

1/15/13

Verse 6

One has to wake up, then go to sleep,  
has to eat food and embrace;  
thus, in this way, many life urges come;  
therefore, who realizes the one changeless form?

Free translation (from the appendix):

Alas! Who is there to know the one unchanging Reality, when all are subjected to the frequent rise of latent urges which ceaselessly compel them to wake and sleep, to eat, and to caress the objects of their desires.

Nataraja Guru's:

One has to wake, then go to sleep, of food partake, or mate,  
Thus do promptings dissipating keep coming round;  
Whoever could there be, therefore to wake  
Unto that reality's one and changeless form?

I inexplicably think of verse 6, since it deals with the horizontal, as being of lesser importance than many of these. On revisiting it this week, I discovered a terrific essay packed with important ideas. What was I thinking? This is great!

Deb's first point was that forgetfulness is a word that is vital to this verse, along with its counterpart, remembrance. We forget who we are, and then find a way to bring it back into focus.

Narayana Guru's Malayalam masterpiece is intended to lead us to a re-identification with our real self. A re-membrance, if you will.

It is utterly mysterious how we lose sight of our true nature and in its place become attached to a constructed ego cobbled together to interface with the surroundings, and then become satisfied with that! We blot out the sense of injustice that wells up in us, calling us back to ourselves, until our spirit goes into a deep slumber. Then our life becomes like sitting in a waiting room,

hoping a train will come along and take us somewhere nice. Instead of rushing out to live, we spend our time making the waiting room comfortable.

Susan was enchanted by Nitya's perfect definition: "The nature of the spirit is to pervade." She felt comforted and reassured by its whole context, on page 42, because it showed her that spiritual endeavor is more about getting out of the way than trying to achieve something complicated. Unlike the Western model, where what we are taught to be has to be built out of spare parts by the cursed sinners we are, this reminds us our true nature is divine, and all we have to do is let it seep into us, or wash over us:

The body is animated by an energy that knows, thinks, discerns and evaluates. This phenomenon is called the soul or spirit. The nature of the spirit is to pervade. It is characteristic of the spirit, or the self in us, to return again and again to the pure being of the universal Self to which it belongs. It does not feel at home when it is confined to the limitations of a body. Just like water finding its own level, the self is always in search of the boundless. The individual's attempt to cater to the necessities of the body is a relativistic form of *dharma*, while the spirit's need to transcend the limitations of the individual's body, family, clan, tribe and nation is its absolute *dharma*.

There are several crucial ideas in this statement. The class also spent time on the notion of spirit pervading life, trickling into it despite our misguided attempts to keep dry, and most importantly in the critical distinction between relative and absolute dharma.

Nitya's genius is revealed (once again) in the masterful exposition of dharma given on page 43 in which he details the most significant shades of dharma ranging from absolute to the relative. All of them are valuable, and even integral to our being. Inexplicably, though, most pundits focus on only the extreme relative end of the spectrum, claiming that dharma means our

social duties and obligations. Nitya never goes that far into relativism, because he knows that duties and obligations are what kill or at least subsume our dharma, bringing about the tragic state that Narayana Guru is lamenting here:

The *dharma* that sustains the life-giving energy that fosters the characteristics of the individual and unfolds the growing personality, has several levels of formation and shades of meaning. As the sole ground of individuation, it is undifferentiated from the Absolute. As the primeval cause of manifestation, it is the temporal function that introduces motion into the field of spatial extension. As the existential base of individuation, it is an evolutionary process that channels and organizes indistinct and undifferentiated energy to assume definite forms of structural integrity that can function with physical, chemical, biological and, at the human level, psychological propensities. As the dynamics of a living organism, it is a retentive store of memory that is used as a ready reckoner with which to decide courses of action and reaction that are conducive to both the organism's self-preservation and to the furtherance of its life term as a stable system. As the propensity of life urges, it is an amalgam of a pleasure-seeking collective will and a continuing process of individuation, in which every blind drive and conscious effort is controlled and decided upon by its longitudinal history. And as the immediate interacting agent that recognizes itself with the self-awareness of an I-consciousness, it is a homeostasis that governs reflexive and instinctive behavior, acquired habits, adaptation, and willed actions that serve the self-regulating system which is intent upon maintaining its fluid equilibrium.

