

Satya Mithya Confusion

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3242>

Dear Sundari,

Thank you so very much for the readings that you sent me. They helped tremendously!

Sundari: You are welcome Steve.

Steve: I have this burning desire to understand the Vedanta teachings (as well as Hindu/Sanatana/philosophy). I wish that I could go to an ashram and spend 3 or 4 years there... but it is not feasible for me, (I am a divorced 55 yr old man with 4 children and financial difficulties). Fortunately, Isvara led me here to you and your staff. I am eternally grateful.

I have been tirelessly studying the teachings, and working to remove ignorance. However, I am a little confused on a couple of things, and I would be extremely grateful if any in your group could possibly spare some time to help me with a couple of questions. I have searched your satsangs to see if I could find the answer before bothering any of you, but I cannot seem to find the answers.

Sundari: Thanks Steve. You made us laugh! We don't have 'staff'. We are it and can barely keep up. James does not reply much to emails anymore as he is busy writing the guna book and I just never have time to get to my book as there are just too many people who want answers to their questions. We can only do so much.

Two things: The Sanatana Dharma or the Eternal way has two sections, Karma Kanda section of the Vedas, which is all action and lifestyle based (and not required for moksa) and then there are the Vedas, with Vedanta being the very last part of the Vedas—the end, or last part, which is knowledge based, the knowledge that ends the quest for knowledge—and definitely not a philosophy. Assuming qualifications, that is all you need to assimilate. While it may help to escape into an ashram to study Vedanta, it is in normal everyday life that self-knowledge counts. Ashram life will not protect you from your ignorance, nor will studying all the Vedas. As I explained last time, Vedanta cannot be studied because the subject matter is you. We cannot escape our karma and there is no need to because moksa does not require any particular setting, just a purified mind, a dharmic lifestyle, the right qualifications and most importantly, total dedication to self-inquiry.

Secondly, *you* cannot work to remove ignorance. There is no doing that can be done by the ego that will remove ignorance. The ego cannot free the ego. Freedom is negating the doer/ego. Only self-knowledge ITSELF is capable of removing ignorance. The dharma of an inquirer assuming the presence of the requisite qualifications is to make self-inquiry its primary focus and submit the mind with great dedication to the scriptures, surrendering to Isvara and trusting Isvara to do the rest. No other way. Surrender to Isvara is the best kind of self-inquiry and takes care of your life.

Steve; Here are my questions:

1. I was reading this satsang: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/283> and within it,

James makes the statement that 'feeling one with the universe' is a non-permanent experience; which brought about this question:

Presently, as I, (ordinary awareness), perceive apparent objects in jagat, would it not be correct to have the understanding that these apparent objects are Self, since Self is non-dual? Or is this the same as 'feeling one with the universe', making this an experiential understanding? If I know that I am Brahman, wouldn't I also know that the universe IS me. I do not want to become enlightenment 'sick', or confuse satya with mithya.

Sundari: Yes, we first negate the objects as not-self and the next step is understanding that everything is self but self is not the objects. All objects dissolve into me, they depend on me but I depend on nothing to exist. I am existence. What James meant by his statement that the 'feeling of oneness with the universe' is transient is that all *feelings* are transient, always changing. Only *self-knowledge* is permanent.

Steve; 2. Also, in another satsang, entitled "Vedanta, India and the West" **James mentions that he chants and performs puja to Krishna every day.** I have some questions regarding this...

Is there any way for me to chant (beneficially) without knowing the Sanskrit? Are there any chants that I should learn (including the Sanskrit) that would be preferable?

Sundari: Yes, any chant will do and no, they do not have to be in Sanskrit. The self understands all words and all languages. It is the feeling and understanding of devotion to the self that counts. Krishna says: 'in whatever way you worship me, I will come to you and make your faith strong'.

Steve: Is this a puja offered to Krishna as the avatar, by the jiva, (Bhakti-yoga)?

Sundari: That depends on who you think you are. For us, we know we are the self and our worship is only ever as the self to the self.

Steve: And if so, what is the reasoning behind the focused devotion to the avatar?... is it simply a matter of personal choice, or spiritual background, with the knowledge that all devotion is to the Self? Why is Krishna the object of devotion? Why not puja to Isvara? - Or maybe there is an understanding of Krishna that I am not aware of?, (I am a neophyte, after all)

Can I offer worship (or puja) to Brahma/Vishnu/Shiva? Being Pure Consciousness, is this devotion even necessary? I somehow think it is. I know that ultimately 'I' am eternal awareness (Brahman)... but it seems proper, from the jivas perspective, to offer worship to Isvara, (out of a sense of gratitude). But isn't any devotion ultimately to the Self?

Sundari: The only 'avatar' is the self. Krishna is just one of the many names or symbols that point to the self, it means 'that which is always good and always auspicious'. But any symbol will do because they all point to the self. Pick one you like and most symbolizes the self, for you. Please read attached email on 'Who or What is God' (I am sure I sent it to you last time) as it explains the kinds of bhakti and why they are important, AND read James' book, the Yoga of Love.

