

7/24/18

MOTS Chapter 3: What is 'Out There' is 'In Here'

Existing outside and seen within, through an act of superimposition,
the five specific elements, like sky, when contemplated,
should become like waves rising in rows
from the treasury of the watery deep, without any separate reality
whatsoever.

The book has:

Existing outside and, as specific modes, seen within,
the five elements, like sky, when contemplated,
should become like waves rising in rows
from the treasury of the watery deep, without any separate reality
whatsoever.

I don't know why I think of *Meditations on the Self* as a simple book that will be easy to breeze through. There is so much to it! I think we will hit some simpler chapters, but we sure haven't yet. In dissecting Nitya's essay, the class produced a treasury of its own, complete with waves rising in rows from the watery deeps, a cache I can hardly begin to do justice to. At least I'll have fun trying. Or I'll *try* to have fun trying. Let's go.

The gist, of course, is contained in Nitya's title: *What is 'Out There' is 'In Here'*. It's similar to Jack Flanders' motto, from the ZBS audio adventure series: "What's coming at you is really coming *from* you." I like the latter because it adds a dynamic element. Our inner conception of the outer world (per the title) sounds docile if not peaceful. Of course it's true, but where it most matters is in the upsetting aspects of "out there," when they impinge on our peace of mind and we make the mistake of blaming the cause instead of recognizing the opportunity it affords us to understand ourselves better.

Since Nitya was oceanically calm, I suppose his title is more appropriate for him. Those of us who tend more toward the oceanically chaotic can think of Jack's version. Either way, as the Beatles put it: "You're inside is out, and your outside is in, so come on!"

At one point I asked the group how they understood this principle, and whether it made any difference in how they sailed through their life. For me, it was a key idea in the transformation I've undergone, so I'm an advocate. As is usual we veered away from the prompt, but did come back to it eventually, so I'll save that discussion till later. Perhaps you can think about it while you're reading, and see what you come up with too.

Deb opened the discussion with an idea she is fond of: When you're an adult you can hold two contradictory ideas in your mind at the same time, and they can both be true. Or equally true. Or equally likely. This verse provides the ultimate contradictory ideas, where we are operating in a world that is out there and yet all that we do and conceive and live in is in our mind, though this is not the same thing as being in our brain.

I added that cessation of modulation is a similar impossible contradiction, but during the reading I did think of a way to reconcile it. I was thinking of what Nitya says here:

Modulation of consciousness is identical with existence. In another sense, modulation of vritti is the existential function of the mind.

So if modulation (vritti) is identical with existence, ceasing it means ceasing existence. A tough nut to crack! I don't want to die over this. What came to my mind was the way a seed epitomizes the entirety of a vast and complex tree, for instance. That huge, infinite manifestation is compressed to an unprepossessing dot, which can expand once again into a new universe of actualized potential. I visualized it as passing through the neck of an hourglass, or a quantum gateway. The paradox is in how the

cessation of modulation is the apex and triumph of the tree, its ultimate extrapolation, where it produces first buds, then flowers, fruits, and finally the essence of the fruit, which is the seed. Which is almost nothing. Nothing (or nearly nothing) is the outcome of everything, in that sense.

Andy imagines the mental construct of vritti as a whirlpool, a spinning world we get wrapped up in. Cessation means stilling the vritti, watching it arise and yet not getting involved in it with quite so much identification.

That's very helpful. Our meditations can carry this out, and in doing so offer us a kind of rebirth. I suspect Patanjali had something like this in mind, rather than his disciples ceasing to exist absolutely. That would be a poor business model! Done in the best sense 'intelligent' mode, meditation can be our personal climax of development, taking us beyond actuality to something undefinable but often called truth.

Deb agreed that the dharma of the tree is to go through every bit of the growth and development we can observe. Eventually it dies to make room for the new seed to take its place. Its like all ripples and manifestations periodically merge back into the unmodulated state.

