

***Sat-Chit* and the Question of an Object's Existence**

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Timothy: Hi, Ted. Thanks for the previous responses to my inquiries. I appreciate it.

One thing I wanted run by you to see if I have it correct.

It involves the relationship between *sat-chit* and the question of an object's existence outside of perception. I have been struggling with this one, but now think I have it straight. So here goes...

Ted: Before we take off, let me point out that *sat* and *chit* do not have a relationship. A relationship can only exist between two different or separate entities. As will be explained, however, existence and consciousness are one and the same thing.

Timothy: Objects appear in the mind as a *vritti*. According to *avaccheda vada*, we can know that each *vritti* is nothing but consciousness with form superimposed.

Ted: *Avaccheda vada* is the most important explanation for the presence of consciousness in the mind. Just as the content or substance of the wave is the very water upon which its form is superimposed, so the *vrittis*, thought-waves, that arise in the mind are but forms made out of and superimposed upon pure awareness, the "substanceless substance" that is the *adhishthanam*, substratum, of the entire apparent reality in both its subtle and gross aspects.

Timothy: As a *vritti* in the mind it is known, meaning that we are conscious of it. Therefore we can say that from the perspective of perception that "*sat* brings *chit*."

Ted: *Sat*, existence, and *chit*, consciousness, are not two different things. They are one and the same. Only by virtue of awareness is any object known to exist. And something must exist in order for it to be aware or, in the case of an inanimate object, for it to be a manifestation of pure knowledge – which all objects are, but which is evidenced in inanimate objects by means of the "intelligent design" that characterizes their structure (i.e. the crystalline structure of geodes) and/or their function (i.e. the rotational velocity of an electron that precisely counters the magnetic pull of the nucleus of the atom, and thus keeps the electron from dive-bombing into the nucleus).

So *sat* does not "bring" *chit*. If anything, we might say that *chit* "brings" *sat*, for unless existence is known to awareness, it cannot be acknowledged as existent. This is what the Vedantic scriptures indicate by the phrase *drishti shrishhti vada*, which means "the world is there because I see it."

This statement can be easily misconstrued as a solipsistic view of reality that reduces the entire manifest universe to nothing more than the subjective dream of an apparent individual. This, however, is not the import of the statement. Vedanta does give credence to the notion that *vyavaharika satyam*, the transactional or empirical reality, does exist "outside" or beyond the

scope of any given apparent individual, every aspect of it does reside within the scope of universal or collective consciousness. So, for instance, while the Great Pyramid is not present before me at this moment, I cannot say it is non-existent. Though I, personally, do not see it, it does stand within the consciousness of someone. And even were no one to be beholding it at a particular moment in time, it would still exist within the “field,” or scope, of limitless awareness.

In order to understand that last point, it is necessary to consider the parameters required for the existence of any object. The two most basic requirements are time and space. In the absence of these parameters, no object could be measured and defined as a discrete entity. Time and space, however, are themselves objects – albeit subtle ones – and thus must be supported by an even subtler and more pervasive substratum by means of which their existence is known. This substratum could only be consciousness, for were it not conscious, no objects could be acknowledged as existence within its scope of being.

This understanding in fact resolves the doubt to which your next statement gives voice.

Timothy: However, at this point someone clever may say, “I object. What about before you perceived the object? It certainly existed. So then we can have something exist independent of consciousness.”

Ted: Nope. As previously explained, nothing can exist independent of consciousness, for consciousness is the only means by which anything can be acknowledged as existent. Even time and space, which are the fundamental parameters by means of which any existent object is measured and thus determined to be an existent object, depend on consciousness for their existence.

Timothy: To which the Vedantin can reply, “There is of course a cause for the perception. However, it is a mistake to say that cause is separate from consciousness. Why? Because any object is *mithya*, and must therefore ultimately depend on *satyam* or else it would not exist. This *satyam* we call *brahman*, the reality because of which any object exists.”

Ted: Correct.

Timothy: Now how do we know *brahman* is not inert? For a few reasons... First, we see order in our universe, which implies intelligence and knowledge.

Ted: Yes.

Timothy: Second, if it were totally inert we would have to explain how conscious can arise from a combination of inert entities, which defies logic and experience.

Ted: Yes.

Timothy: Third, since we are part of the universe, our essential nature should be non-different from the essential nature of anything else. Since Vedanta analysis shows that “I” am consciousness, then we can conclude other objects have the same essential nature.

Ted: Yes. There is only one reality, so the essential nature of all objects must be one and the same eternally conscious being.

Timothy: Therefore we can say that despite an object not exhibiting consciousness directly...

Ted: Yes, it is interesting to note that consciousness does not equate with sentience. Consciousness is the essential nature of all objects, but only those objects with a subtle body are able to conduct or reflect consciousness in a manner than manifests as sentience. In this regard, we can liken consciousness to light. Light simply reveals the objects that stand within it. If it is fed through a movie projector, however, the light will seemingly enliven the images projected on the screen. This analogy of course has its limits, for in order to do justice to the all-pervasive, non-dual nature of consciousness, the light would not only be the illumining factor that made known the objects within its shining, but moreover – as per *avaccheda vada* – be the substance of which the objects themselves were made. Nevertheless, I trust you get the idea.

Timothy: ...we know that ultimately consciousness is the foundation of all objects whether they are perceived or not. End.

Am I keeping it all straight here? Are there other points I am missing?

Ted: You are correct on all accounts, my friend. Good reasoning.