

WHERE TO FIND FREE WILL?

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A Jiva is a living creature with three bodies and five physiological systems functioning 24/7 to keep the body well and alive. As we know, the three bodies and the pranas are matter, energies... physical, subtle and causal matter. All matter is in the category of 'objects', and fundamentally, all objects are insentient, not conscious. What happens then with the human subtle body that somehow, produces the thought; I exist, I am a conscious being?

What happens could be described as the effect of a "magic play" between Satya and Mithya... between awareness and Maya that produces a highly sattvic object called the subtle body. Of all Jivas, the human subtle body possess enough reflectivity to bounce off consciousness to produce what is called; specular reflection. It reflects consciousness just like a mirror, and it not only reflects and illumines the world of thoughts/objects but it also, intelligently examines, discerns and interprets the contacted objects with reference to the other objects in the field and its previous experiences. This intelligent self-conscious reflectivity gives rise to a sense of individual personal existence we commonly refer to as the individual; a human conscious being, or a Jiva.

As we analyze the nature of human consciousness, we could say that the human Jiva is only RC (reflected consciousness), and that RC is not OC (original consciousness), the same way an object reflected in the mirror is not the object itself. But consciousness is not an object and therefore we need to take into this analysis the fact that a light-ray is the same light-ray, before and after it bounces off an object with a smooth and shiny surface. The properties of the reflected ray of light may vary according to the characteristics of the RA (reflecting apparatus), but its essential nature remains the same, light-ray.

If we assume our nature to be LC ("light" of consciousness) consequently we must acknowledge that our true identity is awareness or OC. On the other hand, if we take ourselves to be the mirror RA (reflecting apparatus) commonly known as the subtle body, we will be defined as a Jiva - limited by its qualities/capacity to bounce off LC (light of consciousness) and know its environment. A well-polished and purified RA (Jiva's subtle body) will reflect LC with less distortion, self-absorption and consequently, minimum loss of integrity of its pure light.

But if we accept the logic that a ray of light is essentially the same, even after it bounces off the RA (human subtle body), we will find ourselves in a different condition from the previous two. On first analysis we considered ourselves to be OC or the original light of consciousness, before any possible reflection could take place. The second and most common condition is the identification with the RA, the "reflecting apparatus", the subtle body. In this case we must engage with concepts such as; purification, betterment or in more technical terms, with the development of more sattva guna in the subtle body.

But once we have accepted that a ray of light maintains its essential nature even after it reflects on the RA (subtle body), we have come to the clear understanding that my nature is LC (light of

Consciousness) and that LC = OC. Most importantly we come to the recognition that RC is of same nature as OC (RC = OC). Hence, what is relevant in this third condition is that RC, in its essence, is equal to OC, regardless of how much absorption or reflecting distortions an unpurified apparatus may cause. No wonder we always come to the same non-dualistic conclusion J

Now, where does the freewill fit in all of this? Jiva's apparent freewill does not belong to the mirror-like 'RA', (reflecting apparatus) we call the subtle body. The apparatus is inert, made of matter - not conscious and therefore only an instrument programmed and operated by Isvara for the purpose of creation, maintenance and destruction of creation. Jiva's apparent freewill is also not found in 'OC' because 'OC' is free of attributes, it does not think, discern or develop freewill.

Where to find Freewill then? It must belong to the ray of light after it bounces off and reflects on the subtle body to become (RC). By the power of Maya, this reflected consciousness (RC), although sharing the same actionless and attributeless nature of original Consciousness (OC), somehow in association with the 'RA' (reflecting apparatus) it apparently borrows and develops attributes and qualities inherent to the mirror (RA). This apparent association gives rise to the phenomenal known as personified consciousness. Only then Consciousness has the necessary attributes and qualities to contact and transact in the apparent world of duality. As a result, RC (reflected consciousness) develops the apparent freewill, which will account for the karmic laws by which all human Jivas are subjected to.

Questioner: But on a more practical level... sometimes I hear you saying that there is freewill. Some other times I hear you saying that there isn't?!

There is only apparent free will Diane. From the perspective of Jiva's subtle body, there is an apparent choice between eating a banana or an apple. But those are only vasanas driven choices. Yet, from the perspective of Isvara we could also say that freewill is a thought Isvara plants in the mind of the Jiva that says; I want to understand and know my true nature and no longer to be pushed around by my vasanas.

But why to consider such thought, I want moksha, a "free-conscious thought"? Because this apparent "freewill" or desire for liberation does not seem to come as a "default program" for the Jivas. Simply because everyone, with maybe rare exceptions, is born out of ignorance. All default vasanas are directed towards objects to restore Jiva's sense of limitlessness, completion and satisfaction.

This apparent "freewill" (the desire for liberation), instead, will question and challenge the self-perpetuating mechanism which binds the Jiva to the world of objects... it is the desire to understand and know oneself independently of all objects as the only subject there is; free, actionless, pure awareness. It marks a radical turn of tendency... from being totally operated by ignorance, to saying, 'no more' to Isvara's self-feeding system.

But it is important to notice that since ignorance and knowledge exist both in mithya, and since in Mithya nothing really escapes Isvara, this apparent "freewill" or desire for liberation will rapidly develop to become a new "knowledge-based" vasana which in turn, will begin operating the Jiva (no more in search for objects), but in search for the firm understanding of his true nature as the subject, i.e., awareness. Is Isvara messing with us?

It is all Isvara in operation, which by the way, may at times appear to be a 'controlling freak.' And

that explains why even great Mahatmas still have bhakti for the Lord. But there is a great deal of difference between an ignorance-based vasana and a knowledge-based one. The ignorance-based will produce fleeting experiences due to the constant contact with thoughts and objects, and the knowledge-based will produce self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge will put an end to the compulsiveness to control one's experience and Jiva will live a happy life. Let's set back, let the Lord control, and pray for a sattvic mind. And the best pray is an appropriate action! It never ends to amaze me this relationship between Isvara, Jiva and the world. Is it acceptable to call it Freewill? And if so, where does it come from?