

# How Can Activity Be Ascribed to the Jiva?

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**Seeker:** Dear James, I'm burning for one metaphysical clarification. From my experience, discrimination and inquiry, I have no doubts that the subject/Self cannot be an object. But objects/phenomena spontaneously arise and fall in it. It's not somebody that is doing anything, since Self is not somebody, but it cannot be said that it is not a "spontaneous doer," in a manner of speaking, since Self/Light only illuminates. **If *jiva* is same with Self, it is same with activity,** and therefore follows this principle of Light to shine/illuminate outwards in a sense that *Jiva* is self objectifying itself and therefore the Self too, as long as it doesn't gain Self-knowledge. Of course, from position of Self, both objectification/ignorance and knowledge of *jiva*, *jiva* itself, are objects. **How can activity be ascribed to *jiva* only when it's actually Self?** *Jiva* is not other than Self and therefore not other than "activity" of the Self reflected/interacting with matter. Ultimately, it's Self interacting and experiencing Itself(?). If we could Skype, you could clarify me if I'm wrong somewhere or I could demonstrate better what I mean if it is poorly explained. Or should I just wait for the book and read it? ☺

**James:** There is another factor involved in the situation that you are not taking into account: *maya*. It is the essence of Vedanta. This is why everyone associates activity with the *jiva*, which is non-different from the self. *Maya* is *sat-asat-vilakshanam*, which means that it is not the same as the self and it is not different from the self. It is a power in the self that creates objects - the *jivas* and the world - out of the self, limitless existence/consciousness. If the self does not have this power, it would be limited by its inability to create and would no longer be limitless. There are not two existences, two consciousnesses. So the action that you see belongs neither to the *Jiva*, the eternal individual, the non-eternal *jiva* (the person you have been told you are) or to you, limitless, non-dual existence/consciousness. It belongs to *maya*. It makes it seem as if the *jiva* is doing action. This factor is called *Isvara*, or God, and it amounts to the totality of the created factors in the field of objects. It is this totality of ever-changing objects in which individual *jivas* find themselves that causes action. It is the doer, not the Eternal *Jiva* or the non-eternal *jiva*.