

10/14/14
Verse 78

There is no death, or birth, or existence;
man, gods and all such are name and form;
what exists is like the water of a mirage in the desert—
it does not exist; this should be remembered.

Free translation:

There is neither death nor birth nor any manifested form of life.
There are neither men nor gods nor anything of that sort. All of
them are only names and forms. Their substance is only that of a
desert mirage—and that is, for sure, no substance at all.

Nataraja Guru's translation:

Neither is there death nor birth nor life duration here,
Nor men or gods nor others of that order; all name and form
Like a mirage based on desert sands, is this thing that stands
Nor is it a thing at all with any content, note.

A few brave souls dared to attend class on this most ferocious
of all the hundred verses, and we managed to take it well as
dedicated philosophers. Though utterly clear, there may be some
more worth saying about it.

Although this is the only verse that specifically mentions that
the world we perceive is a mirage, it is foreshadowed in Verse 27:

Sitting in the dark, that which knows is the self;
what is known then assumes name and form,
with the psychic dynamism, senses, agency of action and also
action;
see how it all comes as *mahendra* magic!

Mahendra magic is pretty much identical to a mirage: something created out of nothing. Reaccessing nothingness is tricky to do by employing somethingness, though the dialectic method of yoga has a lot to be said for it. Here “sitting in the dark” is equivalent to the state where there is “no death, birth or existence,” and everything, even divinity, is nothing more than name and form. What Narayana Guru adds now is that we should do our best not to forget this truth. We tend to be captivated by the play of name and form, and go right back into it after a short break (if we can manage one) in meditation. We love mahendra magic! It’s fun! Sometimes. By this point in our study, however, the insubstantiality of what we perceive should have become a conviction. This can only stay with us if we have reconnected with the ground, which is not “us” in any conceivable sense. We are That alone.

Nitya hints at the saving grace that discovering we are nothing is a great relief, in knowing that the binding nets that hold us prisoner do not have to be preserved. They are not life preservers. But he didn’t want to let us off easily. He wanted to scorch us so that we would possibly take a drastic step to break free:

The temptation that comes to someone who enters a spiritual path is to hold onto the desires of the mind while seeking realization. He will make many rationalizations to justify the cravings, trying to cast them in a spiritual light. But there comes a point in life when you have to take a drastic step. If you don’t take it yourself in a philosophic manner, eventually nature will provide the example of the inevitable termination of life when the body perishes, proving irrefutably that you cannot depend on any promise from the flux of becoming.

In the original class everyone was madly in love with Nitya, as well as the situation. We had great friendships, great food, perfect peace, and twice a day the best lectures anyone had ever imagined.

In between the lecture/meditations was a “concentration camp” dedicated to preserving and sharing wisdom. It doesn’t get any better than that! At the same time, Nitya was in demand all over the planet, jetting off regularly to Australia, Moscow, Singapore, India and Indiana, to name just a few of his haunts. We must have seemed very *sticky* to him, the way we wanted to keep him around. We devotedly wanted to hold onto him, as he was the centerpiece of our wonderful life. Many of us were making detailed plans to expand the ideal lifestyle we were enjoying. Pretty quickly that morning Nitya served us the bitter pill:

This is something I personally experience as one of the major issues of life. It comes up in people with whom I have been talking or writing to for some time. Unknowingly they try to adjust their life movements in such a way that they can be with me more, have long periods of association with me, or even have their life dedicated to a certain cause which I somehow represent to them. But the “certain cause” is imaginary—what they are drawn to is an actual person with whom they feel a sense of security. When they begin to plan like this, I see the absurdity of it. I am after all only a bubble that may burst at any moment. They will also burst, but they are thinking of permanent possibilities, one being that this man will live forever or at least as long as they want him to. They don’t think that this bag of gas can blow at any time. When they start planning like that, I also start planning—to get rid of them.

That last line hit me like a bomb. There was no doubt this was about us. It was okay to give up negativity and stupidity. Good riddance! But positivity is such a pleasure, so meaningful. It’s much harder to let go of. Only when you see that it also binds can you begin to contemplate the attempt.

Nitya was a compassionate soul, so he mitigated the blow a little, later in the talk:

Somewhere we have to part company. It's inevitable. If not today, then tomorrow. When it comes it can be very painful. The best thing is to part company now, and continue to sit together in the waiting room awhile. You have already said good-bye but you are still sitting here visiting. But you know it is all over, that very soon we will all get up and go our separate ways.

