

8/19/14
Verse 70

One *rati* alone is expanding into the ego, the senses,
the mind, the body and all that is;
where is an end to this?
Not until one knows that he is different, none other than knowledge;
remember!

Free translation:

One pleasure principle (*rati*) expands and transforms into the ego,
the senses, the mind, the body, and all that is, as if its proliferation
has no end. It will go on operating till the cognizing Self realizes it
is not any of the pleasure-pursuits but Knowledge, pure and
simple.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

The one libido it is that as the 'I' sense, the senses,
The inner instruments, the body and all these becomes
Unravelling; where is the term to this? The knower remains
Distinct only till knowledge becomes known.

Earlier this week Deb and I harvested some honey, spending
time in close proximity with our bees. They seem as if they are
whirling, buzzing sparks of a single mind of astounding
intelligence. Last night as the class took on the complicated and
vague subject of *rati* (loosely translated as libido) I got the same
sense of independent parts joining forces to accomplish far more
than they could separately. Each class participant whirled around
in their own orbit, yet the sum total produced extensive insight: the
honey of understanding.

The way the complex interaction of the bees produces meaningful action seemingly by transcendental accident reminds me of Nitya's description of the intangibility of mind:

When the ego becomes motivated by the rati and you look for enjoyment within, the way it uses awareness—spread out in a pattern—becomes the mind.

There is nothing anywhere sitting by itself that is the mind. When I speak, mind becomes words. When I visualize, it is various images. When I feel, it is sensation. It has no definite form, texture, content or material. It assumes anything the self wants for its inner satisfaction.

We have already heard the key idea in several varied presentations in our study. It is so counterintuitive that Narayana Guru has to try any number of strategies to elicit even provisional conviction in us. It will probably remain a mystery how and why anyone eventually realizes this, beyond an idealistic supposition. The gist is this: we are—our true nature is—the source of our own happiness. Yet we project it onto the world and into our inner world of hopes and fears, where it continually lures us away from awareness of our self. This endless pursuit continues until we discover that we are actually the source of happiness, in a way that is fully satisfying. Then we project self-confidence and compassion onto our individuality and our surroundings, in place of mounting an enervating search for what we already possess.

The cutting edge of science is beginning to think along these lines, and when it finally joins the parade it may bring about the shift in focus the gurus have been promulgating for millennia. Don't expect them to give the rishis any credit, however! A rishi wouldn't expect any, anyway. I'll include a statement from physicist Max Tegmark that closely parallels this verse's bold assertion, and especially Nitya interpretation of it, in Part III.

Nitya puts the central idea very clearly here himself:

Ultimately the object of your pleasure is your own self. It is for the sake of the self you desire everything. This identification of the libido with the aham, the self, becomes the propelling force for the expansion into so many other aspects. Those that Narayana Guru has listed here are the ego, senses, mind, body, and all that is.

A twofold operation takes place when the aham or the enjoyer-self is seeking enjoyment, one in the world of objects and the other in the world of subjects. The idea is to release your mind from these two attractions, remembering that there is nothing called mind anywhere other than this.

In the ultimate analysis, he adds “It is impossible to say whether such forms of enjoyment are outside or inside you.”

Nitya came to really appreciate Freud during this period, and he notes a number of interesting parallels with our study. One key notion that I believe is worthy of expansion is that Freud was a materialist who traced all motivations back to the body, locating the root of interest in sexuality. Narayana Guru points to a transcendent reality whose nature is ananda, that projects interest into every aspect of creation. While similar, the Guru’s point-source is unlimited, while Freud’s is limited, and limiting. Trying to force all attraction into the narrow category of sex interest is an injustice, and some of Freud’s failings can be located just here. At the same time, it is an example of how you can take a narrow subject and expand it toward a total conception, refining and sublimating it in the process. Done properly, each approach can throw light on the other.

