

That Alone: verses 1-8 Original

As many of you already are aware, one surmise in my introduction to That Alone was later corrected by someone in the know. I attributed the change in tone after the first ten verses to an evolution taking place in an already highly evolved being. That much is somewhat true anyway. But I learned from Carolyn Eden and Nancy Yeilding that Nitya revised the first eight verses after the fact, smoothing and improving, and adding quite a bit of complexity a la Nataraja Guru. In many ways though, the prophetic classes themselves were very direct and elegantly perfect. The following is a transcript of what transpired early those first eight mornings, and includes the essential and powerful third evening talk. I'm doing only the most rudimentary editing on it. If I'd had access to this material when I edited the book I'd have probably blended it into the mix. And I might still be working on it! So perhaps it's just as well these waited in the wings until now.

In any case, all explications help in appreciating this ever-changing work. I've finally found the space in my life to type these up, and for those of you engaged with That Alone study, I think you'll find this a welcome addition. As you can plainly see, even the verse translations were never the same twice....

When Nitya referred to Narayana Guru he often used the endearing and simple Guru, which I always amended in That Alone to more formal the Guru. Since this will only go to special friends I'm leaving it as is, a touch of the intimate flavor that was so much a part of the experience. Also, if you can take the time to imagine the pauses and really try to perform the exercises he suggests, that will add yet another dimension. Ah, the handwritten transcription brings back memories of seven years of editing these wondrous commentaries, roughly one a month for 100 months.
Aum.

Verse One

Filling the entire awareness of the knower,
at once permeating the subjective self
and shining as the world outside,
is the manifesting Self;
to That, with the five senses withheld,
prostrate again and again with humble devotion
and chant.

This is the first verse of the *Atmopadesa Satakam* of Narayana Guru. We are going to have a *svadhyaya*, a self-instruction based on this wonderful book. It is not to be treated as just a book, but as the Word of the Guru. Each word should be meditated upon with all profundity.

First it says *arivilum eri arinit*. All the time we are knowing something, seeing something, hearing something. First meditate on that aspect. Watch your awareness,

the stream of consciousness that is passing through you. Identify your status as the knower. When you say “I know; I am the knower,” have a full conscious awareness of yourself as the knower.

When I speak you understand the words. Notice how your consciousness penetrates into the meaning of what I say. It is as if you are entering a room and becoming acquainted with it. Similarly, you enter into the world content and become familiar with the concept within it. When you look you are not only seeing a form, you are entering into the essence of it and knowing it.

In English, the word ‘experience’ means an interaction between a knower and something to be known. Experience is the link between the knower and the known. In Sanskrit, the word for experience, *anubhava*, means “becoming the same.” It is not an interaction but a transformation. The knower is transforming into what is known.

Now, try to meditate on this:

There is a state of knowing in which you become oblivious of your personal aspect as the knower. In fact, usually we aren’t thinking of ourselves at all. The “I am knowing, I am enjoying, etc.,” only comes when we try to tell someone else. Otherwise it is only just knowing.

It is the structure of the language into which we put our thoughts that creates differences between things. If you see a bird on a tree, you don’t think it is happening in your head as an occurrence of knowledge. You see it as a bird out there. Here, the known itself is both the knowing and the knower. The knower is introduced into the known. The knowing is also happening in the known. You don’t have to struggle to bring what is known into you or to fuse the knower into the known, it happens automatically.

Now try to shift your consciousness into three modalities, one after the other, and see how you experience it: I am the knower.... This is knowledge.... This is the known....

Here Guru draws a distinction or a dichotomy between the world outside and the world inside. The best way to understand both the world outside and the world inside is to close your eyes and then open them. When you close them, whatever was seen disappears. When you open them, it all comes back. You can also listen and then not listen. When our senses are not put into operation, we are within ourselves. We have feelings and subtle sensations which are felt within.

What is it that you experience as the knower in you? What is it that you experience as knowledge? What is it that you experience as many things in the external world?

Knower and knowledge refer to what is within, what is felt within the body. If the known is an object, it is outside. These are all separate entities, but in terms of consciousness there is no separation. All these happen within our own awareness.

We have to cultivate a new attitude, a sense of wonder. It is a wonder that this body, which was lying like a log of wood on a bed a short while ago, is now sitting here and reasoning. It is a wonder that now a dimensionless universe can be witnessed which was not there when we were sleeping. The subtle depths from which the contents of dreams come are a wonder. It is a wonder that I can talk and you can listen and understand.

This experience of ours is equivalent to a yolk in an egg. There is a nucleus and an outer part, but it's all one whole. After some time an egg changes into a very animated being, a chicken. It has life in it, sensations, fear, love, joy. Like that, the Karu is a universal yolk which is hatching out into many beings. It is not far from us, because we are That. We are in it and we are part of it.

We are obstructed from knowing it because of this constant consciousness "I am, I am, I am." We have to humble the 'I'. Think of the 'I' as of no real worth. It has no strength of its own. It is just a helpless ideation, a speck of consciousness. Let that 'I' consciousness prostrate before this one Supreme which is becoming everything.

It is shining with great resplendence, *uruvilum ottu*. No one can stop its manifestation. No one can hide it. It is blazing as this universe, as this Self, as knowledge, as emotions, as value appreciations. *Purattum ujivalikkum* means turn with reverence to that universal yolk, to that cosmic egg which is becoming everything.

Restraining your five senses (*ancum ullatakki*), again and again (*terutere*). *Veenu* means falling, prostrating before it; *vanangi otitneam*, by prostrating you should teach yourself.

During the course of the day, we have to live this one instruction. Repeat the verse again and again to yourself, feeling how this great wonder is happening when you are looking at things, handling things, talking to another person, doing your tasks of the day. Watch all those manifestations and really feel the wonder at how the one unmodified consciousness becomes modified as all that.

When you sense that wonder, feel a great devotion, a great reverence. Feel grateful that this inert body of yours is also animated by that consciousness, so that you can think, see, feel, know and do. Feel the wonder that a similar manifestation outside can reciprocate.

We have taken away all our wonder through analysis and labeling. We have filled the vacuum of our mind with labels. We are hoarding labels and thinking we are becoming wise. We should understand these labels are blocks which only increase our blindness.

If you say "God" and there is no feeling in you; if you say "the Absolute" and you don't become overwhelmed by the content of that concept, that's no good. We have become

somewhat devoid of the sense of the numinous since we are always keeping ourselves at a very worthless level.

You may feel love for someone. If, instead of experiencing that love as not just for someone but for everyone, and your love is magnified by that much, then you get the idea of the Absolute. But it is hard to say how something other than the intellect in you can be developed. The intellect is so cold. Whatever it touches it can make freeze. For four or five hundred years, science has been consistently taking away from us the capacity for wonder by labeling, converting life into graphs and photographs. Thus the sense of wonder is going away and cold logic is creeping in to this wonderful system.

It is a question of rehabilitation. How can you rehabilitate the spirit? It is possible. Every moment of our young friends here, Katherine and Emma, is a wonder. They go on creating out of their small little minds so much beauty. Who can say how a child takes a pen and in a few minutes puts so many original ideas on paper. It's a wonder.

Why don't we feel thrilled by that? That thrill is the adoration I am speaking of. If you squeeze an orange it makes a delicious drink. But we don't feel any wonder about it. We should feel gratitude just seeing an orange. It is a wonder and a joy that we can see and touch each other.

You have to cultivate an attitude of devotion. Shankara says that of all the things which can bring emancipation to a person, there is nothing like devotion. Devotion is the only thing that can bring you liberation. Devotion is a wholeheartedness.

Try to see the wonder, the joy, that is being manifested around you moment after moment, without turning away from any of your normal duties. Through the whole day—when you eat, walk, work, go to sleep—ponder over this, take notes about what you feel and read it in the evening.

We are entering into an intense spiritual discipline today.

Verse Two

The psychic dynamism, the senses, the body
and the many worlds known by direct perception,
when contemplated on,
are all realized to be aspects of
the luminous Sun (of Consciousness)
shining in the sky beyond;
this should be realized
through relentless search.

If we take our mind back to what it was a few hours ago, when we were in deep sleep, there was no consciousness. We can analogically relate that to the world completely merged in darkness. As dawn comes, slowly things begin to appear. Similarly, the deep unconscious in us slowly moves and there comes a faint, vague awareness of consciousness. When that awareness becomes assertive, questions come to our mind. Is it morning? What time is it now? Our mind always has some question coming up. This interrogative aspect of consciousness is called *manas*.

Vedantins think of four aspects of consciousness. The first is this questioning aspect which is an attempt to give meaning to whatever confronts you. You give meaning to sense impressions or stray ideas by relating them to other things that are already known to you. You give orientation to the new impression or idea by relating it to a meaningful situation in time and space. Once it is given a formal fixation, it finds a place in your scheme of understanding. In order to do this, you recall your memories that are associated with what is being presented to your senses or mind. The faculty employed in the recall of memory is called *cittam*.

Memories allow you to decide the nature of the impression or idea. You are in a state of suspense until you make your judgment based on those memories. The faculty that is used to predicate the subject in an appropriate and comprehensible manner is called *buddhi*.