Nobody really wants to accept this truth. It is very unpleasant. You want things to go on as they are just a little bit longer. You can rationalize it for a long time. But sooner or later a day comes when you have to part with everything. That parting can be effected here and now, even when the body seems to exist, the person and the world seem to exist; or it can be postponed until it is forced upon you by the final dissolution of the body.

Of course, as Deb pointed out this is just an example. We have all built lives we like, and are resistant to change. This has to be taken to heart by anyone who is serious about breaking free of their entanglements, both conscious and unconscious. Knowing that it will surely happen when we die provides the incentive to begin preparing ahead of time.

Nitya's Buddhist friend whose philosophy failed him when death knocked on his door is echoed by Steve Weckel's tale of his grandmother. She was an old-style fundamentalist Christian from Texas, cocksure of her beliefs. She was always preaching the Bible, and hated anyone who wasn't like her, knowing they were going straight to hell. She knew without the least doubt she had a prime seat reserved at the right hand of Jeesus when she died. But when her death loomed up, all her convictions failed her, and she psychically collapsed. She died a broken woman, unable to resurrect the abstractions that had sustained her life. They were all meaningless in the face of her immanent extinction.

There is no doubt the reality of dying is something we hardly have access to. Sure, we know we are going to die. Yet actually

our entire psyche is built on the certitude of our eternity, and cannot even contemplate any alternative.

Humans spend a lot of time crafting a plausible philosophy to justify how they live, but to a true seer all belief systems look like a cloud of unknowing fogging their adherents' brains. We feel certain we need structured beliefs to ratify our existence, just as some people fear that if they stop talking they will cease to exist. Yet if we dare to let go we find we are buoyed up by *something*. It's a something that is not built up from theories, it is a pre-existing truth. Nitya encourages us to let go so we can discover it:

The Guru is asking you if you are willing to throw all these away as nonsense—your karma theory, your rebirth theory, your salvation theory, your savior theory? “Oh, that’s very difficult.” If you find it to be difficult, you are not fit for this study. If you opt for it, you should make a summary dismissal of everything as phenomenal. Does it exist? Yes, it exists, in the way a mirage exists. It has just that much existence. It *seems* to be so.

The class added that from an absolutist perspective scientific schemes are no different than any other superstition. They are constructs, complex belief systems. Their apparent factuality is a powerful lure to indulge in them, but at their core they are also mirages.

All living systems of thought are an attempt to understand ourselves. Physics is now bumping up against the paradoxes inherent in a world of constructs. I promised to add a brief report from the cutting edge that approaches Narayana Guru’s insight here, although the implications are not yet drawn by the authors:

Scientific American, August 2014:
The Black Hole at the Beginning of Time
by Afshordi, Mann and Pourhasan

Subtitle: “Is the big bang, and all that came from it, a holographic mirage from another dimension?”

The authors propose that our three dimensional universe is a mirage-like shadow of a four-dimensional universe, which clears up a number of problems arising from the “naked” big bang theory currently popular. Their solution “turns the big bang into a cosmic mirage.” They also propose their theory could be tested scientifically, and the recently detected gravitational waves could provide clues.

Regardless of theory, letting go of the conviction that what we see is reality is virtually impossible. It most certainly requires the assistance of a wise and compassionate teacher, even if we burn with desire for the achievement. And most of us are more like a flickering flame that threatens to go out at any moment. Our small spark needs hands cupped around it and an occasional puff of breath simply to keep it alive.

No wonder we wanted that beaming Guru to stay with us!

Nitya eased us down a bit more, saying, “Can you accept that this is only a momentary arrangement? Can you accept that this is all ephemeral, without any compromise? If you can, it takes away all your burdens. You know that all your struggles are only until you wake up.”

This caused Paul to recall a woman’s TED talk relating a near death experience she had had. She likened it to swimming in a lake and diving underwater, holding your breath as long as you could, then at the last moment coming up for air but bumping against a dock floating in the water. In desperation you swim farther, trying to find your way up. Just as you are about to give out, you burst into the air. That first sharp sweet breath, quelling all the panic, is how dying felt to her.

Although gurus are essential, in the matter of making the leap we are ultimately on our own, because “You come to this not through any argument in your mind. It comes as an act of

recognition, factual recognition.” No argument will succeed, and no non-argument will, either. But if we prepare the ground properly, an irrefutable crack between the worlds may appear.

