

9/2/14
Verse 72

Now there is action, which is ignorance,
and again there is pure consciousness, which is knowledge;
although these two are thus ordained by *maya* to stand divided,
a non-dual vision of the Absolute brings about *turiya*.

Free translation:

One aspect of life is action, and it belongs to nescience. There is another aspect which is permeated with consciousness, and it belongs to the sphere of knowledge. Although these two thus stand divided, as ordained by *maya*, to those who are successful in adopting a non-dual attitude, the two together will give the pure experience of transcendence.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

Now there is action, which is nescience, and again
There is the pure mental, which is knowledge;
Ordered by *Maya*, though this stays on divided, thus
The meta-dual attitude the unitive *turiya* yields.

How many lectures in your life have contained as many life-changing ideas as this one? After the reading we sat in blissful silence for awhile, certain that nothing could possibly be added to the lesson. It says it all. And yet, once again we soon were engaged in a lively and incisive discussion.

This was one of Nitya's meditations that on first hearing totally blew me away, reverberated through my whole system, and left me permanently altered for the better. It is a master class among master classes. I don't know how the book alone strikes people, but Nitya was putting an extra intensity into his delivery during this period that was palpable in person. He knew that Atmo

was going to be the best bet for most of us to make a breakthrough, and he gave it his all.

Deb broke into our bemusement by saying that the most vital or relevant of the many lessons in the commentary is that the state of equipoise is crucial, and resting in silence can stay with us through a whole lifetime of activity. It is basis of everything we do. Our self is always there. Bill agreed that we can meet every contingency with equal-mindedness, and the way to maintain it is through intelligent analysis.

This underscores a key premise of Vedanta, that realization occurs right in the midst of activity. This world is the paradise we seek, and not some other. Again, let's defer to the master:

Ignorance comes and dwells in the senses, the mind and the intellect; and yet these are precisely the tools with which you go on expanding the area of your knowledge.

In the field of vidya, maya can function in a very funny way. If you think that after all it is the pure idea that matters and not anything that has manifested in name and form, then you have created a limitation or a frontier between the manifested aspect and the pure, ideational aspect. This may lead you to believe that the person who is actually standing there, smiling at you, is not what matters, but rather the pure idea of the person is what is significant. This is nothing more than another kind of ignorance. That is why in the Upanishads it says the person who adores ignorance is living in darkness, but the person who adores only wisdom is living in even greater darkness.

As always, the solution is to bring the poles together synthetically. The next verse is another superlative teaching on how to do this.

For me, the strongest impact of many came from the idea of getting over our presumption of neediness. Nitya says:

An area where this can have an important affect is love. Love can be so painful. "I love you. Why don't you love me in return?" "How much I love you... why don't you care about me?" It brings great

agony. And what is this love? It is the love about which Kahlil Gibran says, “Your thirst, your hunger. The hand you hold out in want.” You are like a beggar. You are not the rich donor: “Let my heart flow to you.” You are so thirsty and so hungry that you are in terrible need. You want the other person to give to you. It is this need, this thirst, you call your love.

“I want to love and also be loved.” It’s like a contract. If you truly love, you want to see that the person you love is happy. If the other person’s happiness is to have their own way, why can’t you be happy about that? Many people, like Victor Hugo, have tried to bring out this point, but they are dismissed as romantic dreamers. There is much more than a romantic dream in it.

In contractual love we do not elevate ourselves.

Although I had experienced radiant love with great intensity during LSD trips and other moments of ecstasy, I hadn’t fully addressed the way neediness is built into the “normal” psyche. As children, everything is given to us. We are recipients of immense largess, and in an opulent society even more so. We come to feel entitled to be catered to and waited on. Later ideas of “giving back” or “providing” are conceived contractually, so they also play into our expectations of self-fulfillment. We might even (I did) go to a guru expecting them to cure our defects and make us especially wonderful, which is another kind of neediness.

