

Satya, Mithya & Jiva's Freewill

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Leon: Thank you, Arlindo. These discussions are settling in, and I tend to revisit them when prompted by the mind. Currently I was thinking about time and needed to write it down:

If time is a thought, a concept, then what's left is the appearance of an "eternal now." But then if now is all there is, how does that account for the body changing over time? Where is the baby body I had? It should be here if time is not real. Therefore I cannot see how the world is real; it's a logical absurdity that anything exists at all.

Arlindo: You are right on, Leon. Everything is an appearance (not really real), just like the wave superimposed by the mind over the ocean. This apparent reality is constantly modifying, aging and decaying – recycling itself. It is a very intelligently designed apparent reality and governed by pure knowledge and its precise laws. Within this *mithya* reality there appears two types of apparent objects: the insentient and the sentient ones. The sentient ones we call *jivas*, and among the *jivas* we find the human *jivas*. The human *jivas*, due to their developed intellect, produce what we call "*pratibhasika satyam*" – *jiva's* own world/superimposition, or *jiva's* interpretation of *Isvara's* creation.

Jiva contacts the world of the objects one thought at the time, and as it is a very fast sequence of thoughts/objects it creates a sense of duration of experience and interval between objects that gives birth to the concept of time. Your next phrase is beautifully and precisely put: "If I'm not making a mistake, then the only answer is that life is a dream, a projection, a series of thoughts being projected that make it seem as if there is a continuity of life."

Leon: I saw that life then could not be any other way than it is, because if it's a movie, then the movie must be stored somewhere, predetermined "on film," and I am a character in this movie.

Arlindo: The question of *jiva's* free will and destiny needs to be understood in order not seem a paradox. The whole creation is operated by (*Isvara*), the macrocosmic causal body of the entire universe. It is the whole universe, but in its seed/potential form. All living beings think and act according to their causal body program. Yes, things are what they are and they could not be any different, but it does not mean to say that human *jivas* (the only *jivas* with apparent free will) cannot influence *Isvara's* play with their thoughts and actions.

Leon: Which gives me the feeling that I'm being lived rather than living.

Arlindo: I fully agree with you that all other creatures may be fully lived (operated) by *Isvara* (their causal programs) – but in the case of human *jivas*, we may or may not be fully operated by *Isvara* (our *vasanas*), because some mature *jivas* begin enquiring to know who they are, and after they have come to the clear understanding of their true nature and firmly established their identity as

pure awareness, a phenomenon called self-knowledge and *moksa* takes place and the *jivamukta* develops a natural freedom to say “yes or no” to their *vasanas*. In other words, they will filter their *vasanas* in a way that they will only act out on those *vasanas* in harmony with *Isvara* and the *dharma* field, and as a result the *adharmic vasanas* will gradually dry up. Yet, in other words, they will conform their thoughts and actions to the scriptures on *dharma/karma yoga* and live a free and happy life.

Leon: It makes me want to turn over my will to *Isvara* because I really have no choice.

Arlindo: It is highly advised that you turn your will to *Isvara*, meaning to say that you will sacrifice your personal *adharmic* “desires and fears” and begin thinking and acting in harmony with others and the environment. But sacrificing your “*adharmic vasanas*” (desires and fears not in harmony with the field) also means saying no to your ignorance-based *vasanas* – which is equal to “saying no” to the program *Isvara* has given you.

Everything boils down to *Isvara*’s doings, but the human *jiva*, being the only *jiva* equipped with a mind with apparent free will, is therefore, to a certain extent, also responsible for the formation of its own causal body. Human *jivas* have a role to play in this “cause-and-effect” game of life that allows them, by their very actions, to persuade *Isvara* to favor him/her with favorable *karma*, which will eventually be conducive to self-knowledge and *moksa*.

Leon: Is this why enlightened people say that they leave everything up to *Bhagavan*? *Bhagavan* knows the future; it’s already destined.

Arlindo: It is not really like that – nothing is already written in stone as destiny, because the nature of *mithya* is “constant change.” Why? Because this is a cause-and-effect order of reality where everything is affecting and modifying everything else – nothing remains the same from one moment to the next. People who know the truth and have firmly assimilated self-knowledge and *Isvara*-knowledge (*karma/dharma yoga*) will take life very easy. Knowing that in this dualistic reality one cannot win or lose – it is a zero-sum game – they do not get concerned about circumstances of life. *Jivamuktas* know well that, due to its constant modification and dependable nature, nothing here is “really real.”

But although not real, they know that this apparent reality we call *mithya* exists and is experienced. Therefore with gratitude they acknowledge the Lord of this universe for the opportunity to be here, take everything as “*prasad*” and conform their lives to *Bhagavan* and Its laws and rules governing and operating the universe.

But this highly spiritual attitude, entirely based on knowledge, does not free the *jivamukta* from his *karmic* responsibility to appropriately and in a timely manner respond to whatsoever *Isvara* presents to them. Life is a continuous “stimulus-response” game. If anyone responds in harmony with *Bhagavan*, chances are that he/she will live a happy and peaceful life, and develop a mind fit for contemplation and self-knowledge.