

The Structure of *Maya*

Ram (James Swartz)

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Dear James, thank you!

The non-self is in the second week of a self-imposed Vedanta retreat with you via the videos I recently purchased. I'm staying at a beach house just yards from the water – well, the wave/ocean metaphor is right at the front door – a beautiful, constant self-reminder from the *maya* movie.

Having realized that experience was not going to reveal the self, you appeared in my world. As you suggested in previous emails, current studies now consist of reading your book, the texts and watching your videos. I am asking for your assistance in applying the knowledge of Vedanta to understand the many experiences received – *darshans* of the nature you share during the Q&A session at the end of *Panchadasa*, power objects, power spots, *khandana yoga*, manifesting objects, changing one object into another object, making objects bleed. etc. – so they can be put to rest.

What is the structure of *maya* propitiating these experiences? Yes, of course they only come by the grace of *Isvara*, and they apparently occur in the waking state and usually appear to require a fair amount of *sattva*. They are touted as experiences of the self. The non-self experienced them but now knows them to be not real, not truth. So could you take one example, say the *darshan* you share in the *Panchadasa* Q&A session, and explain it? In terms of Vedanta what parts of the structure or rules of *maya* are operating to allow this type of experience to have appeared in me, this object to have appeared in me, as it appeared in you?

Being respectful of your time I am open to a brief Skype session at your convenience if that is easier than responding to my email. Or if your response needs to wait until our physical paths cross – so be it too.

The only book I brought with me to this beach Vedanta retreat, which I had no idea why I brought it as it just sort of jumped off the shelf and into my bag, was *The Crest Jewel of Discrimination*. ☺ I will arise at 1:00 am to participate live in your teaching. Thanks to you and all those supporting you to make this happen!

With love, Megan

Hi, Megan. I am so happy that Vedanta found you. Obviously you were ready for it. And it seems you are well on your way because you have overcome the number one obstacle to liberation: the belief in experiential enlightenment and from this email it seems to me that you have now objectified the not-self instead of the self, which means that your knowledge is now in harmony with the nature of reality. We are always only awareness observing the person, never the person observing (experiencing) awareness. It is probably not fair to say that you objectified the ego but that you, awareness, assimilated the knowledge “I am awareness” and it brought about the recognition that Megan, the not-self, is an object, not the subject. That shift is a real game-changer. It is *moksa*, freedom from limitation. i.e. the belief that you are Megan.

It took me several reads to try to figure out the actual doubt concerning the structure of *maya* precipitating these experiences. My first thought was why it matters if you understand the reason. It doesn't change anything. What is important is that, owing to your nature as an intelligent thinking person, you interpreted your life's experiences, spiritual and otherwise, in such a way that they led you to Vedanta and the knowledge of who you are. The point, however, is that from awareness's point of view no discrete experience means more or less than any other discrete experience. Even on the way to self knowledge, i.e. *moksa*, the kinds of experiences you mention can be as unhelpful as they are helpful insofar as the way they are interpreted can either lead you more quickly to the goal or take you farther afield. Both the experiences and the way you chose to interpret them are actually *Isvara*, and the reasons they happen as they happen and when they happen are only known to *Isvara*. The best that human beings can do is to understand the following basic fact about *Isvara*, which is, as you mention, the structure of *maya*. Whatever is experienced is the result of a *jiva*'s actions as they interact with *Isvara* appearing as the field of experience, meaning your mind and the minds around you. Certain actions – thoughts and feelings like prayer and meditation, chanting, association with gurus, attending *satsang*, etc. – that the Megan ego (apparently) did caused *sattvic* states that manifested these epiphanies. We can't say that your extensive *sadhana* necessarily produced them although in general these experiences come to people who do *yoga sadhana* of some sort, because completely worldly people also get them. It is not an accident that the *siddhi* chapter of the *Yoga Sutras* follows the *sadhana* chapter.

The truth is, however, that *maya* is inscrutable. Nobody understands it because it is not a known object and has no self-nature, and even if someone did understand it, so what? It doesn't change the fact that you are awareness and that all experiences are just ephemeral objects, i.e. not-self. Well, they are the self but the self is not them. People have similar experiences because *Isvara*'s psychological order – the various *samskaric* configurations in the causal body that out-picture the world of beings – creates a limited number of basic types or patterns of experience. I hope this has been helpful. I don't remember what experience I talked about in that *satsang* and I am not inclined to dig it up and pontificate about it.

~ Much love, James