

# The Self Doesn't Care, but It Can Care

Ram (James Swartz)

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**David:** Hi, James. Thank you for your response.

I think I have been trying to reach awareness, be awareness (something different from current experience), but I already am and this is it. Nothing changes. Ha, ha. But I just need clarity on exactly what is doing the contemplation to help with teaching.

You wrote: "As the self, you can dismiss every thought because thoughts don't affect the self."

Please correct me... the self does not dismiss, it just is. So who are you asking to dismiss the thought? The intellect? The act of dismissal is a conscious choice based on a decision, which for a *samsari* is usually driven by an intermingling of *vasanas* (and *gunas*) and physical or subtle objects. As the self, I cannot dismiss, but as the *jiva* knowing I am awareness, I can.

**James:** Yes, as a *jiva* knowing it is awareness – or as a *jiva* not knowing it is awareness. There is only one you, awareness. It is either partially under the spell of ignorance, meaning it thinks it is a *jiva* from time to time – or all the time – or it is free of the notion that it is a *jiva*. The intellect isn't conscious. To dismiss a thought requires the self plus the intellect, the *jivatma*, which is actually non-separate from pure original awareness (*brahman*). So the self is involved in every action, disinterestedly if it knows what it is and with interest if it doesn't.

**David:** You wrote: "If you are the self and you want the doer to be happy, then you have to address the issues that affect the doer. If you want the doer to be happy in its relationship with its wife, you have to see to it that it follows husband *dharma*, however David and his wife have structured it."

Who is the "you" that you refer to in the first line? Not awareness (actually, it is because everything is awareness), because pure awareness has no wants/desire or preferences. So do I take that statement as:

"If you (the subtle body, reflected awareness; more specifically, the intellect, which all are *mithya*) are the self (my real identity, *satyam*) and you want the doer to be happy, then you have to address... etc.," what is it that wants that you are referring to?

**James:** The self is free of desire, but endowed with the power of *maya*, it is free to desire. If it can't desire, it isn't free. It won't have a desire to help itself when it knows what it is, because it knows that it is full and ever-free, but it may have a desire to help a *jiva*.

**David:** I think I have trouble with the "you" that knows it is awareness. I need clarity on who that you is. The intellect, reflected awareness? I am awareness experiencing this reality through the *jiva* which is actually in me. No escape from this reality other than through knowledge (knowing

its all *mithya*).

**James:** There is only one you. It is either under the spell of ignorance or not. If it isn't, it is "enlightened," i.e. free. If it doesn't know that it is free, it is still the self. But, yes, in terms of your understanding now, it is the intellect, reflected awareness.

**David:** You wrote: "*Karma yoga* won't work in the long run, because the basic conflict between your doer's desires and her doer's desires had not been properly addressed and laid to rest. Your doer wants freedom and hers wants to depend on an object, i.e. David."

Does not the practice of contemplation remove or allow one to identify the desires/*vasanas* of the *jiva*/doer?

**James:** Yes.

**David:** That has been my experience. So in my current circumstances, I look at the situation with the wife and think, "The likes and dislikes are fading; what used to bother me no longer does or does not." The like/dislikes that remain which cause agitation will also disappear as the knowledge firms up. From the standpoint of the self, there is no problem but I watch a problem act out... it is all *mithya*. I see myself (my *jiva*) behave a certain way because I have a dislike for, let's say, a behaviour of my wife's. This dislike comes from a *vasana*(s) which proves I am not the doer, because this seeming person is just driven by imprints from past experiences. Combine the *vasanas* with the *gunas* and objects, and you can easily see how I cannot be the doer. So... again from the standpoint of the self, there is no problem, because everything is *mithya*, yet from observing the *vasanas* play out, there is. Do I care or should I care? ☺

**James:** You are free to care or not. If you see that your likes and dislikes are the problem and they are ameliorating as a result of *karma yoga* and inquiry, then you needn't care. But if you care if you care, then do *karma yoga* on the caring, meaning leave the caring to *Isvara*. Or just see caring as *mithya*.

**David:** The *vasanas* get removed when exposed, some take longer or are sneakier, but they are all falling away in light of knowledge. So with that said, I stay in the relationship with the wife because I know her behaviours and "my" behaviour are *vasana*-driven and *mithya*. My question was never to do with my wife, but my relationship with objects, the waking-state reality and mainly thought-objects. I seem to be drawn to dismiss it all. I can see the *ahamkara* dissolving/losing its grip, which it never had. I can see/know my *karma*, *vasanas* and *gunas* drive me (the *jiva*) to act.

**James:** You are on the right track, David; your understanding of *Isvara* is very good. The problem is never with the object, in this case the wife, it is always with you, the subject. So the question is not whether or not you stay with your wife; it is whether or not you stay with the idea that you are the self – with or without ignorance.

**David:** In the end, James, I am inclined to bring to the mind that all this... all of this... from my thoughts, desire to know, to absolutely everything and anything known, is *mithya*. There really is just me; as I prefer to say it, I am. Guidance is very much appreciated.

**James:** That's a very excellent inclination, David. The wife is *mithya* and David is *mithya*. The kids are *mithya*. But *mithya* is *satya*. So everything is *satya*. And, finally, *satya* is not *mithya*. Understanding this fact is freedom.

Let me know if this *satsang* removed your confusion.

~ Love, James