

6/17/14  
Verse 64

Dismiss your memories of each object of interest,  
which cause a state of obstruction;  
the vast expansive memory, which can reveal  
the priceless ultimate knowledge, is not unjustified.

Free translation:

Every object of perception evokes a preconditioned memory, and one stumbles on its imagined consequences. Banish all such frivolous memories. The only memory worth cherishing is one's primal identification with the priceless, ultimate Knowledge.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

This which ever prevails, surmounting each interest-item,  
One's proper retrospection alone can compromise:  
By means of extremely lucid memory, however, the revealing  
Of ultimate wisdom-treasure is still not to be ruled out.

In case we haven't quite gotten the point of Narayana Guru's subtle suggestions, he offers us a direct instruction for practical application of them. Most of our thoughts are trivial and ego-related. Instead of mindlessly following where they lead, we can compare them to a more broadminded attitude and incorporate as much of it as is justified. Nitya is also very direct about this:

Narayana Guru says here that by that remembrance which is vast and expansive, where you are related with the whole eternal universe, where the past, present and future are all taken as one whole, and your relevance to it is made clear to you, that kind of remembrance is a redeeming one. Live in your redeeming remembrance. In Vedanta this is considered to be very central.

Enlarging our perspective is utterly straightforward and simple, and yet due to our habitual modes of thinking we seldom take the time for it. Happily, the class offers an ideal practice ground that is quite compelling for us to do exactly what the gurus suggest. I also invite those of you at home to send us your own interpretations. This is a field where each of our examples will be readily recognized by everyone else.

The key idea, of exceptional importance, is that we don't overdo the "dismissing" of our self-identity. We retain it, only in expanded form. We used Deb as an example: just a plain girl from the Midwest US, which is universally considered the "square" part of the country. Many people from there stay stuck in being square, but Deb was determined to leave it all behind her, and she has become a much more universalized person. We still see and admire her roots because they make her uniquely who she is, but she is not overly tied down to them.

That has not always been true. Deb told a funny story of when she was first traveling with Nitya in her early twenties. In those days she was trying so hard to be cool and hip, the then-current cliché of what the "vast expansive memory" meant. It's hard to imagine now, but back then being cool set you apart. It was very exotic, and caused shock and horror among those striving to hang on to what passed for normal. One day during their ego-trimming battles, Nitya chided her, "You're just a prosaic American girl." It was an arrow straight to her heart, and it took her years to get over the pain it caused. It was exactly how she didn't want to think of herself. But Nitya had skewered her suppressed self-identity, freeing her to become more expansive. Real cool is not a pose, or something to be conquered and assimilated. At heart it means being yourself. Nitya had exploded the myth Deb had adopted. If she had been truly cool, what he said would not have upset her. The fact that it did revealed precisely where her pretensions lay.

The guru principle of the universe is the force that sheds light on our unconscious assumptions, allowing us to finally become aware of them. At such a crucial moment the ordinary person clings to their limited identity. The yogi decides to upgrade that identity with an enlarged self-image. By making the upgrade habitual, expansion happens. It doesn't happen if we just imagine we have got it already. Brain studies have made clear that rewiring our neurons takes time and repetitive effort.

Deb was fortunate to have had a happy childhood where she was loved for what she was. Some others in the class had more typical American upbringings where they were taught to despise themselves. Fundamentalist Christians in particular believe that children are born sinners who need to be tortured both physically and mentally to become what they are supposed to be. The class examined how pernicious the attitudes of self-loathing are in our culture. One had been sure he was going to hell because he kissed a girl, and another was doomed because he had gone to a movie theater. Simply realizing these ideas are ridiculous is not enough, because doubts remain lodged deep in the psyche, and those specific remembrances are merely the tip of a very, very large iceberg.