The materialist orientation springs from our fascination with the outside world, positing that it is the source of our being. We mused about how stringently society is focused on externalities. Paul noted that external and internal factors should be commensurate, which is true, but the way our attention is directed by those around us is anything but balanced. Susan gave the example of Christianity. Despite Jesus’ assertion that “I and the Father are not two,” and “The kingdom of heaven is within you,”

most of the attention in her experience is toward practical outward expressions. In the process, severe damage may be done to the original message, transforming it into a mere mockery of itself. To its detriment, science also relegates the inner world of the psyche to the peripheral domain of psychology, though it is encouraging to see how physicists and neurologists are becoming more influential. Because of the way our brain so convincingly models reality for us, it will always be very hard to shed the prejudice in favor of what we see over what we intuit.

Bill surmised that most religions advocate moving from self interest to interest in the common good. It's a really good step, important in early development. Infants start with only self-awareness and slowly enlarge it to include their environment. Most of us stop the expansion way too soon, leaving out far more than we allow in. Narayana Guru urges us to keep going until the whole universe is included. That being said, Nitya often insisted that the entire subject was dualistic, and the ideal was to not have barriers of arbitrary definitions at all. He used to shock us by asserting that our focus shouldn't be on serving others, that that was an egotistical position. The absolutist orientation was to meet every contingency with full attention. If we had a program of either self-interest or other-interest it would equally interfere with our ability to be fully present. Nitya himself was simultaneously having a wonderful time and being of great help to those around him, without being dogmatic about it. He was a major force for peace and accord in South India, but he never forced the issues—he was simply available. Andy put it perfectly: the idea is to work for one who was not an other.

As Bill summarized, the unitive perspective is to realize we are knowledge. We are knowledgeable entities having experiences in knowledge, and we incorporate everything we can. In order to achieve this, though, we have to engineer a break from our daily routines so we can take a close look at our condition. Otherwise we will remain mesmerized by the play of events displayed for us by our mental model.

The intelligent way out of our fixations is beautifully expressed in the commentary:

It is a most natural thing.... From a very minute particle the whole thing is blown up into a whole universe of interest. When it seeks, what is it after and what is its end?

In the previous verse we were told that we run after many things, thinking they will give us happiness. Doing this does bring happiness, but it also brings unhappiness....

When you realize this you withdraw from your chasing in order to have a better look at yourself. There is a realization of the self that you are This, and there is nothing to seek, nothing to find. Then the circular chase comes to a close.

Andy and Bill reminisced about how Nitya carefully monitored his biorhythms so he could achieve as much as he did, which was easily more than the rest of us put together. He took his cues from his inner promptings, and didn't force himself to stay with a project beyond its natural measure of rati. He had many irons in the fire at once, and as soon as his interest flagged in one he would turn to the next, whichever beckoned him the strongest. That way he was always giving it his best.

Andy noted how Nitya wasn't excessively goal-driven, it all seemed to flow of its own volition. It shows us that rati doesn't have to be about chasing something extra we think we are missing, but that we bring our energies to bear on a natural unfoldment. We are ineffective because we are so often chasing mirages cooked up out of wishful thinking. Nitya demonstrated how being in tune with your svadharma, your natural aptitudes, released vast amounts of libidinal power in stupendously coherent directed endeavors. It's like a laser, where the light that normally radiates weakly in all directions is brought together in a single focus, giving it the ability to perform delicate surgery or even cut through steel.

It's very challenging to communicate the uplifting beauty of the class experience thorough these summaries. I am no poet, but

the experience is exquisitely poetic. Nitya brought flights of fancy in at times to counterbalance to heavy pondering we were all doing, as with his paraphrasing of Shankara's *Saundarya Lahari* (*The Upsurging Billows of Beauty*):

When you think like this, everything becomes rati alone. No wonder Sankaracharya said: "With a glance from your eyes, Oh Mother, this Eros wins the whole world. He has no proper bow; his bow is only a sugar cane. He has no proper string for his bow, only bees. He has no proper arrows to shoot; he has only five flower buds with him. He has no minister except the Spring season. His chariot is the southern wind. But that is enough—he is victorious."

