

A Clean Mirror

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This email was submitted anonymously by a person from the ShiningWorld community.

Cleaning the mirror of the subtle body is knowing myself, placing responsibility where it is due and stopping internal projections.

I am awareness associated with a human form consisting of a causal body, a subtle body and a gross body. I permeate these bodies and make them appear to be alive, much like a ventriloquist makes his inert puppet look alive. The subtle body is a reflective medium because it is made from the finest of awareness' manifest substances, *sattva guna*. The gross body, because it evolves from gross matter, *tamoguna*, does not reflect anything. I, awareness, shine on the subtle body and make it known. When it is illumined it reflects my awareness outwards towards life, the *dharma* field. It also reflects awareness back toward me.

As a human being, my default at birth is ignorance: I do not know who I am. Because of it my subtle body is mainly agitated (*rajasic*) and dull (*tamasic*) and sometimes clear (*sattvic*). With *yoga* I remove the agitation and dullness, rendering it mostly *sattvic*. It becomes a clean mirror brightly reflecting awareness through my senses and causing righteous (*dharmic*) actions.

Although you can't see a pure mind physically, a person with a purified subtle body usually has a charismatic, bright aura and others are attracted to them. A *sattvic* subtle body is helpful, but it is not the goal of self-inquiry. The goal is to gain the firm knowledge "I am pure awareness." This recognition informs, guides and empowers my life, here and now.

By contrast, a *rajasic* subtle body extroverts awareness and makes a person agitated, restless and confused. A *tamasic* subtle body is so dull that it absorbs rather than reflects awareness; such a person appears to be dull, blank, morose, stupid and lazy. Both of these energies do not attract people.

Because of ignorance and an extroverted attention, I, awareness, identify myself with my gross and subtle bodies (*upadhis*) and take the qualities playing in them to be mine. I think I am a human being. If the subtle body is disturbed, I think I am disturbed. If it is dull, I think I am dull. If it is extroverted, I become fascinated and obsessed with gross and subtle objects. I anxiously seek them to make myself feel complete. I fall into an endless trap, a bottomless pit, a whirlpool called *samsara*.

My life experience with objects shows me that peace and happiness are not inherent in objects themselves. Through hard knocks I gain some wisdom and begin to look for peace and happiness within myself. I purify my subtle body and thus it is able to reflect awareness – my self – back to myself. This is a metaphorical way of saying I gain knowledge about myself. A *sattvic* subtle body reflects awareness without *rajasic* distortions. If the subtle body is *tamasic*, I cannot experience the bliss of myself.

Seeing myself in the clean mirror of my mind I become fascinated with the awareness that I am: pure presence of being, unconditioned awareness, absolute peace and happiness and

lovingness. No wonder I am fascinated and thrilled. I am the best thing going, the ultimate satisfaction! Actually, I am the only thing going! There is nothing better than me!! I see myself reflected in a clean mirror.

Other than me, everything is inert: the gross body, the subtle body with its mind, intellect and ego, the causal body, i.e. my conditioning, and even the person I used to think I was. They cannot do anything by themselves now because they are not conscious. They are mere instruments for me to use.

The intellect is the instrument for discriminating and making decisions; it is influenced by past conditioning (*vasanas*) which lie dormant in the causal body and manifest in the subtle body as thought and emotions, as likes and dislikes. The mind is the instrument for integrating perception from the senses, for doubting and raising emotions. The ego is the instrument for directing actions through the gross body and for receiving and experiencing the results of actions; it is like a manager, organiser or executive but it does not own anything. The gross body is the tangible instrument through which experience and action occur.

All these instruments are inert but appear to be alive only when I, awareness, permeate and activate them. They are passive robotic tools powered by me. Put together, they are a personality, a *jiva* person. The individual, the *jiva*, is a composite made of thoughts about the instruments I use to live, the roles I play, my relationships, work, possessions, circumstances, etc. But ultimately the *jiva* person is only a thought appearing in me. When I am ignorant of myself I think I am my roles and instruments and I think the world is real. I think I am a *jiva*. But *jiva* is not me. It is an object known to me, limitless awareness.

When I, awareness, identify with the waking state, I see myself as a waking person. In Sanskrit this person is called *viswa*. When I identify with the dream state, I define myself as a dreamer (*taijasa*), just another thought. When I identify with the sleep state, I see myself as a sleeper. I am none of these. They are merely roles I assume.

The Ego

The ego does not have a sense of itself; it cannot self-reflect since it is inert. The phrases “ego-sense” or “egotistical attitude” are inaccurate and are misnomers, the result of confusion brought about by a fusion of Vedic science with modern psychology. Modern psychology considers the ego as the self, and a healthy, individuated ego as the Holy Grail. It does not know that I, awareness, am the only self.

Unfortunately, in spiritual circles the ego has become a scapegoat and blamed for positive and negative experiences, for good and bad *karma*, but it is not to blame. It is just an inert passive tool. If anyone is to blame it is me under the spell of ignorance. When this condition obtains, I feel bad about myself and blindly perform actions to gain pleasant experiences. When positive results come, I take pride in myself. When negative results arise from negative thoughts, words or deeds, I blame the ego. “The ego did it!” What a convenient projection!

Blaming and punishing the inert ego-idea is not the way to spiritual maturity. I need to withdraw my projection from the ego and take responsibility for my mistaken thoughts, words and deeds. When I am booked for speeding, the cop gives me the ticket, not my vehicle.

My subtle body is a vehicle given to me by me in the form of the creator of the field of life, *Isvara*. As long as I think of myself as a *jiva*, the law of *karma*, cause and effect, applies to me. But when I am firmly convinced that I am awareness, *karma* belongs to *Isvara* acting through the *vasanas* that I once thought were mine. I merely witness the play of the *samsaric* cycle of *vasana-kama-karma* (tendency-desire-action) and am free of it. *Samsara* has nothing to do with me! This is absolute freedom!

I Don't Need a Subtle Body

As long as I think I am a *jiva* person, I need a subtle body to reflect my nature as awareness. When I am firm in the knowledge of who I am, I do not need a subtle body to see myself, however purified it may be. I know and appreciate myself directly, immediately, without the aid of instruments.

I needn't discard my subtle body because it does not affect me but I use it to interact with myself in the form of the *dharma* field. With it I make appropriate and timely responses to what happens.

The shift from the *jiva* to me, awareness, is much more than a cognitive shift, an event happening only in the intellect. It is a "supra-cognitive" shift, an ultimate paradigm/identity shift. I am no longer situated in the physical or subtle body. I have "moved" and "become" what I always was. This movement has a beneficial "downstream" effect on the subtle body and its cognitions. The *rajas* and *tamas* dissipate over time and the mind reflects my glory in glorious thoughts, feelings and actions. Whereas before I asked the world for its blessings, I now bless the world.

Here is my prayer of gratitude: "Thank you, subtle body. At the appropriate time, you will be returned to *Isvara*. Thank you for the loan, *Isvara*."

When the loan is paid, I will continue as I always am – pure awareness, absolute peace, unconditioned presence.