Preparing the ground means dismissing our cherished convictions as relativistic drivel. Perhaps only meeting someone who has already done it can make it seem worthwhile. By giving themselves up they don't just fade away, they become infinitely more available, infinitely more effective. Where our best intentions keep being diverted into dead ends, their lack of intentions keeps them open and zooming ahead. Nitya once described following a guru as climbing behind an expert mountaineer, who is racing up the cliff above you. All you can see is his boots, and you struggle to grasp the slight handholds he has used himself. It's all you can do to keep up. And there is nothing theoretical about it. If you slip you fall.

Everyone loved the last paragraph, with its idea of getting along with your ex-spouse. Incidentally it defines unattachment rather well:

You have to push aside everything relative. Afterwards you can again sit there, but you will feel all the difference. It is a bit like an ex-wife coming back as a good friend. You can be friends then because there is a lot of detachment after all the previous attachment. You will clearly know the difference between the two experiences. Like that, you ask the supreme Attorney to arrange for a separation from this world, from all this relativism, and to effect your divorce. Then afterwards you can come back and live as a friend to the world of relativism. That makes you an *asanga*, an unattached person.

I saved another clipping written by quantum physicists that bears on the verse and makes a lovely ending to our harrowing reassessment. It suggests if we relinquish our mirage-like fixations we may find a new state of being that is much more real, though somewhat strange to us. (Although the book under reference

doesn't make the journey to Oz out to be a dream, the movie does, and that's what most people know nowadays, unfortunately):

NY Times Grey Matter:

So You're Not A Physicist... by Robert P. Crease and Alfred Scharft Goldhaber (Sept. 27. 2014)

Popular books about physics often treat the quantum world as a weird place, a freak show, a realm in which human beings could never feel at home. We think it's just the reverse. Things are weird only in contrast with the familiar. If what we think is familiar turns out to be a fantasy and to contain false assumptions—if our world turns out to be odder than we think—then the quantum world will not seem so freakish.

In that case, the quest to learn about the quantum world will have a sort of upside-down “Wizard of Oz” ending, in which we suddenly realize that what we thought was home was really only a dream, and that our world always was a little like Oz.

Part II

Neither This Nor That But . . . Aum is particularly helpful:

Man seeks immortality. The fear of death is the greatest of all dreads. No one can overcome this fear by perpetuating the physical body as an imperishable substance. Deliverance from fear is always sought, and it is realized by arriving at truth and by recognizing it as the one value which makes the beautiful good and the good beautiful.

Death is a phenomenal experience of transformation. In one sense, it is a pause between two orders of functions in which a series of self-maintained and self-directed operations to preserve and continue the integrity of an organism is brought to a close, and is then followed by a different mode of self-directed operations to disintegrate, disorganize and dissipate the organism into its more

basic elements, from which the transformed substance can again enter into a fresh cycle of organized behaviour. A close look at death will reveal that it does not happen all at once. Within the body, birth and death are happening simultaneously and continuously.

The births of new cells, new functions, and new coordinations are all happening from moment to moment. If there is any truth in what modern physicists say about subatomic particles—bodies are emitted out of sheer nothingness and they are then devoured by antimatter bodies—then, what we call birth, existence and death are only conventional suppositions. These suppositions are valid in a world of transactions. The horror of this validity can be somewhat mitigated for those fortunate ones who are able to turn their life-stream into a continuous symphony and a graceful dance attuned to an ingenious choreography designed by a master who has a perfect insight of the probability curve of the seeming chaos and randomness of the flux called world.

As it is impossible for most of us to dream of such a possibility, even in the wonderland of a utopia, we are left with only two alternatives. One is to turn away from this world and follow the footsteps of those masters and saviours who can show us the path to the Transcendent. In one sense or another, theistic Brahmanism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and non-theistic disciplines like the Sankhyan's, the Taoist's and that of the Zen masters are all biased in favour of the transcendent. Philosophers like Kant have also given transcendence their best attention, and modern phenomenologists have improved upon it. The other alternative is to flow with the current of the flux without any special philosophy of life and be “Les Miserables.” In this field one can also entertain himself with the jarring music of the existentialists by joining the choral song of anguish and nausea, and also realize how strong and irrefutable one's existence is when helplessness makes self-pity more than an obsession.

