

Association versus Identification

Ted Schmidt

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Tariq: Hey, Ted, how are you? I hope your teaching is going well. I have a quick question.

When I say “I am,” is that awareness?

Ted: “I am” indicates *sat*, being, pure, limitless awareness.

Tariq: When I say, “I am this,” or “I am that,” is that awareness identifying with duality? For example, “I am Solomon,” is consciousness identifying with form. Are these statements correct?

Ted: Saying “I am this” or “I am that” indicates awareness associated with a projected object within the context of the apparent dualistic reality. If you believe yourself to be the “this” or “that,” then it is awareness under the spell of ignorance identifying with a projected object, and thus accepting or believing in the erroneous notion that the apparent reality is real.

The point is that when you, awareness, understand your true limitless nature, the apparent reality does not disappear. The apparent reality remains as it ever was and you continue to associate with and thus seem to be an apparent individual person. The difference is that once you have assimilated self-knowledge and stand with unshakable conviction in your true nature as awareness, you are no longer duped by appearances. You continue to associate with and peer through the “scope” of the mind-body-sense mechanism that constitutes the apparent individual person you seem to be, but you know that just as the apparently unique wave is nothing other than water, you are really the limitless awareness that is both the “substance-less substance” of which all objective phenomena, both subtle and gross, are made and the “field” out of which they arise, in which they abide and back into which they subside.

Ultimately, *moksa*, freedom, or self-realization, is a matter of understanding that cannot be necessarily characterized or defined by any particular change in one’s objective experience.