

7/1/14

Verse 66

Food and all such always come again as a matter of course;
that which remains free of becoming is one;
we are that knowledge itself; all others
also remain as its forms.

Free translation:

In this world of becoming, the food that nourishes the body and everything else come as a matter of course. Everything undergoes transformation. Only one thing remains unchanged, and that is Knowledge. We are also that self-same Knowledge. Others too are none other than that.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

Earthy factors shall come to be evermore;
One alone remains not subject to becoming;
What we know, what it is, what we are, are that same;
And all others too remain conforming to its form.

It's been several years since we had a nice enough evening to have class outside, but this was one. A song sparrow joined us in the chanting, perfectly exemplifying the unitive state: it didn't sing for any secondary reason, to get anything, but simply for the joy of singing. Its glorious music was like the gates of heaven opening. A perfect temperature, no biting bugs, and a sublime sunset added to a peaceful sense of communal unity. The dogs Kai and Lucy had a rare chance to sit with us, and they demonstrated how deep a canine meditation can be. The roar of distant machines was a constant reminder of the neurotic world of ceaseless unfulfillment not too far outside our magic circle.

Deb had a kind of flash at the beginning inspired by the reading. She visualized two transparent cubes sitting side by side, symbolizing

being and becoming, and all similar dichotomies. From a lateral perspective it looks like the farther one is inside the other, and if you look from the other side it seems like their roles are reversed. In reality both cubes are the same. Deb's idea is to treat them equally from a neutral perspective. Partisans of one side or the other distort their value, their relative importance, so they prefer one over the other.

Both Jake and Stan, with responses in Part III, described the same distorting attitude as the ubiquitous either/or perspective, in which you can't accept both together. The vantage point of yoga is the both/and attitude, where the wave *is* water. It sounds so simple. That being the case, why have so few made that uncomplicated truth a living presence in their life? Nitya describes the challenge we face:

All our living moments are crowded with the intentionality of our consciousness. If we are always attached to intentionality, the peace, serenity and joy we look for are constantly being pushed away. In a sense, then, meaning is being transferred from the present to the future. We often speak of living here and now, but we don't realize the almost impossible pressure on us to not live in the present. We are always being made to wait, to look for, to expect, to anticipate. Half the time of our life is wasted in looking for and waiting for something to happen. If we can only establish a firm stand on the constant ground the Guru speaks of—the arivu or knowledge—our attachment and intentionality regarding the phenomenal world becomes a secondary interest. Our primary interest then becomes witnessing the game of life in the present moment.

Everyone agreed being fully present is easier said than done. Jan wondered if there was some mantra she could use to bring herself back to a steady state whenever she gets caught up in problems. Of course, once you realize you are caught in the wave, anything you do about it is the antidote. A mantra might be one of those options. I suggested the plenum mantra we close with every night. Or else, checking in with your breathing. When you're anxious the breath is likely to be disturbed, and pacifying it will calm your psyche quite rapidly. The yogic key is to

intelligently convert your perspective from anxious to oceanic, in the manner being instructed in these verses.

Paul wondered if Nitya ever got upset, and by his maturity (he was 45 when we first met him) he never did, despite ample provocation. He was a rare exemplar of steadiness under fire. But he had worked hard to get to that point, as his autobiography attests. Nataraja Guru threw everything at him but the kitchen sink, and a transcendent steadiness gradually grew out of his tribulations. As Moni put it, Nataraja Guru woke him up.

It's wonderful to have such an excellent example as Nitya before us, but we shouldn't get discouraged if we aren't quite so steady. Neither Nitya nor Narayana Guru ever insisted we shouldn't react to provocations. Reacting is totally natural. What we should restrain is our penchant for overreacting. Egos like to make a big deal out of their sufferings. Often they will add to the turbulence by lading on self-recriminations for failure to not react, or react improperly. Most of us have been well trained to beat up on ourselves for all sorts of minor transgressions, and bringing the Absolute ground back into our understanding allows us to stop doing it. I think this is what Nitya was referring to at the end of his comments, when he hinted how to get over our guilt:

At no time does your real Self change, now or hereafter, whatever kind of life you live. You can be a sinner or you can be a saint; wearing holy robes will not alter who you are.