While Jean Paul Sartre thinks that man is cursed with his own freedom, even to the point of violating and hindering it, Narayana

Guru avoids the dismal conclusions of the existentialist. Before leading us into the haven of deliverance, the Guru pauses for a moment in the favourite haunts of the phenomenologists to reconnoitre the crossroads on which, almost ritualistically, all philosophers stumble on an enigma and go round and round in the vicious circles perpetuated by tautology and contradiction. He does not tarry here long, however, because in the very next two verses he offers us his hand to surmount this hurdle, which St. John of the Cross compares to walking in the path of darkness, guided by darkness, to ultimately arrive before the darkest of all darkness, or to the ascending of Mount Carmel confronting nothing, nothing, nothing, and expecting only nothing also on the summit.

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Nataraja Guru's commentary:

EVEN the frame of reference from cosmology and psychology that was depended on to bring the notion of the Absolute into its own proper perspective is here abandoned and the Guru's speculation soars one degree higher. The preparation for this total vision, discarding all scaffoldings to help to raise the edifice of non-dual thought in the self-realizing process of contemplation, was already begun in the end of the previous verse where the five apparently different principles of the elemental aspect of nature were merged into a central unity. As soon as contemplation is able to see the unity behind the diversity of phenomena it is not to remain statically fixed even to the idea of diversity. Speculation rises higher and more neutrally into purer and freer abstractions.

In the present verse it will be noticed that, while the mythological, actual and other miscellaneous conditionings are shed, only the vestige of the reference to name and form taken together is retained. Birth, death and duration refer to the vertical axis of the frame of reference merely nominally and as tacitly implied even in

their denial. Men, gods and other things or entities of a similar order, which may be said to depend more on the horizontal factor, are effaced even before the name-form residue. The denizens of space, with whom mythology, theology or literature are populated, are all swept away, as it were, at one stroke, and the stage is set ready for the higher contemplative verities to be examined hereafter, before the hundred verses complete the total cycle open to introspection or overt speculation with general ideas.

Name and form are those aspects of thought or mentation which persist even when the grosser elements of consciousness have been analysed and found empty by an intense process of contemplation. Name and form remain in the mind of thinking man as categories that still give room for some kind of ideation or mentation into which entities distinguishable by them faintly adhere and seem to occupy a place as configurations within consciousness.

Although the contemplative is to go behind and beyond this pair of conditionings to which his consciousness is subject, to come up against the full light of the vision of the Absolute, the Guru stops short of abolishing name and form here, still giving them recognition. All plurality depends on names and forms. They are two poles, like the matter and form of Aristotle or the visible and the intelligible of Plato - which are again the same as the two orders of the observables and calculables that modern scientific philosophers are beginning to distinguish as being at the base of all strict reasoning or knowledge that can result overtly or actually.

When reality has thus been reduced to just name meeting form, only seeming to contain the distinct entities that we take seriously but erroneously as things, what is there left in its place? The Guru here tries to determine the status of the reality that is left when aspects of appearance through name and form are abolished. He takes the favourite example of the mirage which seems to have the thirst-quenching value-content called water. In reality it has no

such value-content, and dry sand, which has no such value, is the existential basis on which the life-giving waters were imagined. Thus, not only is there an optical illusion, but an emptiness of value or interest. What is false can still be seen by the senses but does not mean anything of value.

Some philosophers like the Vaiseshikas would say here that seeing itself proves the reality, as otherwise we should not see at all. This is the realist position, valid in theory when we forget about life values which are fundamental and even conducive to final happiness. When we think of existence, subsistence and value together, and look at the world of name and form, we find it empty of content or of ultimate value-significance; and it is because of this lack of full or final value-content that appearance is to be discarded as false, although the eye is able to see the mirage and falsely perceive the water, even when no thirst-quenching possibility resides there. Advaitic epistemology admits of slightly varying points of view as between the different schools of dualists and qualified non-dualists (as between the empiricists and rationalists of Europe) about the status of appearance, which we shall not discuss here. We shall only note that the Guru, like Sankara, gives no value-content to mere mentations and appearances but wishes to lead us to the pure absolute core of Self-consciousness itself, which is alone existence, subsistence and value, properly speaking.

When the Guru repeats here that it is a thing and then says it is not really a thing, he is not merely dismissing an aspect of reality as false, as some Maya-vadins (supporters of the doctrine of appearance) might do, but, while making some allowance for the position of the mere empiricist or realist thinker, finally establishes non-dual reality.

Part III

Sujit shared his thoughts with us on this one:

Truly intense verse, and equally intense commentary from Guru Nitya. Reading closely through this commentary gives the feeling of two true gurus, like two roads in time, joining and leading further and beyond the horizon. But leaving the reader behind, at the junction, thinking how much more one has to be detached, to take steps on their path towards any experience of that truth ahead.

