candy,

so sweet.” The suchness of sex comes with being inside the

pleasure. So whatever you

say about mysteries, I know or I don't know, both are close to being true. Neither is

quite a lie. Someone asks, "Do you know the prophet Noah?" You may answer, "Well, I've

read stories in school. I've heard the legends that have come down." But only someone in

Noah's state can know him. Now I hear a theologian reacting, "Don't get stuck in that ditch!

What you have just said is absurd." And that king of saints, the guth, replies, "Any state

other than what you have experienced seems absurd. You have had certain visions. Before

them, did not mysticism sound ridiculous? What you've been given has released you from

prison, ten times! And won't this empty desert freedom you feel now someday be confining?"

Part II

Swami Vidyananda's commentary:

For a coward darkness is like a ghost, and this is a common experience. The ghost and its cause which is darkness are both non-existent. To the coward, however, because of his fear and lack

of light it is darkness that is seen as a ghost. When a lamp is brought and one looks at it, there is neither darkness nor a ghost. In the same way, for those who are not aware of the principle of nescience, this world which is of the form of nescience (which is the same as ignorance), i.e., for a man who does not know this principle, it seems real. Just in the same way as darkness becomes, for a coward a ghost, through that ignorance which is of the nature of darkness, what looms in the form of this world is seen to be true only to those who have not attained to Self-knowledge. But to those who have Self-knowledge and who are wise, this world is like a day-dream and seen to be unreal.

* * *

I came across this amusing passage in Nataraja Guru's Autobiography whilst looking for background material for the new corrected edition of his *Integrated Science of the Absolute* (ISOA). It certainly applies to the whole world and not just rural India! A reminder why in the Gurukula we probe for substantial meanings instead of indulging in useless fantasies:

Challenged by Strange Crowds

To add to the heat of the day and the hardship of the work [on *An Integrated Science of the Absolute*] we also had strange groups of visitors from the surrounding countryside who came out of curiosity because of some of the publicity that I had recently received in the local papers. Not a few of them were journalists or those who claimed to know about Indian spirituality or Vedanta. They had mainly been brought up on cheap literature available in journals on such subjects. Swami Vivekananda's turbaned figure, when he lectured in Chicago at the end of the nineteenth century, afforded almost all of the

idioms, ideograms or clichés necessary for them to present as their stock-in-trade.

Stock phrases and clan reactions were glibly bandied about and there was much of what we could call “putting on a big front” or façade behind which nothing genuinely original could be discovered. Much pretence goes on in the name of spirituality in modern India, and most people either play the role of an oracle when they are silent or else blurt out something which, on further questioning, they cannot substantiate. Such empty talk is what is sometimes referred to as blah-blah.

There were some who insisted on telling me that if I were a true Guru I should prove it, not by any teaching, but by some psychic or other miracle. They often had their own favourite models of spirituality up their sleeves and were more keen on opposing me for the reason that they could stand on my shoulders to glorify themselves. I found that I could not deal with them in any gentlemanly fashion, and found myself snubbing them like an old schoolmaster which was a role familiar to me. Somehow I escaped untoward incidents taking place, which could easily have happened, especially as my own admirers, not without a tendency to pugilism, were watching keenly for any opportunity to enter into the fray themselves. (506-7)

* * *

From the class notes on the Introduction to Yoga Darsana, from October 2007, relating to the Lazarus myth. I haven't been reading the old notes so as not to prejudice the new ones, but this makes me feel they may be better than I imagined:

Bill told us about the days of his youth, doing psychic research in New York. He said it was fairly easy to tune into a psychic space where you could “read” many truths about a subject, past, present and future. Those were heady times.

When he went west and met Nitya, Nitya told him a “ferry tale.” It went like this:

A yogi practiced a certain technique for many years until he was able to walk on water. He lived by a beautiful river where he could practice his craft. One day a wandering monk came to the river. The yogi offered to ferry him across. The monk agreed, and the yogi invited him to climb on his back. He clambered up, and the yogi strode across the water to the other side, where the monk got down. He handed the yogi a dime and went on his way.

