

A *Jiva* Is a *Jiva*

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Arlindo: Hello, Danny, here are a few more words about “death versus deep sleep.” I have always loved this subject. It is my understanding that in both cases (death and deep sleep) the subtle body folds or shrinks back into its causal body to remain dormant as *vasanas*, seeds with potential for expression, but they are far from being the same.

In the case of the deep sleeper, those seeds of individualized consciousness (consciousness associated with the subtle body) manifests again as the same experiencing entity as before once the sleep is interrupted by the dream or awake states. Therefore the waker (the sleeper upon waking) can obtain inferential knowledge of that previous dreamless sleep state. Even though in deep sleep the *jiva* cannot consciously register the absence of objects, its self-existence cannot be negated, because it takes one to know that nothing was there. And by “one,” I mean the subtlest subconscious thought which begins defining the individual *jiva*. This way the self-ignorant *jiva* moves through the three states of consciousness with full confidence in its apparent existence.

In the case of death, the self-ignorant *jiva* upon facing its final dissolution as name and form, in most cases, believes it to be a one-way ticket – one’s subtle body folding back into one’s causal body, never to return again as the same experiencing entity. No inferential knowledge can be gained about one’s apparent non-existence during the interval between one’s previous life and the new life, because the new *jiva* will be reborn as a baby with no self-conscious mind, memories, intellect – he will have to wait until it is properly reprogrammed by *Isvara* to become altogether a totally new entity. Therefore the new *jiva* will have no basis for the elaboration of inferential knowledge about its apparent non-existence, i.e. its unconscious existence between two lives as a soul, one’s emotional-mental energies shaped by desires and fears in their causal formation. And *Isvara* will allow the new *jiva* no recollection of his past experiences as a soul (a bag of *vasanas* in its previous body). All memory must be erased.

Death is definitely not a fourth state, but more like a break from the unending flux of the apparent three states.

I noticed that you made a distinction between the *jiva* and *jivamukta* in your previous post. But in truth, a *jiva* is a *jiva*. Self-realization will make the *jiva* aware of its true identity as the self. If self-knowledge fructifies, the hard and fast knowledge “I am awareness” will allow the *jiva* to exhaust his time in *maya* without the suffering derived by the identification with the body-mind, which we may call the self-ignorant experiencing entity, which is the case for 99% of all *jivas*.

But regardless of knowledge and ignorance of the self, all *jivas* will experience the apparent three states and the thought of the approaching dissolution of the physical body. As far as death goes, I agree with you in saying that it is but an object and therefore it is unreal. But death is a thought only, and although thoughts are objects, this specific thought called “death” (except as an anticipation of an event) cannot really be experienced by the soul, and much less by the experiencing entity. The apparent three states can somehow be experienced and known by the *jiva*, but for the reasons I mentioned before, the thought called death cannot be experienced and

known. This is the main distinction I tried to make in my last post. You wrote:

Danny: As I understand it, in Vedanta any form of after life must be an object. In other words, a temporary state of experience during which one experiences the good and bad *karma* (*punya* and *papa*) earned during one's previous lifetime.

Death, or the interval between lives, cannot be experienced by the soul. The soul is a sort of an emotional-mental ball of thought-energy in its causal form. Without the subtle body, there is no experiencing entity, no free will, nobody to experience. We may say that experience of *punya* and *papa karma* will take place on its own, but there will be nobody there to own it. It is impersonal. You further wrote:

Danny: Earth is the only *loka*, or world, in which spiritual growth or learning can take place because it is the only realm in which there is lag time between thought and experience. In the heavenly and hellish realms, whatever arises in the subtle body (i.e. the mind) is immediately experienced without time lags.

To keep it simple and free from speculation, it may be safer if we say that earth is the physical plane where experience becomes personal for humans. It does so due to the development of the self-reflective mind with the faculty of discrimination and apparent free will. Other creatures here experience their environment, but they have no means to take it personally. It is all mechanical. Again, without the subtle body there can be no experiencing entity. You then wrote:

Danny: Does this mean that the rebirth story is mainly an encouragement for *jivas* worried that they may lose their "spiritual progress" when they move to the next life or a negative, fear-based "teaching" of the deadly perils facing those that do not strive hard enough on the "spiritual path"?

Very nice! Rebirth is a good, comforting thought. Constellations of *vasanas* stick together to keep finding new births, but where is the experiencing entity in all of this? It is all *Isvara* playing what seems to be its favorite game. ☺ Life for the apparent *jiva* is this one only, it ends with the dissolution of the physical body. The whole game of life is more like a mirage. The *jivamukta* knows that, and he has no concern with the appearance of the mental and physical dimensions. Spiritual progress is necessary to relax the mind so that contemplation may emerge and this understanding/vision can become firm.

I enjoyed very much your subsequent paragraph, especially when you say, "By rights the self should be charging the *jiva* a price of admittance for watching the show," and in a way it does. Yes, it does, and the price is called "self-ignorance," which makes the *jiva* labor on the stage of life – going through all dramas and enjoyments. Only by self-knowledge alone the apparent *jiva* can finally sit down and enjoy the apparent show.