

VIII Bhakti Darsana, Contemplative Devotion

Verse 2

Brahma is meditated upon because Brahma is blissful. Constant meditation on Brahma thus is known as bhakti.

8/7/7

Last night a simple verse and a brief commentary became a far-reaching discussion in which everyone participated, bringing in a plethora of insights. No further justification of the class is needed: we all received plenty of food for thought, and offered our own psychic alimentation gladly.

The main discussion centered around Nitya's presentation that as individuals we naturally divvy up the world into several modes, based on our limited perspective. "When these... modes stand one apart from the other to suit the finitude of the mind's logistics, individuation becomes fully cramped so as to be confined within the narrow frame of an embodied being." He goes on to assure us that the "sudden and total reconversion of the modulated into its true and original nonduality is the absolution that figures in this verse as an act of meditation on Brahma." (371)

First we subtracted any sense of guilt from being individuated beings with a point source outlook, described as original sin in Christianity and often misrepresented as an affront to God in many religions. We naturally begin life with a very limited purview—how could it be otherwise?—and the normal growth we experience throughout our lives includes the steady expansion of our inclusiveness. This is opposed by many social

forces which attempt to keep us bottled up in ourselves, using fear and consumerism to draw thick lines between people and groups. As Anita mentioned, we are trained aggressively to remain separate individuals: even some therapists insist on developing an impervious ego boundary as a cure-all. While this is an important step on the road, it is by no means the end. Bill quoted a Buddhist philosopher as to the importance of being a fully functional individual, so you can better help others and do good works. The ego is a healthy thing, not an antagonist to be smashed. But its limitations must also be considered and overcome for optimum spiritual health.

Narayana Guru here recommends meditation on the unifying factor as the way to grow out of limited selfhood to all-embracing Selfhood. When we relate separate items to an overarching normative notion, we transform enemies into allies and stumbling blocks into challenging exercises of overcoming obstacles. It permits us to be more present to engage in the real challenges we face, instead of worrying about ones that might or might not manifest later on.

Anita wondered about Nitya's mention of "unlimited liability" that he attributes to the perfected masters: "This constant meditation on the all-embracing Absolute is exemplified in the lives of Buddha, Lao-tzu, Jesus Christ, and other perfected beings who are well known for their compassion and their voluntary admission of unlimited liability to the entire world, for the fulfillment of which they lived every moment of their lives." She noted the paradox of opening yourself up more and more, when there are so many things which are dangerous and/or loathsome in the actual world. Nancy assured us that becoming open made us more attuned to what was needed in every situation, that prejudice was a block to clearly seeing what was necessary. Being open doesn't mean you endorse negative behavior, or fail to steer clear of danger. It means you see things as they are, rather than as you

fear them to be. And you are always prepared to give what is required, even if it isn't your personal preference.

Openness to all included becoming angry at greedy and selfish people, at least for Muhammad, Jesus, Nitya and Nataraja Guru. And while Jesus intentionally walked into fatal danger, since it was his destiny, there are many tales of seers who were guided away from danger. In martial arts, the first defense is to avoid confrontation whenever possible. Since we see so little of what impends, we can trust in the wisdom of the Absolute to guide us where we need to go. A belief that what we face is precisely what we should be facing spiritualizes all of life. We can learn from everything we encounter, as long as we connect it to us. Meditating on the Absolute is thus another way of saying "understanding from an impeccable perspective."