The day you go one step further to realize your becoming a great saint or a great sinner is not going to change your Self in any way, a great calmness will grow inside you. At least you will have gotten over the agony of your guilt.

This certainly sounds mysterious at first. I know we all think, "I don't believe I'm guilty; that's for Jews and Christians." Unfortunately, guilt is a perfect example of a condition so pervasive we no longer notice it. It utterly permeates our culture; its calumnies are painted in bright letters everywhere! Rooting it out is a liberating meditation if ever

there was one. Yogis counteract it with affirmations. Not simply by repeating affirmations as if you aren't troubled by guilt. The affirmations have to be juxtaposed with actual awareness of how we unconsciously assume we are guilty and act on it. There is nothing simple in this. As Narayana Guru said in Verse 62, "This will not come by mouthing a phrase." Even less will it come by pretending it doesn't matter. Ignoring it or attributing it to someone else does not make it go away.

Stan already sent in a lengthy response to this verse. One of the highlights brought a chuckle:

Nitya writes: "This is a very subtle thing. If you understand it, it makes a real difference in your life. You do and you do not do. You perform everything you are doing now and yet, at the same time, you do not do anything. The Gita expresses it as seeing action in inaction and inaction in action, but this can become a cliché." Right on target—I only wish the action/inaction complementarity were the "cliché" in the west it apparently "can be" in India. I've only run across it myself a handful of times, exclusively in eastern literature, and originally was totally perplexed by it, back in the days when the either/or shadow ruled and ran my own cognitive show.

We can all hope that some day this wisdom will be so pervasive as to be a cliché, like the student's complaint about Hamlet: "It's just one cliché after another!" Nitya added the transforming instruction right after Stan's excerpt:

The whole meditation of this verse centers around not making it a cliché, but living it. Then you see the form aspect, the wave, and fully appreciate it while at the same time remaining as water.

This goes to the heart of the matter. Our brains are habituated to turning living reality into stale clichés, so we hardly notice when we dismiss potent instruction with nary a second thought. We nod and smile and claim we agree, even imagining we have made a spiritual effort, but what we're actually doing is keeping the whole business at bay. Because

we're in agreement with the propositions of Vedanta, we wonder why nothing is changed, why our life continues to be gray and uninteresting. We have to realize that the All is an ecstatic, mind-blowing reality, not reducible to a pat idea. Our ideas of it are by no means it.

Stan included a pertinent quote:

Sri Atmananda K. Menon has well noted, "Vedanta is verily a spiritual 'atom bomb'; and it is no wonder that the intellectuals cautiously avoid it, for fear of blundering into the Right."

Right in this sense not being a political position but a cogito-spiritual orientation. And we are all intellectuals, to some degree. We all profess that we want to change, but change is exactly what the ego most dreads, as it clings to the conceptual straws it imagines are keeping it afloat in the flood of daily life. Thus change is neutralized by converting it to a theory instead of permitting it to remain a dynamic living reality. It is much safer as an alluring cliché.

Narayana Guru's tack in this verse is urge us to contemplate the continuous flow of nourishing input we are blessed with and adopt a more or less worshipful attitude toward it. If we replace the anxiety of worrying about how to get what we think we need with the grateful assurance that our needs are always being met, we open doors for all sorts of beneficial upgrades to our state of being. And haven't our needs been met with amazing regularity through our whole life? So why are we worried?

Food in spiritual writing symbolizes not just what we eat but everything we take in. Man does not live by bread alone. What we imbibe is paired in yoga with what we give, meaning everything we emanate, we share. The ingoing and outgoing tendencies are to be brought into balance.

