

Highlights from *An Integrated Science of the Absolute*, by Nataraja Guru (3rd Edition, 2019)

Nataraja Guru's magnum opus is a daunting read that few take on in its entirety, but it contains many gems of philosophical wisdom well worth having easy access to. While preparing the English language portion of the upcoming edition, which corrects a legion of errors from the 2nd edition, I set aside those excerpts that struck me as having the broadest appeal, and occasionally appended an asterisk to mark out the best of the best, in my estimation. The two volumes each have their own separate document. I hope these excerpts will serve as an invitation to a further exploration of the entire work. The pagination may change slightly if there is further tinkering with the format.

Nataraja Guru thought long and hard before deciding on the three-word sentence that opens this sublime excursion into spiritual philosophy. (Scott Teitsworth, April 2018)

Volume I

beginning:

SCIENCE seeks certitude. Man is naturally curious about two fundamental problems, which are contained in the sentences: 'Whence this world?' and 'Who am I?' When the first of these questions is kept in mind, we may be said to limit our enquiry to the visible world, perceived or perceptible. In its extended sense this domain can be said to comprise that of physics.

When a man puts to himself the question 'Who am I?', he has to do so with the knowledge of factors which are not merely physical. He has to rely more on concepts than on mere percepts derived from sense data. He introspects or speculates on general ideas, mostly taken for granted by commonsense experience. Such ideas are largely relied upon in the matter of arriving at any degree of certitude in metaphysics, which is the other aspect of knowledge, besides physics, under reference here.

His whole vision vis-à-vis the physical world, together with his own subjective experience, which is not experimentally demonstrable, thus emerges into view as the legitimate and unified basis of our present enquiry, containing the domains proper to physics and metaphysics. Physics is quantitative while metaphysics may be said to be qualitative. If physics gives primacy to space, metaphysics may be said to give primacy to time. If physics is phenomenal, metaphysics is noumenal. If physics is relative, metaphysics tends to look at this relative plurality in the light of something that is non-relative. When physics and metaphysics, thus understood, are treated unitively, so that the certitude contained in the one helps the certitude contained in the other by mutual verification, we have the beginnings of a Science of the Absolute.

The Science of the Absolute can be also called a Science of sciences, a Unified Science, or an integrated body of knowledge. When such an enquiry is pushed further, so as to yield a common notion serving as a normative reference for all sciences, we then have a fully integrated Science of the Absolute.

Science, in its progressive and triumphant march, and as it is now understood, is faced with the problem of incertitude rather than the certitude which it thought it was gaining. The inductivo-hypothetical approach to the formulation of scientific laws or theories, based on calculations found permissible according to prevailing practices in mathematics, yield at present varying pictures of the physical world. Scientific myth-making is a danger to which we are becoming more and more exposed. When science is thus being allowed to part company with common sense, man becomes confused, both about what he should doubt as well as what he should believe. A normative or integrated notion of the Absolute, such as we have indicated above, can alone act as a regulative reference in this matter. Thus, our attempt to give precision to the whole range of scientific thought is not a fanciful undertaking. Science, even as understood at present, consists of

both conceptual and perceptual factors, being a mixture of calculations and observations.

defining normalization:

When Shakespeare said that one may call a rose by any name, yet it will still smell as sweet, he was putting his finger on the very tragic or paradoxical core of the total knowledge-situation while trying to overcome the contradiction. Names are nearer to concepts, while smell belongs to the opposite pole of the world of percepts. Both belong to the rose. The promiscuous mixing of these aspects leads to the confusion of tongues known as 'Babelization', of which the natural consequence is a vain and voluminous verbosity often mistaken for good metaphysics. Unilateral approaches, whether to physics or to metaphysics, are both wrong. One necessarily presupposes the other, and to learn how to give to each its due place in speculation is what we call the normative, unified, or unitive approach. The a priori approach is anathema to the physicist. Even phenomenologists of modern times, who stem out of Kantian and Hegelian idealism, have a secret repugnance of anything that savors of the a priori. (7)

The notion of the Absolute is within the reach of normal human understanding. The mystery hitherto surrounding it is only due to an epistemological paradox which has to be shed, dissolved, abolished, or banished from our way of thinking. Then a content can emerge from behind it, as it were, helping us to give precise significance even to such a subtle and ultimate notion. (15-16)

Our attitude is one that avoids exaggerations and exaltations, though natural enough to the mystic. Closed loyalties to static religious forms of belief or behavior are also avoided.

Our basic dictum is that a normative notion of the Absolute is within the reach of human understanding as given to man anywhere in the world. Such attainment of the Absolute is very

natural to man although requiring intense intellectual research on his part. The a priori and a posteriori approaches to truth or knowledge have to be made to come together from opposite poles, as it were, to meet on common ground. Concepts must marry their corresponding percepts, and, in the resulting fusion, paradox is abolished. A process of normalization and re-normalization in a reverse sense is implied here. When the paradox, which could only be schematic and nominal in its status, becomes wholly transparent, the Absolute reveals itself in all its unified or unitive significance. It then becomes a powerful instrument for certitude in the domain of thought. It affords a fecund frame of reference for regulating all precise thinking, which would then gain a beauty of its own, forever and everywhere enhancing its value in the cause of human understanding. (16-17)

The Absolute is not a thing, nor is it a mere idea. When the philosopher has correctly located the paradox lurking between appearance and reality, the paradox itself tends to be abolished into the Absolute. The Absolute is a neutral notion in which all real things and all possible ideas about them can be comprised without contradiction or conflict. Thus it is both a thing and an idea at once. Truth, reality, fact or existence refer to aspects of this central neutral notion, named for convenience the Absolute.

All notions or entities, from the most gross or tangible to the most subtle, reside at the core of the Absolute without rivalry. They are absorbed unitively into its being and becoming. It is hard to give a definitely fixed status to this notion. Existence, subsistence, and value factors are inclusively comprised in it, and as for its own reality, the question itself should not arise once the perfect neutrality of its status is admitted. All dualities are to be dropped before the Absolute can be comprehended. In the context of the Absolute, even the faintest duality has to fade away into something which can even be said to be nothing. Whatever duality may still be suspected, it must be laid at the door of the limitations of human understanding, in its attempt to attain an ultimate notion

of the Absolute. We have to admit this by the very validity of the general ideas based on human understanding which can be presupposed by us. (17)

The essence of the dialectical method can be seen here to be incorporated naturally into a kind of speculative reasoning, both experimental and axiomatic at the same time. The self-consciousness of man understood under the notion of the Absolute is what finally gives certitude to all or any miscellaneous certitude we seek in life. Syllogistic reasoning is only a lukewarm or feeble version of the same certitude characteristic of reasoning. Many other forms of eristic or sophistic reasoning are no better. Trial and error experimentation can be considered only a ratiocination of the lowest order possessed even by animals. The high sounding inductivo-hypothetical method is only a form of glorified guesswork. The method of sampling based on statistical averages and probabilities yields a weaker form of certitude still. No probability can be established except where possibility has first been established. All possibilities which can be proved by even one unique case of success instead of depending on large statistical averages, are basically nearer to the context of the Absolute than to the pluralistic world of multiple interests in life.