Somehow as Nitya talked about this, building on all the groundwork we had laid down in past classes, light was thrown onto the egotistical slant I was bringing to every moment of my life. Honestly, I was horrified. Plus shamed, humiliated, remorseful. I made a resolution then and there to become a donor rather than a charity case. Admittedly the changeover takes lots of time and effort, but I had been sufficiently shocked by my unintentionally sorry state to be eager to do whatever was necessary to turn things around.

Jake added how a consumer society is based on creating neediness and supplying wants. He recalled an ad for life insurance

aimed at 80-year-olds. Life insurance is one thing if you are young and have a family to support, but seems absurd for anyone in their twilight years. Yet undoubtedly people bought into it. In the modern world millions of people are dreaming up new needs to convince people of, so they can generate a new income stream. It's how our economy is structured, but that doesn't mean we should sacrifice our peace of mind to feed the beast. Anyway, the point is that we are always vulnerable to suggestions that we are less than we ought to be.

Deb recalled going to a famous retreat one time where there was a prominent sign that read: "Life is short—don't waste time! Pay attention to the practice!" It's like "be here now" refers to a future state to be attained by effort, so it isn't here at all. Nitya's take is impeccable:

This implies two items of ignorance. One is that you are rating yourself in terms of certain mental or physical conditions that are prevailing at the moment and not in terms of the pure Self. How often do we identify ourselves with the body and its names and forms, so that our individuated person can be compared with another? Then we think the other person must be happy because they have certain things going for them. We think, "If I get that condition then I will also be content." This first kind of ignorance is called *avarana*, the veiling of our real nature. We cover up our true nature with an unreal image of our own imagination.

Now you have an imaginary self-image of your happiness—"When I am like that, I will be happy." Your imagination is positing what you ought to be, what you want to be, what you desire to be. Thus your very future is already filled with an image. You compare your future image with your present one, and invariably feel unhappy with your present image. You feel that only when you come to that future state will you be able to be happy.

This type of projection is called *viksepa*, positing an image in what you consider to be your future. That future can be in the next moment, the next year, or in ten years, but once you have decided it

is not now, you have already forfeited your right to be happy at this moment. “Until I attain that image, I can never be happy.” Such an attitude is an important stumbling block to seekers of truth, who are often motivated by a desire to escape from present circumstances into a supposed heavenly future. This is why it is essential to befriend yourself in the present and not reject your own nature as a prelude to beginning the search.

We have talked before about how virtually the first step in spiritual growth is to befriend yourself, to stop running yourself down. We learn to be self-deprecatory as a defense mechanism, not only because it capitulates to other peoples’ opinions, but also because it deflects criticism. “Hey, I think even less of me than you do, so you don’t have to bother picking on me!” The problem is we come to believe it, usually unwittingly, and the displacement of happiness Nitya describes so well is inherent in this attitude. We make a partial substitution for it by becoming happy about our road to recovery, about all the efforts we are making to “get right with God” or whatever, but if these are unconsciously based on self-rejection they are like the endlessly rotating wheel in a squirrel cage. We never actually get back to where we once belonged. Unless we address the source, we will remain eternally displaced from our true nature.

Constructing our life on a contractual basis breeds misery, based on unrealistic expectations and our exaggerated responses to them not being honored. Many of us youngsters in the original class were obsessed by relational problems, so Nitya often would word the teachings in terms of love:

When love pinches you, becomes filled with anguish and sorrow, it is because you have images about it. These images belong to avidya. The pursuit of love is engendered by vidya, but it often ends up in avidya. You smile and you expect a smile back; you touch and you want to be touched in return; you give and you want something to be given back to you. In this way you make it transactional. It becomes

a contract, and if the contract is not carried out exactly as you want it to be you become very dissatisfied. Only when love is self-contained and has no hankering behind it does it belong to vidya.

Because our problems always seemed so overwhelming we felt like hapless victims of fate, Nitya not only reassured us we could prevail, he underlined the effort needed to unburden ourselves of unnecessary thought patterns:

If you look closely at the painful aspects of your life, only a very few items are actually inevitable. Most of them are minor things we exaggerate or things we bring upon ourselves. In the area of avidya there is a very large chunk you can just throw out, and by changing your thoughts and attitudes the rest of your suffering will be greatly minimized.

