

# Who Is It That Loses Interest in Vedanta?

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2014-09-13

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1034>

**Brian:** Hi Sundari, I apologize for never responding to your email. I have lousy *satsang* manners! I just emailed Isaiah as well, telling him that the seeking has just sort of stopped. I had some very quiet, subtle days about two weeks back when I thought about what “I” was doing and what “I” was seeking, and I realized I was still looking for some irrefutable evidence that “I” was the self – experiential or immutable or otherwise. If Brian is just an object, I’ll still never experience myself as not being in the body; rather, I have accepted the knowledge that that’s just how it is.

**Sundari:** My apologies for the late reply, Brian; we have been super-busy with Trout Lake and the demands that ShiningWorld puts onto us.

With regards to your statement above: this is part of the process of self-inquiry, when self-knowledge starts to take hold in the mind. The ego has difficulty getting on board with the idea that it is and always has been awareness experiencing the ego, not the other way around. *Moksa* is about discriminating you, awareness, from the objects that appear in you, i.e. “Brian” or the world. This is a 180-degree reversal for the ego.

It is true that as the person you will never not experience being “in” the body, but self-knowledge reveals that you are not the body and have never been in the body. The body appears in you, awareness, and depends on you to exist, but awareness is always free of the body. Ignorance/*maya* makes the body/world appear to be real. The *jiva* is just the lens for awareness to (apparently) have contact with objects.

**Brian:** This begs the question of the difference between a belief and knowledge. If you have a strong belief about something that is true, even if it is not verifiable moment-to-moment, is it the same as having knowledge of it?

**Sundari:** There is a big difference between knowledge of objects – belief is an object – and self-knowledge. The value of having a strong belief in something depends on what you believe in. The substratum for all knowledge is self-knowledge – Vedanta – because it is the knowledge that underpins all knowledge and into which all knowledge dissolves. Before self-knowledge is firm, an important qualification for self-inquiry is faith in the scripture, *shreddha*, and to take a stand in awareness as awareness. This requires that the inquirer “believes” the scripture to be true, even though the mind or ego cannot verify it. This is “faking it until you make it” – and though it is not the same as self-knowledge, it is part of the process of preparing the mind so that self-knowledge will permanently obtain.

Knowledge of objects, the means for which are perception and inference, is always true to the object and not the subject. You will not see a rock if you are looking at a tree, assuming the eyes and the mind behind them are functioning normally. Object-knowledge is subject to error and can be negated because there is a subjective element involved. There are three “levels” of

perception:

1) *Vyavaharika* refers to the realm of empirical reality, such as Newton's world of billiard balls and clocks. This realm is apparently predictable and relatively stable.

2) How we perceive or infer any object is subject to interpretation, however. You and I may both be looking at the same object, or talking about what we believe to be true, but I will see through the screen of my likes and dislikes, and you through yours. This is called *pratibasika*, or subjective reality. This can create an entire world of seemingly real realities. Perception will be unique to the apparent person, or at least, seemingly unique.

3) Lastly, there is the realm of *paramarthika* – the perspective of awareness. This is non-dual vision, where everything is seen as awareness and from the perspective of awareness. This does not mean that objects are the same as awareness because awareness and objects exist in different orders of reality. Awareness is that which is that which never changes and is always present. Objects are always changing and not always present. Objects depend on awareness to exist, but awareness is always free of the objects.

HOW objects are experienced depends on whether the jiva knows its true identity as awareness or not. If the *jiva* has self-knowledge, it will not confuse its creation (*pratibasika* or *jiva srsti*) with *Isvara*'s. Through self-inquiry, self-knowledge negates all objects and reveals that they are only apparently real. This is why *moksa* is freedom from dependence on objects.

Self-knowledge, unlike object-knowledge, is always true and not subject to error because it is true to the self, meaning it cannot be dismissed or negated by any other knowledge. Self-knowledge is different from knowledge of objects, which is object-based, not subject-based. Knowledge of objects is not knowledge unless it is true to the object. If it is "my" knowledge, then it is my interpretation of an object (*pratibasika*), which is not necessarily knowledge. Ignorance (or my point of view) causes me to see or experience objects in a certain way because of "my" conditioning. People believe that ignorance is knowledge because they believe that what they experience or believe is knowledge. It may be knowledge, but it may not be.

Self-knowledge depends on the nature of the self – which is always present and unchanging, not on knowledge gained through personal experience or object knowledge – which is always changing. Self-knowledge is based on irrefutable logic, which is why we call it the science of consciousness. It is not up for interpretation. On the basis of self-knowledge the individual can retain or reject the knowledge gained through his or her personal experience. However, from the microcosmic or psychological level, self-knowledge is subject to interpretation. This is why we need a means of knowledge based on a teaching that is independent of interpretation or opinion, which is called scripture.

**Brian:** Having currently given up that kind of seeking, I just lost interest, so to speak, in Vedanta. I still use the knowledge daily, when it's needed, but I don't have the kind of driven seeking that would cause me to inquire. In fact, I became more interested in developing Brian more in terms of hobbies, work *karma* and relationships. I'm still planning on visiting y'all in Tiru this winter, but otherwise Vedanta has taken a back seat to Brian's life. Who knows, maybe in a week I'll be back at inquiry, but for now I'm not sure there's anything left to seek.

**Sundari:** If *moksa* is truly the main goal, one does not give up seeking because nothing else matters. If *moksa* has obtained in the mind, one does not give up seeking because there is no one there to give up anything. Seeking automatically ends when you become a finder and no longer identify with objects, meaning the doer has been negated. I am not sure what you mean by losing interest in Vedanta, unless you see Vedanta as something other than you. Vedanta is self-knowledge, the subject matter is you. How could you lose interest in you? When seeking ends you no longer seek because you know that there is nothing to gain – you are what you have been seeking. You no longer need the means of knowledge because it has served its purpose, but if *moksa* has obtained in the mind, there is never a moment when self-knowledge is not operating, even if it is not “needed” anymore because you are self-knowledge.

When *moksa* obtains and ignorance is removed from the mind, one is not left with knowledge. Knowledge, like ignorance, is an object known to you, awareness. Non-dual vision allows the person to experience life from the limitless point of view of awareness, no longer the limited point of view of the person. The mind/ego is fully in the service of self-knowledge even though the *jiva* remains the *jiva*, with all its limitations. Choosing to “develop” the *jiva* is fine but remember that the *jiva* is not you and not real.

**Brian:** Thanks again for all y’all do.

**Sundari:** You are welcome, Brian.

~ *Om*, Sundari