Bill blinked once or twice, and then the meaning of the story came to him. What seemed like a very exciting ability really had little practical value. Even walking on water wasn't a very big deal compared with the wisdom that could set you free in your heart. What do you want to do, take walks on a variety of lakes or find lasting happiness?

As we've noted before, religious claims about siddhis are best taken as symbolic. Raising the dead, helping the lame to walk and the blind to see are all spiritual metaphors for the dawning of wisdom. Literalism is a bad joke. Do the blind regain their sight through faith or through medical intervention? When we look around, do we see people flying through the air, people walking on water, and the dead coming back to life? No. Tortillas with the Virgin Mary on them, yes. In other words, projections of mind, of wishful thinking. Lots of claims, to entertain and bilk the lost and desperate, whose mainstream religions have let them down by being patently false and absurd, whose government is deranged

and whose pundits are insane. Sure, some of the games are nice and even sweet, like the Rumi divination cards we played with at a dinner the other night. But none of this equals a serious scrutiny of the meaning of life, of how everything we see is a reflection of our mental imagery. It doesn't necessarily help us to link our hearts to the Unknown, unless we are prepared to take it to that level.

Gunther Grass characterized the twentieth century as "Barbaric, mystical, bored." Unfortunately, that is all too apt. Very few are willing to make a serious search. We only want entertainment to pass the time while we are waiting to die.

Narayana Guru invites us to walk the razor's edge. Can we dispense with all the garbage and still retain anything at all that matters? Are we brave enough to first question and then act on our intuitive realizations? Can we swoosh through life, or must we timidly follow the leader? At this point we should be beginning to know wisdom in action.

Our little group demonstrates how much is possible with sincere dedication to something with a solid basis. We have been digging deep in this gold mine for a long time, and transformations are happening. No one is walking on water, but some are seeing life in a different, more welcoming light. Some are daring to imagine being themselves, waking up slumbering parts of themselves. Even just being able to say a few words in a closely-knit group of weirdos is an achievement. Many are giving much more than they were able to before, needing to take less, broadening their self-identification in other words. The love that is quietly shared between us in our lives is perhaps the preeminent mark of distinction here.

None of this will make headlines or be seen on the ill-named reality television shows. Nobody is going to attract a throng or start the next fad. Well, you never know, maybe they will. But for now we are getting to know ourselves as real, authentic human beings, and that's all the miracle we will ever need.

* * *

We didn't spend too much time on Nitya's two Gita quotes, but I thought I'd plug in a couple of excerpts from *The Path to the Guru*. My comments on II. 16 add a bit about who the wise are. They read in part:

16) What is unreal cannot have being, and non-being cannot be real; the conclusion in regard to both these has been known to philosophers.

Religious neophytes often make a lot of noise over whether other people "believe" or not. You must be a "true believer" to be among the saved. This verse points out a simple truth that such beginners have overlooked. Krishna might be asking: "If a thing exists, does not believing in it make it cease to exist? On the other hand, if something doesn't exist, does believing in it make it come into being?" Certainly there is an operational existence for such false beliefs insofar as they motivate behavior, but the philosopher will not be fooled. In other words, fear of an imaginary God may make a person behave according to an established code of conduct, but it's a pathetic and unsatisfying motivator all the same. Krishna wants us to act as free human beings, and would never stoop to such lowbrow pressure tactics.

Either something exists or it doesn't. To an Indian philosopher, for a thing to exist it must persist forever, and if it doesn't persist it's evidence that it doesn't truly exist. Its existence is mere appearance. The search for lasting value in a world of temporal flux is the story of the spiritual quest.

Since the root of virtually all conflict is belief, the implications of this verse are staggering. This simple

understanding mitigates aggression and supports peaceful and harmonious interaction with others, regardless of their beliefs.