I know this is a long quote, but it is so fantastic, it's the kind of thing that should be pinned to every available surface in your house so you can read it several times a day. At least you now have

it in the class notes, for times when you don't have your book handy. Don't fall for that ubiquitous blather about duty—be yourself.

Nitya also gave a succinct definition that puts dharma in a nutshell:

*Dharma* is our second nature. It has the paradoxical characteristic of coupling the changeless with an ever-changing course of becoming. As individuated beings, we are modulations of *dharma*.

That's the perfect way to look at it: "As individuated beings, we are modulations of *dharma*." There's nothing external about it. Or we could say, we individuals are the external manifestation of our dharma. But our contact with it is intermittent. The more accurately we reflect our dharma, the more satisfying our lives will be.

Mick brought up an important problem, one that many preceptors exacerbate by treating the mind as a kind of enemy to be stamped out. Mick's propensity for this was set off by Nitya's statement, "Although the nature of consciousness is to seek liberation, the instrument at its disposal defeats that purpose." But this can be read another way. Mind or intelligence is the instrument at our disposal; therefore it's what we have to use. The way it is ordinarily used does indeed defeat the purpose of liberation, but it can be employed differently. These verses of Self instruction are intended to rectify how we use all our faculties, to redirect them to liberation instead of bondage.

There are two main streams of spirituality. One is to reject everything, spend long years in seclusion and meditation, and try to purify yourself with inaction. The other model, favored by the Gurukula, is much gentler. The idea is to dismantle the barriers we have erected since birth using insight, allowing the spirit to flow into everyday life. It doesn't even have to flow in—it's already

present everywhere, only we have learned to tune it out. Once we stop tuning it out we become aware of it again.

In the first model you meditate so long that personal factors dry up and fall away like autumn leaves. In the Gurukula model you meditate to reconnect with the essence, but then come back into your life, bringing what you have learned with you. You go in and out, back and forth between the inner and outer until they interpenetrate one another. Then they are no longer two separate poles of life, but one unified life.

The Bhagavad Gita is the champion of this latter approach. As Nitya puts it here: “The Gita does not recommend withdrawal or turning away from the world that is seen, but the cultivation of a transparency of vision by which one sees the Absolute alone as the one reality residing in all.”

This is actually as challenging in its own way as undertaking some heroic program of self-suppression. It is deeply inculcated in us to choose a goal and then work toward it, but that is the very way we “defeat our purpose.” Attaining the proper frame of mind requires substantial effort to annul both conscious and unconscious desires and predilections, and discard goals and expectations. I’ve found that if we are able to keep our mind open, life will always exceed our expectations.

Once we are in tune with our dharma, our innate propensities, our actions will unfold naturally and not need to be prodded along with any goal-orientation. Until we know our dharma, though, the goal of discovering it is a reasonable expectation to have.

Being in tune with our dharma means going with the flow, but we lose the flow by being drawn away into anticipating a specific result of our action. Rooting out hidden expectations and other learned flaws is a very good exercise for contemplation.

Expectations about the outcome block us from acting as freely as changing situations require. If we can break free of all those impediments, our actions will truly excel.

There's no magic formula here. We just have to presume that we have expectations and prejudices, and strive to stay open to the input we're receiving.

One of the ways we misinterpret our inner promptings is to think that if we simply go with the flow, being ourselves should be a piece of cake. The problem with this very plausible assumption is that we are tightly bound by our conditioning, so the flow isn't going anywhere any more. We have to first unbind ourselves, get the flow going, and then we can join up with it. As we overcome the inhibiting influences of our conditioning, the flow rises up within and begins to carry us along.

We are very fortunate that our essential nature isn't destroyed by our stupidity, it just goes into hiding, biding its time until we realize how much we need it and miss it. Then we have to find out how to use the mind in a new way. Narayana Guru is exhorting us here to commit ourselves to getting out of prison by rectifying our intelligence. We can either surrender under the crushing weight of our misunderstandings or resolve to shake them off and stand up.

Paul looks at this in an interesting way. He can think of himself either as Paul or as a human. One is specific and one is generic. He knows he is both at the same time. "Paul" is the one who holds opinions and can be fierce at times, but then he can remember his humanity and "Paul" dissolves. "Humanity" includes all possible perspectives, including non-human ones, along with the realization that everyone's experiences are valid in their own way. When he includes himself in all humanity, his personal needs and wants dwindle in importance and he feels more expansive.