After having come to a decision, you feel satisfied or disturbed. This satisfaction or dissatisfaction affects your personal identity, your *ahamkara*. *Aham* means 'I'. You relate your personal experience to a central consciousness in you called 'I' which is affected in terms of pain, pleasure or indifference. We call this the affectivity of the ego.

Taken altogether the four aspects of mind, *manas*, *cittam*, *buddhi* and *ahamkara*, are called *karanam*.

In the morning I wake up and turn on the light. That means the mind wants to use the sense organs. The light falls on many objects. When the light beams are reflected back to the eye by the objects, I recognize books, pens, letters. Actually none of these things come into my eye—only the light does. The quality of the light and the way in which it stimulates my eye brings a recollection to me. Then I judge, I come to a decision which affects me. I think about the class I'm teaching on *Atmopadesa Satakam*. I think of reading the verse, pondering over it, and writing about it. A series of interests arise; I pick up the pen and the book. Thus I become physically oriented. My consciousness is using the body. With this body I can also touch other bodies and other objects.

Thus, from the dawn of questioning through the process of recollection, reasoning and affectivity, I have now come to use my senses, which are in contact with my body. The senses, body and mind all come together in a confection, which becomes a holistic action monitored by the major urge, drive or interest that dominates that particular moment of my life. It is a whole universe of interest. After the fulfillment or thwarting of

an interest, the mind moves away to another interest. Thus you go from one world of interest to another. These worlds spring up from the awakening of the latent urges lying buried in your unconscious.

Guru tells us to look at the world. It lies calm, without activity, when the sun is not there. As the sun dawns on the horizon, the birds wake up and sing. We open our eyes, and once again the mountains, the sky, the buildings, objects, children, all become real. They are all intrinsically related to that sunlight. Even the sunlight itself only becomes meaningful to us if we wake up. There has to be a light from within so that we can see the light which is outside. All visible things are transformations of the light of the sun. Similarly, what we experience as other persons, things and interests are all transformations of the same consciousness. One consciousness assumes all the forms and leads us from interest to interest, from world to world, from one universe of interest to another universe of interest.

Today, meditate on this verse. Make yourself familiar with the questioning aspect of the mind. See how questions bubble up. When a question arises, try to see from what depth it arises. There is a point beyond which consciousness cannot go. One item of awareness after another comes, but from where? Then examine your recollections. Watch to see what memories come to mind. Is there any cause-effect relationship between one memory and another?

Examine how memory leads to judgment and then how it affects you. This is the vicious cycle of how the mind works: questions evoke memories, leading to judgment and affectivity, which brings up new questions, followed by memories, judgment and affectivity.

I enter into that process and watch my mind. I look at Shiva Bob here, and then I think of Meher Baba and memories come of the earlier Sai Baba. I am drawn to the image of that lonely figure, a solitary man sitting alone, gone crazy with his love for God. There must be a value in me which is intertwined with the value of a lonely pilgrimage. That is a *samskara*, something which is processed and has become part of my whole personality. I have other *samskaras*, such as how we used to eat ice cream at Denny's every night after Gita class. That means I'm sensuous. Being sensuous is not good for a spiritual person, but I don't want to get rid of all sensuality. It's a part of the whole.

This body is an aggregate of many *samskaras*, not only of mine but also of my parents, and their parents, and so on. If I have some form of continuation before and after this birth, then I must have brought with me the essence of the *samskaras*, the processing of my previous lives. Those are called *vasanas*. What is conditioned or colored here in this life is a *samskara*.

Thus, there is something of a vertical dimension in me, a continuation of the tendencies from before, called *vasana*. I also have more recent acquired tendencies. Together they make a personality with a central drive and many peripheral interests. All this which is so congregated, of almost endless dimension, is only a tiny fragment of the expression

of the Supreme. You are one expression, I am another. We are nothing and yet we are everything. See how you are placed in it. Go deep into this the whole day.

Verse Three

What is seen within,
through a superimposition, appears to be outside;
the five specific elements, like sky,
when contemplated,
should become like waves
rising in rows from the watery deep,
without any separate reality whatsoever.

A while ago we were all sleeping. Some were in deep sleep, others were in dreams. The idea of this class, our coming together here, was not in our minds at that time. If we were in deep sleep, we didn't know anything.

Try to recapture that state of mind where you have no idea of yourself or of the other. There was no 'I', there was no other. Nobody can say that it was an uncomfortable state. We all enjoy deep sleep. It is one aspect of our experience where there is no *vibhuti*, there is no special manifestation.

The prefix *vi* in Sanskrit is sometimes interpreted as *visesana*, "in a special way," and sometimes as *vikarshana*, "in a discursive manner or in a discordant manner." The same prefix can mean two opposite things. What can happily be called divine manifestation can also be experienced as catastrophic, painful, demonic. The same spirit can manifest as the cosmic and the chaotic. If you are in a good state of mind, everything is beautiful. If you are in despair, even beautiful things can look distorted.

From deep sleep we come out either into the world of divine manifestation or demonic happenings. Thus the word *vibhuti* can change its meaning.

Guru speaks of the five major kinds of manifestations, such as those belonging to space. Even though space is not visible, we perceive it by a process of elimination: it is that which is in between two perceivable objects. It is understood by way of negation. Is it a thing? No. Is it matter? No. It is an idea.

Thus the very first manifestation is something you can say both is and is not. For this reason the Greeks didn't include space or *akasha* as one of the elements. The word 'element' does not apply unless you take it as an element of understanding, an aspect of knowledge.

There are many *vibhutis* or special manifestations in space, such as sound and air. Air is also not visible, but we feel it. We feel a sensation of touch and see certain things

moving because of the wind. In this case, instead of saying we perceive air, we have to say we infer it. We imagine space. We infer the presence of air. There are many, many *vibhutis*. On a pleasant day a light wind is very enjoyable, but a typhoon is very destructive. The *prana* in the air we breathe is life giving. It can be a sensation and thus come to your mind. Endless are the manifestations of air.

Then there is fire. The first thing we did this morning was turn up the thermostat. From the sun out there to the warmth of the body, we see various kinds of manifestations of fire. Life itself has come from moisture or water. We entirely belong to that. Very little of us would be left if we were to be dehydrated. What would be left we can say would be earth.

These manifestations—water, earth, fire, air and akasha—are seen as objective factors of life. I can see you and touch you. You can see me and touch me. You can hear what I'm saying. In a little while, when the sun comes up, we will see a colorful world. This is objectivity. But a little study of physics and physiology is enough to convince us that the sounds we hear are only in our head. Our ear is so structured that it magnifies vibrations and we can hear all kinds of sounds, both resonant and dissonant. When sounds are structured in certain ways, they become word symbols that have meaning for us. If you learn a language the sounds have meaning for you; until then they are meaningless.

These are all *vibhutis*, manifestations. They are thought of as objective, but nothing is more subjective than what we consider objective. What is happening within us we project and see as an outside factor. Then we treat it as really objective. This is called *vivarttum*.

If you see as I see, if you agree to what I see, we have no dispute about the objectivity of things, because your mind is structured exactly as my mind is structured. The manifestations of your mind there and my mind here both belong to one homogenous entity.

We are not here as scientists. We are gathered together in a state of devotion. We are in a mood of adoration. What a wonder that I see a colorless world as full of color and a soundless world as full of sound. Even though I cannot get out of my beingness, it is as if I can identify myself with all the pluralities of things and experience a vast universe. It's a wonder.

In each verse Guru places one precious philosopher's stone, which determines the whole character of that verse. In this verse it is *jalanidhi*. If the Supreme, the Divine, is an ocean, we are the waves rising from it. But instead of just saying ocean, he called it the treasury of the watery deep. Endless are the laws of God, of the divine qualities. It is the repository of all auspicious values.

The world which is seen as outside and yet experienced within, appears outside by an act of superimposition such as the imaginary sky. It should be understood as a series of waves rising one after another from the divine treasury of a cosmic watery depth. Everything should be seen as belonging to that divine source. This is what we have to meditate on all day today.

Space looks infinite, but see how we originate that space. The Divine is originating both space and the individual ego within it, for me, for you, for all, and we are experiencing a joint effect as a vision of a universal mind. The very fact that you and I can share the same space should fill us with gratitude and joy and wonder. Out of the same stuff we are all molded. You and I have this great blessing of participating with the universal mind, with the divine mind, with the cosmic mind. We are co-creators with the Divine. Or, the Divine is using our individual minds as instruments to make a composition. That should fill us with reverence and devotion.

We distinguish things because there are forms. What is form? We experience form, shape, color, the feeling of a thing having three dimensions and the placement of that thing in the fourth dimension of time. If you are a little poetic, you see even more than this. Every form becomes a symbol, an allegory, an ideogram. Each item of knowledge can serve as a poetic symbol. If you are an artist, you see in each form the embodiment of beauty. If you are a philosopher, that triggers you to ponder over the meaning of things. If you are a scientist, that gives you scope for your analytical thinking. Yet all these are only what you can ideate in your mind. Eddington says the physicist isn't studying earth or water or sky but that which his mind can perceive or conceive. If you cannot conceptualize, you cannot study. To the physicist, a physical thing is conceptually physical.

We are getting into a great intimacy here with everything.