This type of cruel upbringing is one major reason that draconian spiritual practices are popular worldwide: they translate self-hatred into palatable terms that promise success. But here the gurus are bypassing the whole morass, trying to remind us we are just fine to begin with. If we can accept that, we will have made a valid start to real transformation. In terms of Nitya's commentary, the idea is to not get hung up on dismissing aspects of our individuality in hopes of becoming one with the Absolute, but continually subsuming those aspects in a vast expansive outlook. A number of us have tried the "negate yourself" approach and found how embittering and desolating it can be. Below the self-suppression, twisted cravings seek ways to escape their bondage, and develop into the kind of psychic horror stories we know all too well. Nitya offers a very important caution about this:

When you meditate on this verse, if you use only one limb of it, that is, not following up the memories caused by the present environment, it becomes lopsided. This approach needs to be complemented by remembering your greater identity. If all you do is reject your personal memories, you become alienated from everything. But when you accept the higher memory, all the barriers of individuality leave and you become expansive.

What is being spoken of here should not be made into a destructive kind of meditation. As long as it is made expansive, there are no barriers between you and the other. This fosters a greater love and greater freedom. This is of critical importance.

Paul has been noticing how the way parents treat their children is bound to have a lasting impact on their lives in unintended ways. Like most of us, he doesn't see how he can intervene, but he would like to. He knows you don't grow loving people by treating them harshly, but by demonstrating love. This is another way to put this verse into practice, by observing the likely impact of treatment on the delicate minds of children, and then positing a healthier alternative. Rather than intervene directly, there are less confrontive ways to improve the situation. Plus, we can always use the example to be sure we don't retain the same faults. And while we're at it, why not treat adults kindly, too?

This highlights one of the most important repackagings we can implement. Most of us are taught we are inadequate. We are convinced that the important people and events of life are happening somewhere else, and we don't really matter. We have to become model human beings before we're okay. All such thoughts sabotage our value as unique individuals. As yogis we should root out these falsehoods and replace them with ideals like we are essential to the flow of life. There is nothing more important than our life right here and now. It's actually shocking all the ways we downplay our value, because it's so much a part of our culture we don't even notice, like the ocean to a fish.

Narayana Guru looked out upon a sea of miserable humans and saw how amazing each of them was. He wanted to tell everyone how

much they mattered, how much they were capable of. Here and there people heard his message, and were transformed. If we take his kindhearted and intelligently honed ideas to heart, we too can embody the priceless ultimate knowledge he is calling us to.

The really weird part is that we tend instead to take on the punitive attitudes of our caregivers. They are no longer around, but we dutifully act out their persecution of us, because subconsciously we agree that we have to be swept aside to make room for the honorable, “holy” people God wants to have around.

This is utter bullshit, of course, but still we believe it.

So the very first thing we can do by way of curing our ills is to stop persecuting ourself. Whenever we notice we’re doing it, we can substitute an awareness of our irreplaceable uniqueness. Even if no one else is ever going to notice the change, we can notice. We can be our own best friend.

Mick told a lovely story about when he was facing a jail term of up to seven years, for the kind of victimless crime that Americans love to harshly penalize. At the time he was feeling dreadful about screwing up and wrecking his family’s happy life, so in addition to the awful prospects he was facing he was beating up on himself, undoubtedly quite heavily as he had been taught, adding immensely to the burden. He was in the ceramic studio throwing pots, when a hummingbird became trapped in the rather large building. Although his hands were covered with clay, he had to get the bird outside. Hummingbirds can’t be driven out a door; they’re too quick and just dart around. After some futile attempts, Mick started to concentrate on telepathic communication with the bird, sending it peaceful, loving thoughts. When he brought himself to a calm state, the bird flew over and hovered in front of him. Mick extended his left hand, and the bird alit on his finger. He walked gingerly outside with it, but the bird didn’t leave immediately. Instead it turned away from him and used its beak to rub his finger, very gently, three times. Then it turned back and looked at him before flying away, likely as a gesture of thanks. Mick understood it also as an expression of forgiveness, a bird blessing, and he knew that he shouldn’t run himself down just because of his unfortunate circumstances. Needless to say,

Mick was blown away. The bird helped him accomplish just what Narayana Guru recommends here: moving from the pinch of outward conditioning amplified by self-loathing, to the vast loving beingness that is the true home of our spirit.