Moni gave a practical example, of the diversity training she gets regularly at work. Our unexamined tendency is to make prejudiced distinctions of the people we meet based on all sorts of irrelevant details, and this causes us to treat them unfairly: some get a better deal than others, because they are closer to our preferences. Moni receives diversity training to be able to serve everyone with equal fairness. She still makes distinctions and decisions about everyone, but they are based on the actual needs of

the situation and not her prejudices. That means there is a unity, a oneness, under the surface variegations, that she is being trained to include in her awareness.

Narayana Guru would be very happy this was taking place! His lament was really a call to us to restore our sense of unity and bring justice in our interaction with the world. When he asks who there is to see it, we should shout back “Me! I see it and I hold to it. Count me in!” As Mick said, this is about bringing love and respect into our daily life, the *karu* into daily life. He read out some excerpts from the book *I Am That*, by Nisargadatta Maharaj that closely matched the ideas we are digging into. Mick is delighted when he finds different sources that present the same truths. But truth is one. It is much the same everywhere, but it is disguised by semantic, cultural and language variations. Part of the fun of this study is discerning the core of truth at the heart of everything we see and do. As Mick also said, this is a new form of conditioning. Yes, it can become habitual to refer the many to the one, the immanent to the transcendent, and it opens up life like a flower coming into bloom. If we are inevitably conditioned while we are alive, isn't this the way to have it?

Susan brought in a very valuable idea, to counter the cliché that we learn by serving others. Service has become a popular watchword in part because it is a respectable way of abandoning our self. Susan reminded us that we have to find love in ourselves before we can share it with others. Come to know love, and then others will be inspired by it. If we try to activate it in others without knowing it in our heart, it is a form of bullying, of evangelism. There is duality at its core. So everything in this study is to be brought home to us. We have to cure ourselves before we can properly care for anyone else. Restoring ourselves to our dharma, our spirit, is the first service we should perform.

## Part II

Nataraja Guru's comments are short enough (and wonderful enough!) to include in their entirety:

## Verse 6

One has to wake, then go to sleep, of food partake, or mate,  
Thus do promptings dissipating keep coming round;  
Whoever could there be, therefore to wake  
Unto that reality's one and changeless form?

THE biological cycle of necessary activities, considered neither physiologically nor psychologically but from a common-sense standpoint, are referred to in verse 6. These follow one another as dictated by the vital urges within man. One satisfaction of instinctive desire follows another in a certain order of circulation. Waking and sleeping alternate diurnally, attended with secondary needs or appetites of hunger or sex common to human beings generally.

Instead of referring to these aspects of necessary life as belonging to sin, concupiscence or desire as in the stricter theologies of codified religions, the Guru here reviews them more simply as necessary factors in common human life, but all the same suggests that, if one set of such necessary items of activity prevails in anyone, it would be impossible for him to get interested in the other or larger unitive interest which is beyond mere necessity in the everyday sense, but belongs to an order wherein one lasting value prevails over all others.

The object here is to bring together into proper relief the two sets of interests or value-worlds to which any man normally can relate himself. Without self-instruction as contained in this composition, man will tend naturally to attach importance to the series of necessary activities at the expense of the higher contingent interest which can everlastingly include all the others and lift the personality to a higher level of life altogether.

The rhetorical question at the end of the verse strikes a note of despair on the part of the Guru. The natural penchant of the human mind to find satisfaction in the horizontal world of values has to be overcome with the help of some positive effort which, as



it were, must do violence to itself. Here comes the need for disciplining the mind to overcome its conditionings, for lifting it away from its merely instinctive moorings, and for setting it on its course to higher and higher levels of interest, until its full dignity is established in selfhood. That very few persons seek the positive orientation of the spirit implied in the ascent here is referred to with a similar note of despair in the Bhagavad Gita:

Out of a thousand humans, one, maybe, strives to attain the desirable; out of such strivers, even when they do so, one, maybe, can understand Me in the light of (correct) principles.  
(VII, 3)

**‘THUS DO PROMPTINGS DISSIPATING’:** The expression in the original is ‘vikalpa’ which has its antonym in ‘samkalpa’. These refer to two sets of mental activities, the former connoting evil and the latter good. The mind is the meeting-point of both these types of activities as defined by Sankara in the VivekaChudamani (167 to 183 and verse 174 particularly) and by Vidyaranya in Panchadasi and in the Vedanta-Sara of Sadananda. Opposite tendencies like good and evil promptings originate in the common locus of the mind. Sankara places in the mind the factors conducive to bondage as well as emancipation. Of the two sets of promptings originating in the mind samkalpa will thus refer to vertical tendencies and vikalpa to horizontal ones which refer to lower values in life. The vicious circle of horizontal values keeps recurring and repeating, while vertical tendencies lead to wisdom and freedom.

