

# Am I Fooling Myself?

Tan

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**Rick:** Hi, Tan. As you know, I was recently in Spain with James.

For most of the week, the subtle body was very *sattvic*. One day at the end of the week I went to him and said I thought that it was happening, that I knew I was awareness, and he said that by the questions I asked and the comments I made, he thought I was getting it or something to that effect. And since I came home, at times I do know I'm awareness. When I meditate, I know that I am not Rick's body, thoughts, feelings, etc. I start the day reading some of James' *satsangs* and then I go right into meditation, into the silence.

BUT... most of the time I behave as if I am just Rick, with the same old habits, the same old emotions, fears, desires, loneliness. Although I can now say that it doesn't matter what Rick does or how he feels, I am awareness and I can let Rick just get on with his life; it's not really my concern.

**Tan:** There is a doer called Rick and this Rick behaves as if he is Rick. He is acting according to his *vasanas*. What is the problem? How could Rick behave any differently – other than Rick?

Rick, the doer, is not just going to disappear. The illusion of the mirage still survives even after you know that it is unreal. You are awareness and you are not going to behave or act a certain way, because you are not the actor. You are the light in which the actor, the acting and the act are revealed.

**Rick:** I was out with a friend today, and he asked me about the emotional reactions I'd had in a certain situation, and I said, "That's just Rick, but I know that I'm not him and I just let him get on with it. It doesn't matter." But sometimes I think, am I fooling myself? However, I just keep discriminating, when I remember, that I am not that body, that person, those feelings.

All in all, it's a strange situation, to know I'm awareness at some times but to forget it at others.

**Tan:** Who is there during all the times "you know" and during all the times "you seemingly forget"? How would you know that you did forget "you are awareness" if you were not there to see it in the first place?

**Rick:** And really, how do I know that I know it? Do I just think I know it or do I really know it? What do you think?

**Tan:** There may be a period of time where you have a doubt whether you know who you are.

But think: Who is aware of the doubt? The doubt "do I just think I know it or do I really know it?" is

just another object arising in you, awareness. It can be dismissed as unreal since it comes and goes. It is not permanent.

**Rick:** In meditation this morning the situation became formulated like this: all his life Rick has been living as his traumatised subtle body. This has dictated every detail of his daily life so far. Now, how does he live as awareness?

**Tan:** Here is a mix-up of Rick and yourself. Rick is not going to “live as awareness.” Rick is a subtle body with *vasanas* reining it. You, however, are awareness, free from *vasanas* and free from a subtle body. Now we can say there are “individual *vasanas* belonging to Rick” but actually all *vasanas* are under the control of *Isvara*.

When Rick realizes without a doubt that he is just a puppet controlled by *Isvara*’s hands, he may relax and let *Isvara* take over – or not. This is like letting go of the steering wheel of a toy car at the amusement park. You are letting go of a make-believe steering wheel you actually never had control of in the first place.

**Rick:** I think this is the crux of where I am as Rick. I have to spend my days and nights largely alone. How do I live as awareness?

**Tan:** As awareness there is no choice of how to live. You “live without breathing,” thinking, etc., as James always likes to quote from Shankara’s *Atma Bodh*.

Only the apparent doer, Rick, seems to have a choice to live an active or passive life.

**Rick:** What do I do to pass all this time which I have till now consumed in seeking? I can’t go to India and live in an *ashram*, for health reasons! That would be a great solution to how to pass the time. But what is the equivalent for me now?

**Tan:** Why not let *Isvara* take care of that? *Isvara*, in the form of Rick, may come up with a plan to get rid of Rick’s boredom – or not if there is something to learn from it as a gift from *Isvara* (in the *karma yoga* attitude). You can always take it as *prasad*.

Does it really matter to you, awareness, how the *prarabdha karma* of Rick unfolds?

If you believe that Rick has to live a certain way to “live as awareness,” then there is still a mix-up of Rick and yourself in your mind.

It is better to clear that up before running off to an *ashram* or something equivalent.

~ Love, Tan