When we see the Absolute everywhere, we know the value-form of delight. We are led by joy to engage more and more with life. There is nothing sad or mean or forced implied here. We grow naturally, from our own enjoyment. This reminds me of my old "expanding boxes theory." Life takes place in a series of nested boxes, one inside the other, but with a substantial difference in size from one to the next. We move about in the first box quite contentedly for a while, until we grow to fill it up. Learning and growing are the same thing. Then there is a period of feeling constrained by our surroundings, like a chick about to break out of an egg, when we become aware of the limitations of our understanding. Some of us of course take well-meaning advice from people and content ourselves to remain in a small box, but the rest keep growing and eventually burst our bonds. Then we have relative freedom of movement for a time, until we fill up the larger box it turns out we're inhabiting. Since they're invisible, we don't become aware of the boxes until we have grown to fill them. Whether there are only a few or an infinite number of them I couldn't say. Realization means breaking out of all the boxes at

once, but there are also relative, minor realizations at every stage of expansion. The cramped feeling within the narrow frame of a human being Nitya talks about is the same as the temporary pressure when the chick has filled the egg to bursting. The only difference is that the expansion is psychological rather than physical.

So we remain engaged with life even as we grow in spiritual dimensions. As Nitya says, “The constant meditation on the Absolute is not to be understood as a sheer withdrawal and absorption into a faceless and characterless emptiness, but as a positive acceptance of one’s cosmic dimension and a universal recognition of the one Self that prevails in all and everywhere as the only joy and meaning of this world.” That’s about as beautifully as it can be put.

Anita told us a story that illustrates one secret of Gurukula life. After last week’s Sunday Gita class, she and Donna were driving home over the wide Columbia River on the I-205 bridge. It is always very busy and fairly dangerous there, so we’ve often counseled her to pay close attention to her driving, which she always does anyway. Donna gasped as they came out of the trees, seeing the nearly full moon poised in the nearby Columbia Gorge, just touching the water. It was a summer sight to send a supple soul soaring! Anita risked a quick peek, but couldn’t really enjoy it as she was attending to the road. She felt chagrined that she missed the beautiful view, but also satisfied that she had done the right thing by bowing to necessity.

In the following Tuesday Darsanamala class she told her tale; then on her way home she took a different route, over the Interstate Bridge. As she approached the highest point, the traffic slowed and came to a halt. It was a fairly rare opening of the drawbridge. (In my nearly forty years in Portland, I’ve been stopped by it only once.) The longer class and the drive had put it about an hour later

than Sunday, and so as she looked to her right there was the moon hovering over the water, right in the right spot. This time there was no danger. She rolled her window down and drank in the view at her leisure, while the world came to a stop around her.

I have noticed dozens if not hundreds of “coincidences” like this surrounding the Gurukula classes, and undoubtedly have missed many times that amount. This is because if we expect them they don’t happen. Anita would never in a million years have expected to be allowed to stop on the bridge as though she were at a sequestered viewpoint to admire the beauty of the scenery. And so it happened. It is not for nothing the Gita counsels us to discard our expectations. We cannot possibly say why these things happen, but they do. But they must happen in perfect innocence, and our desires and expectations inevitably corrupt and suppress their flowering.

Yes, many invisible good things come of the wisdom sacrifice of studying scriptures in depth, yet it is important to not seek them out on purpose. The correct attitude is to accept what comes, possibly with the simplistic belief that the Absolute knows best. Instead of trying to manipulate reality, we turn to appreciating how wonderful it already is, and how much comes to us unbidden. Often what is proffered us is not welcome at all, but it may nonetheless be exactly what we need for our spiritual progress. A brief paragraph in the Portland Gurukula Diary, part II of *Love and Blessings*, succinctly illustrates the paradox:

September 27, 1971

I went out later with Peter to buy some stationery materials. When he was about to park his car, he said that luck was always with him when he’s with me. The Tao is very reticent to be pulled into stereotyped regularity, so I thought that this time it might prove otherwise. He easily found a place to park, but when we returned we found a “No Parking” sign we

hadn't noticed and a ticket. That confirmed my fear of the Tao's unpredictability.

This simple incident has stayed with me all these years as a gentle reminder to not expect predictable reverberations from any particular input, no matter how "divine." The waves set in motion by our actions are exceedingly complex as they intersect with all the other disturbances in the pond. And yet those waves will undoubtedly do wonderful things, most likely out of sight and out of mind, but that is just as it should be. All vibrations and modes disappear into the Absolute and emerge from it as well. That is the meditation we are called upon to make a continuous part of our lives. Aum.

