

The Real and the Apparent

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2012-03-29

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/910>

Landon: *Namaste*, Sundari. I hope you are well and spring is a welcomed affair – it is in Ohio. Thank you for pointing out my confusion. Until you responded, I didn't even take into consideration the reflected I, who I take myself to be, and the real I, or pure awareness.

Sundari: This is where the real work begins. Understanding your true nature as awareness is the easy part, actualising it in *maya/mithya* is the tough bit.

Landon: Is it then that pure awareness is unassociated, ever pure, from the reflected awareness – the subtle body, who I consider to be Landon – yet shines completely through me and permeates everything?

Sundari: Yes, this is correct. The subtle body is not conscious, although it appears to be so because the light of you, awareness, shines on it. It is a borrowed light, like the light of the sun shining on the moon, making it seem to have its own light.

Landon: In other words, pure awareness is *paramarthika satya*, and everything that I experience is *vyavaharika* and *pratibhasika satyam*, or *mithya*? Or am I confusing this too?

Sundari: Yes, awareness is the highest truth, your true nature, and yes, everything you experience in *mithya* is either *vyavaharika satyam* (empirical, or objective reality) or *pratibhasika satyam* (dream, or subjective reality).

Landon: I think of this because *mithya* is categorically neither real nor unreal and dependent on *satya*; therefore pure consciousness, *satya*, is the only reality, the non-objectifiable substratum of existence that sits ever non-attached, which allows for the appearance of creation, *mithya*, as *maya*?

Sundari: That is correct. *Maya* is the cause of the apparent reality, and all the effects are *mithya*, i.e. they are not real and have a dependent reality.

From the perspective of the *jiva*, the *jiva* and all the objects are dependent upon *maya*. *Maya* is dependent on awareness. From the perspective of the self, there is no *maya*, no cause and no effect. There is only awareness.

Landon: That said, pure awareness is ever free, but certainly always available as the reflection, which is my subtle body? If this is so, then freedom comes from the association with pure

consciousness as identified above. I am sure listening to more *Bhagavad Gita* lectures will shine scores of light on this subject matter, but I want to have crystal-clear understanding.

Sundari: That is correct, awareness is ever free and always available for experience in the subtle body.

Landon: After thinking and meditating on your words, I see that my idea of *moksa* occurring at a specific time is from the *yoga* days, and quite a doer mentality. After inquiring from the standpoint of already being free – fake it until you make it! – there is a quiet strength that is growing, a quiet confidence.

Sundari: With the application of *karma yoga* and the firm commitment to your inquiry, the knowledge itself does the work; the knowledge becomes increasingly steady and with it comes the confidence to stand in awareness as awareness.

Landon: Could you further explain what you mean by *maya* is the cause of the apparent reality and *mithya* is the effect? I understand *maya* as the as-though force that makes pure consciousness seem to be other than pure consciousness. Is it therefore that after *maya* has “made” consciousness appear other than its true nature, then all apparent creations are therefore *mithya*? Does that even make sense? ☺

Sundari: This is correct, Landon, it makes perfect sense! It is a subtle point, and well done for working it out, although it could be put more clearly.

Maya is the power (*shakti*) of ignorance. It makes the self appear as if it is the world. The world is the effect of ignorance. The effects of ignorance are apparent, not real and therefore they can be removed by inquiry. Otherwise they would be real and you would not be able to remove them with inquiry.

Landon: That finally makes sense! Thank you. So it is safe to say then that the reason we can negate everything through inquiry is because, yes, everything in this “creation” is *mithya*, and *mithya* is the effect of ignorance, as you have stated? It’s so glaringly obvious, really. And that said, *Isvara* is just another name for awareness as though under the spell of ignorance, wielding *maya*? If this is so, the entire stream of creation (causal, subtle, gross bodies, or elements, objects, world) is completely negatable through understanding, just like seeing the clay in pot, gold in ring, ocean in wave?

I’ve heard this hundreds of times, but it’s coming together, it seems... thank you!

Sundari: Yes, you have it all worked out. ☺ As James says, from this perspective the whole creation is a fantasy, a projection or an imagining. He has written you a reply to the email you sent to him which covers the two versions of the creation teaching, as well as confirmation of the *panchikarana* teaching you touch on. He explains why it is important to understand the distinction

between *satya* and *mithya* so that once you get it and you know there is only consciousness you can throw the whole thing away.

Yes also to your question about *Isvara*, which once you get that, you realise that you as consciousness are beyond *Isvara*. *Isvara* is in you. What is so cool about all of this is once you get it, it is such a big deal that it is no big deal and you get to enjoy everything in *mithya* to the full, knowing it's all you. You get to worship everything too because it is all you. Then you give Landon full permission to wander as far as he wants to in *mithya* because you know he will always come home to you, awareness. This is actually the most important part of all the teachings as I think I said this to you before, realising your true nature as the self is the easy part. Actualising your self as *satya* in *mithya* is the hard part.

This is where many spiritual seekers fall down, as in negating *mithya* too soon it becomes a serious Achilles heel. Many just dismiss it as unreal, which also seems to let them off the hook with regards to dealing with their stuff. The fact is, apparent as it may be, you do apparently exist and so *mithya* obtains. A very important point to get is that although *mithya* is not real, it is eternal because the self is eternal. This is where the rubber meets the road, you have to work it out or you will suffer. This is where all the Neos fall down; they just deny *mithya*.

What is the point of self-knowledge otherwise? It is only for the apparent person who lives here. To the self, there is no *satya* and *mithya*. You just have to get past that apparent contradiction because it is only an apparent one and not real, so you can get past it!