With this glorious image we are invited to let the best of our inner promptings conquer us. The secret is not to become knights-errant, journeying to the Holy Land to take back our supposedly stolen possessions, but to allow ourselves to expand into the joyful possibilities we embody, each of them clamoring for an opportunity for expression in this world of endless miracles.

The somewhat disjunct section at the end of the commentary was prompted in part by the many people from around the world who were writing to Nitya to complain about the pressures they were laboring under. They felt oppressed by their families and social structures, and Nitya was a beacon of openness that they looked to, often in desperation. He presided over many mixed caste marriages, and gave his blessing to many more. He encouraged everyone to find their true calling beyond the dictates of their various pressure groups. He was acutely aware of the lethal burdens many parents foisted on their children, and strove to show how disastrous they were for all concerned. His message finds harmonious support in this verse, and his unitive conclusion is eloquent:

We should be able to speak this way of all whom we love: "I and my love are not two." What great freedom it brings! What great relief it brings! And what great freedom and relief it gives to others, also. It takes away all the rivalry, competition, jealousy, bickering,

insecurity—all with this one recognition, “That knowledge is me and everything is That.”

People can have any kind of idea about their own happiness. It’s okay. You don’t possess anyone. I consider this the great liberation. It is a liberation you can experience here and now.

Part II

Neither This Nor That But . . . Aum:

According to Greek legends, there are three fundamentals: Earth, Chaos and Eros. In Indian legends, kama (Eros) is coupled with rati. Rati is the libidinal enjoyment of erotics. A creation myth is given in the fourth section of the first chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. According to it, the first person that came into being was unhappy being alone. This being, longing for a mate, grew to the size of a man and a woman in embrace and then split into two. Of the two, one half became the husband and the other the wife. Fearing the guilt of incest, the woman disappeared and the entire space became filled with the man's fascination for the woman. The woman changed into the female form of every species on earth and the man mated with her by becoming a male member of all corresponding species. Rati is the propelling force which activates the ego into finding its gratification.

Sigmund Freud borrowed from Moll (1898) the term “libido” to describe the dynamic manifestation of sexuality. At first he thought there was a separation between ego instincts and sexual instincts. In this libido theory he says:

What is described as the sexual instinct turns out to be of a highly composite nature and is liable to disintegrate once more into its component instincts. Each component instinct is unalterably characterized by its source, that is, by the region

or zone of the body from which its excitation is derived. Each has furthermore as distinguishable features an object and an aim. The aim is always discharge accompanied by satisfaction, but it is capable of being changed from activity to passivity. The object is less closely attached to the instinct than was at first supposed; it is easily exchanged for another one, and moreover, an instinct which had an external object can be turned round upon the subject's own self. . . . The most important vicissitude which an instinct can undergo seems to be sublimation; here both object and aim are changed so that what was originally a sexual instinct finds satisfaction in some achievement which is no longer sexual but has a higher social or ethical valuation.*

He further adds:

The ego is to be regarded as a great reservoir of libido from which libido is sent out to objects and which is always ready to absorb libido flowing back from objects. Thus the instincts of self-preservation were also of a libidinal nature. . . . Clinical experience had made us familiar with people who behaved in a striking fashion as though they were in love with themselves and this perversion had been given the name of narcissism.**

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, what Freud considers to be a perversion is extolled as the only true love. No one loves anything more dearly than one's own self. When the self is wrongly identified with the ego, it projects the love for the self either on external objects of the senses or on fantasies of the mind. Freud cannot see any end to this unquenchable zest of the pleasure principle. Narayana Guru asks, "Where is an end to this?" He sees one possible termination, and this happens when the knower knows that he is not different from the one knowledge of which everything phenomenally apparent is only a transient shadow.

* Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers, Vol. V, (London: Hogarth Press, 1952), pp. 132-33.