Physical food places the most direct demands on us, but we also languish in the absence of intellectual and emotional foodstuffs. Instead of becoming undone in their imagined absence, if we adopt an attitude of confidence in their steady supply we will in fact be inviting that supply to come in to our lives, whereas worry blocks it out.

For example, many people agree that there is a kind of teaching curriculum that life offers us, but usually it's left as a vague sort of supposition. They don't bother to examine the threads of it. If they did, they could see it more clearly as nourishing their highest aspirations, and sincere appreciation would almost certainly blossom in their hearts. But many are too lazy to bother. "Let it come—that's okay. But I won't trouble to reach out to it." It's true that similar attitudes have been denigrated into trite beliefs by the religious faithful, but that's the cliché part. We shouldn't let other people's clichés drive us away from our own authenticity. The truth is the flow is always bubbling up inside us, and all we have to do is allow it a chance to be expressed.

Our normal transactional mentality doesn't serve to establish us in unity. After a survey of western philosophy in the twentieth century, with its inability to resolve essential issues, Nitya reaffirms Narayana Guru's unique stature:

There is an unbridgeable duality in all this. Thus these philosophers came up against a problem they did not know how to solve.

Here Narayana Guru overcomes that difficulty. The paradox or dichotomy involved only comes up when we conceive of transcendence as separate from phenomenal existence, but he doesn't see it that way. In the third verse he showed us that we have to conceive of the whole thing as a treasury of oceanic depth from which waves of phenomenality arise. The waves are not different from the ocean. In this verse he says the world of necessity that makes you pass through all these phenomenal bumps—the imperative need, the search and the fulfillment—is an eternal game that goes on and on. It has always been like that, and it will always be like that. But there is also a changeless reality which does not come and go, and it is the same as the knowledge in which the whole game takes place. They are not in any way separate things. It is within your knowledge you feel a need, within it you make your calculations as you go in search. The knowledge itself makes you gamble, take risks and have faith that what you seek will be provided

and that somehow you will find it. The whole process, including its fulfillment, is all happening within knowledge.

We talked at length about some aspects of Nitya's own sadhana, unique among uniques, and tried to apply the principles to our own dilemmas. Most of it will have to vanish in the mist. It made for a lovely conversation at the time. As the crescent moon set and the rosy glow faded over the distant mountains, we slowly stood up and went our separate ways.

Part II

Neither This Nor That But . . . Aum:

When an ant is hungry, it goes in search of a thrown-away bread crumb or a dead cricket. When fledglings cry from hunger in the early dawn the parent birds leave the nest to look for worms. When a fisherman nets a big catch he can sell part of it to buy other provisions and make a saving to meet the contingency of unpredictable days. Those who live a sophisticated life with regular incomes and make their purchases from the nearby shopping centre, do not know the anguish of the little ant, the birds and the fisherman, who do not know how long they will have to toil and hang around or move around in pursuit of the prey which exists in an unpredictable range of probabilities. Even those who have the neat arrangement of a fat checkbook or bankcard and an opulent department store may at times not find the fruit or vegetable they want or a particular brand of a manufactured product. It is not hard to envisage the coming together of several uncertain and unpredictable events, which occur like favourable chances ordained by a benign God to keep the scarcity/ supply ratio at an almost foreseeable pace. It is a well-known fact that most living beings get their daily food. Wild animals, like wolves for instance, which are not always lucky in getting their daily meat, are favoured by nature and are adjusted to a feast-and-fast pattern.

The daily and cyclic needs to which living beings are subjected have a harsh imperativeness. When the need is categorical, such as the intake of air, water and food, nothing is more natural than seeking its immediate fulfillment. Although the need is precipitated by a world of mechanistic determination, the fulfillment happens like the manifestation of a miracle in a rat-maze of possibilities. In some areas of the world even items of abundance, such as fresh air and drinking water, are becoming scarce. There is no promise that every need will be fulfilled. If our board and lodging on earth is hosted by a steward, nobody seems to have seen him, so all our contracts and pledges are made as ex-parte decisions. On the surface of the earth, including its burrows and crevices, in the water and in the air live a multitude of beings that are in need of their daily or periodic nourishment. In spite of continuous poverty in certain countries, when we look at the proliferation, growth and longevity of the several species of beings that are earth-bound, we cannot but wonder how at least a maximum number of them are provided for daily by the unpredictable matching of probabilities, such as a smart cat succeeding in catching a partridge, while a lame cat will find sympathy in a lonely woman, or a herd of caribou escaping the pursuit of the most determined pack of wolves and the tired wolves coming upon a stray deer.