E.A. Burtt, in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, says that in Newtonian science, atoms were like loose grains of sand on a shore, not touching each other. That age of physics is gone. Today we have to think of them as being more like half-melted salt crystals in a saturated saline liquid. This means you cannot say exactly where anything is solid and where it is liquid. Everything is in everything else. From that philosophy or scientific viewpoint we have to go to the adorable Absolute. We have two possibilities. The first is to retire from our consciousness and go into the depth and become one with it. Even deep sleep is so wonderful. How much more wonderful to be with it forever. Yet we are so afraid to die.

The other possibility is that we wake up and come to see the variety of manifestation giving so many expressions of beauty and joy. It's musical, harmonious, rhythmic, loveable. We can get into fellowship and communion with it.

In either case it is beautiful. To be awake is beautiful; to be asleep is beautiful. To live is beautiful; to die is beautiful. To exist is beautiful; not to exist is beautiful. You are filled with such beauty, such great joy.

If you do not know this, each person is a terror to every other person. Otherwise, each is a keeper to every other person. Hearts attract each other. Souls attract each other. Each time you meet someone it is a new opportunity, a new possibility, a fresh occasion. Each thing is like that: if you fear, if you see the slightest separation, then everything becomes a symbol of terror, of threat.

Guru's meditation is to free ourselves of all this threatening separation, to sink and immerse ourselves deep into this wonder.

In the first verse, Guru asked us to turn to the Supreme, which is compared to a causeless yolk which is manifesting into everything, both an inside world as well as an outside world. We were asked to prostrate before that again and again in love and devotion.

In the second verse, he compared it to a scene of supernal glory in the void of consciousness. Its beams change and transform into everything that we experience. We experience within us the imprisoned glory of its resplendence.

In this verse he wants us to know that we are emerging from the depths of a glorious treasury of divine possibilities. A wave rises and falls, merges and reemerges. Like that, let our mind merge into the Divine... emerge as an aspect of this truth... merge back into it...reemerge again..... Merge and reemerge.

Existing outside and seen within.

Evening

The first day I enumerated four qualifications to attend a class like this. One is to know how to discern what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false, what has real value and what has only transient and apparent value.

The second is not to be distracted by external stimuli or internal ideations, to cultivate a forbearance to meet all consequences in the path of search, to give your mind entirely, with total commitment, to whatever is undertaken, and to enter into absolute bipolarity and to find your balance and peace of mind in that.

The third is not to expect anything, here or hereafter.

The fourth is to have an absolute resolve to be freed of all colorations and conditionings.

It is possible to have dark forces, dark urges that bring an emotional cloudiness. But then to rationalize it and weave it into an absurd argument is not part of the emotion alone. There is something really malicious which is to be rooted out. This business cannot be a goody-goody, honey-oozing sermonizing. We are not here to learn

Malayalam words or Sanskrit words. We are here to look into our life and see where we are.

It is madness to be filled with one's own ego up to the nose so that you cannot see anything else. Everything is filled with you. This is the very thing I've been asking you to give up for three days.

Jealousy is burning with rage because someone else is being appreciated or admired. It is wanting to have the same kind of treatment, and otherwise feeling you are being let down.

It is this that I want to relate to what we call the Highest, the Divine, the all-embracing, the Light behind all lights. If you don't see this darkness, as contrasted to light, then there is no point in going any further. You don't have to identify yourself with darkness. You don't have to remain in it. It is foolishness which you can come out of and should come out of. When it is a personal darkness surging up from you, you should not bring in the names of others.

This is exactly what today's verse also says: seeing what is inside out there as an external reality. There is a difficult bend or turn here for us to take. There is a projection that is a universal participation and there is a projection where you get stuck in the darkness of the ego. This is the difference I want to make clear to you.

When I see a beautiful morning sunrise and I call you and show it to you, it is not a projection where you get stuck in your ego. The beauty of the sunrise that I see and appreciate and you see and appreciate are both our personal projections, but there is another element which is not in me, not in you. It has occasioned the perception of the beauty of the sunrise, and thus there is an interaction between what is personally within you and yet outside as a universal factor. When you have this participation within the projection, transactional life becomes meaningful and harmonious.

When you get back into your own ego-oriented projection, participation is lost. When you lose your participation, instead of transaction you get into hallucinatory behavior. In Sanskrit it is called *pratibhasa*, hysteric hallucination. This shrinking into hysteric hallucination is what is preventing you from participating. In participation, every person becomes a beautiful entity. There is no need for one's work to be copied by another. Each one has his or her *svadharma* to fulfill. There is also a collective sharing. When you do your thing, you also participate in everyone's common interest. Then your transaction takes you all the way to the horizon where it touches transcendence.

First, you transcend your own ego limitations. You realize that the good in the other person, the joy in the other person, is also your joy. Then you have transcended your own self-centered ego trip. That means you start seeing your beingness pervading the physical and mental entities of other individual beings. Then not only other individual people but the whole universe becomes one with you, resonating with you. The joy and

serenity that comes from it rises above any individual projection. Rather, you are grasping something, you are understanding something. You become part of the universal understanding, part of the universal serenity. Thus the highest form of participation takes you to the very horizon where transcendence touches transaction.

Before we go to the next verse, we need to see the riddles in this one clearly. This discussion was meant to help explain these things. It is good to know how exactly we live rather than hiding things.

In this verse there are two references to outside and one to inside. The first is a reference to what is out there. It is not a projection, it's just out there. The second is how you comprehend inside you what is supposed to be out there. The third is how what you have comprehended is projected as what you think is outside. If that is not brought in you get into solipsism, into thinking "I created this world." This is one major flaw in the study of Vedanta. When most people speak of Vedanta they think the outer world does not exist, it's all their projection.

Here Narayana Guru wants to correct this. The outer world exists. The inner world also exists. But there is a strange relationship between them which is not easily understood. My interpretation of the outside world is personal. Outside means outside my body, outside my senses, where something can be the object of my senses. Such an outside is there, and it stimulates the senses and the mind of the individual. The way the individual interprets it is necessitated by incipient memories, previous conditionings, conceptual recollections, and so on. There is a socially structured ego where you are taught by your parents that you should be acceptable to others, honored by others, you have to get recognition from others. We look for public opinion, the opinion of the other person, to define ourselves. The ego thus becomes more and more bent by the opinions of people. So you try hard to create a good opinion of yourself in the minds of others. The more you try to create good impressions, the more you are trying to live in your own mask.

You make a mask and then transfer the center of yourself from that beautiful inner being of all to this mask. If that mask is not honored, you think it is just like killing you. This is what I call the ego center and the spirit center. We have to transfer our life back from this structured ego center to our own normal, natural spirit center. When we have done that, we rejoice at the opportunities others get, the joy others get, the good works others do, because the other is no more an other then. Everything is part of our being. That is the first part of the riddle.

The second part is that this physical aggregation—earth, water, fire, air, space and all their related aspects—is called by Guru a glorious divine manifestation. *Vibhuti* in the present verse means a state of becoming or a manifestation that is glorious, that is very special. The same *vibhuti* can become the total distortion of things. Instead of becoming a higher value it can become demonic.

The workshop into which we take our own personal self is to examine where our *vibhutis* are divine and where they are distorted. If they are distorted, we should see how they can be corrected. There is a certain amount of helplessness there. It is because of this helplessness that you go to another person who sees it clearly. If that person sees it clearly and knows how to mend it, he does it as an act of compassion. How does he know it when you do not? That comes through a process of spiritual osmosis, allowing your life to flow along with the life of another.

The Sanskrit word for grace is *anugraham*. Anu means along with, graham means to hold. When a Master is holding you and you go along with them, it is called *anugraham*. But the tendency is to bite the very hand that holds you and wants to guide you. Socrates said “When I act as midwife, most people give birth to a windbag, not a child. And when I tell them this is not a child, but absurdities, they bite me.”

When the *vibhuti* is demonic, it is not an easy thing to correct it and make it divine. But if a Master knows his business, he is like a doctor who will not leave his patient crying. This process is not all rosy. Sometimes it has to be done the hard way. We have to go through a rigorous correction of our own selves. The self-centeredness is to be corrected. There is no other way. Otherwise, normal participation becomes impossible. Without normal participation, transactional life becomes absurd. It has no meaning to say that in deep meditation you get into a higher samadhi if you cannot bring the same calm and serenity and love to the transactional world to share it.

The next aspect is where the Absolute is compared to a treasure-laden watery depth. It is not mere water Guru is speaking of. In his prayer he qualifies it as the ocean of compassion, the ocean of love, the ocean of knowledge, the ocean of glory. From the same ocean of compassion, glory and love, when a wave rises up on the surface, water particles are flung off and leave the ocean. Until a particle gets back to the ocean, it is only a helpless drop which can evaporate in the sun or end up in a drainage ditch. You have to realize your heritage in the Divine. When your ego pulls you out of it you become alienated, and you suffer from this alienation. You alienate yourself when you pull yourself out of the whole.

Guru insists on recognizing the transactional world because it is only there that you get a chance to relate yourself to what is horizontally manifested as the whole. There if you want to have a separate place for you and don't allow anyone else also to have coexistence, it is a tragedy, the greatest tragedy, of alienation.

If you want me to teach you, to guide you, I should bring you back to the ocean and should not allow you to be water thrown into the drainage ditch. That's very important. All these things are to be very clearly understood in the mind.

Remember: there is an outside world. Without it there cannot be a cosmos.