** Ibid. p. 133.

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Nataraja Guru's commentary is one of his best, revealing dialectical secrets of self-realization:

WHEN the self is equated correctly with the non-self they cancel themselves out in the Absolute. This is the epistemological law in the light of which this verse will make meaning to the casual reader. When the implied equation becomes an accomplished fact the process of unravelling of the negative aspects of the personality goes on as a horizontalising process within consciousness. The objective tension mounts up and then decreases when pure thought reabsorbs it again into the domain of its own transparency. When perfectly pure vertically, and when no element of objective opacity intervenes between the self and the non-self, the process of unravelling of subjective into objective elements comes to a stop and the equation succeeds in having the full effect of making the subject and the object one. Before this term is attained by contemplative self-realization in rare individuals capable of verticalized and transparent unitive contemplation, the alternating process of horizontalization and verticalisation goes on without any remission.

The continuity of the process includes as its natural corollary the theory of reincarnation taken for granted in Indian spiritual thought. Death is a forgetfulness of the actual here and now aspects of life in favour of pure transparent thoughts that are almost mathematical in content. When even the mathematical implications of the vertical content of life are abolished there is breaking from the process. This can take place within the relativistic frame of reference or could be fully absolutist in its implication. In the latter

case the knower and the known merge into one unitive Absolute consciousness. Before such a term is reached, relativistic processes of becoming, whether in the gross outer sense or in the subtle inner sense must go on, now transparent in content, now more and more opaque. Such is the ever-changeful alternating process to which the ego-sense is subject, as analysed in the two previous verses and further elaborated in the verses that follow, until the subject-matter enters into the domain of pure thought by verse 84, where even the earth is treated as a universal concrete.

The order in which this unravelling process is stated to go on within consciousness warrants closer scrutiny. It is the 'I' sense that first emerges. The unconscious rises into the conscious level of itself with this first unravelling event. As indicated in the 68th verse, there is the body-sense that keeps alternating with the 'I' sense in which physical factors tend to be more fully abolished. The libido thus gets raised and unfolded into the stage of ego-consciousness, after which the specialized doors of perception come to be added to this global ego-sense. This process of specialisation goes one step further and expresses itself as instruments of inner perception by means of which the brute actuality, which the senses gain directly from objects outside, gets more and more meaningful in view of any action that the organism as a whole might want to take.

Manas, which is both positive and negative according to circumstances, is further specialized at a higher level into buddhi, which reasons and discriminates between alternative courses of action, selecting the advantageous as against the one that might be disadvantageous. Cogitations involving the element of will that veils reality when confused ('vikalpa'), and reasons more clearly [when not confused] ('samkalpa'), alternate when the mind is in operation. At a still further state of positive specialisation, 'buddhi' or the reasoning power becomes further transparent and is able to enter into bipolar relations with objects

of interest outside, or with artistic or intellectual items of interest. This is the 'chitta' level in the vertical series of specification of inner faculties. 'Ahamkara' (the 'ego-sense') is imbued with a sense of one's own individuation as a further specifying factor.

Individuation pure and simple involves the objective body-factor. This objective body-factor, thus socially individualised and fixed in time and place, is not the same as the essential libido with which we started, but is its more positive counterpart. Within the limits of the libido and this objectified notion of the person, self-knowledge can live and move, and such a process could go on unremittingly till full identity between subject and object is established by contemplative self-realization marking the term to this process of unravelling.

The Samkhya theory in respect of the factors that evolve within consciousness has been worked out by various philosophers of that school. (Cf. intro. pages 26-29 Samkhya-Karika of Isvara Krishna, University of Madras, 1948). It is Prakriti (Nature) as opposed to Purusha (Spirit) that evolves and unravels into the elements of Mahat, Ahamkara and the three subdivisions and further ramifications of tattvas (first principles) based on the three gunas (sattva, rajas and tamas), culminating in the gross manifestations of the mahabhutas or the five classical elements such as sky, air, fire, water and earth. The Saiva Siddhanta and the Paramartha school of Samkhya all have their varied versions of the process of unravelling of the elements of the self. Ranging from the libido on one side to the object of attraction or interest is the picture presented by the Guru here. The Guru's version excels in that it conforms more to the findings of the experimental psychology and analytical psychology of our times. A theory of aesthetics and ethics is also implied therein. The revaluation implied here is of great value to the student of comparative philosophy and psychology. The duality between 'Prakriti' (Nature), horizontally conceived as subject to gross evolution, and

the pure 'Purusha' (Spirit), which has no participation with nature, is abolished by bringing in the libido at one extreme and the object of attraction as its positive counterpart. Scientific validity and metaphysical correctness are combined here without duality. This kind of unravelling is to be understood in the light of what is indicated below in verse 71.