Significant human value-certitudes necessarily reside at the core of human consciousness itself and belong to the context of dialectic properly understood in a Science of the Absolute. (37-8)

*In Vedanta each fact, reality, or truth is either existent, subsistent, or has value. Existence corresponds to the Sanskrit term *sat* (also called *asti*: exists), and is ontological in its philosophical status. Subsistence, which determines something that subsists or is substantial and looms into consciousness even after reason has been directed to it, is referred to as *cit*, of which the act of entering consciousness is called *bhati* (looms). The axiological aspect is also added on the top of existence and subsistence and recognized by the term *ananda* (value factor), also called *priya* (dear). The

totality of the Absolute, as it interests man, is comprised within these three categories of existence-subsistence-value, corresponding respectively to *asti-bhati-priya*.

It should not, however, be imagined that these categories stand apart disjunctly. Each one is meant to neutralize or modify the asymmetry implied in the other, so as to fuse the three categories into one homogeneous content belonging to the same golden streak of a real and central logical or rational truth value. Vedantic tradition also indicates other leading lines along which any integrated Science of the future must follow. The departmentalization of cosmology, psychology, and theology is not favourable in bringing to light any unified Science. It is, therefore, always tacitly understood in Vedantic tradition that the *adhibhautika* (what refers to the elements, i.e. cosmological), *adhyatmika* (what refers to the self, i.e. psychological), and *adhidaivika* (what refers to the gods, i.e. theological and, therefore, axiological), should all be comprised within the scope of any complete philosophy. (39)

*Nature, into which all men are born, when treated as a global datum, has two aspects. One can be characterized objectively as 'made for man', and the other, its reciprocal opposite, refers subjectively to 'man as its enjoyer'. These two are distinguished respectively by the technical terms often employed in Vedantic literature: viz. *bhogyā* (something to be enjoyed or appreciated as having value significance), and its natural and inevitable dialectical counterpart *bhokta* (the enjoyer) which is the subject represented in the self. Fichte also treated correctly the self and the non-self as bilateral counterparts in his philosophy. Thus, Nature corresponds horizontally to *natura naturata* and vertically to *natura naturans* of Spinoza. (40)

*The three integrating items we have borrowed from Vedanta must suffice to give us a general idea of the scope and normal delimitations of our subject. We have to first remember that *triputi*

(tribasic prejudice) is to be abolished; second, that *sat*, *cit*, and *ananda* are to be treated as triple categories neutralizing each other; third, that cosmology, psychology, and theology should always be kept hand in hand in our discussion; and finally, that the vertico-horizontal correlation is always to be kept intact between the self and the non-self, as enjoyer and what is to be enjoyed (*bhokta* and *bhogyā*). When this is remembered, we shall have fulfilled some of the more important and fundamental prerequisites of an integrated Science of the Absolute. (40) (This whole section is terrific.)

The reader will notice that we are here standing on a very subtle ground to be understood only, as Sankara said, by those persons endowed with the quality of *uha-apoha* or the special type of intuitive or imaginative mind capable of going backward and forward in a double process of dialectical thinking. This two-sided corrective mechanism is not unlike the feedback arrangement or retroaction understood in the context of modern cybernetics. Such a double-sided method is also sometimes referred to as properly belonging to the combined method of agreement and difference known to Vedantic logic. It is very basic in its methodology, being much favoured by Vedantic speculators like the author of *Pancadasi*. The technical name for such a method is *anvaya-vyatireka*. Here the reasoning moves very subtly and imaginatively, going first to possibilities which are vertically arranged in a mesh or matrix, as it were, and then backwards to the corresponding horizontal counterparts which represent the total field within which probabilities have to establish themselves.

When we say something is probable we imply at once that certain other things belonging to the same context are improbable. Thus, there is a negative and a positive probability, as well as a negative and a positive possibility within the 'matrix' system and, when looked upon as a logical matrix, scientific thought is obliged to look up or down, inductively or deductively, yielding whatever

certitude it is possible to obtain within the four walls of this structure. (62-3)

The central vertical line which cuts through and across this pluralistic horizontalized realm of names and forms comprises all possibilities in the universe in the process of its grand becoming and is in its lower half immersed, as it were, in an ocean of probabilities. This thin and pure reality below the ocean surface corresponds to the notion of the *Nous*, as developed in pre-Socratic philosophy. Above the level of the water ontological aspects give place to the transcendental or teleological aspects, and necessary factors become related into the full freedom of contingency in the world of names. We have here the corresponding world of the *Logos*, whose apex is what we have referred to as the omega point. At its antipode we can imagine a corresponding alpha point. In the intermediate zone where the necessary aspects meet the contingent aspects, we have the zero zone of indeterminism or incertitude, and this is where the saying, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth', becomes fully valid. (66-7)

* In the above quotation besides putting the notion of entropy, to which we have just referred, into the context of the world of information, Wiener puts his finger on the most fundamental philosophical secret on which cybernetics as a whole works. We see him refer to statistical probabilities of two grades: One he distinguishes with a capital *P* and the other with a small *p*. The distinction he wants to establish cannot be quite clear to us, except when we follow our own line of thought, by which the more general ground of all probabilities can be referred to as a 'possibility' because one unique possibility suffices to establish its truth, whereas for probability many successes are required to establish the truth by statistical average. The former is nearer to the ground of absolute truth than the latter where plurality prevails. Possibility therefore belongs to the vertical in the structural

language adopted by us, and probability is ranged horizontally in its less rich or more indigent pluralistic ground. (73)

The so-called 'thinking machine' has implied within it also the principle of homeostasis, which resembles normally the principle of thermodynamic equilibrium. Action and retroaction through a governing control mechanism help the machine to choose carefully between the vertical possibility and the horizontal probability in its backward and forward probing efforts, similar to the groping of a blind man. Probability must always presuppose possibility. (73-4)

Simple inferential logic, of which even a cow is capable when it welcomes a man carrying a bundle of grass or avoids one with a raised stick, belongs to the instinctive level where living beings adapt themselves to what is favourable in their environment and abstain from what is unfavourable. (80)

*The analogy of entropy alternating with negentropy as a subtle osmotic interchange of life-value factors, involving a neutral point of equilibrium, can here be composed and fitted into the total logistic situation. When moving in one direction upwards, as it were, in the vertical axis, the limiting case can be said to be that of tautology, and at a lower level we can similarly locate the point where contradiction resides, as when we say $a = a$, $a = \text{not } b$, respectively. Binary or multiple alternatives of choice could further complicate this situation through the maze of which we have to see how logistic becomes transformed into its own syllogistic version. This is where reasoning moves from the general to the particular or vice versa, through the intermediary of a middle term, yielding the famous fourfold logical form known to Aristotle and distinguishable by the types of syllogisms, *A*, *E*, *I*, and *O*. Within these fourfold limits, syllogistic reasoning deals diagonally with contradictory and contrary factors in thinking, as some experts have tried to analyze and present to us in a simplified schematic form. (81)

**There are thus two kinds of logic in reasoning. The first traditionally formulates its laws under identity, contradiction, and the excluded middle. The other variety, of which F.H. Bradley is the most well-known representative in the English-speaking world, derives its epistemological background from Hegel, whose approach can be said to be dialectical rather than syllogistic. Although identity of dialectical counterparts is taken for granted, the law of contradiction is fully repugnant to this way of thinking. As for the principle of the excluded middle, this way of reasoning rather tends to give it an inclusive central position at the core of the total absolutist situation. Bradley had to fight his own brave battles to establish the claims of his logic within rival traditional schools of his time and century. His monumental work, *The Principles of Logic*, shows how he was able to maintain his own ground against great odds. We quote the following by Bradley as a sample of this new tradition introduced into the world of logic of his time. Here we attain to the very core of the controversy:

In England, at least if we go with the fashion, we all have to believe in an inductive Logic, which starting from particular given facts goes on to prove universal truths.... I am afraid I may lose the reader's sympathy when I advise him to doubt the union of these qualities.... The induction of logicians so far as it professes to make that attempt I shall try to show will not stand criticism. (F.H. Bradley, 1883, *The Principles of Logic*, p. 329.)