Nitya, not surprisingly, reconciles the duality quite handily:

If the mind is finite how does it contain the infinite sky? Mind does not hold the sky. In fact, it contains nothing. Mind is all by itself. Finitude and infinitude are both ideas of the mind.

Nitya boils the inscrutable vritti down to being "a single individual idea," and then they collectively appear as the perceptible face of our samskaras and vasanas:

It is as if positive images and negative apprehensions are hiding behind the folds of the unconscious seeking promotion into the limelight of attention.

Sounds like vasanas to me! Nitya also describes the “no-man’s-land” midway between the external and internal as being like the battlefield of the Gita, known as the field of dharma:

Awareness oscillates between the external and the internal as a reconnoitering observer, and it promotes an item of interest that can sustain itself for a while in a situation that lies in between the inner state of mind and the external environment. When an item of interest is given attention, all its associated correlatives automatically fall in line, and instantly an interesting or menacing or irrational gestalt is structured.

While we’re on the dharma field, Nitya’s characterization of dharma here is extraordinarily helpful:

The eternal process of origin, growth, change, and transformation shows within it an integral scheme, a working principle, an ontologic dynamism, called dharma. Dharma individuates its ground, specifies the individual’s functions, operates as actions and reactions, causing change without negating the individuality of its ground, and finally brings about the individual’s disintegration to initiate a fresh cycle of manifestation. We may as well say dharma is becoming.

The seed emerges and develops over time, and so time becomes a necessary feature of modulation, which brings up another fascinating paragraph in the text:

Becoming implies sequence, and sequence is another term for time. The relation between the ground containing the seeds of action, or dharma, and manifested action, or karma, is analogous to the relation between space and time. Space and time have a togetherness, and one presupposes the other. It is no wonder that the rishis thought of akasa as a self-created and self-engineered world projection, an unfoldment of a

mysterious spirit, and the psychic, psychophysical elaboration or horizontalization of a vertical principle.

Vertical and horizontal are a prime example of opposing concepts, ones that we have already learned to integrate in our studies, so let's focus on how the idea expressed in the title plays out in our lives. Nitya pretty much leaves it to us, not really stressing the importance of it. The most pointed reference he makes is:

We might just as well say that at the moment the mind apprehends the vision of the sky, the mind and the sky are the same. Thus what is seen as 'out there' is in truth 'in here'. Of course, it is not in the head, but it is in the mind. Philosophers like Gaudapada, Plato, Sankara and Berkeley, and more recently scientists like Eddington and Schrodinger, have called our attention again and again to this inherent discrepancy of the mind which makes an inner idea look like an outer object.

We've of course hit on this often enough, yet the mind is so clever that we forget almost always, and just take what we see for granted as "the world." This is probably for the best, so far as relating to the horizontal world is concerned. There is little point in debating the reality of traffic signals or product ingredients, so it would be a waste of time, if not hazardous. In issues like our evolution and relationships, where vertical considerations are present, remembering that we are seeing a passion play staged in our mind's eye is of tremendous value.

John got the ball rolling nicely, talking about how as a youngster he was fully convinced that the scientific world-view would nail everything down in its proper place, and that was where he wanted to make his nest. As time went on, he realized that his view of the world was built out of all his experiences, which were totally subjective. He became aware of the unreliability of people's perceptions of the world, and that the experience that has constructed his perspective has been filtered and mediated by some

part of his mind that is invisible to him. And this is what gives him hope—he sees the opportunity for liberation from the modulation cycle by realizing that there is something more going on than a simple registration of reality.

I contributed that Nitya, while acknowledging our uniqueness and the impossibility of knowing whether anyone else's depictions matched ours, was profoundly moved by the fact that the world works, that we can not only get along but even function spectacularly in all sorts of combinations with others. This means there must be a universal ground that serves as a uniting force, and he felt it was worthy of veneration. We would surely be in dire straits if such a factor were not present.