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Amara's thoughts on witnessing from our Brihadaranyaka Upanishad group cross-pollinate elegantly with the present stage of our study:

It is important to know that the mind is a triangular trio cycling through transparency, translucency and opacity. In Sanskrit this mind dynamic is called sattva, rajas, and tamas. This triple modality can be very challenging to the aspiring witnessing consciousness until discernment comes naturally into the picture.

Oneness or sameness is the Way out of this mind trap. Ultimately we find our way back to the basic truth that everything we witness and experience, animate and inanimate, visible and invisible is made of the same stuff as oneself. All of it, no matter how mundane or how subtly sublime, is illuminated and animated by the one light of the Absolute.

This neutralizing truth is the refuge that carries us across many swollen rivers of confusion and suffering, to the shore of our own Self. When we are delivered to the safe side of the river, we often notice in amazement that all the suffering was a kind of fantasy. The realization then comes that all of it was a mind dream, and that witnessing was the imaginary boat that carried us to solid ground.

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Jake's commentary:

In this verse, the Guru emphasizes his dismissal of the phenomenal world in straightforward terms. It is the very transience of that world that disqualifies its "reality," but at the same time it persists in its circular coming and going. "Like a mirage in the desert," he notes, we must remember that we can never find meaning (quench our thirst) in what always recedes, disappears, and re-appears. The validation for this claim lies in the fact of our own physical/mental death. Denying our own death and pursuing meaning in the transient can only work in the very short run. Nature will always trump our efforts sooner or later. But our demise, writes the Guru, can only exist if birth, the cause of death, likewise exists (and all of the mentally constructed names and forms in between). The entire sequence arises and recedes, in transit always, and it is this fundamental character that both the Guru and Nitya here present as not existing, as not being that which we truly are as we witness the circus.

The fact of our own death constitutes a major concern for most of us. Conditioned and trained to prosper and find happiness in the world of becoming, we don't tend to appreciate its ending for us and our powerlessness in preventing that ending. As e.e. Cummings wrote for Americans so forcefully so many decades ago, "Rage, rage against the dying of the light," a sentiment shared by too many dedicated to pleasure as the true happiness.

As Nitya proceeds in his commentary, he comments on the almost insurmountable difficulty we face in letting go of our attachment to what is not. For those choosing the spiritual path, the letting go can be "worked around" in several ways, not the least of which is the transferring of one's allegiance to a personality and then claiming that shift satisfies the quest because that person—guru, swami, preacher, spellbinder—now personifies

that which one can prize as the Absolute. The true believer, then, is to slavishly follow and not question the power celestial. When this kind of idolatry arises for Nitya in his work, he says, “I also start planning—to get rid of them” (p. 546).

No person or thing in manifestation is stable and permanent, that which lasts. We all will part company eventually, Nitya writes, and the sooner we come to terms with our death the better. If we don’t, nature will. If we part company, live through death, and then come back to participate in the manifest, knowing that all is transient while living in it, death ceases to have any influence on us.

This death in life represents the end of all our egos as a real, controlling force in our lives. Nitya illustrates what he means by narrating the process through which people become beggars or the sanyasins of the Indian tradition. They first get rid of all possessions, including their clothes and hair, which are then burned in a ceremony illustrating their death. They are then given a begging bowl and a piece of cloth to wear. No longer attached to the material or the earning of a living, the new sanyasin lives entirely (or not) by what comes his way: “He doesn’t have to be serious about it [life]” (p. 548). This existence, in the ever-present arising, is but an illusion. Birth, life, and death are merely mental constructions that all disappear only to re-appear.

This point of view or perspective is antithetical to our minds’ constructions and those illusions function most effectively in maintaining our temporary manifestation. As a result, I think we end up in a war with ourselves. Philosophically and literally, the Guru and Nitya present a picture of what is naturally true. In contemporary idiom, “It is what it is.”