Nitya expresses the liberating idea of this verse perfectly in his free translation: “Every object of perception evokes a preconditioned memory, and one stumbles on its imagined consequences.” Those are the impediments we are asked to surrender. Especially we should stop imagining consequences! This parallels the Gita’s advice to not have expectations. Expectations are totally grounded in what we think we already know, and therefore close off most of the unexpected outcomes, usually including the optimal ones. It’s much better to wait and see what will happen. But before that we should relinquish our fixed notions and the unwitting assumptions they generate. Nitya counsels us not to throw the baby out with the bathwater:

It is not an easy thing to reject all these memories. But the Guru asks us to at least break away from our personal memories, which bring regrets, remorse and anxieties; and, if we turn towards the future, to break away from the echo of our memory that comes in the form of fantasies.

Deb really got from this how our fantasies are just repackaged memories, ways we hope to re-experience the past in the future. Fantasies really are echoes of the past projected as a renewed possibility. We may believe they are insinuations from the Absolute leaking into our awareness, but when that happens it’s something else: what we call creative intuition. Nitya is right that fantasies are the embodiment of our desires, fully based on past experiences, so they interfere with creative inspiration rather than fostering it. It’s a bit tricky to distinguish the one from the other, especially since we tend to favor our fantasies. We can help each other sort out the difference.

So let’s close with some examples of what we should be drawing from this verse. We already saw how Deb is both a “prosaic American”

and an open-minded, universal contemplative. Nitya described a similar perspective about himself:

The realization of the higher Self does not mean you should abstract everything and make it only a theoretical possibility. It is to be lived here and now in its most expansive sense. People who come to these classes here in America do not know my parentage; they know nothing of my school days. They know little or nothing of the particular culture in which I was raised. None of these things are necessary for us to relate in a free way with an open mind. They think, “This is a person who speaks of certain experiences of living truth.” That's enough.

So do we peer at people and keep them at a distance based on their superficial characteristics, or do we look for their humanity and resonate with that? We didn't talk about it in class, but the fellow Nitya was taking to India with him, who was only a tangential participant in the class, failed in this respect. Nitya wrote, “For instance, a friend here is going to India with me soon. How does this apply to him? If he thinks of himself merely as an Oregonian doing business, then India will be a very foreign country for him, with an exotic culture and incomprehensible ways of life. On the other hand, if he can think of himself as an ordinary human being belonging to the whole world, he will be very much at home.” I don't know many of the details, but I do recall the guy being miserable and angry when he got home. He was someone who held on tight to his narrow definition of self. I can well imagine that doing business is a particularly stressful test of one's humanity, and that a lot of practice would be necessary to keep the gurus' advice alive in the heart. It's a reminder that we all need to practice these ideas regularly, not just give them a nod.

One idea I have used and shared with my musician friends could be applied to public speaking or other nerve-wracking events. Nearly all musicians get nervous before they perform, and it often causes mistakes and inferior playing. Being nervous is viewed negatively. I suggest that we are not really nervous, only excited. We are keyed up, and that can

be very good for performance. So if we think of ourselves as excited we will do better than if we think of ourselves as nervous. It works! Even just hearing the idea is a relief for many musicians. They instinctively sense it's true.

I've already told so many of my own stories, I want to hear from others. I'll just mention that situations that cause fear and dread can be reimagined as opportunities to learn and grow, and then that's what they become. There is no reason to give in to our habitual gut reaction to avoid challenges. With a couple of trials we can learn how exciting it is to leap over our mental hurdles and connect with someone we might be inclined to avoid. Narayana Guru's gentle suggestions are colossal blasts of curative energy if we dare to take them seriously.

## Part II

### *Neither This Nor That But . . . Aum:*

Mind is never at rest. It is always inquisitive, wanting to know what is happening around. It looks through the windows of perception. Anything that catches its attention is immediately linked to an associated idea. Associations are not always strongly linked like cause and effect; in fact, even a remote resemblance can be more than enough to keep the mind jumping from one memory to another. Memory brings along the emotional colouration of a previous event and this is relived, vividly sometimes, vaguely at other times, and sometimes with exaggerated sentiments. Bergson speaks of it as the pulling of the thread out of a ball of yarn. It has no end. It keeps on coming and coming with bunches of forgotten events and people.