Part III

Verse 70 has long been a favorite of Susan's, and she shared some of her feelings with us:

When rereading the verse, I realized that the ending part (and particularly the following paragraphs) really gave me a lot of solace several years ago when I was feeling sad and somewhat desperate about my kids being away from me (summer camps or school trips). You actually told me to look at this section:

"For all of us, the presence of such a great love is always nurtured in the heart. It is only when we feel an outer event has taken it away from us that we feel the vacuum. But if we realize that our love was always an image in us—born of our own Self, our own consciousness—then we know that nothing really happens at any time. The same son is there where he was: in the same heart. There is really no separation.

If a mother knows this, she can allow her son a lot of freedom. He doesn't have to become a framed portrait sitting on her table all the time. Does she really want to put her son into a frame and keep him fixed there so she can always look at him? Of course not. She can give him all the freedom he wants, since she can say "My son continues to live in my heart, where he has always lived. I and my son are not two." Jesus also said, "I and my Father are not two."

We should be able to speak this way of all whom we love: "I and my love are not two." What great freedom it brings!

What great relief it brings! And what great freedom and relief it gives to others, also. It takes away all the rivalry, competition, jealousy, bickering, insecurity—all with this one recognition, “That knowledge is me and everything is That.” (p. 486)

Being reminded that my children are always right with me, because of all the love we have shared and because we are all That, made so much sense. It felt just right. Now that I am literally on the eve of taking my son (second and last child) to college, this commentary is all the more poignant for me. I tend to look at partings with trepidation and a sinking feeling. These paragraphs (and the verse) remind me not to focus on division. I am not just about me and I don't stop with my skin. Our senses and our culture make it seem that we are separate individuals, coming and going in our own little spaces. How great to be reminded that that separation is a mirage and that we are connected so much more than we know. When I allow that way of thinking, my little universe expands and my anxiety decreases.

This understanding has helped me not only with my sadness about separating from my children but also with the day to day conception of myself in the world. It helps me to feel lighter and enables an inner flow that is too hard to explain at the moment. I'll put it in the mystery category. Pretty great stuff.

Aum,
Susan

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Physicist Max Tegmark comes to a similar conclusion to Narayana Guru that we are nothing but knowledge. Here's how he frames it:

Your reality model includes a model of yourself—that's why you're not merely aware but also self-aware. This means that when you feel that you're looking at this book, what's really going on is that your brain's reality model has its model of you looking at its model of the book.... Which leads to the ultimate consciousness question: who's looking at your brain's reality model, to give rise to subjective consciousness? Here's my guess: *nobody!* If there were another part of your brain that really looked at the whole reality model and became aware of all the information in it, then this brain region would need to physically transfer all that information into its own local copy. This would be a huge waste of resources from an evolutionary perspective, and there's no evidence from neuroscience research of such wasteful duplication. Moreover, it wouldn't answer the question: if a spectator is really needed, then this duplicate reality model would in turn need a spectator to be subjectively perceived, leading to another infinite regress problem.

Rather, my guess is that the answer is beautifully simple: no spectator is needed because your consciousness basically *is* your reality model. *I think that consciousness is the way information feels when being processed in certain complex ways.* Since the different parts of your brain interact with each other, different parts of your reality model can interact with each other, so the model of you can interact with your model of the outside world, giving rise to the subjective sensation of the former perceiving the latter. When you're looking at a strawberry, your brain's model of the color red feels subjectively very real—and so does your brain's model of your mind's eye as an observing vantage point. We already know that our brain is astonishingly creative in interpreting the same basic types of electrical signals in a bundle of neurons as qualia that subjectively feel completely different: we perceive them as colors, sounds, smells, tastes or touches, depending on whether the neuron bundle comes from our eyes, ears, nose, mouth or skin. The key difference lies not in the neurons that carry this information, but in the patterns whereby they're connected.