These words of an English philosopher and logician who occupied a chair in one of the leading universities of England strangely mention how he feared he might 'lose the reader's sympathy'. This reveals the tragic element of parochialism in thinking which has always stood in the way of the love of truth for its own sake, which is just what can avoid disasters and secure freedom for man. Textbooks like those of Bain were propped up by strictly untenable

arguments supporting induction put forward by thinkers like John Stuart Mill. The feebleness and inner contradiction or paradox hiding under the noble edifice supposed to have been erected by Mill becomes clearly evident when we examine the validity of the inductive method of reasoning, which has long been recognized as the method proper to General Logic, as also to scientific research. (82 – ff is excellent too)

In an integrated discipline such as the Science of the Absolute, it is all-important that the universal observer should be imagined as taking his place at the core of a system of reference, having a physical as well as a metaphysical status at one and the same time. (100)

Closed and static loyalties to lopsided interests extenuating, exaggerating, or distorting one structural aspect at the expense of another set up invisible frontiers between human beings. These frontiers, each with its own ideologies, tend to disperse humanity by fragmentation and partitionment due to over-specialization whether in science or in the domain of more general ideas. Much vain verbosity fills libraries propounding the claims of rival interests.

When unitively understood, the individual can learn to place himself sympathetically and without clash of interest within the value world where other fellow humans might belong at any given time. He has to learn to enter into a unitive situation equating the self to its own non-self counterpart. What we call human progress must take place by physics and metaphysics going forward hand in hand, and not one at the expense of the other. Such are some of the general ethical considerations that come to mind when we think of the possibilities of recognizing structural unity between two disciplines, however apparently remote they might be from each other. All maxims meant for the welfare of man such as ‘loving one’s neighbour as oneself’ stem out of the necessity of human

understanding of man across the linguistic and cultural frontiers of custom, ideology, politics, etc.

Here again we have to stress the importance of entering inside the situation before passing judgement about its value. Each man lives at the core of his own structural unit of values, and thus inwardly viewed he can claim the same attention as any other. From domestic frontiers to the clash of national interests the same principle of inequality due to wrong thinking must be recognized. An integrated, unitary, and absolutist approach to all possible values natural to man, understood as a part of the Science of the Absolute, can alone help in correcting the consequent disasters due to such unscientific thinking. (114-5)

Wreaths are placed at graves of national heroes by visiting dignitaries, although such an action is highly reminiscent of ancestor worship. (116)

The varieties of existentialism, whether orthodox or heterodox, may have many divisions, but they are all recognizable as presenting a common front against all those who belong structurally to the side of essence rather than existence. Essence and existence, therefore, must belong to opposite poles in the minds of these rival groups. This is a structural secret which should be kept in mind by the reader who is obliged to wade through a large variety of arguments and counter-arguments between these schools of thought. Doing this helps him to appraise the overall nature of the chief bone of contention between them. (116-7)

The Absolute is not an empty word nor a mere mathematical abstraction. With an axiomatic status, where the a priori normally resides, it has to have a concrete universal content if it is to be fully scientific in both an outer experimental or operational sense, as well as in an intuitive one based on inner experience of the bold and correct speculation which is found in the context of the perennial wisdom of both the East and the West. (121)

At this point it is necessary to explain the nature of the bipolar vertical affiliation of a *sisya* (disciple) to a *guru* (spiritual teacher), as the present writer happens to be a disciple of Narayana Guru. Such a bipolar affiliation should always be understood as properly belonging to the context of the wisdom of the Absolute, without any mere arithmetical or extraneous implications attached to it. Sankara has explained this pure relationship in the very first verse of his *Vivekacadamani* where he paradoxically refers to his own guru as visible only to the trained eye of the knower of Vedanta, and invisible to those without such knowledge. We have also elsewhere in our writings fully explained the nature of this time-honoured way of affiliation in vertical, hierarchical succession (*parampara*) of a chain, as it were, of teacher-disciple links, which alone guarantees, anywhere and at any time, the preservation of this highly subtle kind of teaching. Here it is necessary to point out also that this relationship is being further purified by us in an open and fully critical and scientific spirit, without any traditional philosophical or religious implication. No personal prejudice in favour of one's own guru should here be presupposed. The affiliation is wholly absolutist in character. The torch of wisdom passes best across generations through the personal medium of vertical succession of teacher and pupil. (126)

The Vedanta texts agree in giving us uniform speculative directions or rules for speculation, descending, as it were, from the pole above, while perceptual factors, when understood in uniform and universally revised schematic terms, meet the descending dialectics by ascending, as it were, from the world of ontological realities. The a priori evidence of the word thus meets its own counterpart originating from the a posteriori. Both fuse and give a central, neutral, absolute certitude. (129)

*In the Vedanta of India, with its textbooks such as the Bhagavad Gita and the large body of literature called the Upanishads, we

have already stated that these books claim to be a Science of the Absolute called *brahma-vidya*. It is a mistake commonly made to treat this part of wisdom literature as belonging to Hindu religion. By its dynamic and open outlook such literature refuses to be fitted into any orthodox context of a closed and static religious setup. Be this as it may, we on our part are going to look upon this body of Vedantic literature as a *sastra* or science. Such a status can be claimed for this literature, and clearly proves itself from the colophon found at the end of each chapter in the Bhagavad Gita. In our own commentary on this book, we have tried to justify this claim made by the ancient authors themselves. (130)

For purposes of convenience the chapters of *Darsanamala* [the structural basis for the present work] can be divided into four parts.... The first three chapters can be considered as forming one group where the attention of the reader is still directed outwards to the objective, or at least the phenomenological world about us. The last three chapters, on the other hand, have an axiological unity of content between them. They strictly belong to the mystical rather than to the scientific approach. Out of the four chapters remaining, which are more or less logical or psychological referring centrally to consciousness, as understood with its innermost implications, we can again think of a subdivision, as between the fourth and fifth on the one hand, and the sixth and seventh on the other. They also have an inner symmetry between them. The fourth examines the overall possibility of negative error in the context of the neutral Absolute, while the seventh proposes how to overcome error positively through the training of the reasoning will, and thus to leave the error behind.