Memory has its echo in the indulgence of futuristic fantasy. When memory is retrospective, it becomes regret and remorse, and when it is prospective, it becomes anxiety. On the whole memory is tied up with worries.

Pavlov exemplified the conditioning of the reflexes by his famous experiment with the dogs that salivated at the sound of a buzzer. This phenomenon of conditioning permeates the entire field of learning. In



Sanskrit, the storing of the memory of an impression is called samskàra. Samskàra means culturing or processing. An impression is processed to become a conditioned state. When a conditioned memory is further consolidated it becomes a vāsana, an incipient memory.

Another name for Eros is smaran, the one who reminds. All desires are evoked by the urge to enjoy. The urge to enjoy is like the sprout sleeping in a seed; it wakes up when conditions are favourable. The antidote to smaran is smarahan (the burner of erotic memories), or Siva. The intensity of Siva's third eye burns away the impulses that create unwholesome craving. In the Bhagavad Gita, pure knowledge is glorified as a fire that burns away the dross of action. Memories that bring anxieties and worries should be discarded with discernment. The word pratibandham given in this verse is to be taken as the obstruction of the Real which is veiled by clusters of relativistic memories.

We wake up to the memories of the phenomenal because we have forgotten the original memory of our real identity. In reality we are the pure existence of absolute happiness, sat-cit-ànanda. If this is remembered, it will cure us from the ills of all relativistic memories.

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Nataraja Guru's commentary:

THE mind as an inner organ of thought or consciousness can be related to the future or the past. Interests having a prospective or a retrospective content can fill the mental field by establishing a bipolar relation with any one at a time. Items of interest thus succeed each other, holding the centre of the field of attention at a given time with each person. Just as a river flows forward, overcoming obstacles such as stones that hinder its progress; so the forward-flowing or prospective function, which is a corollary of the orientation of the spirit to the future ideological end or purpose in life, consists of overcoming impediments in the form of interests of various degrees and kinds which happen to hold back the attention of man at any given time. These interests are good for

spiritual progress even in their most ordinary levels or degrees only in so far as they offer footholds for the ascent of the spirit by convenient steps through their means to ever higher levels, so as to prevail finally in self-realization of the highest or absolute value

The enemy of such a process of positive progression is the retrospective orientation of the spirit which is often filled with the dross of personal reminiscences which result in regrets or regression of the spirit harmful to a healthy psychic life. Reminiscent moods are often signs of mental debility or advanced old age. Items of regret can effectively compromise or counter the forward impetus that leads to the goal of absolute Self-realization. The harm done by retrospection and regret to the soul in its progress to the goal is described in the forceful language of the German philosopher Nietzsche in his book *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (Page 153, Random House, New York, N. Y., U. S. A.)

Willing emancipateth; but what is that called which 'It was thus' is the will's teeth-gnashing and loneliest tribulation called. Impotent towards what hath been done – it is a malicious spectator of all that is past. That time doth not run backward – that is its animosity. 'That which was' – so is the stone which it cannot roll called.

Over and above this generalization about the evil of retrospection the Guru's verse contains a kind of safety-valve pertaining to the same question. All retrospection is not to be ruled out. When the Isa Upanishad says;

0 purpose (kratu), remember: The deed (krita) remember  
0 purpose remember, the deed remember.

There is still a two-sided allusion to the item of retrospection or remembrance retained in principle. There is a lucid form of pure memory transparent to purpose and to what is past and gone for

ever. Such a lucid form of retrospection, with double reference to the past as well as to the future, has the same effect as digging for a treasure trove that is hidden under the ground and finding it, and the Guru here accepts this kind of pure retrospection, approximating to a form of general awareness, as conducive, in principle at least, to the end of contemplative Self-realization.

