

# A Subtle Topic

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2079>

**Robert:** ShiningWorld Sage, it is said the mind can't know awareness, but isn't it better to say "thought can't know awareness"?

The mind (subtle body) is reflected awareness and reflected awareness is non-different from awareness. We employ the concept of reflected awareness in order to distinguish between the self as *paramatman*, which knows only itself, and the self as *jiva*, who knows objects but finally resolves into *paramatman*. *Jiva* is the mind and *jiva* can know. *Isvara* provides the necessary thoughts to articulate that knowledge. *Isvara* is the source of objects subtle and gross, and all objects are inert. Thoughts are inert, but they approximate in form what knowledge is as formlessness. There is a recognition of that form as formlessness and that recognition takes place in the mind via its extraordinary machinery. Am I making sense here?

~ Love and infinite affection, Robert

**James:** Lovely to hear from you. You are making sense alright, but let me tweak the ideas a bit. When we say that reflected awareness is non-different from awareness, we don't mean they are the same. Is the subtle body, the reflector, conscious or is it an inert reflector? It certainly seems to be conscious because it is pervaded by consciousness. But it actually isn't. It is inert. Pure consciousness – *paramatma* – which is self-aware consciousness, becomes sentient – a knower – when it identifies with the subtle body. In this role it is called a *jiva*, a sentient being. So your statement that thought can't know awareness is accurate. The positive statement is: original pure consciousness, reflected in the subtle body, is a conscious knower, a *jiva*. In this capacity it knows that it is actually pure original consciousness.

**Robert:** When awareness IDENTIFIES with the subtle body? Is awareness identifying with the subtle body also called "reflected awareness"?

**James:** Yes.

**Robert:** *Atman* is *brahman* in reference to *jiva*. Is reflected awareness merely original awareness in reference to objects?

**James:** Yes.

**Robert:** *Jiva* is a knower and *jiva* is reflected awareness. Awareness is the knowing agent, so reflected awareness which is able to KNOW must be the same as original awareness except that it's a funny kind of individualized awareness that exists only in a special dimension where there are individual THINGS. That makes reflected awareness at once the same as original awareness

and different from it. In truth it is all just original awareness seemingly doing some tricks courtesy of *maya*. Do you agree with this, James?

**James:** Got it in one! James agrees and Vedanta agrees.