Further methodological or epistemological implications of these chapters will become evident when we come to deal with them. For the present it suffices to remember that the two central chapters, the fifth and the sixth, cling close together giving unity and continuity to the total knowledge-situation understood schematically or nominalistically. (132-3)

One more word about the treatment we are going to give to these various subdivisions: We shall give due place in the beginning to modern scientific knowledge of an observational order, while trying to balance such knowledge with speculative observations so as to round them off and fit them into the overall context of the present work. In the second half, especially in what pertains to the last three chapters, Vedantic speculation will receive sufficient counterbalancing treatment as against the observational aspects emphasized in the beginning. *Brahma-vidya* or the Science of the Absolute as understood in the authoritative source books will be fully respected at the end. The four intermediate chapters will represent the part of the work where the subtle transition between physics and metaphysics will take place. (134)

A scientific God must be responsible for both good and evil or be beyond both. Likewise, a scientifically conceived cause of the universe cannot escape the charge of being as much responsible for bad as for good. God must be good and bad at the same time to have a fully absolutist status. (145)

*We have said enough here to show that there is nothing much to choose between the old-fashioned language of mythology, where most cosmological statements are seen to be made in many of the wisdom texts of the world, and the strictly scientific jargon now emerging into view in scientific literature. Except for its communicability to serve experts across frontiers, it has an irritating feature. Edna Kramer speaks of this feature when she refers to the ‘spinners of popular-science yarns in the early days of relativity’ who were recognized to be wrong later, in the light of revised epistemology. Thus, the myth-making instinct in man is never at rest even within the so-called preserves of science.

As for our own attitude in this study, we always refer to a normative notion, whether we examine a scientific statement claiming to use mathematical language, or when we find a

statement in some ancient text which happens to be wearing a mythological garb. (152-3)

In this verse it is pointed out how, because of the absence of right knowledge (*avidyà*) about the Self, all beings find creation to have a terrifying aspect. When such knowledge is absent then nescience (lends support) to the appearance of name and form (*nàma-rupa*). (This plurality of) name and form (entities) seem ghost-like in a most terrifying fashion, presenting themselves as appearances.

It is only because there is a lack of Self-knowledge (*àtma-vidyà*) that the whole of the universe seems to be the seat of all fear and suffering. When the correct knowledge about the Self prevails, all apparent sufferings and their sources (in the world) disappear. There will not be any cessation of suffering until one realizes the true knowledge, resulting from the realization of one's own self. Self-knowledge is the most superior of all means for release. In the same way as in cooking the only means is fire (or heat), so there is no salvation without Self-knowledge. This is what Shankaràcàrya has taught.

By this verse the man who is desirous of getting release from suffering resulting from lack of Self-knowledge, is to be considered an *adhikàri* (a person fit to study this science), and that the subject-matter of this present work is *àtma-vidyà* (the Science of the Self). Furthermore, between *àtma-vidyà* and this work there is the relation of subject-matter and object-matter. The final release from suffering due to nescience and the attainment of the goal of full Self-knowledge, is the aim and utility of this work as required by Sanskrit convention.

Suffering and ignorance apply not only to people in this world but to all created beings, whether seen or unseen, wherever they be in the universe. In principle this applies to all of them. (It is to be remembered that) even the creation undertaken by the Lord involves the same wonderful and terrifying elements of this very

kind. (Vidyananda/ Narayana Guru commentary of 1.7, 164-5.
Parenthetical material by Nataraja Guru)

*From what we have said in the Prologue, it must be sufficiently clear that there are at present drastically differing cosmological theories, difficult to fit in or refer to any normative notion. Without such a normative notion, however, they fail to have a fully scientific status. Truth cannot be multiple. If there are two rival theories this is due to the defects of tautology or contradiction. Tautology is an evil because it implies a *petitio principii* or begging the question, and when we fall into the opposite error of contradiction we at once recognize two rival truths at one and the same time, which on the very face of it is unthinkable. For a Science of the Absolute the necessity of avoiding both tautology and contradiction by transcending paradox is imperative, although the laws of thought may be formulated or applied less strictly for utilitarian or relativistic branches of information or opinion. (168)

This most useful word God need not be rejected except for good reasons, as its prevailing usage all over the world and in all kinds of cultures recommends it for adoption all the more. An impartial scientist should have no prejudice for or against words in full use, especially when fully composable and compatible with a Science of the Absolute. It must be for these reasons that Narayana Guru uses this time-honoured word, having different grades of factual or logical truth, in the verses accommodating within its range all representative equivalents or alternative notions. (170-1)

We have to remember how negation when it is duplicated has the strange habit in our mind of becoming at once an assertion. Double assertion does not become a negation at any time. (171)

We also want to show how Narayana Guru has been strictly satisfied with adhering to methodological, epistemological, or

structural features considered as the minimum requirements for a normative, integrated, and scientific study of this subject. He has kept in his mind only the broad outlines of a vertico-horizontal correlation at ten different epistemological limits, always adhering to the pattern of the quaternion in which we see, as we start from the top, the same Absolute referred to by cosmology, theology, or psychology. As we have said, anthropomorphism must be overlooked by stricter scientists although it can be tolerated by more liberal-minded supporters of a Unified Science. The four limits are always evident in each verse, two of them vertically viewed as existing without contradiction, and two of them presented as exclusive rival elements implicitly or explicitly. Our verse by verse review below will show this, and the student must therefore train himself throughout this work to look for the same structural elements, which alone give scientific validity and the certitude of proof at every stage throughout the discussion. (174)

A scientist when he is asked to state his article of faith sometimes prefers to call it a fact, so that his own status as a sceptic can be guaranteed. A believer on the other hand will tend to put his faith on something attainable only to high speculation. A normalized Science of the Absolute has to include both these positions without conflict or incompatibility at its core. It is in the light of this wrong normalization from the factual, and renormalization from the theoretical that we have to scrutinize the status of each verse of the Darsanamala series. (184)

Evolution in Terms of Consciousness is a fascinating chapter (185 ff)

One has to travel from the known to the unknown in any writing in order to clarify a philosophical or even a merely informative subject. Trained teachers have to follow this rule in lessons. It is therefore that in the Science of the Absolute, Narayana Guru begins by first recognizing the importance of the cosmos into

which all men are born. The most basic or fundamental enigmas, wonders, or problems are meant to be explained or solved here in bold wholesale fashion. No hesitant or faltering speculation is compatible with such a total or global starting point. If the visible world is an effect, no true scientist will ever admit even a distant possibility of its not having a cause. A total effect must necessarily presuppose a total cause of the same epistemological order, by way of respecting inner compatibility in any scientific discussion. It is not therefore unjustified that in almost every verse of this chapter, Narayana Guru has the notion of the Lord employed by him as a vague common denominator, standing for the mysterious cause of an equally mysterious universe. Such a seemingly theological reference might seem outmoded or unscientific to moderns in the West, but the true scientific spirit will have no prejudice either for or against any prevailing linguistic usage. To depart from prevailing linguistic usage is itself a violation of the true scientific spirit, whose intention is to be publicly as convincing as possible in the context of any particular time or place to which such usage might pertain. (197-8)

*We can think of a Cause which can be used interchangeably with the term the Supreme Lord (*paramesvara* of the first verse), or with Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, the Ultimate, or the Totality, all of which are indifferently employed as equally good by Narayana Guru in the last verse, as we can notice. It is not the name that matters but what is *meant* by the name. Starting from a Cause belonging to a de Sitter's steady state universe, where there is no matter but only pure motion in terms of an Unmoved Mover, we have in the context of the first verse to think of a God that comes nearest to a mathematical entity, referable to a kind of omega point in the vertical axis, if one should prefer such a term.

