

# Taking a Stand in a Glimpse

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**Rob:** Dear James, thanks so much for all the helpful answers!! Here is my question: Awareness and existence are the same, but there are two different words: *sat* and *chit*. Why? Is existence connected with *maya*/objects?

**James:** Yes, awareness and existence are one. However, it is difficult to see material objects as awareness. We have several teachings to explain the connection between consciousness and matter but the existence teaching is the best, since it is clear to everyone that material objects exist. Once you can see that material objects exist and that you exist, it is not a big step to see that your existence and the existence of material objects is non-different. Then we establish the link between existence and consciousness. We point out that you can't exist unless you are conscious and that you can't be conscious unless you exist. If existence and consciousness are not separate from each other, then consciousness and matter are not separate. If  $A = B$  and  $B = C$ , then  $A = C$ .

**Rob:** When eternity and endlessness appear as time and space in *maya*, the dimensions arise simultaneously, the three dimensions of space and time as the fourth dimension (more dimensions have been discussed for many years), very abstract concepts, hard to imagine. Since dimensionality belongs only to the world appearing in awareness, awareness has NO dimension. Right?

**James:** Yes. There are no "dimensions" in the self, because there are no differences in it. In fact there is actually no difference between dimensions either, time and space, for example. If you are 60 miles from an object traveling 60 miles an hour, you are one hour from the object. Sixty miles is the same as one hour. Time and space and causality are simply different points of view from which to look at the world. Everything in the apparent creation - the world - is reducible to non-duality, what I call a "zero-sum" reality. Dimensions are just thought objects. For instance, do the *vasanas* cause action or do actions cause the *vasanas*? Both. You can't have a *vasana* without an action nor can you have an action without a *vasana*. Which causes which? They are just different ways of looking at a particular phenomenon.

Liberation is knowing that the perceived differences between objects are no actual differences, which is to say that even the world of differences is non-dual awareness.

**Rob:** If so, how to deal with our images in Vedanta of awareness as a screen where the "movie" appears? The screen has two(!) dimensions (same with the image of a mirror).

**James:** Metaphors never correspond exactly to the object they represent. The idea is that there is no separation between your image in a mirror and the mirror. You can't find a gap between them.

**Rob:** When I am asked, “How do you, take a stand in awareness?,” I find it hard to describe. Somehow it’s the opposite of focusing on something, as you can only focus on an object.

**James:** Yes, you can only focus on one object at a time. To focus on all objects you have to stop focusing. For instance, if you focus on a tree in a landscape, you don’t see all the objects in the landscape. But if you relax your focus, all the objects appear.

**Rob:** It’s more that I try to reconnect with that what is always there (and it’s so obviously there, so normal and ordinary, that it’s overlooked).

**James:** This is an important statement. It’s obviously present always. So you “take a stand in awareness” by knowing. You have to know it is there to get a glimpse of it. If you don’t know its there, how can you “see” it? But you don’t see or glimpse it AS AN OBJECT. It is not an experience although it seems like a glimpse, a seeing of an object. Some people – *yogis* – think that you that you have to make the seeing permanent for *moksa*, but you don’t. The seeing is only knowing “it.” But if you know “it,” then who are you? You have to be something other than “it” to know it. So here is a teaching that can help: you say “it” is obviously “there.” But it is not obviously “there.” It is obviously “here,” meaning present. You can’t see something that is beyond the scope of your perception. However, there is one other “object” that is always present and experienced. What is it? It is you. When are you not present? So “it” and “you” are one. If it and you are one, there is no subject and object, no duality. Taking a stand in awareness is knowing ON THE BASIS OF THIS SIMPLE LOGIC that the ever-present you is THAT which you objectify and seek. This is why *moksa* is called self-knowledge. When you understand it, you stop “taking a stand” in awareness, because you are awareness. It is silly to take a stand in you because you are always you. The problem comes because you take that little “glimpse” of awareness as a glimpse of something other than you. This is because you have been taking TAKING A STAND IN DUALITY forever. So your self, obvious awareness, seems like something else.

**Rob:** Suddenly it’s there, at least a glimpse of IT. Ignorance goes, awareness arises. Night goes, day comes. But I have no idea “how” it’s done. IT has only to be recognized.

**James:** You say “awareness arises,” but awareness does not arise. Examine your experience. Do you “arise”? Of course not. You are always present. Awareness is the ever-present ever-experienced “I.” It’s not “done” but it is “done” in this way: if you have been taught what awareness is, then when you think about it you “glimpse” it. But the glimpse is just a glimpse. It ends immediately BECAUSE THE GLIMPSE IS A THOUGHT. When the next thought enters the mind by *Isvara*’s grace, the glimpse ends and a new experience ensues. So awareness seems to be lost. If you keep your attention on the awareness when you glimpse it and thereby don’t let it run to the thoughts that arise in it and disturb your concentration, you are practicing *samadhi*. But there is no need to practice it, unless you enjoy disciplining your mind in this way. I used to spend many hours in *samadhi*, but what is the point if you know that

the one that is holding the mind on the “glimpse” is awareness? Self-knowledge frees the self of the need to discipline itself. It is a lot of work to TAKE a stand. Taking is an action.

**Rob:** Actually, there is no real “HOW.” How would someone how to open a door with a key? So there is neither HOW nor DOING at all... right? Could you please comment on that or correct my approach?

**James:** There is no “HOW” if you understand. There is a “HOW” if you don’t. I explained the “HOW” above. Good thinking, Rob.