Susan told us how when her daughter Sarah went off to college, it made her aware of how wrapped up in her children's narratives she was. At first she only knew she was losing her very familiar and absorbing narrative. It was a turning point for Susan because she had to think about who she was without her role as a caregiver, at least on a day-to-day basis. Mothers everywhere are self-abnegating, often to a tremendous degree, and society doesn't always provide a ready alternative after that period of life ends. Susan does feel empowered more now, by turning her focus more inwardly, as her children are less in need of her support.

Susan reminded me of suggesting that doing away with narratives entirely was a good idea, one that stuck with her. Total abstinence is a little excessive, however. Bushra chipped in that *quieting* our narratives, whether they are good or bad, is surely beneficial. That's more like it.

Andy mused that who we are is not always tied with our thoughts. Instead we live in an infinite world governed by autonomous logic, and this is a freeing concept. Normally we aren't aware of it but if you pause and just be with it, you can begin to sense it. Prabu added that in Greek philosophy, your thinking was supposed to go beyond logic, to be more than logical. I suggested that logic is a way to tame the thought process, which has its value but is also bound to be limiting. Neither of these is

quite what Andy was trying to get across, though. He was speaking of the natural logic of a successfully functioning universe.

Deb clarified our discussion by asserting (against the popular conceits of our time) that thinking and consciousness are not the same thing. There's a deep level of consciousness that can't be parceled out the way thoughts are. I think we all sense that there is amazing guidance residing in the domain of total consciousness, and our thought are like bubbles rising to its surface.

For Jan, the insights of this verse have taught her how to be less judgmental in her daily life. She feels more present without the need to analyze and judge everything, and this even connects her more with her own depth. She's feels restored to herself, and cleaner in her assessment of others, which is a sweet way to put it. She feels that this way of looking is ongoing in her life, and has improved it significantly.

As someone who takes a weekly walk with both Susan and Jan, I can vouch for their claims: both women are stronger and more confident than I have ever known them to be, and their handling of family and friend issues are not only successful but beneficial to all parties.

Bushra likes to view human relations in terms of cultural values, so she shared how our cultures affect our behavior. We learn early on to recognize culturally dictated mental patterns and follow prescribed or implicit physical patterns as well. Unless we make a concerted effort to break away from them, we will remain subject to their influence. Bushra characterized these patterns as half-truths: since each culture has its favorite versions of truth and they are at variance with each other, they can't all be right.

I called those cultural efforts to encompass meaning as valiant attempts—I think we should credit that they were made originally for the benefit of everyone, back when everyone was a small group you were in direct contact with. Now that we're all in touch with everything across the globe, including mean-spirited deceptions and sabotages about people's beliefs, the deep-seated longing to have one simple story to abide in when there are so

many, is driving the species mad. If you see those apparent fictions as valiant attempts it takes the snobbery out of it, if nothing else. Deb agreed that all philosophies and hierarchies of value are examples of the ongoing and uncompleted search for meaning.

This reminded Prabu of Nitya's account of his first meeting with Gandhi, from *Love and Blessings*. Nitya was insisting on the rightness of his political views and Gandhi showed him that there were many truths, that truth is like a diamond with many facets. It's a lovely parable (pp. 87-88 in the American edition), and there are also some kind thoughts about cultural differences mixed in.

Moni and Deb wondered how and when we become acculturated, since it generally happens without our conscious awareness. To Moni, we create each scene and then we live in it, experiencing our happiness and joy or their opposites according to how we have built the set.

I retold the story of how Leo Zeff, the Secret Chief who guided thousands of psychedelic therapy sessions during Prohibition, used photographs in his work. Each participant brought in a series of photos from their birth to the present, including friends and family. At some point in the session he would have them look at each picture in chronological order. Photos from the first five years didn't have much impact, but invariably at the age of six there would be a tremendous reaction, vast outpourings of emotion, mainly sadness and tears. Six is the age most of us surrender our cloistered world of childhood for the social world of school, and we are confronted by others. The shock of Otherness impels us to create a defensive persona for our own protection, and our innocence is lost, often forever. Zeff found that recognizing this was a huge part of the recovery process initiated by the medicines.

