

# Deductive Reasoning and the Logical Approach to Non-Duality

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**Dean:** Hi Sundari, I have heard James talk about the logical approach to non-duality, can you please explain it to me? I find understanding the creation teaching extremely difficult.

**Sundari:** The logical approach to non-duality as a means to explain the creation, while useful, breaks down (from the jiva perspective) when it comes to the analysis of the cause of the universe. Deductive reasoning will only get you so far, because the only means of knowledge available for it are the senses (perception and inference), which without self-knowledge, are mithya and are stuck in mithya.

The difficulty modern science has in understanding the origin of the universe is a good example of this. It can reason up to the point where it understands that there must be a moment when the creation began—but it cannot tell us what happened at the point of creation or before it began. Quantum physics, the most advanced theory in physics to date, cannot go beyond the Big Bang, even though in essence, it conclusively proves that objects exist only from the point of view of the observer, the body/mind. The reason for this is that non-duality—or a singularity, which is what science calls non-duality—is a state (it's not a state but I use the term here advisedly) **from which there is no information to reason**. If its non-dual there are no objects, no time and no experience. Non-dual means nothing other than. Science will be stuck at this point until it understands what consciousness is—which it won't, unless self-knowledge removes ignorance for the individual scientist.

Think about it. There had to be something before the appearance of objects. Nothing comes from nothing. Although science illogically tries to prove that consciousness comes from objects. If that is the case, where did the objects come from? What was there prior to the objects to make them manifest cannot be answered with the syllogisms of this kind of deductive reasoning. But there had to be something there before the appearance of objects, something that the Big Bang banged from. If we take clay as a good analogy—clay as it is, is just undifferentiated mud. But before the pot can appear, there has to be clay. Clay is one thing but when the potter creates a pot, it assumes a name and a form and seems to become something else. I was a professional ceramic sculptress and it never failed to amaze me how objects could appear from mud. But the sculpture is not something else; nothing has been added to the clay other than name and form. The clay was there before during and after the pot or sculpture appears. If we destroy the pot, we will see the 5 elements which make up the clay from which it came. And if we break it down further and look at its particles under a microscope, eventually we see 'empty' space—which is not empty at all, because it is existence itself. We cannot get rid of the particles; they will dissolve back into the substratum and become clay again. As we know, matter=energy and cannot be destroyed.

Existence, consciousness was there before the appearance of the creation, during and 'after' it is withdrawn back into consciousness at the end of the creation cycle. We can never get rid of the substratum, existence. It is always present underpinning

and supporting all objects or they could not exist. If an object appears before you, consciousness appears before you in a different form. It may not be conscious as it is only a reflection, but it is nonetheless, consciousness—although consciousness is not it. It can only be consciousness because the nature of reality is non-dual consciousness. Only when Maya appears does a creation appear in name and form, which (seems to) obscure existence, consciousness. Before that, there was only nameless, formless undifferentiated consciousness, with all powers present in it, including the power to obscure.

The materialists argue that there is no way to verify non-duality, which is true, from the dualistic standpoint from which they look at it. If your epistemology for knowing anything is the senses, the only knowledge you can gain is through inference, based on perception. Which is not capable of knowing or understanding consciousness because it is an effect, the object. The effect cannot understand the cause, the subject. Consciousness/Existence is not an object of perception because it is that which makes perception possible. There is no way from within the creation to understand this. It is only through the Vedanta pramana that ignorance of the true nature of reality can be removed by self-knowledge. Even the scientist has to agree that there is no evidence other than that gained by the senses that the creation is anything more than an appearance, one that we take to be real. But it is not real; real being defined by that which is always present and unchanging, which can only be ascribed to the consciousness supporting all objects, **the only constant factor.**

No sense organ is capable of perceiving the substance of all objects, consciousness. The senses are only capable of perceiving the properties of objects (sound, colour, shape, weight, texture, taste, smell) and not an actual existent object. Name and form may hide the true nature of existence, but it does not alter it. With the Vedanta pramana we can investigate the nature of reality through self-inquiry by analyzing the relationship between name, form and consciousness.

You can also arrive at the same conclusion by an analysis of the objects themselves. It should be easy to see that an object like a thought is made of awareness. It is not so easy to see that the physical objects are made of consciousness. But as mentioned above, if we investigate matter scientifically, it breaks down into particles and space and the knower of particles and space i.e. you, awareness. Material science cannot make the obvious connection of matter and awareness because (as stated but bears repeating) it relies on perception and inference as a means of knowledge. It does not realize that perception is an object known to consciousness in the form of the scientist and that perception is consciousness. *Maya* makes it seem as if consciousness is an object when it is actually the subject.

*Maya* also makes the individual *jiva* think that it is a unique entity, separate from all other entities and objects. But *Jiva* is not what it seems either. *Jiva* is really awareness—appearing as matter. So the relationship between the three seemingly separate factors *Jiva/jagat*, *Isvara/Maya* (which creates the material world out of awareness) is pure consciousness/existence—you.

If you look at the creation, where does it exist? Have you ever actually seen a creation? No. You have only experienced the objects that appear to you at any moment and these objects are not separate from the thoughts that make them up. Creation is only an idea, a thought. When that thought appears in you, the mind imagines the totality of objects by inference, but those objects are never directly experienced. All that is directly experienced is you, awareness and the properties of objects. The only issue left to resolve is whether or not awareness/consciousness or

matter is primary. Which came first? When we use the word 'first' we mean which stands alone? Does matter exist prior to consciousness so that we can still have matter without consciousness? No. You cannot separate an object from the consciousness of the object. In other words, objects are not conscious. They do not know themselves or other objects. Consciousness is not conscious in the way **we understand what it means to be conscious**. *Isvara* associated with Maya is conscious (although it is not a *jiva* or person) and is not modified by ignorance/*Maya* (the *gunas*). ***Isvara* is conscious because with the appearance of Maya, there is something for Awareness to be to be conscious of, i.e. objects.** Consciousness is 'prior' to matter in the sense that matter depends on consciousness. Consciousness stands alone. It is the first 'principle' out of which everything arises.

Finally, as we have established that you cannot get something out of nothing, so if matter depends on consciousness, it has to come from consciousness. Therefore, the effect (matter) is just an apparent transformation of the cause, awareness. It is not an actual transformation because if it were, consciousness would have lost its limitless nature when it transformed into matter. It would have become limited, bound by time and space—and, there would be no sentient objects and no movement possible in the creation. Matter (subtle and gross objects) arise in you, awareness, which if you think about it, is actually your (unexamined) experience.

Namaste, Sundari