Thus, becoming is a process in which necessity enters into a dialogue with probability that again and again equalizes the balance between the need and supply with a certain amount of scarcity left behind to spur the onward movement of intentionality, which in turn becomes the substance of phenomenal existence.

In and through all these variables, there remains a constant. That is pure knowledge. In an earlier verse, Narayana Guru defined the Self as the knowledge that knows even when concealed in darkness. He is speaking here of the same knowledge, which is not different from the Self.

The phenomenal becoming and the changeless pure knowledge when taken separately may look dichotomous, as in the works of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, and afterwards made unbridgeable by Jean Paul Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness*. This

danger in speculative philosophy was foreseen by the Guru from the beginning, and he carefully avoided the chasm by presenting the objective world of facts and the subjective world of ideas both as aspects of the one primal substance. In verse 3 he compares the phenomenal manifestation to the formation of waves on the surface of the watery depth of the oceanic treasury. The key word in this verse is *vativu*, form. What we call the world is a formation and its never-ceasing proliferation. Although the wave is an appearance, it is an appearance substantiated by real water which has irrefutable existence, and that form can cause a heavy toll by killing a million people when it assumes the demonic dimensions of a tidal wave. As Husserl rightly pleads, there is no separation between existence and absence. The Guru is not pleading here for the integration of appearance and reality, but for the recognition of the non-differentiation of the two.

The key word in the previous verse was *aruma*, the desert of all values. We can re-apply here the analogy of the one sun with its countless beams of radiation which Guru gives in verse 2. In terms of energy, the sun and the sunlight are the same. Sunlight, however, can assume the shape and colour of what it illuminates. This illuminating aspect is termed in this verse as *vativàrnnu ninnitunnu*. The essential reality of all forms is the same dear value, the *aruma* of the previous verse.

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Nataraja Guru's commentary:

THERE is an aspect of nature that is phenomenal and subject to everlasting flux and becoming. This is the domain of the multiplicity of existing things - like the earth which we can touch and know as something outside ourselves, as an object to be known. The knower is the self and the known belongs to the side of the non-self. If we should put these two dual aspects together unitively there is a central neutral reality which knows no change. That remains ever as the 'high value' of the previous verse.

Unchanging reality is the Absolute which is ever constant and the same. It has a certain finalized form as pure awareness which is ineffable and subtler than the subtle, like a mathematical truth of the most abstract and generalized order. It is on such a subtle and all-inclusive basis that phenomenal existence can trace its changing phases.

The one and the changeless on the one hand, and the many that hang together in the chain of causes and effects, are related to the core in the neutrality of the Absolute without contradiction or conflict - but in the manifested world they are contraries or contradictories, according to the various grades of actualities or reasoned entities, factors or beings.

There are three ways of knowing from the relativist side when we envisage the highest of absolute generalized abstractions which is all inclusive. These three ways are touched upon by the Guru here in the third line as:

Firstly, what we know, or rather what we can know by the advancement of philosophical knowledge, which is called 'jneya' (that which is to be known), or even sometimes 'vijnanam' (specified knowledge). This refers to the object-matter of knowledge in pure epistemology.

Then, secondly, there is an 'objective' knowledge pure and simple, or just things that we can touch and entities that are analogous to it as seen through the inner organs such as the mind ('manas'), intelligence ('buddhi'), relational mind ('chitta') and the ego ('ahamkara'). Such actual or analogously actual items are many, and the Guru refers to them as a category implied in 'what it is' or 'that', which refers to tangible aspects of the non-self.

