

Witnessing Awareness Is Not Another Mind Game

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Burton: Hi, Ted. Do you ever get the real sense that you're just observing your *jiva* doing its thing, e.g. it's talking to someone and engaged in its conversation but you are behind it or above it (location can't be pinpointed) just witnessing?

Ted: Yes. This is pretty much the way it is.

Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that I am able to readily navigate back and forth between the "worldly channel" and the "self channel." I find it enjoyable to play my character in the world, but I don't get swept up in the drama like I once did. I have likes and dislikes and whatnot, but they don't nag at me the way they used to.

From an experiential standpoint, though I am associated with the movements of the body and the mind, and much of the time feel myself riding the wind of those movements, there are times when even in the midst of activity I sense that I am not moving at all, that I am the still, all-pervasive, limitless sky of consciousness in which all these object-clouds are moving about.

Which leads us to your next question...

Burton: Is that just the mind as well – possibly co-opting what it thinks awareness is?

Ted: Yes, the experience is an object arising in consciousness and recognized by the mind. Nevertheless, the object (i.e. the sense of being *sakshi chaitanya*, the non-local witnessing awareness) is a reflection that is true to the non-objectifiable subject that is its source – the self, whose nature is limitless conscious existence – and thus the object is essentially as good as the original.

What is important to bear in mind is that the mind that senses its true nature is not the awareness that is illumining it and enabling it to register the thought that its true nature is witnessing awareness.

That is to say that it is and it isn't.

Given the non-dual nature of reality, the mind is pure awareness in the sense that awareness is both the "substanceless substance" of which the mind is made and the "light" that illumines it and thereby imbues it with sentience and intelligence (i.e. enables it to perform the various functions of perceiving, integrating, deliberating and deciding that we refer to as "thinking" and "knowing"). But neither the mind itself nor any object – or even all the objects together – arising within the scope of the mind can comprehensively define or describe/characterize that which is limitless, and thus without attributes or boundary.

So, in this case, I wouldn't worry about the mind co-opting the experience. As long as you understand that the mind is an object, you can let it do its duty. After all, though the self is not an

intellectual conjecture, self-knowledge does take place in the intellect. That is, the intellect recognizes the greater reality within which it exists through “seeing” a reflection of its limitless, non-objectifiable nature. Then, by analogy, once it understands the clay out of which all the pots are shaped, the pots can appear in myriad shapes and colors, but none will ever be taken to be real again. They will certainly hold liquid and other substances and will continue to be experienced as pots. But it will be known that their true essence is formless clay.

Witnessing awareness is not just another mind game.