

The Two Selves Problem

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Seeker: Dear Ram, here is a quotation from your article *What Is Advaita Vedanta?*: “The individual’s body and mind are within the creation and therefore enjoy this particular status, but the individual itself is eternal awareness, non-separate from God and therefore the reality of everything.”

This sounds a bit like the mind/body are separate from God, which is not the case. Anyway, are you suggesting that there is an individual who exists beyond the body and mind? I thought the “I” thought arises in the mind. When all *vasanas* have been exhausted, the mind totally purified, ego transformed etc., what is left? Can there still be an “I,” the individual? Personally, I don’t think there is such a thing as an individual. Of course all this postulating, questing and querying is part of the dream/illusion. There really is only the self, the Lord, consciousness.

Ram: It is true there is no individual from the self’s point of view, so you are right. The purpose of this teaching is to indicate the identity between what a person takes to be a limited being, the individual, and his or her real nature, limitless awareness.

But there can be an individual also – in this sense: the self is capable of creating individuality or it would not be limitless. If it couldn’t, it would be limited by its inability to create an individual – or anything else. But this individuality is just the self associating with an idea of limitation – which is also the self. The self functioning in *maya* apparently becomes the individual. But even though the self can appear as an individual it never forgets that it isn’t an individual. Ironically though, the individual is capable of forgetting that it is the self.

It is a question of orders of reality. The individual is a secondary order of reality. It depends on the self, but the self does not depend on it, so what is needed is to see that one’s essence is limitless awareness. When this is known it is no problem; the self can happily enjoy limitation.

~ Love, Ram