Andy didn't want us to just think everything shifted at six, and that was it. He affirmed that self-awareness is an ongoing process, and waking up to it can happen at any time. Referring to our earlier unreported banter about snakes, nagas and naginis, he

noted how snakes regularly shed their skin when the one they're wearing gets too tight. Could make a fine Zen koan.

Jan, another recently independent mom, took us back to the prompt in terms of goal-orientation. Humans are always setting goals to obtain what we think we want, yet often these are dictated by the outside world and our own inner inclinations are rudely dismissed. Jan has been delighted lately that her daughter Mira, just done with her schooling, has been reassessing her goals to bring them more in line with who she wants to be. She is pausing as she creates her new world, asking herself what do I want more in life, and what does it all mean to me? Jan is justifiably proud and supportive of this process, which is still far from approved for anyone, especially young women. And she is finding that showing her support has brought her closer in touch with her daughter, a beautiful side benefit.

My response to my own prompt was datable: in 1991 I took a conscious decision to change my way of thinking. Most prominently I decided that being kind would be better for everyone than following the more or less ferocious example of my gurus. Nitya had also been mellowing and gentling for some years, and I was beginning to take note. In relation to the outer and inner aspects of the universe, I had been going along with the commonplace assumption that outside events were bullying me, and so were unfair and intrusive, which meant I was justified in shoving them off in whatever way I could. Thinking that way fosters a certain kind of aggressiveness. Once I really believed that "what is coming at you is coming from you," then whenever I endured an insult or injury, I would look at my reaction instead of the other person's motivation. I accorded them the role of divine interloper, showing me where my weaknesses were so I could work on them. It made a huge difference!

Yes, I know, I failed more than once to turn the arrow inward, but it's a learning curve, not a snap conversion. Really, I had had the concept from my tripping days of yesteryear, but

actually implementing those ideas is not so easy. Nitya actually addresses this in his essay:

Our concept of the 'in' and the 'out' as empirical facts holds good even when we are fully convinced that awareness has no outside. Yet the mind can bifurcate itself into the dichotomy of a subjective awareness and an object of awareness. So the mind is to be understood at once as being both true and untrue. What it reports or interprets are likely to be half-truths if not outright lies.

I think that's always going to be the case: we have to confront our own degree of untruth, our deceptions of ourself as well as others. Or we can go on living in a self-contained dream world that has a tendency to become nightmarish. Yet we tend to think we've already been doing that, examining ourselves, even when we haven't.

Deb shared a less intentional version of my conversion that probably blesses many of us just by growing up or growing older. She used to react strongly to things people said (this is true!), but later in life she just doesn't feel the same angry reaction. I know those of us from the 1960s were hyper-attuned to the racism and sexism and just plain stupidity residing in ordinary English expressions, and we linked trivial phrases with their roots in all the horrors of history. It was overblown, undoubtedly, but the motivation was sincere, at least.

We asked John about his recent work in one of Nancy's Atmo study groups, and he spoke quite personally about his recent struggles and the substantial progress he has made in learning how to get out of mental whirlpools. Like many of us, he spent an inordinate amount of energy trying to make bad things just go away. The Gurukula studies and his own personal growth have led him to see the futility of doing away with the endless tragedies our species is bent on performing, and instead find his own balance and strength amidst the swirling waters. By allowing himself to

feel the misery instead of trying to block it out, he finds it dissipates of its own accord after a period of sitting with it without reacting. This is real yoga, by the way. Downward dog won't do it.