Indian Vedanta has adopted two words to refer to the Absolute. One is the Self, atman. The other is brahman, the Absolute. Atman refers to your spiritual core. Brahman refers

to the universality of all beings in which your core and the core of the other are all dissolved into a totality. From the individuation of each one, each one is coming out and there we join hands. In that joining of hands one experiences the love of the total. Jesus says to love your neighbor as your self. That neighbor is out there, but he directs us to love them as our own self. So you have to go inside and see how much endearment is there for one's own personal beingness. Then that endearment is brought out into the transactional. That is at the level of immanence, which is in relation with what we call the transcendent. He said to love your Father thy God with all your love. That is the transcendent God. The immanence is your neighbor.

When the transcendence and the immanence are brought together, you have solved the first riddle. This is not just any philosophy, it has to be done through everyday living in actual participation. It doesn't work to think if I can just get rid of the other person, if I shoot him, everything will be all right, I will be happy. That doesn't work.

I discussed this with Nataraja Guru. He said the problem is you cannot both fear and love. If you love, you love, but if you fear and pretend to love, it becomes transparent. Your fear is very easily seen by the other person. That brings hostility. There is no other way than deciding to love your neighbor.

Whenever Nataraja Guru started a new Gurukula, he always called all the neighbors together and he would say, "We have come to live with you. This is the Gurukula. I want to declare one thing to you. We are neighbors who will never hate each other." He would take the hand of each. He stood by that word till the very last moment of his life, never to fight his neighbor.

If you are living a sacred life, holy, simple, pure, what is there to be afraid of in the three worlds? You have nothing to hide; you can let the other look in at any time. Then you can participate, you can share. Participation means on the transactional level. You may not like the other's personal whims, but you should not treat him as a wretched creature. You don't have to go and sit with him if you don't want to. But once you accept that he's a human being, you won't have trouble.

Then when do you become a recluse? All the time! It's like playing cricket. You run into the society and you run back to the wicket. You touch the wicket and again you run. When you touch the wicket you are a recluse, and when you run you are a participant. Every day you have to practice this.

I think I've made the first aspect of it clear: outer... inner... outer.... The second is the horizontal function of going out... coming in... going out....

The third is: from the surface you go deep into the treasury of your own values. There the value of all is one ananda, there your joy is my joy, your happiness is my happiness. When Guru spoke of the sun rising in the previous verse, that is the grace that is coming up. But when the wave rises, it creates trouble for itself. For the wave, the best thing is to subside and not to rise. For our individuated being, going to the depth is

beneficial. For the spirit to rise above everything, that is fine. Rise with the sun. Fine. You have only one eye then. Jesus says when your whole body is filled with one light, what a great light it is. The sun is called *ekacakshus*, the one eye that sees. Your eyes become unified, you gain unitive vision from above, seeing all as one. And you allow your individuation to sink into the depth.

In between these two, Guru put the other riddle in the verse, the *vibhuti*, how your manifestation becomes one of light and one of darkness. When darkness comes it is not your fault. You deserve all sympathy. But there is often an insistence about holding on to the darkness. It is like a disease. Once it gets into your system, it eats into your vitals. It does not leave. What is the way to make it leave?

When you see the Absolute, then it leaves. If you cannot see the Absolute within you, then you should look for it in the smile of everyone around. You have to go to them, accept them. The more you accept, the more you make known, the more the strangeness and the fear leave. When you do not know, there is fear. When you fully know, there is no fear. All religions assure you of one thing: fearlessness. Jesus says come to me and then have no fear. In all the icons of India one hand is held out, meaning have no fear. The Gurus and Masters hold that out also: fear not. The teaching of the Upanishads in one word is called arriving at the state of fearlessness.

What do we fear? There are only two possible fears. One is that you will physically die. You can't help it. If you are in a physical structure, one day it will wear out and you will have to leave it. Better to learn to die while you're alive so you can die gracefully when the time comes.

The second fear is that somebody will tear away your mask, somebody will look at you as a valueless creature. What of that? God is valuable, even if you are not. You can leave it all for God. That is enough. Nataraja Guru used to say, it doesn't matter if I'm foolish; God is wise. If God also is foolish, then it's really troublesome, but fortunately he is wise. That is enough.

If you get over these two fears, that of the physical body and that of reputation, then nothing else can give you any fear.

Verse Four

Knowledge, the object of one's knowledge,
and the act of knowing
are nothing other than the great primal Unity;
merging into that infinite, shining, supreme Knowledge,
become That alone.

Arivu means knowledge. It is equivalent to what is called cognition in psychology. Something is presented to us, and then we become aware of it. *Arrinnitum* means that which is known; it is here coupled with *artha*, which means a thing, but literally it means meaning. When we cognize a thing we are filled with the meaning of our cognition. Like a flash the meaning, the significance of what is seen, comes to our mind. In the case of a mother seeing her child, the child is a great value. What happens is not just the cognition of a body, it is also the recognition of the value of what is seen. It fills our whole being. From the tip of our toes to our crown we are filled with the special significance of what we have cognized. That is called *artham*.

Our consciousness or awareness of things is not static. It always moves. When it moves from our inner awareness to the object of awareness we react to it, such as the mother feeling "My son." Here the emphasis is on how it has affected the cognizer. Thus, knowledge becomes circumscribed with a certain interest which intrinsically belongs to the person concerned.

Puman means that person who has the knowledge. Usually we think of knower, known and knowledge. The idea is of one's own personal knowledge, but to meditate we have to take it in its deeper significance.

The other day, Guru told us we are going from one universe of interest to another, endlessly. Our interest is shifting from moment to moment, from one gestalt to another. In that process, consciousness moves in a tri-basic manner. The separation within knowledge or awareness through identification with one object of interest is considered to be one of the greatest distractions of life.

"My son." It evokes a certain joy. In the same way we can also have a cognition of someone we fear.

First there comes a cognition, an awareness, that someone or something is presented. Then the meaning of that presentation comes. That brings it back to one's self. The interest need not always be a happy one, it can be fearful or boring, it can be anything.

Uru means one; *adi*, primeval. *Mahassu* is that Supreme cause which illumines everything, from which everything has come. It is equivalent to what St. John calls the logos or the Word. St. John said the Word is with God. There is no difference between the primeval cause and the Divine.

Even for the mother to recognize the child as her son, her mind had to be illuminated, its meaning had to be evoked in her. She cannot consciously do it. The body is just an inert mass. That which animates it and makes it conscious is flowing into it from a primeval consciousness. I am illuminated by it, my mother and father were illuminated by it, and millions of years ago, when life was flowing toward what it is now, then also it was an illumination.

When did it begin? Nobody knows. We may now see only our son before us, and we have only that specific knowledge, but that knowledge originated in time immemorial. Now it illumines my mind and becomes my awareness. It is the same which illumines everything, the world that I see and know.

The sun has light. The eye has the capacity to see light. The mind has the capacity to become aware of the light that the eye sees, the light that the sun sheds. There is a homogenous principle which unites the external and the internal. That homogenous principle is the Divine, the only light there is. Even though we may only be seeing our son, that very sight should make us aware of the beginningless divine illumination.

Devotion in Sanskrit is called *bhakti*. *Bha* means light, and *ikti* indicates conjunction with something. When you say *bhakti* it means conjunction with light. *Mukti* means conjunction with release, and *shakti* means conjunction with strength or auspiciousness. The word *bhakti* means your mind is conjoined with something which illuminates it.

That which attracts the mind is always a value. The highest attraction is where there is love. When love is evoked in you, engendered in you, your mind always flows in that direction. Jesus says, where your treasure is, there your heart is also. Treasure is an *artham*, a value.

In yesterday's verse we pictured our divine source as an oceanic treasury of values. If you love your son, or your friend, then there is a treasure in your heart. That becomes a light glowing all the time in the core of your being. But the love for your son or your friend, or for money for that matter, is what the Tamils call the little love. They contrast it to the big love or the big joy. The many specific things that come into our life give us the little, little joys, not that limitless joy, the joy of abundance, the abundant showering of eternal joy. Whether it is the small love or the big love, when it comes the heart goes to it. We are used to going from one small love to another small love. When a person is having *paramanipremam*, they are having absolute love, unbounded, infinite, without limit or frontiers. That love is experienced continuously. It is called devotion, *bhakti*. Narayana Guru defines *bhakti* as *atma anusantanam bhakti*, when a person is continuously contemplating on the pure Self, their own divine substance, they are in a state of devotion. God is eternal, ever-luminous, the dearest of all values. If a person loves God, then they know it is their own true being. If I love my Self and my Self is Divine, then I love that Divine.

A person may seem to love their hands and legs, their whole body. But if the doctor says that to preserve your life you have to have your leg cut off, you will agree to it. You think, "Okay doctor, let me live. I love this life so much! If for the sake of that I have to abandon one leg, let it go." So it is not the body which we love.

It is also true that you may be willing to die, to sacrifice your life to save your beloved. That means even the value of your life is less than the love of the beloved. There is something greater even than life, and that is love.

To go from the small love to the higher love, greater love, deeper love, is called devotion. Guru says that shines without any boundary, without any frontier. When you say “my” you are drawing a line around your I-consciousness and saying whatever comes within this circle, that’s mine. I, my, mine. Outside is the other. There is another person who always stands there as a center with a circle around it. That person also says “I” and whatever is in that circle he calls “mine.” If these two people come together and begin to love, thereafter they always say “our.” The boundary between their I’s is gone.

