

VII Jnana Darsana, Consciousness and its Modifications

Introduction

4/24/7

A simple sketch ushers us into the next stage of our study. It is widely held by religious people and idealists that matter is an evolute of spirit. Scientists tend to believe that spirit (if any) is an evolute of matter. In the traditional Indian view also espoused by Narayana Guru, both matter and spirit arise together simultaneously, being mere semantic variations of the cosmic situation. The original dichotomy is between unconditioned and conditioned, or empty and full. When consciousness is unmodified it is called pure, and when it is focused on a particular interest it becomes conditioned. Conditioned awareness cognizes both matter and spirit as related aspects of the state of manifestation. A universe featuring only one of them is absurd: without spirit—what is more widely termed life—there is no awareness. And without matter there is nothing to be aware of.

The existence of matter is sat; the awareness of spirit is chit. Together they make meaning, ananda. This is what we call holistic understanding.

Much of the introduction is a simple presentation of the ten terms that will be defined in the Jnana Darsana. It is worth perusing to keep the scheme clearly in mind as we probe ever deeper into the wonder of awareness. Now on to verse 1.