

A Brahmin Is One Who Knows They Are Brahman

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Reginald: Sundari, I am sorry for being late to reply your email. Here are my few questions again after I read your explanations.

1. Because of my strong identification with my intellect I cannot realize that I am the consciousness that is present in deep sleep state but now I know that I, consciousness, am witnessing anything, including the presence of ego and other thoughts in the waking state, and when in deep sleep state I also witness the absence of ego and anything else. It is like I know there is no pot on the table, I am there to witness the absence of the pot, so I am also there to witness the absence of the ego and everything else in the deep sleep state. Is that right?

Sundari: Yes, well put.

Reginald: 2. Consciousness, or *brahman*, is the substance of all form, taste, smell, sound and sense of touch, (the known-ness is the substance of anything) like gold is the substance of a ring, bangle and earring. Is that true?

Sundari: Essentially correct but remember there is only one awareness out of which everything arises and depends upon but awareness is always free of the objects – like the clay gives rise to the pot, the gold to the ring but the clay is free of the pot and the gold is free of the ring.

Even though the subject (awareness) and the object (*jiva* or world of objects/*Isvara*) share the same identity as awareness this does not mean that these two orders of reality are the same. This is because we have to take *maya* into account.

Awareness is *adjata*, unborn. Vedanta is the path of the unborn because it reveals that although there appears to be a creation nothing ever really happened from awareness's point of view. All objects are made up of awareness and dissolve back into awareness in that they appear in the mind and the mind appears in awareness. The mind (subtle body) like all objects is an object known to you, awareness. The thoughts that appear in the mind belong to the *gunas: Isvara*.

The apparent reality (*mithya*) is a union of *paraprakiti*, or higher reality (meaning *Isvara*), and *aparaprakiti (jiva)*, lower reality. Their common identity is *uparaprakriti*, awareness. Awareness is the both the intelligent cause, that which shapes the materials into form (without ever losing or modifying its own nature) and the material substance, meaning the effect, the forms created, like the spider's web emerges from the spider and is made up of the spider. As consciousness is non-dual there is no real world. When *maya* appears awareness plus the *gunas* becomes *Isvara*, the Creator. *Isvara* is the name for all forms, not for a particular form.

Maya is made up of the *gunas: rajas, tamas* and *sattva*. *Rajas* is the energy of action, projection, desire. *Tamas* is the dense energy of matter, concealment and denial. *Sattva* is the natural state of the mind: the energy of revelation, clarity and peace.

When *rajas* and *tamas* arise in the mind *sattva* is obscured and *maya*, or ignorance, reigns. The effect of *maya* is *samsara*, an apparent reality, the belief in duality, aka ignorance.

Isvara is not a doer, or a *samsari*. From the *jiva*'s point of view *Isvara* is unlimited and the *jiva* is limited. From awareness's point of view both *Isvara* and *jiva* are limited. Even though *Isvara* is omniscient relative to the *jiva* (because only *Isvara* has knowledge of all objects) *Isvara* like the *jiva* depends on awareness to exist. Although *Isvara* is not conditioned by *maya* and is conscious, and the *jiva* is conditioned by *maya* and is not conscious, both *Isvara* and the *jiva* are reflected awareness and make up the apparent reality. Therefore neither *Isvara* nor the *jiva* are real, "real" being defined as "that which is permanent."

Maya, the power to delude (ignorance), is a power that exists in awareness so although its appearance gives rise to the apparent reality *maya* is neither real nor unreal. *Maya* creates the categories of real and unreal. Without *maya* there is no creation, no *jiva* and no *Isvara*. It is very important to remember that *maya* only covers a very small portion of awareness because awareness cannot be covered. Awareness is that which knows *maya*, the apparent covering. Awareness does not create but *maya* creates the apparent duality with apparent doers, *jivas* being the small doers and *Isvara* being the big doer. Once *maya* is transcended, i.e. non-duality and duality understood, ignorance falls away and only awareness remains.

Reginald: 3. *Sakshi chaitanya* is the witness of the body, mind and intellect so *sakshi* is utterly unaffected what happens to the body, mind and intellect. So can I say even though the body, mind and intellect are tortured in hell for an unlimited amount of time the *sakshi* is also utterly unaffected (because *sakshi* is not of the same order of reality with body-mind-intellect complex). It is like me seeing a movie in a theatre in which an actor is tortured eternally but the watcher is utterly unaffected. Is that true?

Sundari: Yes, that is how it is. Hell is total identification with the body-mind, *samsara*, or the belief in duality.

Reginald: So even though eternal hell exists then I, consciousness, am not affected because I am the witness of hell so I am beyond the hell, is that true?

Sundari: You are correct in that you, as awareness, are prior to everything. Hell is the non-apprehension of the true nature of reality as non-dual, which is what causes all suffering. Hell is total *rajas* and *tamas*, or ignorance, and it is impersonal. The suffering comes from taking what is unreal to be real. *Samsara*, or hell, is possible because when *maya* is operating the self appears as a subtle body and apparently identifies with objects. In this sense hell, or ignorance (*maya*), is termed as "beginningless" and eternal but it is not endless for the *jiva* who is qualified and whose mind is purified because self-knowledge can permanently remove personal ignorance (*avidya*). *Moksa* is discriminating awareness from the objects that arise in you. I know what you mean by using the word "beyond" but it is not a good word to use with reference to awareness because it is an experiential term. It implies that awareness is a special or elevated status, something to be attained or achieved. Awareness is the natural order of reality, it is not beyond anything because

everything proceeds from it, including the belief in duality, which produces the idea of hell.

Reginald: 4. When you said “you are not THE *sakshi* OF your mind” does it mean I am the *sakshi* of all *mithya* minds? My mind is as *mithya* as other minds.

Sundari: This depends who you are identified with; if you know that you are awareness and there is only awareness then yes, of course, you are the *sakshi* that shines on all minds because there is only one *sakshi* so there is only one mind, or subtle body. If you are identified with the *jiva*, or *mithya*, then there appear to be many other minds that are different from your mind. *Sakshi* does not belong to the mind as it is that which knows the mind and by whose presence the mind appears to think and experience objects.

Reginald: 5. I found *Vajrasuchika Upanishad*; is it an authentic *Upanishad*?

I read it and it is great, even though not many discussed it but I think it conveys the message of Advaita Vedanta. (Link is [here](#).)

Sundari: This *Upanishad* is basically saying that there is no special status, action or virtue that confers enlightenment. A Brahmin is one who knows their true self to be *brahman* because their ignorance has been removed by self-knowledge. Therefore this *Upanishad* does confirm the teaching of pure Vedanta, except for verse 7, which is not consistent with Vedanta and does not make sense:

“Then is it knowledge that makes a Brahmin? No, it is not so, because among Kshatriyas and others there are many who have attained cognition of divine truth. Therefore knowledge does not make a Brahmin.”

Vedanta says that only self-knowledge will remove ignorance and reveal the true nature of reality to be non-dual, i.e. *brahman*.

Reginald: Thank you very much, Sundari, for your help.

Sundari: You are very welcome, Reginald, my apologies for the delay in getting back to you.

~ *Om* and *prem*, Sundari