This is what happened in Colrain, Australia, when a little girl named Phoebe brought a stone to me. Before that, whenever she came and sat by me she said there was a boundary between her and a stranger. When she brought a stone and gave it to me, we both recognized it as a common link, and she said the boundary was gone. When a famous novelist read an account of this, he wrote in a letter to me that he spent some time thinking of little Phoebe in Colrain, who knows how to break boundaries between man and man.

When all these frontiers are gone, you come to possess the frontierless love. Each day you should be able to break one frontier, one separation. Tagore prays, “Where the head is held high and the world is not broken into fragments of narrow domestic walls, lead me into that world.” That’s the world we look for. Some people say a good wall makes a good neighbor, but

Robert Frost laughs at it. He says neither walling in nor walling out works.

That supreme Light that shines without any frontiers, like the sun that shines above, caresses the sinner and the saint alike. It falls on the beautiful and the ugly in equal measure. In our meditation for the day we should look for the frontiers in our mind, for all the narrow domestic walls in it. We should break them down and even go beyond that. Walls are built out of fear. The more you are afraid the more vulnerable you become, and then you want to become invulnerable. So you make fortresses and mount machine guns on the walls, and inside you are busy building atomic bombs. We have to disarm ourselves. We have to disarm others also. A smile can disarm a person, a disarming smile. What pleases me most in the United States is when you go for a walk, an utter stranger who passes you will look at you and say “Hi! Have a good day.” In many countries people go stiff and won’t look at each other. It is a beautiful thing to look at another person and say how beautiful is the day, have a good day. But we shouldn’t stop there.

At the end of the verse Guru makes this emphasis: this moving from your small love and small interest into the primeval love and primeval interest should be such that finally you become that. You should be able to say “I am that I am,” or *tat tvam asi*, That thou art. Ayam atma brahman, this shining consciousness within me is the Absolute. *Prajnanam brahman*, all that is visible, all that I perceive here, is the Divine. You should be filled with that one overwhelming thrill of life, continuously, so that we all live in the intoxication of that one love. This is for today’s meditation. Expand your love. Include everyone. Do not push anyone outside. It takes time but it will work.

Verse Five

People of this world sleep, wake,
and think many thoughts.
Ever wakefully witnessing all this
there shines an unlit lamp,
precious beyond words;
That is never extinct.
Ever seeing this, one should go forward.

The word Guru uses for people here has the specific connotation of those who confine themselves to their private and personal interests. There are two kinds of mind. One kind is completely trapped in the necessities of this world. The other is those minds which can lift themselves above the necessities of this world to always be in communion with everything sublime and transcendental, while at the same time being capable of dealing with necessities also. A person's inner worth very much depends on the ratio between the mind oriented to the world of necessity and the mind that transcends it. We are speaking here of those who are caught in the world of necessity.

Sleeping and waking are the alternating phases of our consciousness. Sometimes we are sleepy and sometimes we are wakeful. Even when we are wakeful we can have the quality of being half asleep, when we are not very alert.

The possibility of having different shades of consciousness shows that light is not devoid of darkness. When we bring more and more light into this room it becomes brighter and brighter. That means the present light also has an admixture of darkness in it. Like that, consciousness can also be brighter and darker. Worldly people are all different shades of this inner light and darkness.

What we have translated as "think many thoughts" comes from the Sanskrit word for worry. There are two kinds of worry, either becoming anxious about tomorrow or becoming regretful about yesterday. People who are caught in the necessities of life, who have the alternating states of wakeful, dream and deep sleep, worry about many things. Some of their worries are prospective anxieties, and others are retrospective, remorseful.

The worries are qualified as many. As soon as one worry is over, another comes to take its place. When one train of thought ends, another train of thought begins. There is a series of variegated interests.

Think of our stay as a fetus in the womb of our mother. We have no memory of that. It was a long sleep, although great activities were going on. That is a great paradox. Some force was very busy putting together all the inner mechanisms, like an electrical

engineer designing and building a whole power system. When all the inner connections are made and the main switch is turned on, everything comes to life. Our organism is such a system. It becomes aware as soon as we come out of the mother's womb. But there was another light of awareness which knew exactly how to structure the whole organism so that it would be able to carry out all the required functions. When we came out of the womb we opened our eyes, looked around, and became conscious of this world: its life, colors, forms, sounds, variations in pitch, and impressions of heat and cold.

The child cries, and after getting its first nourishment it slips back again into its sleep. Occasionally it opens its eyes, looks around for a little while, shows an expression of happiness. It alternates between a sense of pleasure and misery: it cries, sucks on mother's breast, and goes back to sleep. For many days these are the only activities—waking... sleeping... waking... sleeping.... In between there is the call of necessity, the intake of nourishment and the purging of dirt. No other activity or interest. Before we come to know what's going on we are already tuned to these three aspects, waking, sleeping and attending to necessity. There is always expectation in the child to suck something, to be fed, and we have to change diaper after diaper. Eventually the interest variegates. When the child cries you don't always give milk, you might call its attention to something pretty to look at, something colorful. You might call its attention to some sound, some musical tone.

Thus we create expectations in the mind of the child to go from one set of values to another set of values. As children we were all conditioned this way, to always expect gratification. That causes the desire to be gratified. People who live in the Godforsaken villages of India or Africa don't know many necessities. In Galbraith's Age of Uncertainty, he says for primitive man the need to be clothed was to protect himself from the extremes of climate. To the modern man that part is almost ignored. Now clothing is mainly to show off. It's our decorative aspect. If we go into a fabric shop, endless varieties are put before us. We have any number of choices.

It is almost like an indoctrination. Somehow a compulsiveness is put into our system through the mass media of advertising. You feel a "must" and in turn it causes worries and anxieties. When the compulsion is activated in you, you worry not only about what you have or don't have, you worry about what others have and what you don't have in comparison with them. You look at the world and want to copy what the world is doing. There is a kind of unquenchable thirst involved. There is no end to it.

After describing this aspect in the mind of the world-oriented person, Guru calls our attention to that light which was with us when we were in our mothers' wombs, diligently functioning, putting everything together in the right place, and coordinating, for instance, the inner connection between the eye and ear and vocal system so that when you see something you can hear its name and articulate it with your tongue, drawing energy from the blood supply, etc.

Although this seems so concealed from us, think of the infinity that went into it. That light which is behind our eyes, ears, touch, mind, intellect.... Turn to that light beyond. Guru says we cannot determine the worth of that light. It's like a lamp which is not only shedding light but also seeing. It's like a flame with an eye in it. The flame is illuminating an object and is also seeing it. There is nothing happening in our system that is not seen by that eye. Only in its light does everything function. God is the Light of all lights, beginningless and endless. That's why St. John says

whatever has come has come from that, and that is the light and the life of the world. Jesus himself was called the light of the world. The Guru, the dispeller of darkness, is also the light. Guru is equated with the Absolute, the cosmic light.

We have to see how we can shift our mind from the world of several interests to this all-unifying value. Our little, little light, the light that illumines one single interest, is gone as soon as the interest is satisfied.

We are not only speaking of waking and sleeping. An urge comes to have a drink so we go to the fridge and have some juice. Then that light is gone, but another light comes. We want to have a cookie. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna that yoga means to have a unified interest. All our little interests must become subsidiaries to the main drive, the main interest.

In yesterday's verse we saw that our true nature is the Divine, and our desire is to regain that state, to go back to it. What is advocated here is not turning away from that but filling every detail of our life with one ultimate interest, seeing the causal light in all its variegations and effects. Then the flame of our mind will burn without flickering. The mind of a yogi is equated to a flame burning in a room where there is no wind. A steady flame. It is also a witnessing flame.

Krishna asks Arjuna to become one in mind with him. Be of divine mind rather than of worldly mind. That should be our prayer: may my mind become like the mind of the Divine.

This means cultivating an inner transparency. The past, present and future are all fused into one continuous whole. When the ends and means are unified, we do not worry about choosing the path and never reaching the end.

The secret words which were put into this verse are *vilamatiyate vilakku*, a lamp of priceless value. In the first verse we were asked to bow down before that yolk which is becoming manifested as everything, both the external and the internal world all at once. In the second verse it was described as the great sun in the firmament of our consciousness. In the third we were told that

it is an oceanic treasury of divine value. In the fourth it appeared as a knowledge which is abundant. Now we are told it is a priceless lamp.

Plato says what the sun is to the world, so is the eye to the soul. We pray to the light to lead us. "Lead kindly light, amidst the encircling gloom." We now turn to the light. God is light; the Guru is light. The God and the Guru we adore are not two, and they are not outside.

Today's meditation is to seek to go back to this light, which is always shining within. Become constantly aware of that, and see that it has no beginning and no end. It is witnessing, the witness within you. There is a great discipline lying in it. You need only your peripheral mind to tend to all the external functions. The core can go on continuously shining as the unchanging cause. Notice, watch and witness all the changes going on and also remain as the unchanging.

