

# The Intellect and the Three Energies

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2016-11-05

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2984>

**Ingrid:** Hi, Ted.

I have a friend who is trying to learn Vedanta but seems not to accept that there is an intellect, that it is transformed to wisdom when self-realized is what he means. The wisdom I see as the self-knowledge the intellect acquires knowing it is the self. This denial that there even is an intellect must be since there is a lot of no-mind teaching out there.

The mind is the universe, so we cannot leave the mind where we put our shoes outside the door to the meditation room. And I see we have to discriminate the witness from the apparent, which the intellect is used for.

When people are in denial of this, is it because there is *rajas* and *tamas*?

**Ted:** *Rajas* and *tamas* are always present to some degree in everything, including the mind of the self-realized. However, it is correct to say that the denial is present in this case due to a predominance of *tamas*.

**Ingrid:** I wonder how to see if the person is qualified since the basics of object and subject have not been grasped although he has tried almost a year to learn Vedanta, I think. Are some intellects yet not ready to grasp that the intellect can discriminate between objects and awareness because of too much identification with thought or mind chatter? Or is it lack of logic? Or an inability to witness and inquire deeply?

**Ted:** It all amounts to the same thing. The identification with the body-mind-sense complex is yet too strong for the intellect to grasp the fact that the BMSC is "illuminated" by awareness.

**Ingrid:** Is Vedanta just for intelligent people, but that self can be realized without *jnana yoga*?

**Ted:** The systematic unfoldment of the implied meaning of the words of scripture that constitutes traditional Vedanta does require discrimination that is a function of the intellect. But even for one who doesn't engage in formal self-inquiry, the realization that constitutes self-knowledge, or "enlightenment," occurs in the intellect. Remember, self-realization is a matter of understanding, not experience. An experience may lead to the realization, but the knowledge is what liberates and what remains after the experience ends.

**Ingrid:** I do not say he is not a smart person. I just wonder if it is due to the intellect or just *rajas* and *tamas* that it is such a denial or can the person not see because he has not a *sattvic* mind?

**Ted:** The person cannot understand because his mind is not *sattvic*.

**Ingrid:** I feel now it is not like “my mind” is *sattvic* since there is not really a head to have quietness inside. Okay, there is a head, but maybe the thoughts never were inside the head.

**Ted:** Thoughts are not inside the head. You can't cut open the brain and find thoughts. Thoughts appear in the mind, which is essentially the subtle body.

**Ingrid:** That it always was a body-mind-sense complex that appeared that could sense, but that the *jiva* is appearing, and thoughts are appearing but not in any relation to *jiva*. It just identified with the thoughts as the *jiva*'s thoughts.

**Ted:** Correct. The thoughts are in relation to the *jiva*, but are not exactly the *jiva*'s thoughts. They are the objective phenomena within the ocean of the causal body to which the particular *jiva* has exclusive access, so to speak.

**Ingrid:** But now that there are fewer thoughts, where did they go? Are they dissolved into awareness becoming awareness? I do not think they can change from *mithya* to *satya*. So are they just becoming *sattvic* energy instead of *rajasic* energy? Are we sure God has not just removed them? As a grace?

**Ted:** Objective phenomena simply arise, abide and subside within the ocean of consciousness. Their content (i.e. the substance of which they are made) is nothing other than consciousness, but their forms (i.e. their particular shape and quality) are only apparent. They are like the pots and other objects made from clay. If the objects were broken down, they would revert to clay. So, the objects are *mithya*, whereas the clay is *satya*.

**Ingrid:** Was it *vasanas* that had disappeared that in a way were linked to this body-mind so I could have experienced them as “near” to the body?

**Ted:** *Vrittis* (i.e. thoughts) and *vasanas* – that is, in the sense of likes and dislikes – are not exactly the same. But the basic idea is correct.

**Ingrid:** Now, it is quite empty here. If a thought comes, I realize it is not me as awareness. It does not really belong to the *jiva* either, so it is not personal. Yet other *jivas* do not hear those thoughts I “hear” or witness as awareness.