Synchronicity continues to abound around the study. On Sunday Prabu, Deb and I attended a fiftieth anniversary screening of 2001: A Space Odyssey, fully restored for the occasion and shown on a giant, curved screen with a great sound system. Prabu, who also attended the previous night's showing, got us there way early, so we could sit in the exact center of the theater. A few inches to the side wasn't going to do it. The show was like being in outer space for a long time, first in orbit, then on the moon, and then plunging into deep space, with the earth modulations utterly in abeyance after the opening scene. And then last night we read in the commentary:

Although it is very true that we cannot get out of our mind to reach anything 'out there', we can lodge our body in a space capsule and shoot it into the space 'out there' to walk on the moon and return.

May we attain the transcendence that David Bowman does at the end! Kubrick, like any great director, is acutely aware of the dichotomy of seeing a mesmerizing display on the screen that is essentially playing out its meaning in each viewer's psyche. Deb noticed how the whole film was an archetypal quest tale, only set in what was once the future and is now almost the present. No dragons to slay, only inimical AIs.

Though Nitya brings up the confusing idea of total cessation of modulations at the end of the chapter, I think the idea that we don't have to turn modulations off completely keeps our old habits alive and well. So do your best to turn everything off, once in a while! FMRI has demonstrated that the brain buzz continues even when our conscious mind thinks it's not present, and that's probably what Patanjali thought, too. Nitya provided a beautiful

ending to a magnificent evening, both within our hearts and outside in the pure, clear, warm, moonlit evening:

The search for Truth, therefore, lies in the secret of eliminating all the belying modulations of the mind. It is for this reason the highest achievement of Yoga is given in the Yoga Sutas of Patanjali as samadhi, or beatitude emerging from the total cessation of all modulations of the mind.

Knowing this, the mind should be disciplined to straighten its folds and pacify its waves. That cannot be accomplished through any program of action. It is only by calming down and silently merging into one's own depth that one can correct the inherent flaw which causes the mind to create the never-ending and ever-complex series of phenomena we call the world.

Part II

Baiju's Meditation promises to always be an outstanding contribution, as is this one:

Meditation #3

We see, we hear, we can touch and feel, we smell and taste-thus we enjoy the abundance of what is provided by nature (let's ruminate over: do we have anything other than what nature has provided?); given a choice we always want to enjoy the pleasures of life (Don't all animals live the same way?) and feel happy. But those very same abilities of ours, listed in the beginning, make us feel many painful experiences – sometimes they are short-lived but some of them are lifelong! All such experiences we encounter are associated with the world outside. So the world is solid reality for us.

As we have seen now, the life in this world is a combination of pleasures and pains. Can we be above the pleasures and pains of this world? While the *jagad gurus* like Narayana Guru had spent

their time and effort to enlighten men and women of the great secret of the Universe, they did the greatest service to humanity by advising them of the secret of transcending the pleasures and pains of the life in this world.

In verse 3 the Guru says the world (a composition of the five elements) that appears to be solid reality to all of us is just an appearance (*vivarta*)! We (our physical bodies) are also integral to the solid world we experience – we, and our pleasures and pains, must then also be just appearances! How come then we enjoy the pleasures and suffer the pains? The senses and the inner organ (mind, etc.) what make us feel the pleasures and pains are also part of the manifest world, which is just an appearance. Doesn't it suggest that the pleasures and pains are illusory? What we see as this world “outside” is not the true nature of the underlying real ‘substance’. That is why the physical world is referred to as *vivarta*.

Now, in the second half of the verse, the Guru uses the metaphor of the ocean and the waves to say that the world that we see and experience is not different from the underlying substance (the Self); he wants us to succeed in experiencing that nondifference by means of contemplative inquiry.

We must be careful in comprehending the nature of the Self without being confused about an apparent contradiction in the wisdom words of the Guru.

The Guru combines two aspects of the Self in this verse:

1. The phenomenal world is just an appearance (*vivarta*). We do not see the real substance (the Self) behind the appearance.
2. The Self and the world that appears to us are non-different.

The metaphor of the ocean and the waves explains the second aspect only. (The word *abheda* used in the verse means nondifference). If we need to understand the aspect of *vivarta* by the help of a metaphor, then we may relate to one of a piece of rope and the illusory snake or to the example of mirage.