I don't know how God thinks, how God sees, but I'm very familiar with how my Guru looked at things and how he evaluated them. When I think, do, behave, I see his watchful eye over me. I can hear within me his whisperings of caution. I know what he approves of and does not approve of. This is what happens when one intensely accepts within oneself the dharma of the Buddha, the way of the living Christ, the all-seeing eye of Allah. You are here in reciprocation with the powerful director of your life. You have an owner to your life, a Lord. You are no more an orphan, you are properly parented. Let us become rich with this feeling today, and let the whole day be a coming back to your center again and again, and relating that center to all that you deal with.

Verse Six

One has to wake up, then go to sleep,
has to eat food and embrace;
thus, in this way many life urges come;
therefore, who is there to comprehend
Reality's one and unchanging form?

We are very much influenced by light, particularly sunlight. The sun is always luminous as the earth is revolving. We face the sun only for twelve hours. The other half we are in the dark. When the sun comes, energy flows in. We feel that energy and we wake up. When the sun goes down, energy wanes and we become lethargic and go to sleep.

The structural composition of the solar system is such that it can produce only certain kinds of functions. There is an intrinsic relationship between structure and function. Our body has a structure, and it functions according to that structure. With our legs we walk, with our hands we work, with our eyes we see, and with our mouth we speak. Each organ is structured to produce a particular kind of function.

The structural and functional secret of a thing is called its dharma. The operational dynamic ingrained in a thing, which makes it what it is, is called dharma. Earth is called dhara, that which supports other things. *Dha* means to hold, to support, to maintain. We are a part of the earth, and that earth brings us alternating day and night. It is the

dharma, the functional nature of this earth, to have day and night. When day comes we wake up and when night comes we sleep. That is a dharma of this organism of ours. All heliotropic beings wake up when the sun comes. There are some animals and plants that are geotropic. They become energized when the sun is gone, but they are not direct participants in the energy which comes from the sun. They live on other beings which receive solar energy. Plant life is the main solar bank. The leaves gather solar energy and turn it into chlorophyll and store it in their cells. When we eat the plant, its energy comes to us. For our inner fuel the energy comes from plant life. Those animals whose energy comes from plants are generally energized in the daytime. They graze in the fields. Some animals which live on the plant-eating animals, such as cats, prowl at night.

Our main theme is waking up and sleeping. As this is a basic dharma that is ingrained in us, this body will be subjected to these alternating phases to the very last. It is not our fault, it is a dharma. In its nature, dharma is contradictory to brahman, the Absolute, the changeless. Dharma is the changing. It's a paradox, a contradiction—the changing is in the changeless. Our very basic nature is changeless. Our second nature is always changing. The witness in us does not change whether we are waking or sleeping. All the major functions in the body are supervised and kept functioning even when we sleep. There is something changeless looking on in us. The main thing for us to know is that we individuated beings are established in dharma, and waking and sleeping are two major functions of that dharma.

When we are wakeful, we may have a hot drink such as coffee or tea in the morning. Then we move on to breakfast and later lunch. Some people are used to having an afternoon snack with more tea or coffee. Then later we want to have dinner. There is fueling and refueling. When we're wakeful we expend a lot of energy, so we have to refuel. Once you go to bed, even if you sleep for ten hours, the body doesn't ask for any food. When we are wakeful the first demand is for nourishment.

Guru always chooses his words very carefully. There are many words in Malayalam and Sanskrit for eating, but he chose *bhujiccitanam*. *Bhu* means that which manifests, that which makes things. You need nourishment to continue your becoming, to continue this existence. This special word gives the sense that this is for your sustenance. It is that which sustains you. You want to eat food. This is also dharma.

Nourishment of the body is one pole. The other pole of our life is where the psychophysical organism is in touch with the spirit. We need food for the spirit also. Spirit is not happy if it is confined to one body. Its quality or its dharma is to pervade. A child and its mother both have a compelling need to relate to each other. The mother suckles the child, kisses it, embraces it. The child takes a delight in being embraced and kissed by the mother. Although the child and the mother now have separate bodies, the child feels at home, at ease, only when it regains the mother. They were together as one for at least nine months and the child wants to regain that state. The mother feels the same way. When they are united they feel much better. Later the mother introduces

the child to the father. The child has also come from the father, and love is extended to him. There are other products of the same parents, brothers and sisters, and love is extended to them also. In this way love expands.

We have a way of limiting love to units of families, clans, tribes, nations, religious groups, and so on. At the same time there is the need to relate to the other and transcend the limits of one's own body. That is also dharma. Dharma thus is to cater to one's physical as well as spiritual integrity. As this dharma is ingrained in us, we are led from situation to situation. In each situation we see the possibility of fulfilling one function or another, one dharma or another. Seeing the meaning, the value of the dharma that can be fulfilled in something else is to have a purposive vision. The purposive vision by which things become meaningful to us is called *artha*.

All passing moments have one meaning or another to us. Some meanings are favorable, some are unfavorable. If certain things happen, your natural functioning will be thwarted. Since you don't want a dharma in you to be exploited by the situation, you turn away from it. In another situation where a dharma in you can be fulfilled, you are drawn towards it. You are drawn to the *artha* that allows fulfillment, and you want to turn away from that *artha*, that meaning or purpose, which is detrimental to your dharma. Thus you have two kinds of desires, attraction and withdrawal, to either expand or shrink back into your single unit, to share or not to share.

The desire to share is called a *kama*. Wanting to eat food is a *kama*; wanting to embrace is also a *kama*. The difference is that eating food is for the sustenance of the body, and loving another who is animated by spirit is for the continuation of the spirit, for spiritual sustenance. If two people love and embrace and produce a child, the spirit continues in another physical formation; the continuity of the spirit is ensured. The individuated aspect of spirit has the dharma to sustain itself through immortalizing the species, so you like embracing. Guru is not pointing this out as a sin or anything bad. He only says that this is nature.

In nature, dharma gives you the vision, *artha*, and *artha* produces in you the desire, *kama*, to fulfill the vision. Where does it go wrong? When in our love we are drawn together and we unite all the inner meanings, all the inner *arthas* of our life for the satisfaction of dharma in us and then we put a wall around us. We say "You are mine and I am yours," "I want to possess you and insure that you will be only mine." Society agrees to it. Unknowingly, you build a fortress around you. We put a boundary, a fence around the couple. You begin to experience that a certain freedom which you had is now taken away from you. Instead of freedom you get security. Why don't you have both security and freedom? Somehow, society doesn't understand it that way. You have to barter your freedom to buy food, a house, your privacy, security. You give away the freedom that is the basic nature of spirit. The spirit becomes choked. You make a demand on your spirit to behave in a manner which is opposite to its true character.

You need freedom. That is the next step. There is nothing wrong in waking or sleeping, in eating or embracing. All these are ordained by the very nature of the structure of your organism, psychic and physical. It's all fine. But then you bind yourself. Here Guru expresses a note of grief: "My God! Don't they understand they can be free?" He calls our attention to that in the next verse.

We cannot throw away this body. It's very useful. We cannot change the course of earth, it will always be like this, bringing day and night. We cannot just immortalize the body, it needs to produce new cells and throw away the waste cells. It needs continuous nourishment. The spirit cannot confine itself to one body. The greatest punishment is to alienate someone from everybody else, to lock them up in a solitary cell. In a way, we do that to ourselves. When we reach out to someone else's hand, the spirit feels good. We hold that person in an embrace. There is great joy, great thrill. You forget that you are two bodies. The spirit now has its triumph of transcending the limits of one body. You extend it to your children in your love for them.

But then it comes to the ugly other, the other you don't trust, the one you cannot love. Somewhere a line has to be drawn.

Guru wants to tell us there is a way of sleeping without sleeping and a way of waking without waking. When you bring yourself to a neutral state of mind you are just as restful when you're waking as when you're sleeping. You are as active in your sleep as you are in your workday. You neutralize the two states. You are never wakeful in an aggressive sense and you never sleep dead to the world like a stone. You keep yourself in a kind of neutral zero.

I've seen how this is a reality in the life of Nataraja Guru. Sometimes I would come in late at night. I would hear Guru snoring and wouldn't want to disturb him. So I would be very quiet. In the middle of his snoring he would say "I kept the key on the table and there is also a torch light there." Then he would resume his snoring. Another time Guru was sleeping and I thought he was in deep sleep. A certain idea came to me and I didn't want it to leave me. I took out the notebook and pencil which I always kept under my pillow. (I never knew when Guru was going to say something precious and I always wanted to be ready to catch it.) I just scribbled a line, and it really made no sound, no disturbance at all. I was very careful. Then Guru said, "This is a kind of madness to sit up in the dark and write." Right away he would be asleep again as before. I could never make out when he was sleeping or when he wasn't. He was in a state of neutrality.

There are some extreme forms of spiritual discipline. For instance, in India we have a maxim "Do not sleep, remain hungry, remain alone." Narayana Guru is not asking us to go to that extreme. In Christian theology, embracing is considered a sin. But Guru says no, that's part of your dharma, which brings you a certain meaning in life, artha, which produces in you a desire, kama, which is either prompted by the needs of your body or the needs of your spirit.