Then, thirdly, there is the self itself which is, as it were, within the body, but not really inside or outside.

These three aspects, while they are distinguishable from the relativistic side, merge into the unity of the Absolute when the philosophy becomes finalized or confirmed. The phenomenal and the noumenal worlds can be equated in terms of the Absolute.

Knowledge, knower and known are the tri-basic aspects of truth as seen from the relativistic side, which are transcended in the unitive vision of the Absolute. This tri-basic aspect of knowledge is to be vedantically finalized or reduced in terms of the vision of the Absolute.

Unitive knowledge combines the 'it' or 'that' aspect with the self aspect on one side, and the non-self aspect on the other. When the tri-basic aspects are thus unitively and globally reduced and reconstructed, as the last line states, we come to see all others too that we saw as individuals apart from our own individual selves, as also conforming to the prototype of the global neutral and normal notion of the Absolute. All first, second or third personal pronouns in the singular or plural and whatever gender, could come under the aegis of the Absolute Self.

Part III

Dipika is responding to Verse 63 now, but I'm adding it here because it's a good review of a few of Nitya's key points:

The first lesson about trusting your senses is: don't. Just because you believe something to be true, just because you know it's true, that doesn't mean it is true. This is because your senses will tell you the most inglorious lies."

This is such a great learning...to understand how limited we actually are

A contemplative adds an extra dimension of more or less intelligent choice. Then, despite being at the mercy of our mental structuring we at least begin to have a say in how our life pans out. It is up to you to make your consciousness bright or dull. If you decide, "Oh, this is the time to mourn, to sit and become boorish," you can. Or you can realize it's nonsense, just nonsense, to get into depressions

Yessss....with a big chest thump...

Ive made a promise to myself that I will never let myself get into a bad mood no matter what...

every little thing is begging to make us whine...the weather the pollution the traffic apart from the bigger problems of having enough money finding a partner losing a partner addictions...you name it

its never a good enough day...so you have to start NOW and then you learn to watch & catch yourself & voila it starts becoming a habit & slowly you understand that you can be in charge of your reactions & change does come about.

But in this wakeful state alone, it is possible to become critical, thoroughgoing, penetrative, meditative, reflective and perceptive of this possibility of seeing the Absolute in the relative.

This is such a great hope giving statement...so much work left to do !

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My talk at Powell's brought out a new friend, Stan, who found Nitya's books at the library and tuned right in. (You all have likewise donated them to your local libraries, haven't you?) He's

joined the email version of our class, and has a stack of our books awaiting his delectation. He is so excited he has written me a lot, way too much to put in here. I will pick out a few paragraphs, and if you want the rest, please let me know. The whole is well worth reading if you have the time. Stan welcomes dialectical interplay to fine tune his thoughts. He already sounds at home with the Gurukula philosophy, as you can see:

Thanks for the tips on the books. I have been enjoying your intros read randomly here and there, with the beginning pages of your Krishna book having been most consequential. Will definitely get to them all. I actually have both books you mentioned [That Alone and Psychology of Darsanamala] already checked out from multco, [library] and only the Absolute knows when I will be able to get to them--a most wonderful dilemma!!

There used to be a time when I felt deeply lucky when one out of the twenty or more books that came my way for examination for possible insight/wisdom would be in such close alignment with my own present state of understanding/curiosity/and personal need at that time, that nearly every page was a mind-stretching delight.

And now, to be knee deep in such material, so wholly apropos to my own most central interest and passion, with no end in sight, well, just amounts to a kind of bliss, literally, with a sense of volcanic transformation in the offing. Like a kid in a candy shop, I hardly know which bowl to gorge myself on next.