Although your perception of yourself and your perception of the strawberry are extremely different, it's therefore plausible that they're both fundamentally the same kind of thing: complex patterns in spacetime. In other words, I'm arguing that your perceptions of having a self, that subjective vantage point that you call "I," are qualia just as your subjective perceptions of "red" or "green" are. In short, redness and self-awareness are both qualia. (289-90)

(Max Tegmark, *Our Mathematical Universe*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014)

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Andy was musing about addiction and how it related to this verse, how projecting our happiness onto outside substances creates bondage that is difficult or impossible to overcome. My feeling is that we are all addicted to externalities, but at least we have more options when they don't involve chemicals that produce irresistible physical dependency.

I'm doing a final runthrough of my Chapter XIV Gita commentary, dealing with the three gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas), and thought this paragraph worthy of passing along:

Our spiritual heart presses us to seek a higher state of mind in which its pains will be eased. The sattvic approach is through yoga, meditation, clean living, psychedelic exploration and the like. Rajas seeks dissolution through activity, through throwing ourselves into the fray, and "giving it everything we've got." Quite a few spiritual, or at least religious, programs offer dissolution through busyness, through works or service. Tamas makes the mistake of numbing the brain for release. As the next verse points out, when we come back down we are still tamasic, and our energy will be directed to renumbing ourselves with yet another soporific medicine. Such a misdirected path quickly leads to addiction,

because each dose offers only temporary relief without resolving anything.

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Jake's commentary:

In verse 70 and Nitya's commentary on it, several principles emerge that are flat out heresy for both western atheists and religionists. Both share the assumption that objects external to ourselves stimulate our reactions to them. The sophomoric psychological question concerning the noise created by an unobserved falling tree (often posed by undergraduate instructors) captures, I think, this idea. The prefabricated answer is that no sound could be created where no human agent existed. But the premise that the object's action precedes perception constitutes an even more fundamental assumption. Because the *real* world is that of objects and forms, in this construction, our perceptions are secondary, one could say derivative and dependent. As an anchor for social manipulation, few unstated premises rival the power of this notion that the manifest world outside the Self is the true and the real and that our Selves are vehicles through which we respond to it. It is in charge by way of its experts, priests, and propagandists who rely on this bedrock belief.

The Vedantists, writes, Nitya, point out "there is only one reality, called *Akahanda Caitanya*, unbroken consciousness" (p. 482). Our division of manifest self into the knower, doer, enjoyer are fragments of that Absolute and when we focus attention on objects, both the objects and the observer are, too, fragments in that totality united through sensory acts. Likewise, writes Nitya, when the mind turns inward seeking pleasure/happiness internally in the form of fantasies or imagination, it cobbles together bits of memory in order to construct whatever it decides to make. Works of art, literature in all senses of the word, and so on, are common expressions of this kind of work. As Nitya points out, "whether

you are seeking enjoyment in the field of your own fantasy or with actual objects, it is always nothing more than the play of consciousness.”

Starting, then, with a whole oneness of all the cosmos and our then splintering off onto our manifest missions within that wholeness we are driven by what the Guru calls *rati* in the first line of his verse. Divided at our creation, according to the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, we enter manifestation driven to reconnect with that which completes us. This drive, sometimes called *libido* in the West (but which indicates much more than the sex drive only) works through our tripartite selves of knower, doer, enjoyer. Doing and knowing are driven by our peculiarities as an enjoying self. In other words, knowledge for its own sake is uninteresting to us and pointlessly pursuing it holds little fascination. It is in the enjoyer that the other two aspects find meaning, and meaning, value, determines the course of any individual's *rati*.