Steve: 3. Per the teachings I have been practicing karma yoga. **What is upasana yoga?** I could not find any references?

Sundari: It is meditation. Read the satsang on devotion, read THE YOGA OF LOVE.

Steve: My understanding is such:

The Self/Awareness (Jivatman/Brahman) has no attributes, (is empty).

Sundari: The self is not 'empty'. Emptiness is a concept known to the self. There is no such thing as emptiness, as everything is the self and the self is the fullness that knows the apparent emptiness.

Steve: Because Awareness is unlimited, it has the inherent ability to create (Shakti/Maya). Shakti manifests as Isvara (Brahma/Vishnu/Shiva), wielding its attributes Maya and the Gunas, (It is, apparently, no longer empty), and Isvara (The Causal body) is apparently existing.

Sundari: Essentially correct. The attributes of Maya are the three gunas. **The self was and is never empty**. Without attributes, does not mean empty. Read above.

Steve: The Self (Jivatman)/Awareness is reflected off the Causal body, and the Subtle body manifests, in apparently, many forms. Just as the moon apparently appears multiple times, when reflected in many pools of water.

Awareness, deluded by Maya, identifies with the Subtle body, manifesting the jiva.

Sundari: Awareness apparently deluded by Maya. It never actually is deluded because Maya is an object known to awareness. But yes, because of the deluding power of Maya, awareness appearing as the Subtle body identifies with objects and then thinks that awareness is something other than it, so chases objects to complete it.

Steve; The jiva is apparently born (Gross body), apparently dies (Gross body) and transmigrates (Subtle body) in the apparent creation (jagat). The only permanent reality is Awareness. If I need to be corrected anywhere in this logic, someone PLEASE set me straight :)

Sundari: All that dies is the impermanent ego-personality and the Gross body. The Subtle body, being the vehicle for the vasanas and therefore eternal with reference to the jiva (**but not with reference to awareness**), continues. It is called 'the traveler'.

Steve: I have read that Purusha and Prakriti are the two different aspects of the manifest Brahman (Isvara)... and that they are both eternal, indestructible realities.

Are they speaking from a Dvaitadvanta perspective?

And I have also read that Purusha is indestructible, yet Prakriti is withdrawn at the time of dissolution of creation.

Would this be considered dualism? or is it possible for Brahman to have a permanent existence as Purusha?... or does this effectively introduce dualism as well and therefore negate Advaita?

Sundari: I am not sure why you got so mixed up here. We went through all these terms in my last email. Nothing in mithya is permanent--and so, it would depend who you think Brahman is. If you are saying it is awareness, of course, it is permanent. Awareness is existence itself and nothing negates it. If you think Brahman refers to awareness as Isvara the creator and the world, then it has a relatively impermanent existence as the creator. Purusha is another word for the self, so it is non-dual, ever-present, unchanging, unmodified, indestructible, and non-negatable.

Prakriti is matter in seed form, it has three qualities (the three gunas) which seem to conceal the self (but do not, nothing does). Maya creates prakriti—it is the subtle cause of matter and energy. Prakriti is like a mirror, capable of reflecting awareness. It *borrow*s awareness and is an object known to awareness. So, like all objects, prakriti is destructible and impermanent with reference to awareness, but not with reference to the individual (non-eternal) jiva.

PLEASE READ INQUIRY INTO EXISTENCE, by James. All your questions are answered there as well as in thousands of satsangs on the website and in James' teaching videos.

Steve: Does Advaita understand Isvara to be both Purusha and Prakriti.

Sundari: You should be able to answer this one, Steve. If this is a non-dual reality, there is only awareness, so creation arises from awareness and dissolves back into it. Prakriti is an object known to awareness (purusha/satya) which arises when Maya manifests, it is not eternal, (meaning it is mithya), other than as a *principle* in awareness, as is Maya, Isvara, Maya and the eternal Jiva (not the individual jiva).

Steve: Is there any formal Vedantic logic process used to validate this position?

We are taught that Isvara is not a permanent reality???

Again, Is there any formal Vedantic logic process used to validate our position?

Could you elaborate on this for me?

Sundari: I gave you all this logic in my last reply to you. Please read it again, I have attached it here. I cannot repeat the whole teaching to you again. Repeat: Please read *Inquiry into Existence*. It will really help you with this inquiry.

Steve: I apologize for so many questions.

I pray that my understanding is unfolding correctly, and I hope that I am not sounding too confused with the words that I am choosing. Thank you all for your valuable contributions of knowledge and time to this world. I am very grateful that Isvara has brought me the teachings through you. When I have the money, I do plan to purchase your video courses, as I am sure this will help deepen my understanding. May you and your husband continue in eternal peace.

Sundari: Thank you Steve, you are welcome and may Isvara bless you with fully assimilated self-knowledge. Your understanding is good, but are a bit confused and you have work to do on assimilating the teaching on Isvara/jiva, which is very subtle and the most difficult part of Vedanta scripture, the means of knowledge. You are doing fine, keep at it. Please follow my instructions with regards to the reading material I recommend.

Love, Sundari