So now here's the first little bit of Stan's first eruption:

So far I have only read, several times, N's comments on "Verse 66", which is very useful in several ways. One is in his incisive overview of Sartre's and Heidegger's work. For my purposes, he deftly lays a finger on probably exactly why I've found them not attractive or relevant to laying bare the full truth of human reality, and I could never justify spending the time to wade thru their indirect beatings-around-the-bush to find proper

reference to the Absolute. To now learn that they insisted on framing the transcendent and phenomenal in strictly either/or terms explains and justifies my gut-level refusal to give them any more attention. Precisely just such a deeply endemic error would be necessary, though, for Heidegger to have so supported Nazi ideology as he did, for as long as he did. In my view, this is a fine instance of how the integrity of one's consciousness depends upon the quality of the fundamental (dialectical) contrasts that underlie it.

Either/or contrasts in my opinion, even the most neutral and comprehensive, cannot possibly by their very nature *properly* serve as more than purely relative, intellectual tools, limited to supplying, "necessarily," the cognitive means by which our "intentions" can be successful in the phenomenal world--much as I think Nitya says. They are approximations of "what is" that we find useful in securing the "necessities" of life, but are largely made-up, superficial conveniences to which is often also further added a hierarchical spin. These simply have no business serving as our "ontological" foundation, despite having been forced into that role in western culture.

For example, not only in the either/or mind-set are "God" and "human" believed to be wholly separate and radically different, but God is further believed to be vastly *superior* to humans—a further presumption springboarding from the previous, already shaky and in fact distorted one—yet for many, of course, this stack-of-cards is a key element of nothing less than "reality" itself, rather than the socially and transparently manipulative device it actually is.

Such a ricketly structure could never stand on its own, so it has been cumulatively further buttressed, bolstered, and fortified down thru the centuries by associations with many kindred either/or, hierarchical contrasts, like good/bad, rational/irrational, gain/loss, right/wrong, life/death, thought/emotion, and my all time favorite, the secular version of sacred/profane, the great **mind/body dualism** of dualisms—surely one of the sheerest mass hallucinations ever. Oddly, John Searles, the Berkeley

philosopher, informs us that the mind/body division is a philosophical conundrum that is both “a scandal,” and in his view *still* has not been resolved—at least by western philosophers, the only philosophers he seems to recognize as being capable of philosophy. But there is no need to resolve it; it simply fall away for myth it is, in the face of correct complementary/dialectical contrasting.

The particular class of either/or contrasts—which sorely needs to be commonly identified and consciously highlighted as such, by itself being contrasted with the complementary class—is routinely, pervasively, culturally forced beyond its proper economic/technological limitations. We use either/or thought so much to clearly distinguish palpable things, conditions, events, time, etc. that must be pursued, avoided, manipulated in the material world, that few understand the inherent limitations of this tool, or even that it is *only* a tool, highly relative and mercurial in nature, thus to be held and used tentatively at all times. Strictly exclusive either/or relations cannot possibly be reliable as the ultimate guideposts we make of them, from which virtually all our subsequent thought structure and behaviors are infused and misdirected by. After all, all words themselves are symbolic abstractions of previously lived, dynamic, either/or contrasts; their very “meanings” can only exist by virtue of an implicit opposition to their own antonym or something sharply “other” that they prominently stand *against*. Literally, without that implicit contrast at its very root—and as the very reason and means by which we find any word useful—a word can *have* no meaning and is simply not a word. Oddly enough though, linguists and theorists of language, such as the formidable Noam Chomsky himself, are appently oblivious of this simple fact, which of course is highly inconvenient to their careers.

Blind faith in the actually expedient mode of either/or cognition is, in my opinion, the almost completely unsuspected source of human imbalance, dysfunction and suffering. As Nitya puts it or at least infers, either/or thinking is naturally (to which I

would add empirically, lawfully and absolutely) “secondary” to what I call complementary thinking, where water and wave can be, and must be, clearly distinguished on the one hand, (if we are to avoid the “tidal waves” of phenomenal realities we constantly face and secure what we materially need), yet *also* understood--with no true contradiction whatsoever--to be one and the same, ultimately, from another, deeper, perspective. In other words, to live well human consciousness must—literally *must*—be based fundamentally on, and grounded *in*, complementary contrasts of a “both/and” nature, not either/or. Only then will our compulsively alluring, self-constructing thought processes be held in check, properly and continually *balanced* between our Unconditioned and our conditioned aspects. Only then can thought be truly sane.