When people ask if you believe in God, what they're really saying is "Do you believe in a very large angry parent-figure who will punish you eternally if you don't comply with our (my) way of interpreting events?" Because we learned very early in life that we don't have a say, that other people make the important decisions, we've learned to defer our dharma to outside "authorities." Religious and political leaders more or less consciously assume the role of surrogate parents to provide the expected discipline and not coincidentally pocket the fee. Trusting souls follow the well-intentioned training of their childhood and play right into the hands of these betrayers of trust. Few are the leaders, and fewer still their followers, who say, with Krishna, "Follow your intuitive promptings based on all you've learned, and act in accordance with your own best understanding, for this is the true light of the world. Learn to heed your inner voice, because it's the voice of God sounding within you."

* * *

Here's some of what I wrote about the Gita's verse II. 69:

69) What is night for all creatures, the one of self-control keeps awake therein; wherein all creatures are wakeful, that is night for the sage-recluse who sees.

The simplest interpretation of this classic verse is that most people attend only to what they "see" through their five senses, while the contemplative delights in the invisible realms of ideas, ideals, and ultimately the Absolute itself. If you can't see something it is dark to you. Conversely, the realm of sensory stimuli blankets the invisible firmament of thought, and so the

sage-recluse has to screen it out to prevent it from blocking contact with everything beyond the reach of the senses.

Transactions based on sense data are where ordinary beings put their attention, while the interstices within the matrix of manifestation remain invisible and therefore unappetizing. The wise seer takes delight in this invisible universe, and knows that being bogged down in externals will prevent attending to it. As Wordsworth said,

The world is too much with us; late and soon
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours.

The search for truth has always appeared inscrutable to most people. They can't understand why anyone would spend time meditating, when they could be partying, watching TV, drinking beer, getting laid, making money, or what have you. But for someone searching for meaning in life, these are mostly a waste of time, diversions from the search. They may enjoy them too, in moderation, but they have a secondary importance to the quest for understanding.

Contemplating the enormity or the incomprehensibility or what have you of the Absolute and how it suffuses the world is just about the most absorbing amusement there is. You can call it meditation if anyone asks, and then you won't have to explain it, since everyone thinks they know what meditation is. But that which is dark resists explanation. If you start to get a handle on the Absolute, you can be sure the handle will very soon be inadequate. Believing they know exactly what God is, is a comforting device for the terrified, the simple-minded, or the neophyte. Offer such people your smiling reassurance, then go back to wondering. They will not be joining you in the dark, no matter how brightly it shines.

Accessing this mysterious depth through contemplation, prayer or some other route is another thing the Gita means by being awake in the night. Prayer sets up a bipolar relationship with the deity being prayed to. It doesn't really matter if it's between you and yourself in your own mind, because you're invoking the wise part of yourself out of the dim part, or the transcendent Unknown from the limited known. It helps to gently minimize the ego also, by acknowledging you don't have all the answers. For the most part, however, the preferred direction is inward, not out to some hypothetical deity. The Gita gives little credence to prayer and ordinary forms of worship, but does acknowledge that they are suited to certain types of people and have some value. Contemplation and intelligent reasoning, on the other hand, are accorded the highest respect.

Structurally speaking, day and night are equivalent to horizontal and vertical in Nataraja Guru's scheme of correlation, representing such polarities as space and time, activity and stillness, becoming and being, physics and metaphysics, and so on. (For more on this, see especially his *Unitive Philosophy*, p.158.) In yoga, these pairs are all to be taken together. You can't have the vertical without the horizontal any more than you can have day without night.

Every Arjuna has a choice to make between the blind world of separation from the Absolute ground, with its divisions and hostilities, or the inner light that leads to union with it. The first is in plain sight, the second, subtle and mysterious. Yet what looks bright is spiritually dark, and that which cannot be directly perceived is lit by the energy of ten thousand suns.