

# The Real Cannot Be Known and Experienced

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**Arlindo:** Hello, Sally. This confusion is called superimposition, and is very common in the spiritual world. It is as well responsible for the rise of most of the Neo-Advaita teachings we find in the spiritual marketplace. This is so because Neo teachers do not extensively subject their minds to the scriptures, where the complete teaching of the nature of reality is clearly unfolded. This is unfortunate because teachings as such offer the spiritual *jivas* a spiritual short-cut which is ineffective in canceling one's ignorance. Once the seeker hears the ultimate truth, "all there is is consciousness, and you are That," he feels as if he got the ultimate truth about himself and the manifest universe.

But the problem lies in the fact that ignorance of the nature of reality is very much hardwired. It is deeply buried in the collective unconscious mind of creation for countless universes. To hear the absolute truth without having understood the relative nature of reality is of very little help. And why so? Because the *jiva* will deny the existence of the apparent universe as non-existent, which is a fundamental mistake committed by several teachers and traditions, because one cannot deny the existence of something one experiences and suffers except by deeply understanding its apparent nature (*maya/Isvara/jiva/Creation*).

To keep it simple, we may say that there are only two orders of reality of the same one reality: the unmanifest consciousness and the manifest consciousness, *satya* and *mithya*. The unmanifest consciousness is the causeless cause of the manifest (it needs a power called *maya* in order to project the world of duality). The manifest is dependent on the unmanifest for its existence. But the unmanifest is free from the manifest world.

We are talking of an apparent order of reality which exists/appears within the absolute. These two orders of reality have consciousness as the common factor or ground because everything in the apparent creation is made of consciousness. The unmanifest (pure consciousness) is real but it cannot be objectively known or experienced. The manifest universe (pure consciousness plus objects) is unreal, or apparently real, but it can be known and experienced. But what is most important to understand in this context is that the logic, laws and attributes that applies to *satya* do not necessarily apply to *mithya* and vice versa. This confusion is called superimposition. Understanding *maya* is the key to liberation.

**Sally:** Very well said, as usual, Arlindo. ☺ It's a pity that the difference between "it exists" and "is real" is not more widely taught. If those definitions are clear, we then have the basis for inquiry. *Maya* is then seen as having a unique position which, as you say, is the key to liberation.

**Arlindo:** Absolutely, my friend, apparent suffering is not real, but it is experienced by all apparent *jivas* in *maya*.

*Maya* is a power or a talent inherent in awareness and *Isvara*, but the most intriguing thing about *maya* is that it neither belongs to awareness nor to *Isvara*. It does not belong to awareness,

because awareness is whole, limitless and therefore partless and without properties and attributes, and a power or a talent, even if never manifest (remained as potential) is still a causal attribute or property.

If it does not belong to awareness, one would conclude that it belongs to *Isvara*, right? But it does not seem to be the case! *Isvara* rather seems to be a product of *maya*. When pure *sattva* manifests as the causal intelligence of creation, the creation is instantaneously projected and never to remain the same from one moment to another. *Isvara* (pure *sattva*) seems to be the cause, and Creation the effect. It is difficult to find room for *maya* in this equation, but yet we may say that *maya* is the power that allows the rope to be seen as a snake. *Maya* seems to be a kind of deceiving power which fundamentally provides *Isvara* with the ability to create, maintain and recycle the universe due to its dualistic subject-object function (awareness and *maya*). *Maya* exists, but it does not seem to exist, yet without it the apparent reality does not come to exist. ☺