

# A Very Simple but Very Difficult Teaching

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**Ken:** So you are saying that I still have more work to do. Please... no!

**James:** As long as you are a doer, doing never ends. However, if you are the self, the doer and its doings have no impact on you. Firm self-knowledge is the only way out of the doer trap.

**Ken:** If I am the self as you say, then who is the doer? We are then getting a split personality here.

**James:** No split, Ken, just one you appearing as two by virtue of *Maya*. The “doer” is a function in the subtle body that makes it look as if the self is doing.

**Ken:** I can't get it; if I am one, how can I appear as two? I have to be either one or two or neither of them.

**James:** When you look in a mirror there are two “yous.” One is the real you and the other is a reflection. There is an unconscious power in everyone called *Maya* that produces a reflection of your real self in your mind that you take to be the only you. The reflection in the mirror looks just like you, and you can count it as a second you, but you know it is not real. Vedanta makes you aware of the real you, and when you are aware of it, you see that the you you always thought you were is only a reflection. So it is a “both/and,” not an either/or. This fact is very difficult to understand because the intellect is conditioned to duality, unless it has been cultivated by continual exposure to Vedanta.

**Ken:** Okay, thanks for your detailed reply and explanation of your view, it is quite interesting to read and a lot of data to process. 😊 By the way, when we sleep and are in a deep sleep state when nothing is registered by any awareness, can we say that we exist at that moment, even if we later woke up and “knew” we have been sleeping?

**James:** It depends on who the “you” is. If “you” refers to the mind, then it seems to non-exist for a few hours, but it is actually not-nonexistent because it returns with its predictable thoughts when it wakes up. It goes into what we call a “seed” or dormant state. But the real you does not cease to exist. It is your existence, your “is-ness,” which is non-separate from existence itself. Existence/consciousness doesn't come and go. It is unborn and eternal. If you take yourself to be the reflected self, the mind, then you can say that it comes and goes because it has two states, manifest and unmanifest. But existence is non-dual. It doesn't have two states. If it did, you would have to ask what existence exists in. There would have to be something behind it from which it came and into which it is resolved. You will find this firefly notion of the self in the spiritual world.

What I'm saying is not "my" view, although it may seem that way. I am a teacher of traditional Vedanta, the science of existence/consciousness. However, it so happens that I have verified this knowledge in my own experience. It is more than a point of view, a belief. It is a direct palpable experience of myself as limitless existence/consciousness. I notice from your last name that you have Buddhistic inclinations. I suggest you read my book *The Essence of Enlightenment*. It will help to contextualize this discussion so it will make more sense to you.

**Ken:** Hold on, then this reflection of false me happens in the mind, which is part of a real me?

**James:** There is a power in you, limitless consciousness, that is not the same as you but is not different from you. It creates the mind, which you think is you, out of you, consciousness. At the same time, it covers the mind with ignorance so the mind doesn't know it is limitless.

**Ken:** Or mind is also a reflection? If there is unconscious power of *Maya*, where does it live? If in me, then I must be real to be the container for illusion of the *Maya*...

**James:** Yes, you are real. "Real" means "that you are always present," and that you don't change.

**Ken:** ...but if my brain is illusory and doesn't constitute the real me, then *Maya* also cannot dwell in it, because how can it dwell in something that doesn't exist in real?

**James:** That is correct. The effect dwells "in" the cause - is based in the cause - but the cause, limitless existence/consciousness (the real "you"), is free of the effect, the body-mind-sense complex.

**Ken:** You again have two "mes" then: so-called real me and false me (a reflection).

**James:** It seems that way, but actually there is only one you. The false you exists alright because you can't experience something that doesn't exist. But it is not real. It is like a dream which only seems real until you wake up. So even though there is another you, it is as good as a non-existent you because it has no impact on you.

See your own experience. If you actually changed when something happened, you wouldn't know who you were "before," because the previous you would have been completely subsumed by the "subsequent" you. But this is not how it is. The apparent you continues to change, and you witness it. You are not affected by what happens to Ken or you would not be able to report everything that happens to him as it is. Eventually, as experiences piled up, you would become contaminated by all the traces of experience left so that you would lose your objectivity and be unable to evaluate what is happening accurately. But you know just how miserable Ken is, how happy he is and every state in between. He is an object known to you. He is not actually real, because he disappears when sleep comes, although he seems to be real when he is awake. Yet you don't disappear when sleep happens. You are

present to witness it. If you weren't, you wouldn't know you slept.

**Ken:** But where does this real me dwell?

**James:** It doesn't dwell anywhere. It is the basis of everything. It is existence itself; everything dwells in you, just as an ocean is not based in the waves but all waves are based in the ocean.

**Ken:** Or are you saying that we are both real and unreal? If so, then it's fine because this has been understood and realized even by the ancient Greeks, and is written aptly in Plato's *Dialogues*.

**James:** Yes and no. Yes because there are apparently two "yous." The operative word in that statement is "apparently." It means "not actually," which means that there are not two "yous." Here is another reason for saying no: you have to take account of the knower of the two. If there are two yous, then they must be known to you. If they are known to you, they are objects and you have to be something other than them. It so happens the original you and the reflected you are not in conflict, because they exist in two orders of the one reality. Think of the mirror example.

Don't be in a hurry to resolve this. Contemplate it. It is the essence of enlightenment, and very few people get it right away. We have many ways to explain this. It is particularly hard because, as I said, the intellect is conditioned to either/or thinking, not to both/and thinking.