

# Name and Form and Experience

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**Don:** I am in the process of trying to resolve the questions that arose from your last email, but in the process I have been led back once again to the basic issue of awareness's connection to the material world. Here is my understanding and my questions regarding this:

Awareness/existence/consciousness/self does not experience, because there is no duality, no objects, other than awareness/existence/consciousness. However, when awareness/existence is associated with name and form (an object, i.e. a thought), experience happens. (point 4 on page 52 of *Inquiry into Existence*). Unless existence is associated with name and form, it cannot be experienced.

**Sundari:** Yes, correct. Awareness does not experience except indirectly in that no experience can take place without it. So we must ask, experienced by whom? You are only ever experiencing awareness, but unless you have self-knowledge, you don't know this. The self needs nothing to experience itself. When *Maya* appears, there is (apparently) something for awareness to be aware of and experience seemingly happens. But as awareness sees only itself, who is it that experiences? The *jiva* is just a lens through which awareness apparently experiences objects, with the emphasis on "apparently."

**Don:** However, point 6 says, "To experience the non-separation of objects from the self, consciousness, the name and form must be separated." My question: If name and form are separated from consciousness, how can there be experience?

**Sundari:** If the objects are removed, there is only awareness, experiencing itself. Awareness does not require the presence of objects to know itself. Separated means discriminated from, the essence of *moksa*. Discriminating your self from the objects that appear in you, 24/7. Entry-level self-inquiry requires that we negate all objects as not-self. As we mature in self-inquiry, to achieve *moksa* we need to see all objects as arising indirectly from self in the form of *Isvara* (the "good" and the "bad") and dependent on self, but as the self we are dependent on nothing. You have answered your own question below.

**Don:** I say objects depend on existence, but existence does not depend on objects. Experience depends on both existence and objects (name and form).

Page 53: The text asks the question, how can objects be awareness when they are not aware?

My understanding of the text's answer to the question is:

*Maya* (*Isvara*?) creates "the appearance" of matter out of consciousness (existence) from its *tamasic* aspect, which is the power to conceal by not reflecting but rather absorbing the light (of awareness?), thus consciousness is not revealed in matter, making matter appear inert and non-

sentient. However, the *sattvic* aspect of *Maya* has the power to reveal by reflecting the light (of consciousness?) by means of the subtle body through the sense organs, giving it, the inert subtle body, the appearance of being sentient.

**Sundari:** This is correct; you can delete all your question marks.

**Don:** It is these powers of *Maya* that give awareness/consciousness the appearance of being both sentient and inert, but awareness/consciousness is neither, it rather is the knower of both sentience and insentience. However, as was said in point 4 on page 52, awareness/existence/consciousness is not experienced unless it has something to be aware/conscious of, i.e. matter, born out of *tamas*.

**Sundari:** Correct again.

**Don:** I will take your suggestion and purchase James' new book on the three *gunas*.

I know I keep going over the same points, but I understand it to be the process required to make the knowledge firm. I beg your indulgence.

**Sundari:** That is the only way to assimilate the knowledge so that it sticks permanently. You are doing great inquiry, keep it up!

~ Much love, Sundari