**TO WAKE UNTO THAT REALITY’S ONE AND CHANGELESS FORM:** The reference here must be to the Absolute conceived as the master interest in life. Horizontal relativistic interests are pluralistic. They contain rival or conflicting items as against the series of vertical unitive interests implied in the contemplative view of life. The latter can range from the basic necessities of life such as food to the satisfaction of the

highest of cravings, such as the love of freedom. The Absolute need not necessarily be conceived as a thing. It can be merely a dimension such as depth, or a direction such as the superior attitudes that the mind is capable of having when thinking creatively of the Absolute. The one-to-one relation as between the Absolute and the Self is implied here.

The word 'changeless' employed here draws attention to the nitya-anitya-viveka (the discrimination between lasting and transient values) which, according to texts such as the VivekaChudamani of Sankara (verse 19) is the preliminary qualification required before one enters contemplative life. The changeless reality can only be the Absolute, as will become clear later on when the nature of the Self stands revealed in greater relief in these verses. The Eternal, the Everlasting, Omnipresent and Omniscient are attributes belonging to the Absolute, whether theologically conceived as a deity or as a purely abstract notion by one capable of such philosophic thought.

#### WORD NOTES:

'Wake to, etc.': The suggestion here is that the Self, when moving within the range of the fully sleeping state or the opposite condition of full wakefulness, is engrossed alternately in actual or virtual activities or interests of a horizontal kind. Intermediate to these extremes of sleeping and waking there is a purer middle state of consciousness which is referred to more directly in verse 7. This word 'wake' is meant to pave in advance the way to this middle state.

When bipolarity is established correctly between the Self and the non-Self as counterparts, the resulting state of consciousness has the Eternal as its content. In other words, there is entry into the neutrality of the Absolute when the relation as between subject and object is established in a vertical sense.

#### Part III

Sujit has weighed in with a very germane question, and we'd love to hear your feelings about it. Sujit writes:

Reading these verses over again, one can see that Narayana Guru implicitly accepts that the socially conditioned or molded self (in the reader) will find it an uphill task to decondition. He is perhaps hoping that the reader will at least decondition to extent of initially understanding the concept of 'that alone'. It is obvious that poet is employing an explanatory technique of disciplined and repetitive self-instruction - positioning the reader in various points around the central subject of discussion, and pointing to different perspectives of the same thing. Each perspective to me is as intriguing as much as it is interesting.

I am unable to hold back these questioning thoughts - what if many people of the world are really able to decondition themselves? Would an advanced or fully deconditioned person be fit for his/her normal job positions, responsibilities and accountabilities in real life today? Is it meant for all? Or else, how could one balance between the two extreme poles; and live in '*ananda*' when there are real issues and negativities to address with shrewdness? Isn't that mold of the self also an integral part of the survival of societies? Aren't societies the collection of selves? Can we shut off the self selectively; say at work and off work or when off from accountabilities in this competitive world? And so on....

Then I switch on my TV all I can see is the discussion of a nation (USA) polarized by the gun control debate. I wonder what is the 'real distance' between the path to self-realization and the reality on the backstreets that we tread!? Can a self-realized person living in '*ananda*' be the security guard where my children are schooling? Would we still want that security guard to live as a normally conditioned person in the mold of the guard? When and where does '*karma*' come into play?

I wonder whether the same thoughts have passed your mind too?  
Or whether in the presence of Guru Nitya such discussions have taken place?

The timing of this review of Verse 6 is such that Narayana Guru is preempting a similar question. He is saying that people of the world are heavily caught up in their routine pursuit of passions and commitments and - who is there after all that has got the time, willingness or ability to wake up in the dispassionate, untransforming, formless state of mind?

My response:

This type of pondering is essential to getting a lot out of our study. Sujit has set an excellent example for all of us.