Likewise, the same God belongs to a psychological context in the second verse, a biological context in the third verse, an operational context in the fourth verse, a phenomenological context in the fifth verse, a naturalistic context in the sixth verse,

an epistemological context in the seventh verse, an ethical context in the eighth verse, a creative context in the ninth verse, and a causal context in the tenth verse. All these contexts are to be fitted into the general context of cosmology. The terms 'beginning' (*agre*) and 'thereafter' (*punah*) must be understood only as structural limiting points and not as implying a real duration. There is no real duration involved between *agre* and *punah*, except in the last verse. (198)

*The famous Cartesian dictum, *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am) puts its finger on this central and neutral meeting point of all certitudes. Superficial critics have fallen into the error of treating this dictum as a compressed form of syllogism, and some of them have tried to extract the converse of it so as to prove its absurdity. In whatever familiar logical form this dictum might be stated, it is meant merely to refer to the structural zero point of the knowledge situation which any systematic philosophy must postulate, if it is to follow some definitely conscious method. (210)

On the plus side of the vertical axis, cogitations lead us to factual ideas, and innate ideas constitute a kind of rearguard in consciousness. Adventitious [horizontal] ideas necessarily bring up the flanks and imply an element of strangeness and accident lacking full reality. (210)

How is it possible by instinct or intuition to attain a knowledge of discriminating between what is right and what is wrong? Here we have not only matters of logical judgement but also the entering into the picture of value appreciation. Morality involves an axiological certitude where the notion of God, the Good, the Ultimate Goal, etc. are the final causes for guiding conduct. It is here that the conscience comes in, and a moderated conscience characterized by wholehearted affiliation to the Good through a passionate love of truth, has to correctly help in guiding human understanding. (211)

Absence of doubt does not necessarily mean belief in a hypostatic God, but rather combines with the scepticism that is its natural and necessary counterpart. Certitude thus is a point that moves up or down along the vertical parameter given to intuition. (213)

Descartes enumerates such states as passions and lists them as wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy and sorrow. There is a circulation of interest here beginning with wonder and ending with sorrow. This alternating process tends to repeat itself in a cyclic figure-of-eight, referable to the plus and minus sides of the horizontal correlate in pure self-evident conceptual and a priori terms always having a schematic status. The methodology comes in when we understand the process as operating alternately in a necessary order of succession natural to normal man. Passions can be discarded when, by long repetitions of this alternating process, a point of surfeit or saturation has been attained by the person wholeheartedly seeking truth. In principle, however, the horizontal axis is never totally abolished as long as its use for guiding understanding is present. (214)

The spectacular triumphs in modern science have added their large volume of support to this technocratic attitude. As a result there is now a serious disruption of the sense of right values. It is therefore highly desirable that this lopsided approach to truth is rectified by a full formulation of the Science of the Absolute, where both physics and metaphysics can coexist without conflict. The epoch-making step taken by Einstein in formulating his Theory of Relativity is not, however, a step taken in the wrong direction. On the other hand, Einstein started a new tradition in physics, implying a revised epistemology and methodology, that no more emphasizes experiment and observation as unilaterally understood, but instead relies on the observer and the observed as correlated counterparts. The new physics relies more on mathematics than on mere observable laboratory experiments. It represents an attempt to

bridge the gap between axiomatic and experimental thinking. The Cartesian correlates play an important part in the Relativity Theory, where they are treated as time and space belonging together to one and the same continuum. Whatever the term continuum might mean, we enter here into a new kind of physics where time, that is not visible, and space, that is evident only through visible objects, are treated together as belonging to one and the same knowledge-situation, whether that of physics or metaphysics. Thus physics and metaphysics come together and overlap in the post-Einsteinian version of the expanding or contracting universe with its red or violet shifts. (215-6)

*The methodology and structuralism tacitly presupposed in Darsanamala implies both a reduction and a construction by which multiplicity is first reduced to negative unity in the first five chapters. Both plurality and duality get abolished by a method of elimination of what is doubtful and unessential. Having touched the rock bottom of ontology by this negative reduction, the last five chapters aim at a more positive construction implying the normalizing of existence with its own rational subsistence. There is a construction implied in the method here by which ontology gets transformed into a value-world where teleological first and final causes gain gradual primacy. Even at this stage of reconstruction there are always the Self and the non-Self involved as irreducible counterparts related by complementarity, reciprocity and cancellability. We shall explain these later on. Here we have only to remember that the methodology of this work has to be treated together with its own epistemology and axiology. (217-8)

We can even extend the application of these same correlates into the domain of Vedantic thought, where reference to the horizontal as the world of effects and to the vertical as the world of causes is found. In the language of the Bhagavad Gita one can think of the same correlates as representing the field (*kshetra*) and the knower of the field (*kshetrajna*). The latter is the vertical because of its

attenuated or refined status, with the whole referring to the same universe of Einstein wherein the observer and the observed have to belong together to a context common to the liquidity of matter and the fluidity of mind. (219)

*In this present chapter [2] it will be seen that Narayana Guru relates the world of effects to the world of causes. This implies a negative reduction of horizontal factors into vertical terms. This gives a mathematical or dialectical reduction of counterparts wherein the visible world is absorbed by gradual steps through reasoning into its existential or ontological residue of Absolute Reality. Even when reduced in terms of existence, it continues to be characterized by subsistence. Its rationalist status and value belong to the world of aesthetic or ethical significance pertaining to axiology. Finally, characterized by existence, subsistence and value, this Absolute attains its full stature as a complete version of the Absolute as seen from a total philosophical or scientific standpoint. We have thus to first arrive at the ontological Absolute by the method of reduction. A positive mathematical construction would then yield place to this negative methodic reduction. The present chapter is meant to explain in broad outline the implications of this negative methodology. (220)

To the extent that time is included as a pure duration given to intuition, strict skepticism may be said to yield place to some sort of belief. (222)

There is hardly any literature available at present which takes the correct impartial position between the two disciplines of physics and metaphysics. Starting from what is known through the senses and thus naturally with realities that depend on space, we can travel step by step to attain a notion of pure time that is not directly given to the senses. Thus we have to travel from rigid objects in space to the pure flux presupposed by absolute time. The limiting instances in such a journey that we can undertake mentally are

precisely those of classical and modern physics. The steps of such a transition from a rigid or radical universe to a universe that is recognized as affine or refined, together with a notion of time proper to each of them, have been worked out in great detail without omitting any experimental or mathematical details, by Henri Bergson in his *Duration and Simultaneity*. (223-4)

Bergson is interested in making philosophy a discipline that can be treated with physics in order that both physics and metaphysics will form one integrated or unified discipline. This can be called a science or a philosophy as one prefers. What results is a philosophy of science or a science of philosophy, or even a Science of sciences. In our view this is no other than a Science of the Absolute.