Jan related an inspiring story of how she was bringing Atmo into her life. She wanted to work on loving her kids without having to possess them. She took a phrase from last week's verse that was reiterated in the present one, and told her teenage son, "What makes you happy is what makes me happy." It worked! He was very pleased to hear her say it, and it improved their relationship on the spot. Later they were able to have a mild argument based in respect rather than opposition, and they both wound up laughing about it.

This kind of success story is modest enough, yet it has profound implications. We picture realization as an explosive blast that lights up the sky, but it is much more than that. Being able to say your happiness is my happiness requires a major change of heart. It can only be true if a sea change has taken place. Probably mothers are far ahead in feeling that way, but it's never easy for anyone.

Fred recalled Nitya talking about how the psyche is like a crystal of three colors: black, white and red, standing for the gunas. The light of transcendence or turiya illuminates the crystal, which

rotates to produce all the complexities of conscious life. He likened it to the three primary colors used in LED displays, which are mixed in varying proportions to produce an infinite variety of colors. Fred thought this was an apt metaphor for maya, that what we see is an infinite display but it is built up from a few essential elements. We don't notice the elements unless we are philosophers, but they are nonetheless what allows the panoply of life to exist. He might have added that this is akin to the current scientific model that a few subatomic particles are responsible for everything in our universe.

Susan felt it was a great relief to her to not have to pin everything down, that you could allow things to be what they are rather than having to define them. The idea is a continuation from last week, where she relearned there is a way of knowing that goes beyond words. There is a fourth state, a turiya, that is like an all-engulfing silence.

Vast amounts of anxiety and insecurity are generated by the learned need to define everything we encounter, easily exacerbated by traumatic experiences. If we can become convinced that this is unnecessary and even counterproductive, it can certainly lighten our state of mind. Again, this is no easy matter. Much healing has to take place, largely self-administered. A level of basic trust has to be reestablished, a conviction that the universe is not inherently hostile, and then the fear drains away. Needless to say, fear is the bedrock basis of rampant consumerism, too: you don't just need whiter teeth, you need a vast arsenal of defensive weaponry, armed guards, laws and a punitive system, and on and on. This makes deciding to live openly and without fear the most revolutionary act possible—and one of the rarest.

Nitya continues to wean us away from our lackadaisical attitudes about spirituality. Here it is an active, engaged process, satisfying and challenging in the here and now:

The [turiya] is not a state of inertness. There is no inertia at all.

Does the fourth state only come when you are in a state of absorption? There are many arguments about this, but at least the Vedantins and Yogis believe—and the Taoists have something similar to it—in a state called *jivanmukta*, where you don't have to lie still or sit like an inert lump to experience the realized state. One experiencing *jivanmukta* is also in the state of *sahaja samadhi*. *Sahaja* means natural, innate; *sama* means equipoised and *dhi* means intelligence.

Sahaja samadhi comes about through the same element of intelligence with which we appreciate a thing via our senses. The mind works by borrowing the light of that intelligence. It is the same intelligence by which one meditates, wills, acts. In fact, it is the only reality. That spark of intelligence belongs to a greater reality than we normally understand or appreciate. Usually our intelligence is moving around, oscillating, unsteady, so it is called *chala*, moving. When it is not moving it becomes equipoised, *samadhi*. When it is standing firm in the world of wakeful transactions and the world of subjective ideas, it is in *samadhi*.

The activity is all grounded in non-activity, like aum that arises from and returns to silence. Like classical sonata form, what emerges from it gives meaning to the silence: the silence is uplifted by the sounds that lead us into it. We closed with a meditation on the beautiful final paragraph. We know equipoise is our ideal, but also that we tend to lose it under pressure. Life is kind to give us pressure situations to practice with. We spend time in equipoise in the class so that we can take it with us when we go on. Nitya's words joined us in the vibrant silence:

You can have all the transactions of the world with that silence as the backdrop of your mind. You can have all the dreams and creativity of the world with that silence as the ennobling, stamina-giving, energizing principle of your creativity. It is into that silence you can go just as you go to the lap of your mother or your most beloved person. Into that silence you can merge, because you are that. The one who is

aware of this all through is having a sahaja samadhi, an experience of turiya.