* * *

10/24/17

Bhakti Darsana verse 2

Brahma is meditated upon
because *brahma* is blissful.
Constant meditation on *brahma*
thus is known as *bhakti*.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

*The Absolute is meditated upon
Because it consists of Bliss.
Constant meditation on the Absolute
Is thus known as contemplation.*

Once again we were treated to a spectacular gem of a one-page commentary, where Guru Nitya rises to sublime heights of

poetic mystical elucidation. Some of his spirit was passed on to us through the written words, as the class also expressed unbounded enthusiasm and delight in sharing our thoughts with each other. For what shaped up to be a short, simple reading, we yet again had to slam on the brakes at 9:30, lest we all turn into pumpkins. (Refer to *Cinderella* if you don't know this metaphor.) Like racehorses that take a long time to slow down after crossing the finish line, or a boiling kettle that still steams after being taken off the fire, a sense of elation in the class persisted well into the witching hour.

This is a commentary where each idea—practically each sentence—could be the basis of its own class session. Probably we only scratched the surface of the insights we could draw from it, but even the scratches were significant.

In the Gurukula we usually distinguish the Absolute as Brahman and the Creator god as Brahma, from the trinity Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva. In Darsanamala, for some reason, Brahma was used for the Absolute. In case you have any doubts, Nitya opens his essay with “Brahma is the Absolute.” He then expands this definition with an idea that we found very stimulating:

Brahma is the Absolute. Knowledge of the Absolute is an inevitable corollary of the knowledge of the Self. In this context the Absolute is to be understood not as a noun but as a continuous absolution of everything that comes under the purview of consciousness.

A noun is pretty much a static entity, so to indicate the dynamism of the Absolute, Nitya makes the Absolute a kind of verb: a process of continuous absolution. In my 35 years of association with this work I have always wondered at the use of ‘absolution’ here. Absolution is treated as a noun, and is normally something granted by another person or outside agency. Andy provided the aha! moment: Nitya coined the term ‘continuous absolution’ to indicate

the process of resolving each item of awareness in the Absolute. Absolution here means “making Absolute.” This is another way of describing the continuous contemplation of the Self that is the central motif of the Bhakti Darsana.

We spent a lot of time comparing the standard conception of absolution with Narayana Guru and Nitya’s intent. Andy noted the usual meaning of absolution is forgiveness, and in a way a focus on the Absolute brings forgiveness, though from within. At its best, ecclesiastical absolution comes close to the absolutist version of Vedanta. We checked the OED, and I’ve included its most salient definitions in Part II. The words are not absolutely related, but are certainly close. I think we have to credit Nitya with enhancing the definition.

Andy’s insight is totally in keeping with the spirit of the verse. Nitya reminds us of the importance of continuous absolution by first reminding us that if we focus only on aspects of horizontal specificity, we are making our awareness smaller than it longs to be. He writes:

When consciousness becomes individuated it seems to assume several modes, such as a sequential motion from the prior to the antecedent, extension in all directions, an objectivization of bodily form, and images of gestaltations. When these and the several other such modes stand one apart from the other to suit the finitude of the mind’s logistics, individuation becomes fully cramped so as to be confined within the narrow frame of an embodied being. (371)

Of course, this is a necessary condition early in life, so we can fit in with our social context and also stay safe from the dangers surrounding us. At some point, though, the cramped condition that results becomes unbearable. Seekers of truth are those who want to restore their innate vastness. There is no need to abandon one’s

well-earned common sense, but only to add another dimension to it—a dimension that already throbs within us. Nitya describes this process as re-cognition, of cognizing our predicament again in a new way:

Self-knowledge is a re-cognition of the singular homogeneity that pervades all modes, and the spontaneous reclaiming of all alienated modes into an evenly sustaining existentiality which fills as well as transcends all conceivable limits of space and time, mass and motion, and pairs of opposites such as subject and object, knower and known, actor and action, and the enjoyer and the enjoyed. This sudden and total reconversion of the modulated into its true and original nonduality is the absolution that figures in this verse as the act of meditation on Brahma. (371)

Sound familiar? Once again we are instructed to take the apparent duality of our experience and resolve it in oneness, in unity, by intentionally bringing in our intelligent understanding. The multiplicity of the world will never *look* like oneness, but it surely can be *understood* that way. If we limit ourselves to appearances, we constrain ourselves to never accessing the underlying reality of our universe. Jan underlined the practical aspect of the verse, how our intentions help joy to grow in our lives. Only an act of contemplation can take us there, and the process has to be continuous because our senses always register the uniqueness of what they perceive. It's their job. But the "job" of the intellect is to remind us of what the senses aren't perceiving. It's a really interesting job, too.

Nitya was a living demonstration of just how transformative the job of continuous absolution was, and he communicates a whiff of the bliss he felt every moment of his realized life:

In the commentary on the previous verse, love was shown as a unifying dynamic. The same love, in its perfection of actualization, is seen here as an ever-abiding rejoicing in the highest sense of mystical union with all. When such a union is realized, the knower of the Self is absolved of all taints of prejudicial judgments that forbid the natural flow of love in all directions and the embracing of all as aspects of one and the same universal Self. (372)

Deb revelled in the idea of removing prejudices and opening oneself up to that constant flow. She acknowledged that every moment we are judging and separating, yet bhakti was about turning our self around to admit the flow of love into our purview. She reminded us that there is no prescribed way to do this. There are many ways to allow unity to happen, and each of us can access it in our own way. Paul added his favorite idea, that piecemeal understanding never quite adds up to a holistic comprehension.

Bill also resonated with the highlighting of bliss in the teaching, musing how after all the intricate philosophical discussion earlier in Darsanamala, he now realized Narayana Guru was living in a blissful state. Only in the Bhakti Darsana do you get a sense of the way the world must have looked from that kind of perspective. Finding our true nature means accessing the bliss, and the more time you spend on that level, the less the entanglements that separate you from it. Those can now be viewed in a more loving light, and the restrictions they cause go away with that attitude. Bill admitted that at times in the past he had emphasized more the practice of meditating in a certain way than simply accepting the bliss. The class got the sense that this was in the process of changing for him in a very real way.

I mused that the present state of global politics could be summarized the exact opposite: as cramped souls hurling prejudicial judgments at each other, forbidding the natural flow of

love in all directions. It's a sordid recipe. Nitya, as was his wont, reminds us that it has not always been this way:

This constant meditation on the all-embracing Absolute is exemplified in the lives of the Buddha, Lao-tzu, Jesus Christ, and other perfected beings who are well known for their compassion and their voluntary admission of unlimited liability to the entire world, for the fulfillment of which they lived every moment of their lives. (372)

While we ordinary folk don't presume to be always at a peak of dedication and care, we are also motivated at least sporadically by a sincere desire to enhance the lives of everyone we might come in contact with. In Darsanamala we take a very different tack than the tried and (almost) true. For the ordinary person, rearranging the items of the horizontal world to make them marginally better, is the goal. There is no doubt that with some effort you can improve your living circumstances in many cases, and there's nothing wrong with this. Yet to the Vedantin, horizontal values always come up short, no matter how well arranged. We can see that people with very comfortable circumstances are not always happy, are not always radiant with joy and good will. In fact, those who are struggling may be much more loving and compassionate than their more comfortable neighbors. The key is to re-enter the unified state of the heart, so to say, and then the horizontal vagaries will be bathed in the balm of verticalized wisdom. It doesn't mean we don't deal with them also, just that we know they are not the true source of our joy.