In India *brahma-vidya* is referred to as the science (*vidya*) which is the foundation of all sciences. It deals not merely with 'truth' but with the Truth of truths, the Light of lights, or the Value of all values. The Absolute is a natural and normative notion around which this science was built. When stated in such a wholesale fashion, the Science of the Absolute becomes repugnant to the spirit of modernism because it appears as a seemingly totalitarian discipline. Totalitarianism in politics and religion has left a bad taste in the mouth of most Europeans, who prefer a humbler piecemeal approach to truth. In spite of such an understandable objection, this is in itself another form of prejudice not necessarily justified with equal force in other contexts, outside religion or politics. (225-6)

In this chapter Narayana Guru refers to the notion of cause rather than of time. Whether cause or time is used for our purposes of clarifying methodological aspects here, the resulting steps of the argument involving the reduction that we have spoken of remain unaffected. It is therefore no less useful for us to follow the steps of the scientific reasonings of Bergson even when we should be thinking of cause and effect rather than universal and unique Time.

The first and final material cause of the universe must have an absolutist status in the same way as the multiple time of Einstein must presuppose more philosophically an absolutist concept of Time. (227)

Bergson now goes on to define real time and explains that it has no instants. We read:

The instant is that which terminates a duration if it should stop. But it does not stop. The real time cannot furnish us the instant; the latter results from a mathematical point, that is to say, from space. But all the same without real time the point could not be anything but a point, and there would not be any instant. Instantaneousness thus implies two things: a continuity of real time, that is to say, of duration, and of time spatialized, which, described by a movement, becomes a symbol of time: this spatialized time which consists of points rebounds on to real time and makes the instant jump out of it. – p. 69 (246)

We believe that the images are created to the extent that they appear, just because they seem to appear to us, that is to say, to be produced before us and for us, and come to us. But let us not forget that all movement is reciprocal or relative: if you should see them coming to us, it is also true to say that we are going towards them. They are in reality there; they wait for us in a line: we pass along the front. Let us not say, therefore, that either events or accidents happen to us; it is we who arrive at them. And we could experience this immediately if we knew the third dimension as we know the others. (Bergson, on 283)

Hitherto in all literature pertaining to the nature of the Absolute, whether viewed theologically, mystically or philosophically, we can see the persistence of a peculiar language of its own. Contemplative literature like perennial philosophy has its own *lingua mystica* far removed from the language of matter-of-fact

physics or common sense. It consists mostly of language filled with figures of speech where various grades of parables, fables, myths or metaphors, besides other comparisons, play a large part. This succeeds only in establishing vague indirect analogies between the world of visible facts and the world of more abstract reasonings. The vagueness of such a style usual to absolutist literature cannot be abolished, although the style can be varied indefinitely. When intuition was once admitted into speculation we parted company with verifiable facts and entered into metaphysics, which at best relies on what is called dialectical reasoning. The lack of any publicly evident degree of certitude makes the dialectical approach fall into disrepute, and there are moderns who even contemptuously refer to metaphysics as 'nonsense'. (310)

Post-Hilbertian mathematics has an epoch-making significance in the matter of giving precision and certitude of a scientific nature within the pure processes of thought and expression with which all theorization or speculation whether of physics or philosophy has to deal. The emergence of a branch of mathematics called the algebra of geometry makes mathematics attain to a status of a self-sufficient branch of knowledge, where mathematical realities can be thought of as independent entities having an absolutist status of their own.

The quantitative experimental world is left far behind by such a new development in scientific thinking. Conceptual and perceptual elements reveal the same relational pattern and have a reciprocity between them whereby they give certitude to each other, making absolute certitude possible. A Science of the Absolute is unthinkable without supposing such a possibility where two sets of elements, one *proper*, and the other *improper*, mutually lend certitude to each other. We have in the foregoing sections said enough to justify this generalized statement. Let us now see where we stand in the matter of accepting a structural framework for giving precision to thought and language. It has to be remembered that such a structural framework lays no claim to be reality in

itself. Just as Cartesian correlates or latitudes and longitudes give linguistic precision to thought, the structuralism we are thinking of has no reality other than that of serving as an instrument for correct thinking and for research based on such thinking. (316-7)

Bergson gives us here the following picture of three kinds of causes:

A cause may act by impelling, releasing, or unwinding: the billiard ball that strikes another determines its movement by impelling. The spark that explodes the powder acts by releasing. The gradual relaxing of the spring that makes the phonograph turn unwinds the melody inscribed on the cylinder: if the melody which is played be the effect, and the relaxing of the spring the cause, we must say that the cause acts by unwinding. What distinguished these three cases from each other is the greater or lesser solidarity between the cause and the effect. In the first, the quantity and quality of the effect vary with the quantity and quality of the cause. In the second, neither quality nor quantity of the effect varies with quality and quantity of the cause: the effect is invariable. In the third, the quantity of the effect depends on the quantity of the cause, but the cause does not influence the quality of the effect: the longer the cylinder turns by the action of the spring, the more of the melody I shall hear, but the nature of the melody, or of the part heard, does not depend on the action of the spring. (Bergson, 1944, *Creative Evolution*, p. 82) (321-22)

The subtle paradox persisting between being and becoming is somehow to be transcended by Vedanta before the Absolute can be attained. (323)

In the Vedantic terminology we can say that the present chapter [2] is concerned with effecting a transition from a practical workaday point of view in human life, called *vyavaharika*, to what constitutes the highest of absolutely true values, called *paramarthika*. Both these standpoints belong together in the overall context wherein a

moral man aspiring to spiritual perfection belongs. He has two comparatively firm grounds between which he can make his choice in guiding his life in view of ultimately attaining the supreme perfection of the Absolute. Intermediately between these two comparatively firm positions there is an infinite range of possibilities of errors, hallucinations, or misplaced values. (325)

*Relativity can be bypassed both by the synthetic or the analytic approaches. The latter leads to the heart of matter and the former to the overall conceptual or nominalistic Absolute. (335)

When experts who belong to this school [phenomenology] find it difficult to state their case clearly, we will not dare attempt here to do the same any better. (339)

In our own terminology, phenomenological reduction merely means the verticalization of the factual and empirically objective world 'about us' or 'given to us' in its horizontalized version. The intentional world is a more fluid one, or at least a finer and subtler one, with a thin and pure schematic status hidden behind fully factual appearances and brute realities. The phenomenologist retains within brackets the essential realities underlying facts. If the world of facts has a horizontal reference, the world proper to phenomenology gives primacy to a vertical reference. (345)

This refers to an interesting methodological feature which is that of cancellation of counterparts. Here we attain to something highly dialectical in import, which we have to understand in the same light as when Hegel speaks about a thesis and antithesis cancelling out into a synthesis. Hegel got lost in his own attempt to give content to such a resultant synthesis and it was only in historical imagery that he visualized such a synthesis. In the purer context of a Science of the Absolute it is not difficult to see that the cancellation implied here between two elements fixed in the vertical parameter on the plus and minus sides, when fully and

legitimately cancelled out, results in a central normative notion of the Absolute. Such a notion acts as a common reference for all disciplines. This cancellation need not necessarily be without some sort of residue. It is only when the numerator of a fraction finds its own equivalent counterpart in the denominator that complete cancellation is legitimate. Otherwise when the noetic and noematic aspects are cancelled there will be a remainder of one or the other, giving a revised status of what finally results. The mechanism is very subtle and hard to imagine. (352)

