

# Enlightenment Is for the Intellect

Ted Schmidt

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**Mitch:** Hi, Ted. I wanted to let you know that I've read James' book and many of your *satsangs* on your site as well as his, and I find your teaching style to be incredibly helpful on a number of levels, especially being a breath of fresh air after encountering so many "Neo teachers" who had previously led me nowhere. I had my "realization" recently and I know now that there is simply "no going back." However, I did have something I can't seem to "understand."

**Ted:** Just to be clear, and I only make this rather nit-picking point because you seem to "get it" and because language is such an important factor in the communication and assimilation of self-knowledge, when you refer to "my realization" it should be with the understanding that the realization is not something Mitch has had. Rather, it is the realization, as you point out subsequently, that you never were Mitch in the first place. In this sense, as we say, realization is not *for* the apparent individual person but *from* the apparent individual person.

**Mitch:** Realization for me has been largely the "dis-identification" with the "apparent person" known as "Mitch" and realizing that "Mitch" never had any existence in the first place and all experience, including "apparent" doership, seemingly takes place within me. The shift now is to that of "self" and it's a really beautiful thing.

**Ted:** Right on. Of course, the shift of which you speak is only an apparent shift as it has actually been you as awareness illumining the apparent reality all along. Due to the effect of your own deluding power of *maya*, or ignorance, however, you simply had seemingly forgotten your true identity and had identified with the limited point of view of the scope, i.e. the mind-body-sense complex, "through" which you were looking, so to speak. Even the metaphor of the scope doesn't convey the reality of the circumstance because you are not really looking through some three-dimensional entity. The apparent three-dimensional entity is actually appearing within you. Yet, again due to the power of *maya*, it seems as though you are behind the eyes of this being referred to as Mitch and in accordance with the *dharma* of the *jiva upadhi*, or the universal law governing the conditional effects and operation of the apparent individual mind-body-sense complex, you can only know the sensations, emotions and thoughts of that particular apparent individual entity.

**Mitch:** So with that said, if the "self" is already free and limitless, and if the person never actually existed, where is this actual realization taking place? Understandably, it's obviously the "mind." Granted, I see it as more along the lines of the "self recognizing the self" via mind.

**Ted:** This is correct. Yet it should be understood that the self does not need the mind in order to "know" itself. The self "knows" itself by virtue of being itself. The "knowing" as we think of it in terms of the subject-object dichotomy intrinsic to the perspective of the apparent individual

person does occur, as you say, in the mind. That is, the understanding “I am whole and complete, limitless, actionless, ordinary, ever-present, all-pervasive, non-dual awareness,” which is essentially the subtlest object in the manifestation, takes place in the mind. The thought that constitutes this understanding, which in Sanskrit is called the *akhandakara vritti*, is not awareness itself (other than in the ultimate sense of everything in a non-dual reality being nothing other than awareness) but rather a pure reflection of awareness in the mind. Hence for all practical purposes the realization does indeed take place in the mind. As you subsequently point out, the mind is nothing more than an inert mechanism that when illumined by awareness performs various functions, such as perceiving, cohering sense-data, doubting, deliberation, deciding, directing, emoting and assuming doership. As such, the mind doesn’t actually realize anything itself but is simply the “computer,” if you will, that generates the knowledge of its true nature when illumined and thus set into motion by awareness. It is in this way that the apparent individual person “experiences,” so to speak, the knowledge of its true nature. This is the reason we say that realization is not for the self but for the mind of the apparent individual person.

It would seem then that we are faced with an irresolvable paradox. On the one hand, the liberation that results from the assimilation of self-knowledge is not *for* the apparent individual person but *from* the apparent individual person. On the other hand, the self-knowledge that is tantamount to liberation takes place in the mind and is thus a phenomenon exclusive to the apparent individual person since the self already “knows” itself.

One interesting aspect of this apparent conundrum is that it exposes the essential non-doership underlying the apparent doing taking place within the context of the apparent reality. Because the self is all-pervasive, perfectly full and immutable (and thus has neither any motivation to act nor the capacity to change), which are the defining characteristics of action, it is not doing anything. And because the mind-body-sense complex is nothing more than an inert machine, the apparent individual entity is not doing anything. All apparent action, including the assimilation of self-knowledge, which is a subtle action, simply takes place when the subtle body is illumined by awareness.

More to the point, however, the assimilation of self-knowledge that occurs in the mind of the apparent individual person is, as you point out, simply the self’s way, not that it is an entity that has any sort of agenda of knowing itself, within the context of the apparent dualistic world of experience. There is no reason that such an experience need take place within the scope of whole and complete, limitless awareness, but that is nevertheless the way it appears to be due to the influence of the self’s own inherent power of ignorance.

**Mitch:** However, in deep sleep there is obviously no “subject-object” dichotomy therefore no “enlightenment” to take place. Hence there is only “apparent” duality when mind is active. So I say that realization is only “realization” for “self” appearing as an apparent “body-mind” that “realizes” that everything is already “itself,” but this only occurs via the use of mind. But it has to be the “self” that is doing the “realizing” THROUGH a mind or AS a mind because the mind itself is simply inert, and the self without mind (sleep state) has nothing TO realize.

**Ted:** Essentially, yes, you are correct. To reiterate, however, be clear that the self does not need the mind to know itself. The mind only allows for awareness in association with the mind-body-sense complex to understand from the apparent point of view of the apparent individual person

that despite its appearance as a limited entity its true identity is limitless awareness.

It is also important to understand that the deep sleep state is not equivalent to “enlightenment,” self-realization or self-knowledge. While no conditioning *vrittis*, or thoughts, obtain in the deep sleep state and thus the apparent individual person experiences limitlessness by virtue of having temporarily resolved into an unmanifest state within the causal body, self-knowledge does not arise because there is no intellect in which it might do so. Hence when we awaken from deep sleep we are just as ignorant as ever before. Thus self-knowledge only occurs in the waking state but reveals that which is the substratum of all states and, moreover, once assimilated obtains permanently.

**Mitch:** Then after enlightenment self continues to appear as the body-mind because that’s just the way it is based on “*Isvara*.” Therefore the self will still “experience,” so to speak, as the appearance of a “body-mind” but the “self appearing as ‘mind’” now knows that all experience is merely itself. Nothing at all changed except for the perspective of the “waking state mind” which the self is appearing “as.” So basically the gist is that “enlightenment” is merely for the “self” appearing as mind-body in the “waking state” and really nothing more than that.

**Ted:** Yes, ironically “enlightenment,” or self-knowledge, occurs *in* the intellect of the apparent individual person but results in liberation *from* identification with the apparent individual person. Thereafter the self’s association with the apparent individual person will continue but the mechanism of the mind will no longer suffer the plague of confusion concerning its true nature and the erroneous sense of incompleteness and inadequacy that are its consequence. Having recognized itself in both its non-dual and apparently dualistic aspects and, by logical extension, realized itself as the singular source of peace and happiness, the self can happily sport as an apparent individual person without seeking to obtain happiness from any of its apparently objective forms. Thus the self “attains” the freedom that was its true nature all along.

**Mitch:** I’d love to get your opinions on what I’ve written because I just don’t see it any other way, and would love to really get your take if you agree or not, and I apologize for the long post, and hopefully it makes sense, SOMEWHAT.

~ Sincerely, Mitch