Part II

Neither This Nor That But . . . Aum:

In verses 69 and 70 the Guru called our attention to the libidinal force which is at the root of intentionality, and in verse 71 he gave us an overall picture of becoming. He made it clear that no one can escape the flux of becoming. In the present verse he refers to an alternating process, an ambivalent principle instituted by maya. Maya is that which is not. Hence the predicate “instituted” is to be taken only allegorically. This paradoxical alternation of interests and the knowledge of the associated contexts to which these interests belong should be understood as maya.

Maya is a wonder. The Absolute is also a wonder. Wonder comprises delightful surprises as well as unexpected strokes of tragedy. When we take interest in a specific object or event we project our happiness or misery as a condition intrinsically associated with external objects or happenings. This is erroneous; yet, in the course of a day we indulge in such projections hundreds of times. At the same time all our value judgements are made on the basis of our intuitive perception of the three basic aspects of our Self, such as its existence, its self-luminous awareness and its ever-blissful state. Then, even to make an erroneous judgement, we have to borrow the light of our Self. It is like a man who uses his knowledge of truth to tell a lie. Deriving pleasure from objects of interest or suffering pain and misery because of physical identification is termed here avidya. Comprehending the nature of the Self, at least momentarily and indirectly, is called vidya.

The occasion for this ambivalent alternation is one of action. Action is necessitated by the individual’s dissatisfaction with his present state and the search for novelty, for a new state of being, or

for another arrangement of his life situation which might be more interesting. This pursuit of happiness was alluded to in verse 69 as the libidinal urge. It can be directed toward objects outside or toward the self. The feverish search for happiness implies two mistakes: one is that the individual underrates the true nature of the Self because he identifies himself with a body which is given a certain name and which is considered to be one of the many things of this world. The other mistake is to think that one's happiness is conditional to a factor outside oneself. Transactionally, this identity is quite valid; it is erroneous only when we consider the basic nature of the self. In an absolutist sense we do not lack anything, we are the very existence, knowledge and happiness that we are seeking. This identity is veiled by ignorance and this kind of ignorance is called *avarana*. The veil is not merely blank ignorance, it functions as a projection that is capable of affecting the mind with pain and pleasure. When a film is projected on a blank screen, the original white screen is veiled by the dark patches that come from the projector. Apart from this veiling, the dark patches and the shades of light appear as intriguing figures which have the power to produce a series of meaningful ensembles to the onlooker. A projection superimposed on something else is called *vikshepa*. Maya operates by interlacing the veiling and the projection.

When a man is in a theatre, excited by either a humorous sequence or a blood-chilling scene, he laughs or cries. After leaving the theatre, he will laugh at the folly of allowing mere shadows projected on a screen to affect him. In life we also take many things seriously and suffer. Later we may think of the same things as silly.

If a person is content and happy here and now and can transcend both *vidya* and *avidya*, he is blessed with a nondual vision. When a person loves another person with great intensity, he or she experiences a transpersonal identity. Everybody experiences this going beyond the bodily limit to be at one with another's interest. If this possibility is widened in its scope, the limitations of

name and form can be transcended. A total transcendence of the transactional experience can bring a hitherto unknown identity with our own basic nature.

There are three areas to look into: one is the transactional world of all dualities; the second one is the world of the contemplative where all forms, names and events are reduced to a single universal; and the third one is the neutral ground of the realized ones who treat both the transactional and the transcendental as aspects of one and the same reality. The turiya, the fourth state of consciousness referred to in this verse, is to be understood in terms of AUM, as it is described in the Mandukya Upanishad. In the transactional world we experience inevitable pains and pleasures which are characteristic of the agitations of the nervous system. There is no solution to this. It must be accepted as a fact of life. Most of our pains and pleasures, however, are imagined. It is up to us to give up all the fanciful imaginings that we generate.