In order to achieve in the end total fulfillment, you are coming back to your own beingness. Your beingness is the spirit, and its nature is freedom, ultimate freedom. That is the goal. If all that you do here is directed towards that, you are doing the right thing. If you stop half way, you will lose the game. Today's meditation is to be based on this one thing: how all the urges that come in your life can be made secondary and contributory to this fundamental urge, the meaning of all meanings, finding the freedom of your Self. There is an ultimate freedom. We should direct everything which happens during the course of the day to be in resonance with that. Engage in all your activities of the day. Watch what dharma is coming to function. Look for what meaning you are seeing. Then see how a desire which is colored or motivated by that meaning is coming into your mind. In the simple fulfillment of that, see where it serves to sustain the body and where it enables your spirit to expand its horizon of occupation. Look at how you further your spirit, the freedom of your spirit, where you get over a fear, where you cover a new field, break a barrier, throw away at least one prejudice of the mind. This will keep us busy the whole day, and it will be beautiful, wonderful, to become familiar with one's own dharma, *artha*, *kama*, moksha (liberation). Not just in the course of the whole life; in every day. We get a secret of the operational dynamics of our life every day. That's great.

One further point. Guru uses the word *vikalpa*. When you see the meaning, *artha*, you can see a right meaning, a perverted meaning, or that which transcends the meaning of the situation.

When the meaning you see is full of fear, and it arouses in you dark forces like anger, fear, lust, possessiveness, dominance, and so on, it becomes *vikalpa*. If the meaning is conducive to promote the welfare of the many, to enlarge your vision of the spirit, it is called *sankalpa*. A great Guru may have many *sankalpas*. Narayana Guru desired unitive understanding for all people. Jesus and Buddha sent disciples out to teach. These are *sankalpas*.

There is also something that goes beyond *sankalpa* and *vikalpa*. You transfer yourself from dharma to brahma, from the functional aspect to the Absolute. In the Absolute there is no dharma, *artha* or *kama*, because there is only moksha. It is always free. The Guru laments because he sees the possibility of living in brahman and yet because of the body we are caught in the cycle of dharma. Just watching that sportive game as a passive witness is how he looks at it. This may not be possible for us immediately, but I am giving you a hint about his stand. He is unhappy that we are only caught in the *vikalpa* and not even caught in the *sankalpa*.

Verse Seven

Do not wake any more,
and without sleeping remain as knowledge.
If you are unfit for this,

then steadily fix your embodied self
in devotional service to those great ones
who ever live free from birth and death,
in silent contemplation, awakened to Aum.

When we first hear this verse it sounds like a paradox. We are asked to not wake up, a seeming impossibility if we are alive. Every day we wake up in the morning and go to sleep in the evening. But here we are asked to give up both these two alternating states of consciousness. Is that possible?

The Guru has given six verses to explain the one word *arivu*. The first verse begins with *arivu*. Initially he makes a correction. When we say knowledge we think of the ordinary kind of knowledge, which is knowing things. He says, not that kind of knowledge but the knowledge which surpasses all other knowledge. When you enter into that knowledge, you are shown that it shines as the world outside and also as the world inside at once. It does not alternate.

Thus this verse isn't saying anything new. Guru is calling our attention to the very first thesis he placed before us. Most of the time we are living in the ordinary knowledge, which is of very little worth. We are asked to enter into the greater knowledge, which is at once the external world and the internal world. Then we were asked to kneel before that supreme knowledge with great reverence and prostrate again and again. We are not prostrating to an external god; we don't think of a creator outside. The whole reality is here and now. It fills everything.

The peripheral mind, which was recognizing itself as a knower of this world, an enjoyer of it, an actor in it, is now asked to recognize that what little knowledge it has and what capacity it has to act and what consciousness is given to it to enjoy are all derived from one supreme Knower. You are asked to let go and return to your own real state. Don't confine yourself within the delimitation of an ego. Open up. Surrender.

In the second verse we are told how we come to these small states of consciousness. It is because of an in-built inner organ which always begins with a question. The question is hooked on to a chain of memories. Through an act of comparison of the presented fact to the old memories, we come to a value judgment. We are affected by that value judgment and consequently live in a small world of pain or pleasure. We forget the source of illumination and see only an object that is illuminated. We are carried away by the object even though we never grasp the object or touch it. We only get an idea of an object because of a modification of the light that illumines it there. We were asked to return to the light itself rather than glorifying a particular shape, form or color presented by the light. From the light we have gone to the world of light and shadow. That dual light represents the wakeful and the shadow, sleep. Or that light represents partial knowledge and the darkness represents partial ignorance. When they come together they make situations. We are now asked to go back to that sun which is shining in the firmament of consciousness, illuminating everything. That is again *arivu*.

We have seen *arivu* as that which fills the inside and outside all at once. Then we again saw *arivu* as the supreme illumination that is ever shining forth in the firmament of our own consciousness. Guru gives yet another version of *arivu*. He said we have a surface knowledge and also a depth. Your surface knowledge is such that you are caught in its ripples, its waves. You assume a sense of agency when you rise up as a wave and then it falls. Your interest of the moment is like a wave. The next moment that interest is gone.

Sometimes people come here, a boy holding a girl's hand, and they say finally we have found each other. That boy is the greatest value to her and she is the greatest value to him. After a week or a month when we see one of them and ask "Where is your friend?" the reply is "Oh, you mean so-and-so. We are no longer together." "What happened?" "Oh, now I've found another."

This is how the waves of interest come. Deep down, man still loves woman and woman always loves man. It is not any particular man or any particular woman. It's the anima and the animus. But even the anima and animus are not the real thing. You love your own Self and your Self is all. When you go into that depth, there is no marriage and no divorce. It's an eternal union. That is the *arivu* with which we have to couple ourselves, finding our own depth and remaining in it. Then there is no waking and sleeping. This is the oceanic treasury of *arivu*.

Then he gives another meaning of *arivu*. There comes a presentation, a visitation, to the individuated awareness. Either the inner light can be turned on to that, or one of the lurking incipient memories can be turned on to it. If an incipient memory is turned on to that, you see what is presented only in the light of an urge.

That urge gives meaning to the situation. Then your *arivu*, your knowledge, becomes mutilated, distorted, colored, and interpreted to you in terms of that one simple urge. Its *artha* or meaning has become a relative meaning, which evokes in you a desire. The desire can be for the freedom of your Self, the Self that is caught in the mesh of this body and mind like an imprisoned splendor. The desire can be to release it, a desire which excels all other desires. Or you can have a desire which is prompted by an urge. That kind of desire, *kama*, again mutilates the knowledge presented to you.

Dharma, *artha* and *kama* can be liberating and they can be binding. When you are bound, you are caught in the world of the alternating states of interest, the bright and the dark, *taijasi* and *tamasi*. You are caught between them.

Guru says, from all these studies you must by now have come to know that consciousness has different degrees of illumination. If you also include the depth, the unconscious, the unknown, in consciousness, then the conscious and the known are only a very small part of the whole. We are at the periphery when we think we are wakeful. Although we think we are wakeful, our status is that of a sleepwalker, a somnambulist. One day we may truly wake up and realize we were doing that somnambulism in our wakeful state. That which always remains is neither wakeful nor

dream nor deep sleep, but it is that eternal consciousness in which these three states are possible.

In this verse Guru says do not wake up and do not sleep. He adds, you become *arivu*, knowledge. You can engage in all the activities of life, you can have a siesta or sleep, but never leave the central reality to which all these programs belong. Be riveted to that.

Can you do it by yourself? If the answer is yes, fine. If the answer is no, then you have to look for another way. There came a man from one of the Himalayan villages, a son of a petty prince. He was just like any other man, waking and sleeping, getting lost

in his confusion. He didn't know what to do. Some disquiet came and troubled him. He was sad not for himself but for the people around him. He was pampered and given everything, but then he found there was old age, disease and death in the world. He saw people suffering from all these, and that troubled him. He began to question the reality of this world. One day he woke up and found that what he previously considered to be a wakeful life was the life of a somnambulist. Also, his sleep was no sleep because something was active all the time in him. To him it was a great discovery, a great awakening. He was Buddha, the Awakened One. Many were drawn to him. Even today after nearly 3000 years his word is a light, his way is the way of millions of people. They take refuge in him. They make a sincere commitment to follow his way. When you make that commitment you are putting yourself in a crucible of alchemy, and the transformation begins.

Or you can turn to Jesus. He was striving for the millions. Humanity was his concern. Not his tribe, not his clan, not his country. He saw everything as belonging to his Father. He said come to me, those who are suffering under the load of this great burden of life, I'll receive you. Those who turn to Jesus find in him the Good Shepherd, a great example.

There was a simple priest in a temple in Calcutta who in his innocence turned inward, apparently looking for light in the wrong place. He believed that a stone image was his mother. He wanted to feed her. He tried his best to make her open her mouth; he refused to believe she was only stone. Someone had told him it was mother. If it is mother, she should be kind, she should reciprocate his love to him. He loved her dearly. Then another world opened to him. He moved away from the present state of wakefulness, and then the mother opened her mouth. It was no more a stone. But he was no longer in a wakeful transactional world. It was not a transactional Ramakrishna feeding a transactional devi in the stone image. It was another, a deeper state of consciousness.

Here and there are those rare beings who have found out the secret. It need not always be a person who is around the corner. That person can be removed from you in time and space, like the Buddha or Christ. Or they can be someone in the next apartment.

You hitch your life to them, and life begins to change from that day. The qualification of that person is that they should be conversant with all four states of the Absolute, the wakeful, the dream, the deep sleep and the transcendental. In all these four states they should have a stable understanding and exercise comprehension. They see this grand drama going on but are not assailed by it. They have no more questions to answer, no riddles to solve.