The pertinent point that is established unequivocally, combining the two aspects, in this verse is that **the Self alone is real**.

The ocean and the waves example is one in which we can at once see the manifest forms (waves) and the real substance (the ocean or the water); they are non-different. But the deceptive appearance (*vivarta*) that hides the real substance can be removed only by close investigation or inquiry. The Guru thus clearly instructs us to continue the contemplative inquiry until we experience the nondifference between the Self and the manifest world, which is only a superimposed appearance.

The Self alone is real is the conclusive finding of the Guru, which implies that the voyage to the Self is the one that, on successful completion, transcends the worldly pleasures and pains.

There are moments when we unknowingly “sense” the presence of the Self and react. Take an unintended situation; maybe while traveling to some new place on business, we all of a sudden happen to be in front of a heavenly view of the nature which brings intense ecstasy in our minds. Impulsively we make the sound WOW! We do not realize that the ecstasy which evokes the impulsive WOW lasts only for a fraction of a second before any thoughts occur. It is a microsecond duration that is not driven by the sense objects; nor by any associated desires. That fractional duration is not owned by either the mind or the senses. The very next moment the senses and their master (i.e.: mind) take charge and we may make use of all sorts of adjectives to describe the scenery-picturesque, marvelous, and what not. But no words can

either describe that scenic beauty in its fullness or evoke the blissfulness which instantly produces the sound WOW, never realizing that the impulse came from inside to pronounce that seemingly meaningless sound. Why do we get such a spontaneous stimulus to say WOW from within? The reason has to be none other than the Self, which stays always a witness within as well as everywhere without, whose nature is of absolute bliss-*Ananda*.

Ananda, and the objects and events that evoke occasional *Ananda* in our day to day lives are non-different, we know. Therefore the Self within us along with its unitive nature is momentarily experienced at times as *Ananda*, causing a WOW. If only we could extend the WOW moment forever!

The compassionate Guru wants us to transcend the states of worldly pleasures and pains, living always in the state of *Ananda* or more precisely being ourselves *Ananda*.

Aum tat sat.

* * *

Susan sent the notes for this chapter from 2/5/08, when Deb and I were in India for Emily's wedding and an aftermath of travel. She hosted six classes, and wrote excellent notes on them. Ten years later we are finally attending to the whole book! Check it out:

Tuesday night's class was centered around the third chapter of Meditations on the Self, a commentary on the 3rd verse of Atmo (above). Bill noted that the image of the ocean in this verse is central to the philosophy we are studying. It is important to see that all the manifestations spring from a quiet place. All the sights and sounds and drama of our lives seem to be separate and something out there. Not only are they not separate because of the way our mind works but they are also all part of the Absolute. They all

come from that vast treasury that is like a huge ocean and they are never separate entirely from it. They are like waves that form and wash up on shore and then recede back into their source.

Our discussion focused mainly on how we can become more aware of and sometimes sink back into that source in our daily routine. When we are able to do this, we are less influenced by our mind's conditionings.

John started us off talking about how our minds perceive things in such different ways. He mentioned how eyewitness accounts of a crime often conflict because we each see an incident with our own colorations and conditionings.

Bill, just back from India, talked about how much fun it is to travel because your usual reactions are gone. It is an easy way not to be subjected to one's preconceived notions. He said India is amazing in this way because it is so different from how we live here.

This ability of our minds to perceive can have negative consequences but it is also a blessing. As Nitya explains in his commentary on the first 8 verses of Atmo (what I call the Atmo Supplement), we are creators.

"Space looks infinite, but see how we originate that space. The Divine is originating both space and the individual ego within it, for me, for you, for all, and we are experiencing a joint effect as a vision of a universal mind. The very fact that you and I can share the same space should fill us with gratitude and joy and wonder. Out of the same stuff we are all molded. You and I have this great blessing of participating with the universal mind, with the divine mind, with the cosmic mind. We are co-creators with the Divine. Or, the Divine is using our individual minds as instruments to make a composition. That should fill us with reverence and devotion."(ch 3 supplement)

Sometimes, though, our creations of mind are overwhelming and detrimental and they keep us from truth. In Meditations on the self, Nitya ends the third chapter by suggesting that we try to "merge" into our own "depth."

