

Making Sense of Metaphor

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Ellen: Hi, Ted. Thank you for your response. I understood the descriptions of awareness as attribute-less and action-less, but am still trying to understand the metaphors.

In the metaphor of awareness as light illuminating objects, where do the objects or apparent objects come from? Are they existing before awareness shines on them and then becoming visible in the light of awareness?

Ted: Remember, we are contemplating a metaphor. And no metaphor can accurately reflect the non-dual nature of reality, for the fundamental vehicle of metaphor is an object, whereas pure awareness is non-objectifiable.

Having said that, however, it is true that all objects are essentially nothing other than awareness. That is, all objects are made of, arise out of, abide in and eventually subside back into awareness. Hence all objects depend on awareness for their existence, yet awareness itself is ever free of all objects. Whether objects appear or do not appear, awareness always is. In this regard consider the deep sleep state. Though no objects appear in the state of dreamless sleep, you do not cease to exist. This is evidenced by the fact that upon awakening (i.e. returning to the waking state and identifying with *vishwa*, the waking entity, the one who interacts with the “outer” objective world) you remember that you slept soundly. And since you can only remember something that you previously experienced, it is obvious that you must have been present during the deep sleep state. Admittedly, the person you take yourself to be was not present to “know” the experience, because the intellect, the instrument of knowledge, along with the subtle body was resolved into the causal body during the deep sleep state, but you, awareness, were present, as you invariably are in all states of being, for you, awareness, are the very “ground” of being upon which objects – including states of being themselves as well as time and space, the two most subtle objects of all, which are the fundamental parameters by which objects are defined – depend for their existence. In short, no object can exist prior to you, for you are the being upon which their being depends.

The point of the metaphor is simply to illustrate how awareness is neither an active entity that is creating objects nor the objects themselves (except from the perspective of the subtlest non-dual understanding), for the objects are only projections appearing within the scope of awareness, or what is also referred to in terms of another analogy as *pratibimba*, or “reflected” awareness, but rather is simply the actionless, all-pervasive “field” of existence, being-ness, is-ness, in which all objects appear.

Ellen: With regard to the hologram metaphor, are you saying that since awareness is attribute-less, action-less and non-volitional, it is not doing anything at all (other than being itself) and that it is its own power of *maya* that makes it seem as if it is projecting holographically? In other words, is it true that awareness is not actually projecting holographically, but that it only appears that it is because of its power of *maya*?

Ted: Yes, awareness only seems to be projecting due to the power of *maya*, ignorance. Ironically, *maya* is a power in limitless awareness, for if awareness did not have the power to apparently delude itself then it wouldn't be limitless. *Maya* has two powers by which it works its cosmic sleight of hand. The first is *avaruna shakti*, which is the veiling power that enables it to apparently cause awareness to forget its true limitless, attribute-less, non-dual nature. The second is *vikshepa shakti*, which is the projecting power that enable it to make awareness appear to be something that it isn't (i.e. all the objects, subtle and gross, comprising the manifest universe). Awareness "itself" doesn't do anything. It simply is the field of being, or existence, in which all apparent activity takes place and all apparent objects appear. It is in this sense that nothing is actually happening. Awareness alone is, and all the objective phenomena appearing within its scope of being is but a fleeting apparition.

Ellen: Thanks for your help with this.

~ Sincerely, Ellen