These are indeed questions that Nitya talked about, often, and I have thought about them on my own, too. Anyone who comments on or teaches the Gita (I've done both) is constrained to address them. Essentially it's one question: how does spirit fit into the world, into nature? This is where nonduality (Narayana Guru's stand) trumps duality, by a mile. They are not really separate, but we seem doomed to think of them that way. When spirit is detached from nature, both suffer. This class is about rejoining them and ending the unnecessary suffering.

First off, I want to reassure everyone that there is not the slightest danger that everyone on the planet will suddenly become realized, drop out, and let the world go to hell. I imagine this is a personal doubt that people think of, and then they project it into a mass movement as a way of drawing back from it in their own lives—a kind of defense mechanism. The question, then, isn't about the security guard but about 'me'. Do I dare link up with the Absolute when I have all these duties to perform to keep my life running smoothly? Can I safely relinquish my sense of control? Obviously, answering this in the affirmative is crucial to remaining serious about the study.

An email from John H. this morning raises the same issue from a slightly different angle: “if it’s so hard to ‘get there,’ why try? Isn’t life filled with enough frustration and failure, without having to start a quest you will not likely finish with satisfactory results?” Arjuna himself asked a similar question in the Gita, in fact. We’ve gone deeply enough into the subject now to begin to sense its awesomeness, and there is—quite normally—an instinctive drawing back at the threshold.

I want to assure everyone that by becoming authentically themselves, they don’t become misfits, they actually become much better members of society, as well as happier in their lives. We can turn this question upside down and ask if it’s preferable to be disconnected from our self and our world? Are we better citizens because of it? Narayana Guru felt that this dissociation was the cause of all our ills, and with it as our prevailing condition the world is in dire straits. I’ll clip in his well-known quote from *Word of the Guru* at the end, for those who haven’t got it posted on their fridge already.

Speaking of Arjuna, he was a kind of “security guard” himself, a warrior-type charged with defending his family. His urge at the crucial moment was to run away and become a dropout, but Krishna insisted he stand his ground. He taught him how to find his joy right in the midst of his everyday life, and that’s what we’re aiming for in the Atmo study as well.

As far as karma goes, it looks like the world is so constituted that there is reciprocity throughout. Every lock has its key. Humans will always have to look for a need and then fill it, for our very livelihood. That means there will always be those whose relative dharma is armed defense so long as there are armed offenders about. In some heavenly future time they will hopefully evaporate together. My feeling is that we bring that day closer by discovering our own authentic self and helping our friends to find theirs. It’s the best way to ameliorate the anger and frustration that living in a body can engender, and which often gets unleashed on the world or on our self.

In any case, we don't have to think of realized people as only robed monks sitting in lotus pose. Realization is meant to permeate every aspect of life, not to separate us from it. Narayana Guru is going to teach us that there is nowhere else to go: this is it. Dig it. Make it beautiful.

The veiled urge to authenticity many people feel often surfaces as the desire to become an artist. It seems like everybody wants to be an artist these days. That's wonderful, but then we have only a few models for what an artist actually is, so you have to become a painter or a script writer or an actor or something. The best way to take it is that we should be artists in everything we do: in our relations with other people, in our work, in our play, in our chores, in our rest, and especially in the way we take in information. We won't have a painting or a sculpture to show for it—there's not necessarily any "proof" of our artistic nature—but the joy we experience by activating our whole being instead of a mere vestige brings the satisfaction we are looking for.

So yes, go ahead and wake up. It won't spoil anything. Quite the contrary! It's a way to begin our much-needed rehabilitation.

Here's the excerpt from WOTG, when Narayana Guru asked Nataraja Guru to make a plea on behalf of the world's ecology:

'Can you speak to the crowd?' 'I shall try to,' replied the young man humbly. 'It would be a good thing,' continued the Guru, 'to tell them about the excessive greed of human beings. Don't you think that the animal called man is worse than the rest of the animals in this respect? The desires of animals in the forest are safely controlled, by natural instinct, from all abnormal excesses. The elephant is simple and fat, and does not need tonics or treatment to keep it so. The jackal hides in the woods all day and comes out only at night when all is quiet. It does not take much food—just a few fresh crabs, and the clear stream water, reflecting the moonlight, to drink—and it is content. It enjoys its life with its nightly music, and you can see that it is none the worse for this sort