"The search for Truth, therefore, lies in the secret of eliminating all the belying modulations of the mind....Knowing this, the mind should be disciplined to straighten its folds and pacify its waves. That cannot be accomplished through any program of action. It is only by calming down and silently merging into one's own depth that one can correct the inherent flaw which causes the mind to create the never-ending and ever-complex series of phenomena we call the world." (MOTS, p. 9)

For me, I find that I can sink into my own depth when I'm doing things that don't bring up my conditionings -- when I'm walking in the woods, when I'm playing the piano, when I'm working in the garden. Bill said he thought this merging was more about meditation. He also said that understanding and doing both help us to merge. We study this philosophy and then we use it in our days to day lives. This is how we learn to merge more and more into our own depth.

Anne said she feels she has been more able to do that when working with patients at the AIDS Hospice. She has been working with a patient who has been very difficult and personally attacking. Anne said she has been able to dissociate with her and not get pulled in. Several years ago she said her ego would have gotten in the way and she would have dealt with it differently. In this situation she was able to let go of all the mind modulations and stay true to herself.

John mentioned how he can really see all the creations of the mind when he is in that state between sleeping and waking. Anita says

she has that experience when she is trying to meditate. She will sit quietly for awhile and then suddenly realize that her mind has gone lots of different places.

Anita led us into a discussion of dharma, by saying that it is hard for her to think about unity and feeling like everyone is connected. She said she feels the connection during class but then as she goes through her day she feels separate from those around her, partly because she is single. Anita said looks at married couples and thinks that they must feel that connection more easily but then she concluded that everyone is on their own trajectory toward unity.

This trajectory can be seen as Dharma and is wonderfully described in the third chapter of Mediations on the Self.

"The eternal process of origin, growth, change, and transformation shows within it an integral scheme, a working principle, an ontologic dynamism, called dharma. Dharma individuates its ground, specifies the individual's functions, operates as actions and reactions, causing change without negating the individuality of its ground, and finally brings about the individual's disintegration to initiate a fresh cycle of manifestation. We may as well say dharma is becoming." (MOTS, p. 8)

Bill elaborated by saying that dharma never loses the source of its creation. It starts with that essential ground of being. When we are able to be more aware of the source, then we understand our own becoming; our own manifestation.

But still we at times are caught in our own web of habitual reactions to things. We all talked about what we do when our minds start obsessing about something. Anita worries about the mysteries of life and death and doesn't want them to be mysteries. I obsess about what tragedies might befall my children. Nancy referred to this tendency as our minds tying knots. I think she said

that if you can picture the knots, it is easier to untie them. If you can recognize that you are once again going off on some tangent, it can gently help you get out of the habit. "Oh, there I go again, stewing about that same old issue again." Every time you can recognize what your brain is doing, it has a little less control of you.

We talked about other ways to work through such knots. Moni says she picks up the phone. Bill says he just tries to ignore the inevitable twists and turns of his mind. Anne read from the book she is reading, called *The Zookeeper's Wife*, by Diane Ackerman, that talks about watching the stream go by but trying not to get caught up in it. We all talked about how meditation can also be good for problem solving (though ultimately that is not what it is meant for) so that the mind doesn't try to problem solve or go through contortions while we are trying to live our lives.

Moni closed with the idea from the chapter that these modulations of the mind are only half truths and in knowing this, we can more easily let go of them.

"Yet the mind can bifurcate itself into the dichotomy of a subjective awareness and an object of awareness. So the mind is to be understood at once as being both true and untrue. What it reports or interprets are likely to be half-truths if not outright lies." (MOTS, p. 9)