For the most part, the mind will have none of it. Nitya, here, narrates the difficulty a friend of his went through on being informed (via an accompanying x-ray) of his terminal condition. Faced with this near-term certainty, this man lost hope, essentially dismissing all his philosophical/spiritual work and sank into despair. “It’s only words,” counseled Nitya, and none of them

changed anything. But “despite his philosophy, when the actual call came he couldn’t accept it” (p. 549). It is this universal call we will all receive that Nitya points to as a key event that must be loosened from the mind’s control, but it does not relinquish that control without a struggle. If it cannot reduce you to despair, other options are at hand. In many Eastern philosophies, writes Nitya, karma and reincarnation act as vehicles that lighten the load. The notions of individuality and infinite re-birth can act to “kick the can down the road,” so to speak. In the Semitic religions is the accepting of a god which will then judge your one life on the basis of that confession when everything finally ends. A third possibility, says Nitya, is to join the Nihilists and make your final Hemingway-esq stand in the face of the infinite unknown.

On page 552, Nitya narrates a way around all this nonsense, a principle which echoes the very point of *That Alone*: “You have to forfeit all the interests of life. Then alone do you come to the Absolute. That means you cease to be. You cease to be in the absolute sense, not in the relative sense. Absolutely, you were not, even previously. You continue to be what That was or what That alone is.” Arriving at the point at which you have let go and escaped the mind’s control, you can come back to see the immanent in the “re-born” as an Asanga, an unattached person, for whom, as Singer’s Gimpel proclaimed, “God be praised, even Gimpel there cannot be fooled.”

Part IV

Eugene wrote a terrific response:

Man Oh Man! It is 5:34 AM and I am in love with this verse. I feel like my existence is an echo or a shadow of this verse. There are so many deaths one experiences in a day, a week, a lifetime, really. It's very cool knowing you are experiencing or about to experience a sort of ego-death.

On Friday, I am going to have my present residential and work worlds shook up one way or another. I know this as a fact. I know this has nothing to do with spirituality or morality. I know circumstances have reached a point, yet again, where I can choose to say, "Well, it isn't meant for me to live this life in this way anymore." I could also say, "Where did it all go wrong? Was I awake and aware when I decided to take these paths?" So many seemingly definite answers to definite questions well up like an open can of soda pop I previously shook for decades.

I wonder if I am finding the easy way out. I did not prepare properly. I did not understand how bad the economy had become. I did not understand that I am trying to fulfill some instinctive parental nature by making choices that were not "appropriate" for me. Who knows? I submit to every possibility while knowing it is all a mirage. The transactional matters as a kind of kaleidoscopic microscope or looking glass.

It is possible for me to "be friends" with every internal and external transaction. The dread arises when my ego feels as if its monumental efforts to thrive are thwarted and then **THINGS FALL APART.**

I realize Narayana Guru is only stating what we all knew instinctively. Yes, instinctively. From many perspectives, none of this is happening and every possible transaction may happen. Physics for everyone!

Strangely, I can't define where this ground of peace-like death/life is relative to my mind. I know that I know that I don't really know that I know that something is freeing up! I know that this experience of letting go or freeing up is also a synthetic experience. I welcome whatever comes. It is all of the same substance.

Portland Gurukula, thank you for the class notes. Attending class may not be an option always. Flowers for freedom, these notes can be!

Eugene Lewis--sometimes. Ha!

PS. You know what is funny? You mentioned not asking "new" people to come to class for this particular verse. I think THIS is what we need. I am sure the Gurus knew how to dispense their version of knowledge and truth, but I would take this one first any lifetime.

My response:

It may well be what we need, but it ain't always what we want. Americans especially, products of a brutal environment liberally laced with glamorous attractions, are seldom drawn to such a grave-seeming conception. We think of spirituality as the most glamorous attraction of all, else why bother? So I think the Guru is right to put it after a long period of preparation.

He might have rethought his position, too, in that with Darsanamala, a much later work, he put the concept in the very first darsana, verse 8:

This is terrible and empty of content,
like a phantom city;
even as such, the whole universe
is made as a wonder by the Primeval One.

What a hip guy! Almost one hundred years later, Scientific American introduces a radically "new" supposition: the whole universe is a cosmic mirage projected from another universe (which may in turn be another mirage...).

So yes, let's give up our fascination with "phantom cities" and see what's left over. Thank you for sharing your thoughts!

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Dipika also wrote:

What a brilliant verse

How true about us & our fantasies

If only I could 'kill' myself & live in the 'absolute' sense

but am chicken...worried about my basic comforts & whether i will be safe or not without all these false protective layers.

Such a pity...that the only way this would be safe & possible is to join a 'sect' & take belief in what they preach.

My response:

Well, we're all chickens here. At least we can allow ourselves to be nudged in the right direction by those who aren't. As the Gita says, even a little of this way of life saves one from great apprehension.