The zeal of Christian missionaries to communicate the ‘true’ Christian verities to another person involves a subtle irony. The man who is most keen on communicating Christian doctrines is not necessarily the man who feels any truth within himself. Yet he is interested for worldly reasons to take an interest in propagating Christianity from motives which are not truly spiritual. The true believer and man of faith is, as it were, silent and stands behind the man who pretends. (362)

We know how Sartre’s existentialism has caught the imagination of the public and has impressed youth in an out-of-the-way fashion. The wild enthusiasm that existentialism received among the youthful thinkers and creative artists of Europe gave it a form which discredited it in the eyes of respectable ecclesiastical, academic, and other official philosophers. Sartre himself recently refused the Nobel Prize offered to him because he preferred to remain in the company of the so-called non-bourgeois world. In a certain way this act marks the culmination of the triumph of this movement, whether more conventional and respectable philosophers look upon it with approbation or not. (366)

Temporality is evidently an organized structure. The three so-called ‘elements’ of time, past, present and future, should not be considered as a collection of ‘givens’ for us to sum up—for example, as an infinite series of ‘nows’ in which some are not yet

and others are no longer—but rather as the structured moments of an original synthesis. Otherwise we will immediately meet with this paradox: the past is no longer; the future is not yet; as for the instantaneous present, everyone knows that this does not exist at all but is the limit of an infinite division, like a point without dimension. . . . The only possible method by which to study temporality is to approach it as a totality which dominates its secondary structures and which confers on them their meaning. We will never lose sight of this fact. Nevertheless we cannot launch into an examination of the being of Time without a preliminary clarification of the too often obscure meaning of the three dimensions by means of pre-ontological, phenomenological description. We must, however, consider this phenomenological description as merely a provisional work whose goal is only to enable us to attain an intuition of temporality as a whole. (Sartre, 1957, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 107) (369-70)

Antinomies such as science and nescience, truth and error, are not treated by Narayana Guru as capable of being strictly cancelled out leaving no remainder of content. There is a subtle bracketing principle as in Husserl's fundamental phenomenology where the bottom of a receptacle and its lid are put together in such a way that the content still remains existent and real. Paradox when resolved does not abolish all content into nothingness. On the contrary, by a reasoning involving both a double assertion and a double negation, the full absolute existence is reaffirmed rather than emptied into nothingness. (388-9)

[Continuing] This is the reason why we see in Narayana Guru's gloss to verse 2 the reference to *atma-vidya* (Self-knowledge). This is to be taken in a global sense with the purpose of countering the ill effects of nescience. If we think of *atma-vidya* as having a vertical structural status and nescience as having a horizontalized one, the difficulties presented by two sets of antinomies are solved.

The mutual absorption or osmotic interchange between appearance and its cause in the mind takes place both as exosmosis and endosmosis alternatively at one and the same time as required by each of the reasonings proper to any one verse of the series. The reversal has also to be carefully noted when it takes place. The reduction of duality into unity involves a double correction at each stage. (389)

*Phenomenological reduction consists in taking a verticalized view of the content of natural science and ordinary psychology. What is more there is always the possibility of cancellation between counterparts consisting of two sets of antithetical factors. When the phenomenological sphere is reduced to its proper proportions and then cancelled out into some sort of synthetic residuum, the reality remaining consists of the pure individuality of man centrally located in a world of things around him. This is the central value revealed by phenomenological reduction or cancellation. The status of such a fundamental notion is regarded by some phenomenologists as fully absolutist. In this [3rd] chapter the four antithetical factors involving being or non-being, each set viewed vertically and horizontally, are finally reduced into one central existence. (397)

In the commentary to this verse it is categorically stated by Narayana Guru himself, as we are justified in taking it to be, that the Siva-lingam is false and the stone is real. Ordinary devout or religious persons attached to the worship of such a symbol will be somewhat shocked in the same way as Kierkegaard shocked the religious when he emphatically condemned all congregational church-mindedness as downright falsehood. In the case of Narayana Guru, however, there is the saving feature that he has already devoted the whole of the first chapter to the God with a conventional value for overt adoration and worship. Even in the present chapter he has taken care to refer to an ontological version of God, as we can see in the commentary to verse 8 where he

states, 'The world is none other than the Lord'. No sacrilege is intended when the Guru states that the Siva-lingam is false and the stone is true. (398)

Regarding the three gunas, we read in Samkhya-karika of Isvara Krishna (verse 12) the following:

The three modes (gunas) have a joyous, grievous and stupefying nature. They serve for manifestation, activity and restraint; they mutually subdue and support each other, produce each other, consort together and take each other's condition. (411)

[referring to an Upanishad quote] Fear is an indirect way of referring to other natural laws which cannot be violated by any factor or entity belonging to the phenomenological world. Natural laws have to be observed. There is no choice or contingency. Rigid necessity prevails. (413)

Religion could be said to be impure to the extent that religious belief does not attain to the clarity of a philosophy which questions and doubts critically. (426)

If we can suppose that the principle of negativity prevails over its own dialectical counterpart, making it just possible to exist as two rival ambivalent factors with an element of paradox between them persisting and finally to be abolished, we then attain to a more or less correct notion of what is meant by maya. The infinitesimally small degree of negativity implied in it is the only factor that keeps it from representing the pure Absolute itself. (430)

*Professor Betty Heimann, in her *Facets of Indian Thought* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963, p. 172) on maya:

The Sanskritist must at the outset feel repelled when, for example, the Indian concept of maya is translated as 'illusion'. The western mind, according to the present use of 'illusion' sees here something unreal, deceptive and delusive. Yet this is not even the primary meaning of the Latin word *illusio*, from the root *luclere*, 'to play'. *Illusio* originally, though this is now forgotten, meant 'interplay'. As such, but only in its original meaning is it a near equivalent of maya. Maya, the 'world of the measurables' (from the root *ma*, to measure), is a relative and transitory display of forms. In this sense it actually corresponds to *illusio*, interplay in variant shapes and forms, manifestations of the underlying substance. *Illusio*, thus interpreted according to its original meaning, truly is analogous to the Sanskrit term *lila*, 'play and display' of the creative urge for world-formation and elusive world-manifestation, as taught in Indian cosmogony. (435-6)

The deeper seat of paradox lies at the core of the Absolute as a negative principle of the most delicate or subtle character. The Absolute has to be attained by abolishing this last residual paradox, which in its transparency is hardly distinguishable from the light of the Absolute itself on which it thrives. (439)

The method of philosophy has to correspond to the content treated by philosophy. It can start from the known or the unknown according to whether axiomatic certitude or experimental certitude is given priority. In the Science of the Absolute it is not enough to speak of appearances which are given positively or empirically to the senses. One has to attain step by step to the innermost reality hiding behind appearances before the Absolute reality stands revealed. At every step there is a paradox and it has to be resolved, graded, and numbered if scientific treatment is to be given to the component items or factors. (440)

Discursive philosophy is too often verbose and polemical wherein rival schools of thought both claim to possess the Truth.