Nitya writes: “*This is a very subtle thing. If you understand it, it makes a real difference in your life. You do and you do not do. You perform everything you are doing now and yet, at the same time, you do not do anything. The Gita expresses it as seeing action in inaction and inaction in action, but this can become a cliché.*” Right on target--I only wish the action/inaction complementarity *were* the “cliche” in the west it apparently “can be” in India. I’ve only run across it myself a handful of times, exclusively in eastern literature, and originally was totally perplexed by it, back in the days when the either/or shadow ruled and ran my own cognitive show. And yes, given our overvaluing of cognition in general, the complementarity of functions that actually *found* it, and in fact unconsciously allow every operation of intelligence as well as the entire biological realm to even exist, is presently for most of us, unfortunately, an all *too* “subtle thing.” That really needn’t be; there is no good reason that our natural complementarity can’t be consciously understood and held in the very foreground of human consciousness.

I take it as my mission to expose the “absolute necessity” of the complementary perspective from every angle possible. Just as Neils Bohr (best known for his insight into the complementarity of particle/waves in physics) attempted to promote it in his latter

years, to wholly perplexed audiences, complementarity needs to be a part of our earliest classroom experience, consciously understood, embraced, and acknowledged as our true framework of reality. Nor is this really difficult to do—at least for those motivated to and neurologically capable of considering it, those who have managed to preserve something of their childlike nature, and better yet, children themselves.

On the other hand, for those not only *not* receptive to this view but adamantly resistant to it (those suffering to various degrees the pandemic neurological disorder perhaps best diagnosed as chronic inflammation of the conservative faculty, or “conservatosis”), Sri Atmananda K. Menon has well noted, “*Vedanta is verily a spiritual ‘atom bomb’; and it is no wonder that the intellectuals cautiously avoid it, for fear of blundering into the Right*”—for indeed, the complementary biologic of life, the pre-conscious foundation of life, is too simple and obvious to be categorized, really, as “philosophy” at all.

Ironically, our biggest challenge, at least we who are seeking full adulthood (in reference to your memorable point at Powell’s), is not that complementarity is too paradoxically advanced for ordinary mortals to fathom, but exactly the reverse: it is actually too *simple* for the relative complexity of thought to grasp, especially in an organism entangled in wall-to-wall either/or thought, day and night.

To do so literally requires the mind to stretch beyond its own bounds, and naurally cancel out its own extraneous activity, which naturally occurs when brought next to the furnace of Presence, the “atom bomb” of Discernments of the Simplest nature. As Bohr said (paraphrased here): “You can’t think about this (complementarity principle) without becoming a bit ‘dizzy’”—to put it a bit too mildly....

So, merely understanding, fully, just how it is that we *simultaneously* “do and do not do”—necessarily, all the time and at every level of ourselves right “down” to the cellular—quickly makes mincemeat of a voluminous mass of western philosophy,

such as Heidegger's, along with the socially constructed framework of pseudo-reality as a whole. But, philosophers aside, for just about anybody who is unprepared for considering the Naturally Embedded Alternative, it can be deeply traumatizing to have nothing less than what you've unquestioningly taken all your life to be reality itself basically demolished, in a heartbeat.

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Jake's commentary:

I grew up in an American household in which matters of philosophy or life's meaning were channeled into one of two ruts: complete mystery and an off-loading of any larger reality onto a priestly class or a stubborn clinging to a superficial New Age kind of "spirituality" illustrated loosely by public celebrities of the time such as Shirley McClain and the like. These two views clashed often in our domestic kitchen, battles that generally concluded with the sneering retort to a claim that traditional faith (as commonly understood in its Protestant strain) ought to be observed: "you create your own reality." Not having the tools or the information to parse this final—and at the time novel—claim, it eventually came to act as a dogma of supreme authority in our family, and, I suspect, continues to do so in a significant number of them today.