The ground of our transactional experiences and subjective experiences is the unmodulated pure consciousness. This can be compared to the silence that precedes and follows the articulation of AUM. “A” indicates a sudden break from silence into a world of objectivity. The known and the knower emerge with a clear distinction between them. The sound “U” indicates a gradual merging of sound into the silence from which it blared forth. Like that, in the subjective reflection mind merges once again with the universal. “M” indicates the total extinction of the articulated sound, and it symbolizes the disappearance of the duality between the knower and the known. The silence that follows brings us back to the ground from which everything started. A true knower has a transparency of unitive vision and always sees this unchanging ground of pure silence as a backdrop to all events in the flux of becoming. His intellect remains stable, steadied by this unflagging vision. This is called sahaja samadhi, the natural absorption of the enlightened seer. In this verse turiya is to be understood in that sense.

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Nataraja Guru felt Verse 72 was of special importance. He referred to it in Verse 1:

When opinion attains to the red glow of what might be called knowledge, the duality between the two aspects may still persist, but when the same attains to white heat, the duality as between the material source of light and light itself becomes effaced, and luminosity pervades both subjectively and objectively. When fully realized, the wisdom of the Self would have no vestige of duality as between the source of light and light itself. Such is the unitive reality in the mind of the Guru here. The neutral Absolute given to higher dialectical reasoning and reaching beyond or higher than its own dualistically- understood counterparts is what is intended to be conveyed by the word 'even' in the text of the verse. In verse 72 we come again to this question of non-duality beyond or above duality, discussed in its proper place as the Guru's philosophy unravels systematically. The subtle problem as between duality and non-duality is fundamental to Vedanta tradition, and we shall have occasion to refer to it many times in the course of our comments.

And:

The equal status given here to the subjective and objective aspects of knowledge is not an alternation as between the light within and without. An alternating movement as between two ambivalent aspects of the personality is, however, alluded to in Verse 68 as well as in Verse 72. Duality might have to be admitted for methodological reasons to arrive finally at its abolition through higher dialectical reasoning. Even otherwise, we know in modern philosophy such as that of Bertrand Russell, who calls himself a neutral monist, that the 'mind-matter' duality could have a middle

ground which is neither the one nor the other. In terms of consciousness the distinction between its subjective and objective aspects is only of importance for purposes of nomenclature. The stuff or substance constituting knowledge, whether subjective or objective, is the same.

And now his Verse 72 comments:

CONSCIOUSNESS is subject to two main and alternating phases or pulsations; one which is fraught with elements that are overt and refer to the world of actualities in which there is action and reaction in the mechanistic sense. This belongs to the peripheral, inert, gross and unthinking aspect of the person. Darkness, nescience, ignorance and necessity are the distinguishing features of this phase. We feel the heavy weight of our own body here and there is a sense of being overpowered by this inexorable force of nature, which is the negative aspect of what is known as Maya, comprising, when fully and correctly understood, both the minus and plus aspects of this dual, alternating process.

The other ambivalent counterpart of this dark side is that zone of pure thought which is removed from all practical considerations. Phenomena are transcended in this which is the noumenon, and as such the Guru refers to it as '*kevala*' (pure, lonely) and '*chinmayi*' (made up wholly of mind-stuff). This does not develop any horizontalized action, but is where pure thought prevails more and more intensely and internally. Action is peripheral. Thought is central and, while remaining unmoved, it moves beyond to the world of the intelligibles. The alternation is thus between the horizontal world of observables and actions present or possible, and the world of the intelligibles or calculables which we should distinguish as located at the inner vertical core of our self-consciousness.

Maya is a notion that on final analysis comprises both phases of this subtle alternating process and not merely the negative aspect of darkness, or nescience. It is supposed to have a *vikshepa* (projecting) and *avarana* (veiling) function. One is positive and the other is negative in its content and effect. Although the term ordinarily connotes more the negative rather than the positive aspect of this double process, here the Guru more correctly describes the double function as ordered by the principle of Maya, which must refer to the last vestige of asymmetry or error in consciousness, beyond which and neutrally the full notion of the Absolute lies. Vedanta knows of no other factor intervening between the Self and absolute wisdom, and it is permitted even to say that Maya is the same as the Absolute, because of the possibility of Maya being reabsorbed into the full transparency of the Absolute when its dual or negative implications are realized and effaced by the subject in all completeness of Self-absorption into the Absolute.