Sometimes philosophy is judged on the basis of a single battle between two such rivals. Long drawn-out battles occur over larger periods in which many and varied skirmishes take place. The final results often remain vague and lost to humanity. It is not rarely that we even find serious works on philosophy where verbosity, hair-splitting and logic-chopping are found, whose benefit or what it is all about nobody really knows. Wrong patronage is sometimes the cause for some of the fat volumes produced supporting this or that special philosophy. Libraries often get filled in this way and as Shankara says, ‘the magic of words makes a great forest where one becomes mentally dizzy.’ (441)

The reference to the three *gunas* (nature modalities) of pure (*sattva*), passionate (*rajas*), and dark (*tamas*) qualities, within the limits of this chapter [4, on maya], marks the point to which the scope of the chapter extends. Here we have to explain that the three *gunas* are not treated as realistic modes of change, but are meant to suggest the structure and modus operandi behind Nature, only revealing its abstract dynamism. This principle, derived from the Samkhya (rationalist) philosophy, is one of the greatest contributions ever made to Indian philosophical speculation. (444)

It is by introducing a series of concepts proper to each chapter that Narayana Guru accomplishes the transition between each separate chapter. In the first chapter we have the Supreme Lord (*paramesvara*) in a positivistic and empirical context as the key notion. Vital consciousness (*caitanya*) replaces this in the second chapter. A fully accredited mind (*manas*) takes the place of *caitanya* in the third, and in this [4th] chapter the concept of *cidatma*, the self, consciousness in essence (a double-sided expression helping in the transition from ontology to teleology) replaces *manas*.

Maya is still a negative factor in the context of the Absolute. It has a purer and more dignified status than *manas*, in the phenomenological and ontological sense, and therefore requires for

its unitive treatment a newly coined double-sided concept, which is *cidatma*. (456)

We say that the horizontal, which is the function of maya, can be overcome by a philosophically trained mind, which by its better understanding refuses to recognize the horizontalized value implications where vital tendencies incline the Self to horizontalized interests. By a full verticalization of these tendencies one transcends the duality of the ambivalent interests. When this is done such interests become less and less accentuated as if by a lighter and lighter colouration, and become finally absorbed in terms of a pure mind-stuff (*cid*) in the purer vertical parameter. (469)

In this chapter we also find, in Narayana Guru's gloss on verse 6, happiness and suffering referred to alternately with reference to the *jiva* (vital principle). The factor affecting such alternation is maya, which has a dynamism proper to itself and is capable of being accentuated or intensified with a dualism between the pure and practical aspects, where it pulsates or alternates in a continuous succession. When such accentuated pulsations are very fast as in the case of electromagnetic pulsations they tend to get fully absorbed into the vertical, and this horizontal conflict becomes unnoticeable. Life when viewed in a perfectly verticalized context abolishes events such as birth and death, absorbing both into a one-dimensional continuum. (470)

[speaking of Sankara] The slightest criticism of the Vedic word, even when impossible and contradictory positions are found, is nonetheless not endorsed by either Sankara or Ramanuja. The extreme intolerance in the name of orthodoxy unmistakably comes into evidence when the question of caste and Vedic orthodoxy is mentioned. In the *apasudra-adhikarana* (action denying Vedic rites, religion, etc. to the proletarian), the spiritual status of the *sudra* is discussed. This orthodox attitude denies any right and

dignity whatsoever to the common person. It is comparable only to the instances of slave trade and lynching in America and the anti-Semitism of Europe and Hitler before and during the last world war. This section of Brahmasutra is a blot on human nature, and genuine Indian spirituality should not be confused with it. We find a mention of the permissibility of punishing *sudras* by killing them if they happen to know the contents of any part of the Vedas. If they innocently happen to hear the Vedas being recited it is permitted to pour molten lead or wax in their ears. If the *sudra* is caught uttering any Vedic passage he is to have his tongue cut out. Although exceptions to this rule are mentioned and reluctantly approved using far-fetched and irrelevant arguments, as Max Müller pointed out, this section of Brahmasutra (I.3.34-38) sufficiently reveals the nature and intensity of the intolerance and exclusiveness of a group of orthodox Hindus. The claim of Hindu tolerance made by Swami Vivekananda in his famous Chicago Address seems very weak when viewed from this particular perspective. (479-80)

[RST – this may indicate a later interpolation by fundamentalists, as NG continues: “That Sankara has no word to say against this in his commentary is rather strange, because his position regarding caste is different in Vivekachudmani where in verse 297 he compares caste to a rotting corpse.”]

Fortunately the position of the Brahmasutra [of exclusivity] is openly and dynamically revalued by the Bhagavadgita. (481)

The study of maya can be undertaken from two ends, which are those of prakriti when the three gunas (nature-modalities) are fully operative in it. This is the seat of the most delicate of paradoxes in consciousness and it is where all philosophy has its origin. (485)

Yet many of the arguments directed against these schools are seen to be not dignified enough and often full of childish objections not fully respecting the total setting where each theory has been set

forth. One even sometimes wonders if the same Sankara is responsible for each and every comment on the numerous sutras. Here and there a superior and well-constructed critique emerges, but generally one becomes disgusted with the low order of argumentation used against anyone who is not in the orthodox Vedic camp. (490)

If we now think of the implications of such a structural double-sidedness regarding spiritual progress it is true in the first instance that the desire for such progress points its arrow to the plus side of the situation. But philosophers like Nietzsche have also pointed out that thinking of what 'was' is one of the greatest tribulations to the spirit. Dwelling on the past is a form of regret and dangerous to spiritual progress. This is why *pitriyana* (ancestor worship) is degraded in the Vedanta and *devayana* (worship of the gods) is at least tolerated as the next best, pointing the arrow in the right direction of normal spiritual progress. In this connection Narayana Guru does not rule out the possibility of even attaining the hidden treasure of the Absolute by digging into the negative and retrospective layers hiding it. Such a progress moving in this negative direction can attain in principle at least the ultimate atom (*paramanu*) and by this attain the light of the Absolute. (493-4)

Maya Darsana Verse 5: Here the central notion is *cidatma*, pure and unconditioned consciousness having assumed the form of oneself. It is here both the horizontal and the vertical aspects are brought into relationship. This aspect of the Self as *cidatma* is subject to alternating pleasure and pain. Narayana Guru in his short commentary relates this with the *jiva* (vital self), and *jiva* should be understood as the horizontal correlate of *cidatma*. (497)

The pure philosophy of mathematical intuition tallies with its own experienced or experimental counterpart. The former tends to be axiomatic and descends through various stages of postulates, theorems, lemmas, etc. in order to give logical results of

descending certitude. Only hypothetical certitudes are derived from experimental observations, which are most certain at the pole of actual things and events having a horizontal reference. The hypothetical constructions find their place in that intermediate zone where reasoning descending from axioms is able to meet the ascending hypothetical constructions. Axiomatic and experimental thinking thus meet and yield an ambiguous certitude in the middle zone where both types of thinking join. (510)

An element of faith is necessarily involved when one goes from perceptual physics to conceptual metaphysics. It is intuitionist mathematics alone that can accomplish this transition without violating the requirements of human understanding. In a later quotation we will see Bergson referring to the 'faith of the physicist' because even for the theoretical physicist it is necessary to go beyond what is strictly perceptual. Faith is necessary in order to have a normative reference outside of the perceptual for the adequacy or regularity of thought. (511)

Sankara admits that the Upanishads permit the belief in two selves, one to be searched for and the other given to natural experience. (535)