In our other study group, we've been pondering a helpful take on how to do this from Nitya's Brihadaranyaka Upanishad commentary, and I'll include some highlights in Part II. Here's an enticing excerpt:

In and through individuated experience, the thread of *atman* glows with the intention of unifying specific instances into a contiguous knowledge of the Self. Thus *brahman* can be meditated upon by recognizing the Self in and through the proliferated variegations which appear as the phenomenal shimmering in the wakeful and dream states. For this the meditator has to catch what precedes an illumination and what follows the glow of awareness. This is like diving into deep sleep or the causal consciousness and refusing to succumb to the breaking up of the Self into instances of display. (I.629)

Paul mused on the motto of the United States: *e pluribus unum*, which is Latin for “out of many, one.” He felt it gave a tangible shape to the many changing into one and the one changing into many. Or, how they each include the other aspect, without exclusion. The one side doesn’t invalidate the other, they are mutually enhancing. Deb added that it isn’t the many changing into one, because the one is always there. It is our limited understanding that only sees many. I might add that the present US motto is more like “divide and conquer.” The dreams of the founders have foundered.

Nancy talked about how Nitya used to draw a diagram of a figure eight to illustrate how the horizontal and vertical interacted, with one aspect predominating and then the other, producing movement in a symmetrical pattern. The center where they meet is where your heart is, filled with love. It is the you. She added that we are much larger than we think we are. Our energy fields extend way outside our bodies.

Toward the end of the time, we returned to the idea of absolution, mostly in a dualistic sense. After all, you have to think of yourself as a sinner or otherwise transgressor to require ordinary absolution. Of course we often do, and then it has its valid place. At this stage of Darsanamala, though, the Gurus feel we should

have already worked through that preliminary challenge, so they are presenting what is possible when we aren't so burdened with guilt and confusion.

Absolution in the Catholic Church involves making a private confession of your sins (or problems) to a priest. Some of them might offer advice, but the belief is that merely admitting your sins relieves you of them. It is anyway a good first step.

I used religious confession as an example of what the course prescribes, and Jan added that psychotherapy has its basis in this too. True. Anyway, you can go to confession with a range of attitudes. You might be hoping to buy your way into heaven—the Church famously made paying off sins an income-producing option. Other people felt free to sin all week and then obtain absolution on Sunday so they didn't have to sorry about what they were doing. The best attitude would be along the lines of feeling you were going to a representative of God who would offer you forgiveness, so you could regain your sense of dignity: the Absolute reminding you that you are okay, and that you are loved.

The Vedantic version does not depend on external ratification of any kind. You give yourself absolution, by contemplating your life and actions. You don't hide from yourself and you don't demean yourself based on popular fantasies. What Andy shared remains the best: you convert duality into unity, making it Absolute.

Paul wondered if the horizontal has any innate essence, because his church certainly made it seem like a solid, real thing. Everyone in the class felt its essence was derived from the vertical. In fact, the vertical IS the essence. Deb noted that's what maya is: perceiving the projected as essential. I also thought the horizontal acted superbly as a mirror to show us who we are. We learn about ourselves through interaction with actual events, and without them we are probably quite invisible to ourselves.

Nitya closes his commentary with another of his splendid sentences:

The constant meditation on the Absolute is not to be understood as a sheer withdrawal and absorption into a faceless and characterless emptiness, but as a positive acceptance of one's cosmic dimension and a universal recognition of the one Self that prevails in all and everywhere as the only joy and meaning of this world.

Jan was moved by the thought that the one Self was the source of all joy, that whenever joy was present it was springing not so much from the particular events happening in that moment, but from an ocean of joy present within us and biding its time until we permit it to manifest. She could see the relevance of this idea in her life, and was touched by how it accentuated the depth and poignancy of her experience.