of life—its neck is as plump and glossy as a pillow. The animals have no exaggerated needs like man. Man trots about the earth as a veritable demon of destruction. As he marches, he carries behind him a trail of devastation. He cuts down the trees, and blasts and bleeds into paleness the green beauty of Nature for the sake of the plantations and smoky towns and factories which his unbridled desires necessitate. Not content with destruction on the surface, he tampers with the crust of the earth, making it weaker and weaker day-by-day; and he covers the surface with miles and miles of iron and coal. Man is terribly inconsistent. The state, which calls itself interested in humanity, would, for example, vehemently forbid even a man suffering from the worst form of skin disease to quit his miserable body. On the other hand, it will madly engage itself in wholesale manslaughter, after due deliberation and in the holy name of altruism or religion. Man does not know what he does, although he prides himself on being more intelligent than the animals. It is all a mad deluded rush.' 'Oh, this man!' he said, lapsing into wistfulness... 'He must lay waste; his greed can be satisfied only by the taking away of life.' As the Guru repeated the word *Man*, the youthful orator watched his composed features and could not but discover a distant tinge of sadness in his voice and in his venerable features. 'Man knows not what he does,' the Guru repeated, and became silent for a moment. 'It would not have mattered so much', he continued, 'if the effect of man's misdeeds struck its blow only at mankind. But the innocent monkeys and birds in the forest have to forfeit their peaceful life because of man. The rest of Nature would be thankful if, in the process of self-destruction, man would have the good sense to destroy himself if he must, alone, leaving the rest of creation at least to the peace which is its birthright.'

from *Word of the Guru* by Nataraja Guru, p. 12-13 (New Delhi, DK Printworld, 2003, first ed. 1952)

I'm also going to quote myself, for anyone who's gotten this far. My Chapter XVIII Gita commentary (online) explores this subject in depth, especially verses 16 and 17. This, mainly quoting Nitya, is from 16:

Integral to being ourselves, Guru Nitya makes the absolutely essential point that we have to take responsibility for our actions. Abdicating responsibility “allows even superstitious brutes who are caught in the snares of hallucination to perform atrocities... while holding the firm conviction that it is the will of God, not their own will, which is responsible.” He adds, “Is God a person with whom we can interact, or is it only an abstraction? If God is an abstraction, how do we surrender our will and action to that? How can we expect an abstraction to bear the responsibility for our own actions?” On the other hand, if an omniscient God is in charge, individual will is impossible.” (Gita, p. 420)

We can look around and see exactly this type of misunderstanding surfacing in tragedies worldwide. Belief in an external manipulator calling the tune opens the door to all manner of truly deadly sins. When we jealously guard our will and simultaneously attribute it to God, the clash of contexts opens the door to the worst kinds of behavior.

#### Part IV

After class, the nightly poetry reading brought this gem to my attention (you probably all know it):

The angel that presided o'er my birth  
Said, 'Little creature, form'd of Joy and Mirth,  
Go love without the help of any Thing on Earth.'

William Blake

I thought it perfectly encapsulated the idea we've been working on, that our inner nature is formed of joy and exuberance, and that it is



love enough and to share. Our love should never be dependent on Things, because that is something else, and not so dependable.

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Bobby wrote:

I really like this part: “In the Gurukula model you meditate to reconnect with the essence, but then come back into your life, bringing what you have learned with you. You go in and out, back and forth between the inner and outer until they interpenetrate one another. Then they are no longer two separate poles of life, but one unified life.”

For a while I struggled with: How do I achieve the balance between meditation and life. Or, do I leave for Tibet and sit?

I had received hints and information but that idea really helped solidify and clarify the act of meditation.

What a great idea from Susan! Loving oneself is definitely something I’ve struggled with. Also, loving oneself *too* much, or maybe in a vain fashion, is also something I’ve worked to overcome. I think keeping the mind free and flowing the present is the best remedy to these. I feel like negative thoughts often flow from remembering past experiences. Like, “oh, I should have done that differently or “oh man, that really bummed me out.” Staying present is peaceful.

Also -- through my practice of Yoga and Tai Chi, I’ve discovered an appreciation of the heart center and resonating love. During and after practice I feel warm, positive, golden vibrations emanating. They are my “good vibes” and I send those love vibes out to the world. Not just during my focused practice, but throughout the day. I feel like I’m loving myself and sending out love to the

world. Even though they are one. So, really, just tapping into that love. Resonating with it.

