

# Awareness Cannot Delude Itself

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**Chris:** Hey, Sundari, just here to discuss something.

I just can't believe how awareness somehow deluded itself by projecting a three-dimensional world and making it look as if it is an individual being separated from objects and other beings that are also deluded by *maya* as a volitional doer. It's insane!

**Sundari:** It does seem to be insane looked at from the point of view of the doer. It all depends who you think you are. When you understand the self and what it means to be the self, it is clear that there is no creation, no *jiva*; this is because we can negate the creation with the teaching, assuming the mind is qualified. We say that awareness is "apparently" conditioned by *maya* because it is impossible for awareness to be deluded. If that were true, awareness would not be non-dual, duality would be real and it would not be possible to remove ignorance.

The trick of light, the movie that is life and gives rise to "the world," is brought about by *maya*, which has a very curious ontological status, that of being neither real nor unreal. It is not real, yet it exists. Due to the "magic" of *maya*, or ignorance, a power that exists in awareness or it could not be unlimited, the apparent reality is projected, or the metaphorical dream of the manifest universe arises **within the scope of pure awareness**. *Maya* is said to be eternal because awareness is eternal; this is why *maya* is beginningless. Personal ignorance (*avidya*) ends for the *jiva* when the self is realised to be its true nature, ending its personal cycle of incarnation and suffering; but *maya*, or cosmic ignorance, continues unchanged. The creation is not always manifest, because *maya* is not always manifest, but it always exists as a potential in awareness. When ignorance, or *maya*, does manifest, *Isvara* (awareness plus the *gunas*) in its capacity as a Creator appears, followed by the apparent creation (*Isvara srsti*), the world of sentient beings and insentient elements (objects).

***Isvara* is not a volitional entity with a personal agenda.** Thus *Isvara* does not allocate *vasanas* or *samskaras* to *jivas*. *Isvara* is simply what we might refer to as the realm of pure potentiality (i.e. "universal pool of *vasanas*," or the macrocosmic causal body) from which all *jivas* draw the *vasanas* that are associated with their particular subtle bodies as a result of their apparent actions. And then, believing themselves to be *jivas*, are conditioned by *maya* (the *gunas*).

*Maya* simply means ignorance, or non-apprehension of the true nature of reality. In order for the creation to manifest, *maya* (ignorance) has to be there for awareness to appear as a subtle body and to have contact with objects. This is the self apparently under spell of ignorance. If there was no ignorance the *jiva* as an apparent person would not exist, because the apparent reality would not exist.

**Chris:** It's just really the belief that I am a willing, doing person which is the cause for all of these emotional fears/desires in human beings. Life just happens, so to speak, and it's all really just a play happening here that's reflecting awareness. But in the waking state awareness deludes

itself by creating all of these separate forms and believes that it's a separate individual.

**Sundari:** Yes, it is the self under the spell of ignorance identifying with the doer (subtle body, or *jiva*) which gives rise to all existential suffering. Remember, **there are two meanings to *jiva***: (1) awareness **associated** with the subtle body, the self (apparently) under the spell of ignorance, conditioned by *Isvara* and at the mercy of the *gunas* because of identification with objects; (2) the other meaning of *jiva* is “pure consciousness” – *jivatman*, free of *Isvara* and the *gunas*. Essentially, *moksa* is the understanding that, “I am not the apparent individual person I seem to be, but rather *atma*, which is *brahman*, limitless awareness. Thus while I may still be associated with a mind-body-sense complex, I am not **identified** with it.

**Chris:** At some point I was questioning whether or not this was solipsistic, and I (the subtle body) was the only one that's watching all of this, but apparently it wasn't. No one really knows, I guess.

**Sundari:** Well, actually you are wrong here, Chris. If you want the answer to this, Vedanta is the only place to find it – and if the mind is qualified, self-knowledge will remove ignorance, revealing the one and only self to be your true nature. Looked at from the *jiva*'s point of view your statement is true, but who is the “I” questioning “whether or not this was solipsistic”?

The full **definition of SOLIPSISM**: the theory holding that the self can know nothing but its own modifications and that the self is the only existent thing; also, extreme egocentrism.

If you are speaking as the self, this is no theory but fact, because there is only one principle and that is you, awareness, from which and upon which everything arises and depends. The self thus has no modifications, because being only one it has nothing to modify to. If you are speaking as the person (ego) identified with being a person, than the “theory” that there is only you is egocentric.

**Chris:** But awareness wanted drama, so to speak, so it placed itself into different bodies, *gunas* and forms all having their own movies and *gunas/vasanas* judging whatever happens.

**Sundari:** Again, you are making awareness out to be a big doer, Chris. The self does not want or lack for anything. It is whole and complete, **actionless**, non-dual, limitless and changeless. I have attached a brilliant discourse that James had with an inquirer about the *maya* and *jiva*. I think it will be of help to you.

**Chris:** So I guess the only real thing to “do” in life is just remind myself that everything appearing is just me, awareness, and not the body. I just sit, relax and allow whatever happens to happen, and not identify.

**Sundari:** The essence of *moksa* is the ability to discriminate you, awareness, from the objects appearing in you at all times. This entails knowing the difference between *satya* (that which is always present and never changing) and *mithya* (that which is not always present and always

changing). To be free, it is not enough to know about awareness; if you don't know what it means to be awareness, then your knowledge is still indirect and you have some work to do.

**Chris:** I would like to attain happiness in *maya*, but apparently that's just a pipe dream, there is really nothing here left for me to do except drift and float around.

**Sundari:** How can you attain something you are? Happiness is not feeling- or situation-dependent. It is the happiness or bliss that comes from the solid knowledge that you are not the person, but pure awareness and therefore not conditioned by anything that appears in the *jiva's* life, irrespective of how the *jiva* is feeling. I guess if you think you are the *jiva*, then you can "drift and float around," but if you know you are awareness you will be open to the beauty and harmony of creation, and allow self-knowledge to unfold your every thought, word and deed.

~ *Om* and *prem*, Sundari