In Verse 66 and its commentary, the Guru and Nitya do the parsing for us, arriving finally at the conclusion they consistently do throughout the entire *100 Verses*: the wave and the water are not two. In observing our world of necessity as we go about our business in it (the wave), we need to bear in mind the context in which all this sound and fury take place, the transcendent Absolute, that which is constant and that which we visit regularly in deep sleep and can come to be aware of in meditation—the oceanic depths.

In first discussing the world of becoming, Nitya emphasizes its capacity to make demands on us, some of which are non-

negotiable. Our daily need for food, writes Nitya, leaves none of us in a position of bartering. We eat or die, like it or no. With this example, he goes on to make the point that three elements exist here “for us to take into consideration: . . . absolute necessity. . . . the field of operation of chance, and . . . the fulfillment that needs to be attained” (p. 456). The *chance* element is the linking portion between necessity and fulfillment that introduces the element of fear. It is possible, for instance, that one may not find food, and on occasion such is the case, however remote. A basic and universal need, our demand for food is generally achievable. On the other hand, “wanting to hear a symphony,” suggests Nitya, is far less fundamental and much more abstract. Because of that character its fulfillment becomes more problematic. Our hierarchy of needs reflects a diminishing possibility of realization the more removed the desire is from being non-negotiable. Always existing, however, is the element of fear of failure, and it is this general dynamic that Nitya calls “the world”: the sum total of “the dialogue between the certain and the uncertain” (p. 452). (The stock market’s Volatility Index is the clearest measure of this I know of.)

In *this world*, then, fear rules as each of us goes about constructing our universes. And it is this cobbled together *thing* that can and often does come to occupy our complete attention when we forget the Absolute context in which it all takes place (which is precisely the aim of both atheism and religionism.)

In several key paragraphs, Nitya drills deeper yet into the notion of this thing and how it grew out of Western European thought and connected especially deep in contemporary American cultural philosophy (a developmental link that Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut so eloquently point out in their *French Philosophy of the Sixties*.) Citing Husserl Heidegger, Sartre, and Jaspers, Nitya reviews the process through which this concept of our world, as commonly understood in the West, came to be a dichotomy or division between the immanent and the transcendent. In summing up, Nitya writes, “Sartre gave us a simple choice: either go with

the Idealists or the Existentialists and don't confuse their distinctions" (p. 455). Hegel or Hemingway. Unable to bridge the gap or connect the Absolute with the everyday world of our awake consciousness, Sartre narrowed the issue to an either/or fallacy that pretty much represents the American cultural divide. What remains constant in either case, however, is the manifest reality of the waves and their collective character of fear and anxiety, a condition of maya which has always been true and always will be, writes Nitya: "the imperative need, the search and the fulfillment—is an eternal game that goes on and on" (p. 454). That game is that which *is* to our senses in the awake state, and, as the Guru and Nitya have made so very clear, our senses tell us that experience is real. The fact that it arises and recedes within the context of the Absolute does not disqualify its reality however transient. In other words, to say as a final claim "we create our own reality" is true only insofar as it refers to that which *is*—and by definition that which *is not* in the world of necessity.

In living our lives, concludes Nitya, the continuous compulsions we experience daily and the circus manufactured out of our collective fear are conditions always driving that which is not, the arising and receding. This is also the world where we live, and our participation in it is mandatory if we are to come to know what the Absolute "looks like." By the same token, that unstable fear-driven conglomeration is a pale imitation of the real. Observing and participating in the former while *knowing* the latter provides a path to living transcendence here and now, a conclusion containing an added bonus as Krishnamurti notes in his *The First and Last Freedom*:

There can be freedom from fear only when there is self-knowledge. Self-Knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, which is the end of fear.
(p. 189)

Part IV ?