\* \* \*

This came from Paul:

**RE:** the One question ~ “how does spirit fit into the world, into nature”?

**The Dharma of Karma Is  
the Dissolution of Karma  
Within the Solution of Dharma**

**Karma** is our transactional experience of dualities. Karma is cyclical in nature within its reoccurring opacity of man’s compulsive imminence of becoming (maya). Karma is nature’s design incompletely perceived as form, name, and value. Karma is: the individuated knower, the discriminative act of knowing, and the known (subjectively labeled & valued). Karma’s Absolute Dharma--subsequent to the removal of maya’s “veil of illusion”--manifests as a doorway providing Spirit an Actualization in (and as) Nature.

**Dharma** is Transcendence of experience negating duality. Dharma is pervasive in nature within the saturating translucence of mans Spiritual Eminence-of-Being (the Absolute). Dharma is the Designing or causal function of Spirit saturating the entire cosmos—with nothing left out. Dharma is: the Non-individuated Witness, the complete assimilation of the Observed & Observer as the Unified Self-Actualization of God. Dharma manifests as the non-existent doorway enabling nature (or man) Self-Realization as Spirit.

~ nature is the expression of Spirit within the confines of space and time ~

~ Spirit is Origin of All Expression actualizing as nature ~

~ karma is the unrealized (fragmented) misperception of the One as the many ~

- ~ Dharma is the Unified Self-Realized Witness of the Many as the One ~
- ~ karma is the solute that is destined to dissolve into the unitive solution of Dharma ~
- ~ Dharma saturates karma for the “soul intent” of self-realizing the Absolute-Self ~
- ~ One becomes the other & the other is solely One ~
- ~ Spirit Actualizes Nature while Nature finds its Actualization in Spirit ~
- ~ man is paradox wherein dualities lose definition ~

## Part V

Here’s the best of a long letter from Susan. She told me her five points came to her like being struck by lightning, and I think she must have been. They are exactly right on insights about how to “realign our structure” and get out of our own way, so that we stop tripping ourselves:

“There are two main streams of spirituality. One is to reject everything, spend long years in seclusion and meditation, and try to purify yourself with inaction. The other model, favored by the Gurukula, is much gentler. The idea is to dismantle the barriers we have erected since birth using insight, allowing the spirit to flow into everyday life. It doesn’t even have to flow in--it’s already present everywhere, only we have learned to tune it out. Once we stop tuning it out we become aware of it again.” (from the class notes)

I keep thinking about the Alexander Technique in relation to what I am learning with the Atmo study. The idea is that the body has a natural and most efficient and healthy way of moving. One can witness this in babies and toddlers. As we grow, we develop habits of movement that are detrimental. Alexander Technique is a way to inhibit these conditioned movements so that we essentially

get out of the way so that the natural movement of the self (this is the way he puts it) will be possible. Alexander says the self is the mind and the body and that they cannot be separated, so that getting out of the way of our natural way can also be thought of as letting the spirit pervade. I like this idea of getting out of the way and it seems to be similar to your idea of dismantling barriers. As with Alexander, it really helps to think about our reactions as often as possible. I like the Alexander Technique, because it focuses on movement and that seems to be easier for me to notice. It is a way into being more repeatedly aware of the barriers to the Absolute. This is vital because it is so easy to just get swept up in the “promptings dissipating” (love that phrase from Nataraja Guru!) without letting the Absolute dharma inform and balance one’s life — creating the transparency of vision. When I think of getting out of the way to let the spirit pervade, I think of many examples:

1. If I get into an inane discussion with [teenage son] Peter that gets a bit heated and I notice this, usually I can step back mentally. When I do this, when I can step back and see that I am wrapped up in a pointless contortion, that perspective allows me to get out of the way, and the larger perspective flows in and I can then let it go and the discussion will then deflate into nothing. But this is a hard one — I go through this a lot with my kids and they hook me in very often by making me feel guilty. This really throws me off and I am not in my center.

2. When I begin to dwell on some issue and it takes me over — I can get out of the way if I start to notice that my dwelling has gone on for a long time or that it keeps popping up throughout the day and in every conversation. That happened last week with gun control. I called my congress people about my support for Obama’s plan. I brought it up with everyone I spoke to over two days. It isn’t wrong to call the legislators but the more I talked to people the more I could see that my perspective was very distinct and that I was holding onto it very tightly. This was hard to see at first because I felt so righteous. It isn’t wrong to have an opinion

but if the opinion makes me as rabid as the NRA people, then I am definitely cutting off the spiritual flow that might help me to find a solution or an understanding.