I have just come across a powerful paragraph from Nataraja Guru's *Integrated Science of the Absolute*, dealing with the opening idea of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras: yoga is the restraint of mental modifications. This is almost universally taken to mean *all* modifications. Yet this can lead to just such a "faceless and characterless emptiness" as Nitya warns us against in his conclusion, above. Nataraja Guru eloquently argues the restraint is only of the outgoing tendencies, not of the efforts to unify the mind. If we restrain everything, we will wind up in the most tamasic, static state. The evidence is not hard to see, though even the Guru notes there is a "delicate distinction" involved. I have clipped the paragraph into the verse 1 notes of the Yoga Darsana, which is where it is explicitly addressed, but it is so relevant here I'm including it in Part II also, so you don't have to wait another couple of months for it.

Part II

Swami Vidyananda's commentary:

The Self is the same as the Absolute, and the meditation of the Self is, therefore, the same as the meditation of the Absolute. It is because the Absolute consists of Bliss that a knower of the Self contemplates the Absolute. Such a constant and unbroken meditation is what is well known as contemplation.

* * *

Nataraja Guru's *Integrated Science of the Absolute* Vol. II has a very important clarification for us, referring to Patanjali's Yoga:

Besides the idea of peace, the most important single condition for Yoga is mentioned in the second verse of chapter I:

yogas-cittavritti-nirodhah

Yoga is restraining (the outgoing) activities of the mind.

This sutra is meant to define Yoga as a whole. The keyword is *nirodha* (to hinder, obstruct or control). Many people fall into the error of thinking that one must control all psychic activities, because *citta-vritti* means 'the activity of the mind'. Here a subtle distinction and a clarification have to be made. Narayana Guru makes this in the first verse of the Yoga-Darsanam. The verticalized activities of the mind should not be obstructed but instead must be allowed free scope, with *vitarka* (criticism) and *vichara* (inquiry) as functions. It is the outgoing tendencies or horizontal activities of the mind that produce dissipation of interest. It is only on the horizontal level that control is necessary. Mere brute unilateral control is not to be thought of

either. One has to respect the reciprocity of counterparts, whereby an ascending effort to unite with the higher Self is reciprocally understood as being met by the descent of the soul, from the opposite pole of the total Yoga situation. This delicate distinction is also clarified by Narayana Guru in the Yoga-Darsanam. Yoga is a bilateral and not a unilateral process. (103)

* * *

In his commentary on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, volume I, Nitya elaborates on the aphorism repeated here by Narayana Guru: “Bhakti is continuous contemplation of the Self.” Let’s look at the most salient points, found in pages 628-630:

The highest teaching of the Upanishad is epitomized in the instruction, “One should meditate on all aspects of the totality (*brahman*) as the Supreme Self (*atman*)” (I.4.7) The aspirant meditates on this aphorism after listening to the *sruti* reiterated by an authentic person as one’s own guru, provided the guru is an accomplished *brahmavid* and an erudite knower of the *sruti*.

When a person chants the sacred mantra AUM, the verbalization of A, U and M is suggestive of the chanter’s wakeful, dream and deep sleep states. Then the person goes further into the deep and eternal silence which is inaudible but fills the entire consciousness as the inexpressible, imperishable verity of *turiya* (the fourth state). Similarly, *sravana* or listening is to be followed by a silent meditation in which all specific idea formations are dissolved in the unnamable Self.

A beginner may not know how to proceed with the discipline of unifying the multitudinous proliferation of consciousness in the wakeful and dream states.... Hence it is necessary for a disciple

to keep his or her body, words and mind in perfect attunement with those of the guru.

The instruction to meditate on *brahman* as *atman* is called *vidya sutra* by Suresvara. Sutra is the conjoining thread. Although *atman* is invisible and all-pervasive and transcends the limits of time and space, it occurs to a personalized organism like a human being as an item of illumination. This light of awareness within the phenomenal scheme is felt in the individual's sensory system and memory storage and as the flash of judgment and consequent affectation about a circumscribed item of awareness. Each such illumination is like the fluorescent shining of a firefly in the night or a dewdrop that is made to glitter kaleidoscopically by a gleam of sunlight.