Thus, with a seventh verse we are brought into a position of entering into a bipolarity. It is up to you to choose with whom you establish your bipolarity. It can be a living person so that you can see the Word manifesting through someone who is physically present, or, if you have that power, you can relate to the impersonal. Then the living Word is always present right in your heart. But from this moment we are committed to a bipolarity.

Today, make sure what bipolarity you have established in your life. You should stabilize yourself in your service, in your bipolarity. This means you don't come and offer all and then the next day run away. Bipolarity can only be established through constant reciprocity. If there is no reciprocity, nothing will happen.

If you plant a seed it should remain in one place in your garden. You can't pull it up every day and put it in another place. Bipolarity has the same secret. There has to be contiguity, a continuation of natural flow. There is an ascending and descending flow of sap in a tree. Like that, there has to be a reciprocal flow between the master and the disciple, between the seeker and the light that is sought. Aum.

Verse Eight

Enjoying the five fruits such as beauty,
mounted on a foul-smelling gun
and evasively flying back and forth
are five birds;
having brought them down
through an inversion,
that radiant inner awareness
should fill one's entire being.

Two important word definitions given before the beginning:

The first word in this verse is *olimutalam*. *Oli* means the brilliance of the beauty of the things we see, the visual attraction. *Mutalam* means et cetera. This simple word, although it is usually used in the sense of et cetera or suchlike, gives more meaning when carefully examined. In Malayalam usage, *mutal* means from that onward. When

you first open your eyes they perceive some object. That object has an attraction that catches your attention. From there on the world begins. It is as if that is the jumping off point. We step onto the primary stimulus and then a chain of events comes which drags us on and on through the external world.

Another meaning of *mutal* is investment, the value that is implied in a certain thing, its implicit worth. If someone gives you a flower, it has a value. In a few hours the flower fades away and you throw it in the compost. It is very beautiful for awhile, and then you discard it. Someone else may bring you a living plant. You don't throw it away, you water it. Day after day it brings new buds, new flowers. It has a greater *mutal* than the flower alone.

Thus, in the opening word Guru directs our mind to the discerning of values which are transient and those which are permanent. The word *otimutalam* is to be taken as a cryptic indication. In Sanskrit, such kind of expressions are called *sutra vakhya*, a cryptic indication which will help you to go a long way.

Nalikum is a gun, it has a barrel. *Nalinum* is a lotus flower, it has a stalk which is hollow. Like that, the human body has a hollow tube from the mouth to the rectum. At least half of that hollow is filled with filthy dirt. Every now and then we have to empty ourselves of some of that dirt. So this body is like a foul-smelling gun. Why does Guru call it a gun? Life and death are living side by side in the body. While we are enjoying life, we are also nearing death moment by moment. It is the same gun which has five interests, five kinds of sensual enjoyment. Guru has used very difficult figurative language here. We have to put together many allegories to get a composite picture. We have to think of a tree with five kinds of fruit, and five birds that are enjoying the fruit. We have to think of the same tree as a foul-smelling gun and include the possibility of a hunter who can shoot all five birds down.

We have learned to equate knowledge with the Supreme. To make that equation we have differentiated ordinary knowledge from that knowledge which permeates everything, which is self-founded and which is the ground of everything. It is the ground of all knowledge, conscious and unconscious. In the first verse we gave our adoration to that knowledge as the cosmic embryo that manifests as the external as well as the internal world. We looked upon that as the supreme Sun shining in the firmament of consciousness, whose brilliance is transforming into all that we experience. We have adored that knowledge as an oceanic treasury of values.

Then we were told how that knowledge is the sustaining reality which gives meaning to everything, and how that meaning becomes a clear value which creates a desire in the individual being to possess it or become identified with it.

We saw the possibility of either being attracted to the structured qualities of separate bodies or separate realities, and thus getting lost in the world of myriads of interests, or of gaining a unitive understanding where we see the all-supporting truth and we are drawn to the universal value which liberates our mind from being bound to a small love.

We have two choices: we can commit ourselves to simple objects and be attracted by them, commit ourselves to them, get bound to them and live a very limited life full of obligations and duty, with a very narrow horizon of value, having the enjoyment of whatever little value or meaning those objects might bring. That is one way.

The other way is liberating yourself from all such obligations, breaking all frontiers, rising up into the higher heavens, spreading your wings and flying as you like, treating the whole universe as yours, and being free. It's up to you.

Then we are asked to look at all the action which is going on, and the light which is witnessing all the action. That light does not move; it is like an unmoved mover. It is in this light that everything is going on, but it itself doesn't play. Either you can be on the playground as one of the many players acting out their role, or you can be the supreme witness who is governing the whole game. At your will you can start it and you can disband it; it becomes your own magic show. At one end is the fool, and at the other end is the magician. You can play the part of the clown or you can be the great magician. You have to decide which part to play.

Then we were asked to decide whether you see you are that one supreme light, knowledge, awareness, consciousness; or that you are the wakeful, dream, deep sleep and transcendental states put together. There is nothing outside you. You are both the manipulator and the enjoyer, the creator and the creation. Or are you spreading out this grand vision of phenomenological magic, and after enjoying it do you decide to wall it up? If you cannot see that, you are asked to seek the company of one who has attained that great awareness. You get into a bipolarity with one who has freed himself.

You are seeking freedom; there is one who is free. Hold on to their hand.

Before that, you should make up your mind whether you want to do that. If you do, a drastic change is to be made in your life. There is a radical note in this verse. You cannot do it bit by bit. You have to decide once and for all: do I want this?

What is required here is not a discipline of control, not controlling your senses or appetites. You can control cancer for awhile, but there is no assurance that it won't relapse and come back. Instead, the whole thing is to be inverted. How do you do that?

If you take the wise, free man as your example, he is not controlling his self or his senses or his mind by creating a great stress on himself. He is looking in the opposite direction. You are looking at the effect, he is looking at the cause. He sees how great the cause is, so the wonder of the effect is not beguiling him any more.

If I have only this one room that is mine, then I should put my possessions into that room. But if all Oregon is mine, then I can just leave Mt. Hood where it is. I don't have to bring Mt. Hood into my little room. There is no need to pocket it; it is already mine. If the whole universe is mine, if everybody is already mine, then I don't have to sit up all night

worrying about how I can make someone love me: how can I get that person, how can I keep his love or her love. I have no such troubles. If everybody is already in my love, then I don't have to possess anyone. They are all already there as part of me.

This is called inversion. You have turned the tables. Instead of you running after the shadow, the shadow now is following you. You have become a great emperor. You have a great empire, an empire of vision. In that empire there is a throne of wisdom. You can do it as a fool in a fool's paradise, or you can do it as a real wise person. The fool in his reveries fantasizes that he is Jesus Christ, Napoleon, Caesar. That's in *pratibhasa*, the world of illusion. From that we come to the world of transaction. We can go one step farther and transcend. When you transcend, everything is again yours, but there is a real difference. When the fool thinks everything is his, it is the ego which is fantasizing. In transcendence the I-consciousness is merged with the cosmic consciousness, supreme consciousness, transcendental consciousness. Then there is no I. Instead of you wanting to possess the whole world, you allow the totality to possess you. You are not enjoying now, you are the enjoyment. The enjoyer, the enjoyment, and the object of enjoyment have now all become one in the supreme reality. You are completely at rest, totally at peace with yourself and the rest of the world. This is the transformation which happens when you come to a person who is absolutely free and join their game to gain the final freedom. Many people may interpret this as someone asking you to leave the little pleasures of ice cream or movies or things like that. In a sense that may be the result, but it is by gaining a depth, your total psyche gains a depth which you had never known before. Instead of seeing the light, you become the brilliance. Instead of having information, you become the reservoir of all knowledge.

A great scholar of Calcutta University went to see an illiterate man called Ramakrishna. He had never learned in any school, but the answers to all the riddles of life were on his lips. The scholar said, "I don't understand. I've been reading volumes and volumes in the big library at the Asiatic Society, and yet this simple man sitting here, who never went to any school, speaks with such fluidity and spontaneity. Whatever he says is like a pearl of wisdom." Thus do you become the source of all truth.

So, be rich. Instead of haggling after the little investments outside, find your Self to be the greatest investment. It is in-vested, invested inside. The supreme Investment. Let this be our meditation for today. Feel rich, not beggarly. Don't stretch your hand and say "Will you give me a little love?" What a terrible state, hankering after a little love. Just open the floodgate. Love is everywhere. "Will you look at me? Will you pay me a little attention? Otherwise I will cry." What terrible poverty of mind. Be possessed by and possess all. This is so simple and so truthful. Just decide "I don't lack anything. The three worlds are mine. The past, present and future; the sky above, the atmosphere and the earth; everything in the wakeful, the dream and deep sleep, is mine."

Without this knowledge, when you sip a cup of coffee or tea or something, it is only a cup of tea. With this knowledge, it is not just a cup of tea, it contains the elixir of your very Self. The little joy that is manifested in the cup of tea is the ananda of the Self. It is a value of the supreme Self that is manifested there. When you hold your friend, your

lover, to your bosom, you are not embracing a man or a woman. In that joy is the joy of the Self, the ananda of the Supreme. This is not a kill-joy. This is a magical way of changing everything transient into the eternal.