3. When I start to feel that I am not as good as other bridge players, other writers, other pianists, other humans in general, I can spiral right down. I am comparing myself. I am deciding who and what and how good I am based on someone else. But when I can let this go, I feel so much better! How do I let this go? This is a difficult one. The best way is to remember about being open, to remember that in the past when I have let these comparisons go it has always felt better. Though logically I can always find a way to define myself as “less,” it helps to have faith that this is not the point. I am who I am and the more I let that be and not try to decide what it should be, the more the spirit in me can find its level — it can go toward the boundless. For me to think that I am less because I am not a great pianist or a great writer is a very bounded way of thinking. I am making the assumption that I know what I should be based on something outside. If instead, I just keep writing and playing piano and playing bridge because I am compelled to do all of these things and because I really enjoy them, then that is all that matters. It is not the quality in comparison but rather the spirit moving through me that feels right in the end.

4. This brings me quite naturally to the next thing upon which I dwell — I feel “less” and “unworthy” because I have the time to do all these things. I am not out there working 40 hours a week at a job or doing something to help all the people who need help. This can make me get very much in the way of the flow. But again, when I can calm this voice by having some faith that I have been raising my own children and I have also been drawn to various volunteer jobs over the years. I have spent a lot of time dealing with health issues and exploring diet, exercise, supplements. This has been an education that I can pass along to others, both because some of my health ventures have not worked out and because some of them have. Faith and openness, when I can reach these, help me

to see the spirit pervading in my life, often in ways I could never have imagined.

5. When I am clinging to an outcome and feeling that all will be lost if that outcome does not come to pass, it helps if I can recognize that I am clinging. Most often now I do this by reminding myself that clinging is usually detrimental because it causes stress in me and also that quite often when I let go of the outcome I desire, something better or more fitting comes along anyway. This clinging can be about anything from getting to a destination on time to wanting my child to get a good grade point average to not wanting to get the flu to wanting a nice, relaxing vacation to wanting my kids to be always be safe to not wanting to die. But any time I can see myself let go of these things, I can feel the flow come right through. Keep an open mind.

I like the way you talk about these things in the notes: “Rooting out hidden expectations and other learned flaws is a very good exercise for contemplation. Expectations about the outcome block us from acting as freely as changing situations require. If we can break free of all those impediments, our actions will truly excel.” This is a good one to remember. Oh, and your second sentence also reminds me of something else about the Alexander Technique — since working on this, if I trip over something, I am much more able to recover. My teacher said that her students often report this after working with the technique for a few months. It’s pretty cool — the technique helps one to not get locked up and so one can go with the flow more easily and recover from the jolts.

[Susan reacted strongly to the reference in class to living life as if we are in a waiting room, so I asked her to write about it. It’s a great example of a state of mind we become accustomed to and only become aware of if we take a good hard look.]

So about the waiting room — when you brought it up in class, I had a vision and now I think it was an instantaneous collusion of

ideas that (as in a dream) don't really make solid sense now in reflection. I thought of a doctor's or hospital waiting room, which is part of some sort of past memory but the nugget that hit me was the idea that we come to a place, intending to get vital information or determined to reform or set new goals or really get serious and as we settle down to make the leap, we often get side tracked. Instead of continuing our movement forward, we make sure to have all our comforts — pillows, a comfortable chair, tea, a book or our iPhone just in case there is time on our hands. Then do we really ever get out of the waiting room? Do we go beyond or is the act of sitting in the waiting room with all our comforts what we take to be actually making the leap? I am thinking of myself of course — I come to class, I love seeing everyone and talking to everyone, I get my nice hot cup of tea and maybe munch on one or two or three of the delicious Teitsworth/Buchanan treats. Then I find a comfortable place to sit and sink into the chanting and the conversation. It's all wonderful — a highlight of my week. But sometimes, I am just in the waiting room. I am either in my analytical mind that is very interested in the ideas being discussed and/or I am (perhaps unconsciously) holding tight to my conditioned notions and not allowing my mind to really open. It may sound as though I am being hard on myself, but actually it's just something that has occurred to me as I have started the Atmo study. Perhaps it's partly because I realize how little I gleaned from Atmo the first time I read it (and it really changed my life that time!) but now I see how I don't open myself as much as I could. This is a good thing to see. It is a challenge of sorts. It has made me more aware of my interactions with others and how tightly wound I am.