In and through individuated experience, the thread of *atman* glows with the intention of unifying specific instances into a contiguous knowledge of the Self. Thus *brahman* can be meditated upon by recognizing the Self in and through the proliferated variegations which appear as the phenomenal shimmering in the wakeful and dream states. For this the meditator has to catch what precedes an illumination and what follows the glow of awareness. This is like diving into deep sleep or the causal consciousness and refusing to succumb to the breaking up of the Self into instances of display.

After listening to the teacher's pronouncement of the a priori truth, the disciple closes the eyes to efface the physical distance between the disciple and the preceptor. Then the natural oscillation of modulating consciousness (*bhavana*) is substituted by the intuitive flash of holistic apperception which is the heart and soul of the testimony of *sabda*.

The thread that relates the understanding of the disciple and the vision of the teacher reflects the sutra that relates the Self with the cosmos or the Absolute.

Illumination comes like a flash of wisdom, and it is the revelation of such knowledge that establishes in a person an unchanging attitude for the rest of one's life. Suresvara... maintains the belief that such a revelation will not come by itself unless a person seriously aspires for it. The seriousness of one's search depends on how one prepares oneself to gain such an insight. Every passing moment is an opportunity to have a hard look at the facts of one's life to see what blemishes are there that can be steadily removed.

* * *

From The OED, the most relevant definitions:

absolute [Latin *absolutus* freed, completed; past participle of *absolvere* ABSOLVE]

A (adj.) detached, disengaged

1 Absolved from

4&6 Finished, perfect; complete, entire

10 Viewed without relation to or comparison with other things of the same kind; real, actual.

IV Without condition or mental limitation

13 Philosophy: Existing or able to be thought of without relation to other things.

B (noun) 1 the Absolute, that which is absolute, that which exists or is able to be thought of without relation to other things.

2 An absolute thing: an absolute principle or truth.

absolution [Latin *absolutio*]

1 Remission from sins, declared by ecclesiastical authority. b (An utterance of) the formula by which this is declared.

2 Forgiveness of sins generally.

3 More widely: any absolving or formal setting-free (*from* guilt, sentence or obligation); remission (*of* sin or penance).

4 Especially Roman Law: A judgement for the defendant.

absolve [Latin *absolvere*]

1 set free, discharge.

3 Pronounce free (*from* blame, guilt, the consequences of crime or sin, etc.)

Part III

We received another thoughtful email from Jay, including support for my assertion that kids are true gurus:

This class note is wonderful! While reading it, I had few thoughts which I share with you.

As Bill said...Finding that true nature means accessing the bliss, this is interesting. Vedantin Adi Shankaracharya was a scholar and has written many words explaining advaita, but at the end of his life he pen downed BHAJAGOVINDAM which is more of a devotional song, as if he may have deviated from his intellectual path. Again, this shows that love is more effective than intellect to merge with the absolute. This was what Mirabai did, and you have given more examples of this path.

May be 'absolution' is LOVE that dissolves all the limitations. This is the key component of vertical axis. Intellect is probably the aspects of horizontal axis. When we say, love is blind,

it has to be blind, a nonjudgmental, all accepting, to facilitate the union.

Paul's mention of: *e pluribus unum*, "out of many, one" is really an interesting observation. Not everybody in US probably aware of its profound Vedantic sense. Love thy neighbor as thy self also suggests not being too judgemental and being more compassionate.

Infinity symbol is figure eight on its side, meaning "unboundedness" or Atman. As you said before, "Seekers of truth are those who want to restore their innate vastness"....and this is infinity or the unlimited one.

Talking about LOVE, I had an interesting conversation with my three and half year old granddaughter. While picking her up from her day care school, I said let us go home, sweet home. Then I asked her, why we call it sweet home...we don't put lots of sugar in it. She replied...because we put LOVE in it!

Regards,

Jay