### Part III

Mick told us about a new cat that he is completely in love with, and the cat is equally in love with him. He waxed rhapsodic about their relationship, as if he wanted to be sure it was okay with us to feel that way. He was raised in one of the “tough male” models so prevalent in the older cultures. I’m sure he was reassured that we at least didn’t believe it was healthy to suppress our feelings. Mick’s cat enthusiasm brought to mind one of Nataraja Guru’s quotes: “When a beautiful fat housecat rolls in the sunlight, that is yoga.” I also reread the part from near the end of verse 48, which I’ll expand a bit because of its relevance. Nitya was speaking about how we have to extend our boundaries beyond the limits of our body, and that is a kind of realization. He adds:

This is reestablished in our lives every day. When you pick up a cat and say “my dear kitty,” you have already gone beyond your bodily limitations and your own body identity. People do not realize that this itself is part of your realization. Of course, it needs to be further perfected. When you say someone is a realized person, it is not that she hugs a cat. There’s a bit more to it. But you make a beginning just by hugging the cat.

A big myth is now exploded with this verse. You have now come so close to the experience of the Absolute. It is within your reach, in the palm of your hand, so to speak. When Jesus says, “The kingdom of God is at hand, close to you, within your own heart,” people still doubt it. They say “if it is so close, where are the signs? Why are the clouds not becoming all pink and red? Why aren’t the trees bursting

forth in light and the sound of God's own voice?" Jesus says, "Ye hypocrites! I give you no signs."

All the religious words have frightened and confused us. Narayana Guru wants to give us courage, telling us, "Don't be afraid. You are as good as anyone. The essence of realization is in your own daily experience." With this realization you come to establish a universal norm for living that experience with others, not just in a state of absorption.

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Peg sent a snapshot of one of her favorite thinkers:

63/64 verses, and the class notes—which I read and treasure—brought this to mind. Sending much love/gratitude to all.

Kazimierz Dabrowski (1902-1980) was a Polish psychiatrist and psychologist who, among many profound and useful theories/incites, developed this typology of emotional development and his Theory of Positive Disintegration.

(from a Karen Nelson article...) "IQ tests give us one means of understanding and describing differences between individuals. But how do we understand and measure the quality of the differences we perceive between Klaus Barbie and Mother Teresa of Calcutta, between Dag Hammarskjold and Adolf Hitler? Kazimierz Dabrowski's theory of emotional development--or Theory of Positive Disintegration, as Dabrowski called it to emphasize the role of suffering and inner conflict in advancing development--gives us a framework for understanding these qualitatively different levels of human development."

Kazimierz Dabrowski's typology/levels of emotional development:

I. Dominant concern with self-protection and survival; self-serving egocentrism; instrumental view of others

(Dog-eat-dog mentality)

II. Lack of inner direction; inner fragmentation--many selves;  
submission to the values of the group; relativism of values and beliefs  
(A reed in the wind)

III. Sense of the ideal but not reaching it; moral concerns; higher vs  
lower in oneself  
(Video meliora proboque deteriora sequor -Marcus Tullius Cicero)

IV. Self-actualization; ideals and actions agree; "what ought to be, will  
be," strong sense of responsibility  
(Behind tranquility lies conquered unhappiness -Eleanor Roosevelt)

V. Life inspired by a powerful ideal, e.g. equal rights, world peace,  
universal love and compassion , sovereignty of all nations  
(A magnetic field in the soul -Dag Hammarskjold)

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As well as his poem (1970):

Hail to you, psychoneurotics,  
For you perceive sensibility  
in the insensibility of the world,  
uncertainty in its certainty.  
For you are often as conscious of others  
as of yourself,  
For you feel the anxiety of the world,  
its limits and its false unlimited assurance...

For your fear of the absurdity of existence.  
...For your awkwardness,  
for your transcendental realism  
and your lack of daily realism...

For your creativity and your ecstasy,  
For your maladjustment to what is  
    and your adjustment to what ought to be,  
For your immense possibilities not yet actualized...

For what is unique, original, intuitive and infinite in you.  
For the solitude and the oddness of your paths.

Hail to you.

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Thanks,  
Peggy Grace Chun

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We've heard from John after a fairly long respite:

This brings to mind several things.