Name and form are the final ingredients of Maya with which it works its projection or veiling. And when '*nama-rupa*' (name and form) become transcended, the Absolute begins to shine in its full glory. Such are some of the implications here suggested. The meta-dual attitude is the *dvaya* (dual), *para* (beyond), *bhavana* (creative approach or attitude), which should now become sufficiently clear in the light of the double nature of Maya explained here.

The word 'turiya' is another technical Vedantic term, the full meaning of which has to be understood in the light of what is described as the fourth state of consciousness in the Mandukya Upanishad. It refers to pure or absolute consciousness and the pertinent section translated reads as follows:

'Not inwardly cognitive (*antah-prajna*), not outwardly cognitive (*bahih-prajna*), not both-wise cognitive (*ubhayatah-prajna*), not a cognition mass (*prajnana-ghana*),

not cognitive (prajna), not non-cognitive (aprajna), unseen (adrishta), with which there is no dealing (avyavaharya), ungraspable (agrahya), having no distinctive mark (alakshana), non-thinkable (achintya), that cannot be designated (avyapadesa), the essence of the term that designates the one Self (ekatma-pratyaya-sara), the cessation of phenomenal complication (prapanchopasama), calmly established (santa), benign (shiva), secondless (advaita)- such they hold is the fourth. He is Self (atman). He is one to be known.’
(Translation from R.E.Hume, with slight modifications)

This ‘turiya’ or ‘turya’, as differently called, is also described in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in V. xiv, 3, 4, 6, 7; and in Maitri Upanishad in VI, 19, VII. xi. 7. Such a state has as its nearest Chinese concept the Tao which is described in the beginning of the Tao Teh Khing as not capable of being expressed in words by the famous sentence: ‘The Tao expressed in words is not the real Tao.’ This turiya is sometimes referred to as the supra-conscious state, but it would be better epistemologically to call it the neutral state beyond all dual consciousness, having its locus in the Self, as the last adjuncts described in the Mandukya Upanishad quoted above make sufficiently clear. It is not a mere *sunya* or vacuity without value or content.

Part III

Jake’s commentary:

In his commentary on this verse, Nitya opens by saying the content of it needs to be understood in light of the previous two in which he discussed libidinal forces and the world of becoming. The present verse drills down into those notions in order to illustrate our common lot in that world and to point out how to both live in it and to transcend it at the same time. This apparent contradiction points to two elements necessary in order to reach an awakened

state, and both are part of our day-to-day world. They constitute the very fabric of our contemporary culture wars between conservative dogmatists and progressive technocrats but was noted thousands of year ago in the *Upanishads*. Nitya cites the rishis: “the person who adores ignorance is living in darkness, but the person who adores *only* [italics mine] wisdom is living in even greater darkness” (p. 505).

The battlefield on which our current contest takes place is firmly established in our awake world of necessity/becoming, maya’s domain. And in the opening lines of his first few pages of commentary, Nitya goes into some detail as to the qualities and nature of maya. It is, he writes, a condition rather than a force. Because “it is not” in Vedantic terms, it does not propel action but rather is that context in which it occurs, and it is our consciousness within it that is modulated. As we pursue happiness, the dual nature of the context, which remains mysterious, presents positive and negative poles by which the mind measures any action. Success or failure, happiness or misery, bracket all our attempts to do.

It is in action that our focus of attention is defined (in maya), writes Nitya, and our minds are constantly in search of more of it. Through this movement we seek and encounter novelty and thereby we move from moment to moment. This set of circumstances, all established out of awareness and within the world of becoming leads us to “two items of ignorance” (p. 500). By pursuing the novel, we assume the present to be unsatisfactory. We want something we feel we don’t have, a premise that, in turn, replaces or covers over our true Self. Our egoic non-self takes charge of the crusade and leads us to a second kind of ignorance: no longer living in the present moment. Because what is desired will (or won’t) materialize later on, we delay happiness too, consigning it to the future we have constructed and that exists nowhere in nature. In short, writes Nitya, “you have [now] already forfeited your right to be happy at this moment.”

