

Consciousness versus Brain: Dialogue with a Child

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1278>

Adult: This is the dialogue with my son who seems to have been born with a strong *sattvic* predisposition. He was nine years old at that time. The book is *Proof of Heaven* by Dr. Eben Alexander. Dr. Alexander is the author of the autobiographical book *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife* (2012) in which he asserts that his out-of-body and near-death experience (NDE) while in a meningitis-induced coma in 2008 proves that consciousness is independent of the brain, that death is an illusion. My son has not read and does not know anything about the content of the book or about Vedanta.

Child: What is this book about that you have bought as a present for your friend?

Adult: It is a book about a neurosurgeon, a doctor, who had a disease where his brain was damaged, but he had an extraordinary experience during that time.

Child: So his brain was not functioning?

Adult: No, his brain was completely shut down, but he still had an incredible experience during the time his brain was not functioning.

Child: So did he fantasize that experience?

Adult: No, his brain was not functioning at all. So his brain could have not fantasized that.

Child: Yeah, makes sense.

Adult: So there must have been something else there. Actually, it is an old argument and fight among the scientists: Was the brain there before consciousness and consciousness was born out of the brain or was consciousness there before and the brain was born later out of consciousness?

Child: Why should the brain be there before consciousness? That does not make any sense. These scientists don't seem to understand.

Adult: Why do you say that?

Child: A brain without consciousness does not make any sense. What should it work on? Consciousness without a brain, however, does make some sense. Not a lot, but at least a little.

Adult: What do you mean?

Child: Well, consciousness without a brain would not know if it would stand or walk or do anything. Actually, it would not even know if it would know or not know. But at least it would be aware. But a brain without consciousness does not make any sense at all. What meaningful function should a brain have if there is no consciousness? It is rubbish. So it can only have come after consciousness.

Adult: Yeah, seems to make sense.