There's an old saying in the South: "You become what you hate."  
While I don't hate my parents, I find, in reflection, that I had un-  
mindfully taken on their best, and worst, traits.

As for association - yes, I hear stuff like that all the time. A friend  
told me that she had two very bad Tri-Met [bus] rides and so she  
will never ride on the Tri-Met again. I rode Tri-Met for 35 years  
until I got into the appraisal biz and I couldn't get to the appraisals  
that way - and yes, I had bad rides, great rides, and mostly, just  
rides. And though I try to take everything as it comes, as it is, and  
be open -

there's like this voice that wants me to make some kind of  
judgment or something about it. IN some cases, I suspect that this  
is a self-defense mechanism - I mean, I remember as a child  
sticking a knife into an electric socket to see what would happen.

Yup - I got a sound shock, and caused a pop, snap crackle, and burnt the knife a bit. So, yes, associations have their place. But I think the key is to be mindful - ever mindful - to know why you are doing what you are doing - why you are careful when you are careful -and such - as opposed to knee jerk reactions based on neurons firing that you aren't even trying to figure out.

Whew, what a winter and spring. Ah - this weekend, I long to get my victory garden going!

Much L to all

PS - don't stick knives into electric sockets until you want to see sparks and get a shock. Upside, you get a light show that's pretty far out - and as for the shock, well, I wouldn't recommend it, but at least you know your body is still functioning property.

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And from Pratibha:

Yes his ideas are colossal, creative blasts that we all can apply.

I can affirm that I used to get nervous worried while driving to teach; I began to say affirmations of courage and success for that day's class. My mind settled more peacefully and class always went well after doing these affirmations, sometimes a mantra.

So we do have free will and choices when we truly embrace them.

regards to all,  
Pratibha

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Jake's commentary:

In this verse, the Guru once again presents his central theme of our need to dwell on and in the Absolute while going about our daily business. Here, however, he offers a view that, at first blush, flies in the face of what is a bedrock conviction held by most, especially those buried in contemporary American culture and its public notions of virtue. Within the parameters of this model, family or home-of- origin memories assume defining contours and go a long way in explaining one's adult condition. In Indian psychology, writes Nitya in his commentary, these experiences (among others) are called *samskaras*, that which processes lived experience of the present life into memory (largely out of awareness until excavated later in life often through talk therapy).

In completing this explanation of that which motivates our behavior, Nitya adds the notion of *vssanas*: "the refined essence of memory that the life form carries over to its new body [as it passes from life to life]. These incipient memories are those with which a newly born child begins life' (p.438). It is the combination of the two that we call memory, which is, in turn, that which we connect to experiences as they arrive in the material world. In short, as we go about our business our memories lie dormant ready to "sprout" whenever the environment presents us with an occasion to which we can attach them. Because our memory reaches so far back into the eons, our mind's capacity to articulate the details is possible only to a very partial degree, and "what is retained in memory is not exactly as you have lived it. It is more like a caricature of it" (p. 439) and follows no logic the mind can attach to. Memories are in charge as long as the process remains out of awareness, and in all cases the very nature of them leads us back to the circular path of samsaric misery. As Nitya reminds us, even pleasant memories are tinged with regret because of their being over with and not available in the present moment. They are available only as they are lived as actual events that ever appear and disappear. Because



they are a quality of the immanent, they are part and parcel of that which is not.

This timeless system, carried through our bodies as we come and go has a direct effect on their nervous systems, writes Nitya. Memories are embedded in and “have roots in the past.” Excavating them can cause disability or disease in extreme cases. Always associated with objects of interest, memories as they boil up act to obstruct and distort direct perception of the Absolute and in them is contained the energy of eros (which is the power of any object-centered urge and not to be narrowly understood as the sex urge.) That combination of energy and memory constitute a powerful and continuous assault on self meant to distract it and turn its attention to those items of interest, which are also so highly prized particularly in American culture. Family bonds are of particular significance as are those associated with one’s larger “families” of gender and ethnic group. In all these cases, the assumed-stabilizing anchor is thoroughly embedded in the transient domain of that which is not. As with any convention founded on illusion, the holding fast to it demands that we construct and continuously reinforce our denial of that which *is* the Absolute when glimmers of it pierce the fog now and then, a miasma our minds weave out of memory and its mirror image, fantasy—the memory echo we cast into the future.