The upshot of the preceding set of circumstances leads to a conclusion both materialists and moralizers find repellent: “ultimately, the object of your pleasure is your own self. It is for the sake of the self you desire everything” (p. 481). The Guru's first three lines, when considered collectively, point directly to the consequences of our driven search. Beginning at birth and with our development of ego, the senses, the mind, and the body come to occupy the stage on which this play is acted out, and for most there is no end. In our frantic search to locate ourselves “out there” we enter maya's dualities of which our individual *I* is now a part of. Both happiness and misery attach to every thing.

In his last two lines, the Guru gives his solution to this dilemma, a way out he repeats throughout the verses generally. Remembering that we *are* that knowledge and that the world of becoming is an endless cycle of arising and receding, we can step out of the illusion just enough not to be seduced by it. Once we can arrive at such a steady position, we may develop the wisdom to interact with others in constructive ways that remove our own egos

from the equation. Nitya illustrates this notion of how *rati* operates by narrating in general how he deals with people who come to him “emotionally charged” and on the edge (p.484). Seeking his counsel, they tearfully try to put into words what is upsetting them, stumbling from one partial explanation to the next. Projecting their self-love onto external situations, they meander between psychological breakdown and a letting go of the *rati* driving the whole enterprise. Nitya writes that he tries to remain sympathetic as the person grapples with his or her misery but does not directly address the misunderstanding at the heart of the matter. Nitya listens and offers words only at key points “but not about them.”

In his last two lines, the Guru reminds us to “remember” that we are “none other than knowledge.” In his commentary on those lines, Nitya concludes that in that re-collection we have an opportunity to share the Guru’s advice with others, thereby locating in each of us the power over our individual contemporary American lives. “You don’t possess anyone,” concludes Nitya, a philosophical position completely foreign to our political governors, bureaucratic overlords, intellectual elites, cultural self-righteous moralizers—and general population.

Part IV

It occurred to me that one significant difference between Narayana Guru et al and Freud is that Freud postulated pure self-interest as the central motivator in humans, while the gurus proclaim Self-interest. The rishis have met face to face with a benign—it could even be called it wise—force capable of incredible acts of organization, resulting in the coherent world of endless complexity we find ourselves astonished by. Both schools of thought discern a master impetus behind the surface play of events, and both recognize the presence of selfishness as a key factor, but the gurus add a more fundamental *elan vital* that goes well beyond immediate gratification to unobtrusively organize

immense possibilities for us to participate in. They insist this factor is objectively verifiable, that it is not a postulate but a reality we can invite into our daily lives, and that even when we remain ignorant of its presence it is sculpting our unfoldment.

Carl Jung sensed something like this, a more universal guiding force he termed the collective unconscious. It doesn't really matter what you call it. As Nitya will tell us in the next verse, "Do not try to give it a name." Despite the differences, all are united in being sure of what scientific observation has recently confirmed: that the world we think we perceive is merely an appearance we generate to make sense of unseen forces. It does make a difference whether we conceive of these forces as benign or demonic, so that we either welcome them or reject them. This crucial bit is the fulcrum on which our state of mind pivots. So without necessarily naming it, we might hazard a frame of mind of openness and eager anticipation.

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(Not sent out):

Dear Scott,

Even though you feel miles and miles away, I just want to say that your notes on verse 70 were truly lovely. I like the way you started with the real bees, comparing them with class members all buzzing busily in their own circles but together producing the best of honey. And then rounding off with a touch of bees again, in the "Billows of Beauty" quote. An amazing poetic balance taken as a whole.

Many are the apt metaphors you create. Recently there was one about focusing less on the warp and woof of light and dark threads, good and evil acts, and more on the tapestry of life as a whole.

“Like a good friend bringing gifts of sweets, the mind will always gratify us by bringing a few glittering metaphors gathered from its contemplative intuitions. Such is the magical phenomena of the mind to which the *devas* make their appeal.” (BU, p. 71)

As always, thank you for all your dedicated and loving writing and thought.

Jean