**Ted:** Correct.

**Ingrid:** But I know for others, they do not feel it is empty, but a lot of thoughts. How come those bodies experience a lot and this body experiences less if all appears and it is only one self all appears in. How come this awareness is “locked” to witness this body and these thoughts?

**Ted:** Each subtle body has a portion of the causal body to which only it is privy.

**Ingrid:** Is it maybe not inside the brain that is *sattvic*?

**Ted:** The *sattvic* mind is less agitated by thoughts.

**Ingrid:** It could be feeling, just like the inside of an arm. Nothing there to be aware of except when pain is also located in body parts. But how can I explain the intellect? As an organ apart from the rest of the mind?

**Ted:** The intellect is not an organ separate from the rest of the mind, or *antahkarana* (i.e. “inner instrument”). It is simply the discriminative function within the *antahkarana*.

**Ingrid:** Is there personal mind and universal mind?

**Ted:** Yes. The personal mind is the *antahkarana*. The universal mind is *hiranyagarbha*, which is the total of all subtle bodies, or essentially *Isvara*’s mind.

**Ingrid:** It seems to me that intellect is located in the forehead.

**Ted:** The mind is not the brain and is not located in the physical realm. The brain is the “hardware” that conducts the “software” of the mind.

**Ingrid:** But the human brain, does it actually store information? What about memory?

**Ted:** Memory is another function of the mind. It is called *chitta*.

**Ingrid:** I witness a body. I also witness feelings. Thoughts. Senses. I can be aware of different body parts and move my attention to different places, as if the awareness can move inside. At the same time I witness the body, since I am the awareness.

**Ted:** Yes, but remember, as pure awareness you don’t “witness” these phenomena as objects. Pure awareness is the principle of illumination or intelligence that enables the mind to know objects, including itself.

**Ingrid:** I wonder if it is like we are taught about the brain by science is accurate or if it differs a lot from Vedanta. I see scientists have not understood that consciousness is prior to the body but try to figure out a lot about awareness and know a lot as well. I do not know anything about science really, but what I know is that the I is me and is aware of the body-mind, so the brain and intellect must be inert and operate because of awareness.

**Ted:** Correct.

**Ingrid:** But it seems as if I am not linked to the body.

**Ted:** You, pure awareness, are not linked to anything. Linking requires two substantives. But in non-dual reality there is only awareness. The connection between the body-mind and awareness is only apparent, for essentially there is nothing but awareness.

**Ingrid:** The intellect recognizes me, but it is not me. It is made of me. The intellect is the me, or the *jiva*, and it is a body, so it is one human organism.

**Ted:** Correct.

**Ingrid:** But since it is not real, just something “plastic,” in a way it seems illogical that the individual mind stores information in the brain. I just feel like this *jiva* is an instrument that receives information. It is a transmitter, in a way.

**Ted:** Yes, basically this is how it is.

**Ingrid:** It is a form, but I cannot locate or notice the brain, just notice the intellect in the forehead of this body. It is like a film, so I am just in it. I cannot notice I am thinking and when I write I just do it without thinking about how I do it, so it happens without a separate self-idea.

Can we say that what science is explaining about the brain and body is correct insofar that they do not know awareness is prior to and not located in the body since it is beyond it?

**Ted:** Yes.

**Ingrid:** Or is there a huge gap between modern brain science and Vedanta? I know it is the science of the self and totally different of course, but since they study the brain, etc.

**Ted:** What material science discovers is valid within the context of the apparent reality. It is simply not the fundamental truth of being.

**Ingrid:** I also wonder about *rajas* and *tamas* and *sattva*. How do we really know it is three energies? And about earth, fire, water, space, air. Can we say that the earth consists of no more substances than these, as if all are derived from those? Which is apparent awareness of course that is manifested awareness. Or do they mean these five elements are what the whole universe consists of?

**Ted:** These categorizations are not meant to be scientifically valid. Modern science has fine-tuned these basic taxonomies, we might say, but the basic principle underlying them still holds. They are simply models from a pre-scientific era that are intended to reveal that no matter how you slice the apparent reality, its substrate, its essential nature, is nothing other than awareness.

**Ingrid:** Thank you.

**Ted:** My pleasure.

~ *Namaste*, Ted