All of this activity is mind-conjured and tied to our personal ego-self we hold so dear. This “superficial remembrance that you are so and so,” writes Nitya, “is a memory that limits you, but if you remember you are the Absolute it will sublimate all those binding, relativistic remembrances” (p. 441).

Coming to terms with the reality of the Self and the passing shadow of our mind’s ego-self places much of what is prized in American life into a secondary category. Family, ethnic group, gender, or even national identification are revealed as the illusions they are the more clearly one comes to realize the Absolute oneness. Because of this inevitable development if we choose to pursue awareness, Nitya counsels us to hold fast to that which is

while we meditate on this vision and incorporate it into our lives as we live them here and now. Letting go of the notion that personal memory is true in favor of a larger, eternal truth, requires that we, as Ken Wilber phrases it, “transcend and include.” The Absolute is no dry abstraction; living the Absolute includes living in the All: “Always, the narrow shell of relationship is to be discarded in favor of a wider one” (p. 442).

## Part IV

Although Verse 65 elaborates on the idea of the vast expansive memory of this verse (64), Peggy sent this as a follow up to her first email, so I’ll include it now:

PS: Re creative performance friends comment...

I've found the following framing for the fear sensation/biochem (aka performance anxiety, or fight/flight, and the crazy thinking that can accompany this) to be quite useful. Consultant Tara Mohr advises...

Don't run, and don't go on the attack. Evaluate. There's a **difference between** the fear you feel when your **life is at risk** (tiger leaping at your neck), and the fear you feel when **you're taking a risk**.

"The late Rabbi Alan Lew talked about how in Hebrew there are many words for fear," she says. You can calm down and figure out how to take action by identifying which kind you're feeling.

**"Pachad"** is the innate biological response that turns us into an irrational, Hulk-like mess. If you're not actually clinging to survival, pachad is imaginary - meaning the face-burning panic you feel before giving a speech is no more real than what you feel during a suspenseful scene in a movie. Know it for what it is, suggests Mohr.

The other kind of fear is "**yirah**," a word which means something close to **awe** in English. This is existential fear -- the fear of standing up for yourself, being who you are, or realizing your full potential. Mohr describes yirah as the "**sacred, trembling feeling**" that we encounter at the possibility of the future. This type of fear can be powerful, if you recognize it. It is the deep anxiety many of us bring to the unknown.

**The next time you have to make a difficult decision or find a new approach, ask yourself whether the butterflies in your stomach signal a genuine possibility of harm, or "the sacredness of what you're touching."**

(Scott here): This is really right to the point. Thank you, Peg. Though the presumption in Eastern spirituality is often that we should cremate *all* our vasanas, the Gita and the Gurukula gurus are in favor of promoting the best and torching the only the worthless or detrimental ones. I believe that the feeling we label as "nervousness" is often the eager anticipation of our thwarted vasanas sensing an all-too-rare opportunity to express themselves: essentially what Peggy is saying in different terms. We have learned to think of the sensation negatively, so we unwittingly wind up continuing the suppression. No wonder we make mistakes in such a mood! Remembering that our best abilities only sporadically get the chance to manifest—and this is the central meaning of our life, after all—will put a much more positive spin on performance anxiety no matter what the circumstances.

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Baird also weighed in on roughly the same topic, first creating a composite of Nitya's and my comments, and then adding his astute example:

... "Every object of perception evokes a preconditioned memory, and one stumbles on its imagined consequences." Those are the impediments we are asked to surrender. Especially we should stop imagining consequences! ... Guru asks us to at least break away from our personal memories, which bring regrets, remorse and anxieties; ... situations that cause fear and dread can be reimagined as opportunities to learn and grow, and then that's what they become.

Along these lines, a practice which I find helpful is to remind myself that worrying is just using my imagination to create something I DO NOT want, and then be thankful for the negative thought because it provides the CONTRAST I need to think about what I DO want.