Nitya makes a comment as to how this kind of future-living constructs a barrier for those seeking truth as a route to escaping their condition. By the same token, I think it is an equally formidable barrier for those buried in a commercial culture in turn embedded in a project of creating material desires always to be sated in the future. In both cases, the present itself disappears and the

grand illusion of the future/past dominates. Keeping one's attention focused outwards becomes, it seems to me, an absolute mandate for both camps: apostates become either sinners or superstitious primitives.

Nitya then considers some of those motivations so often cited by propagandists and/or proselytizers as beyond dispute: love, wisdom, compassion, and so on. When one is “doing the right thing” or “making a difference,” however, one is still working within maya's domain and comes under the influence of duality. Nitya writes that *vidya* and *avidya* (ignorance and wisdom) as having their way regardless of the character of the motivation. Love, he notes, is perhaps the most noble of intentions and when applied equally to all of life cannot be corrupted. It stands in the Absolute. In the relative, on the other hand, it can and more often than not does become just as transactional as anything else. A quid pro quo dynamic replaces a complete and whole embrace of the All and an allowing of each life form to be: “you smile and expect a smile back” (p 501).

In the last few pages of his commentary, Nitya offer a “how to” manual on dealing with this general and very real condition he spent the first few pages articulating. Given the givens, “if it is natural for us to indulge in ignorance, and ignorance has knowledge for its basis, how do we transcend both?” (p. 502). In answering his question, Nitya explores “three special areas: ignorance, wisdom, and transcendence.” Ignorance is the very nature of our awake/dream states, and much of it we cannot rationally know. The work-a-day world presents us with conditions of ignorance that in order to deal with, as the Buddha

says (writes Nitya), “you have to lock your fingers, sit firm, and suffer.” A child cutting a tooth experiences discomfort and cries all night. In this arrangement, continues Nitya, no amount of philosophizing will change what is. It is in our embracing of our discomfort that we manage to amplify the anguish, creating additional and unnecessary suffering. Nitya here points to love—our making a contract of it—as an important and pervasive example of this kind of self-created misery. Rather than elevating love and accepting others as they are, we create obligation, guilt, hatred—all in the name of a love we have distorted into something entirely removed from its pure form. As Nitya writes, if you really believe that possessing the beloved is a tangible goal how will you actualize that possession once you have it? “Put them in your mouth? You can’t nibble them like a chocolate Santa” (p. 503).

Our prime directive, concludes Nitya, is loveability, not love. Once we realize the true goal, we can then allow the Other to be and incorporate his or her happiness into our own, regardless of where it is directed. This is the wisdom that lies at our very foundational Self, he writes. Once we can become aware of both that Self and the world of the non-self populated with others in their immanent forms, once we can combine both and not seek to privilege one over the other, we have an opportunity to transcend the duality.

In his last few pages, Nitya goes into some particulars that characterize this non-dual position beyond ignorance and knowledge, the fourth state of *turiya*: that which is maintaining your beingness, your existence, within the state of total unconsciousness [deep dreamless sleep]; and which is the ground of the operation of all consciousness in the dream as well as the ground of reality in the transactional world. This total ground remains unbroken through and through as the Self” (p. 505).

This fourth state, *turiya* or *Samadhi*, he continues, does not demand the state of absorption experienced by yogis as they sit inert. It is possible to attain right here in the world of necessity as

we stand in that position of balance observing/participating but not being hypnotized by the passing circus: “you can have all the transactions of the world with that silence as the backdrop of your mind” (p. 507).

In early Nineteenth-Century (and in conventionally masculine) terms, this theme found a peculiarly American voice (now largely untaught in its public education system):

It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. (Emerson, “Self Reliance,” p. 153, *Selected Essays*)