

The World Does Not Exist

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“Brahma satyam jagat mithya, jivo brahmaiva naparah.”

(Translation: *Brahman* is the only truth, the world is unreal, and there is ultimately no difference between *brahman* and individual self.)

Peter: *Mithya* has no time or location. In order for something to appear real it must have a location, and to have a location you need space and time, and multiple objects appearing within space-time to infer its existence. If we can negate time, then we can negate space. If we can negate space-time, as they are one, then we can prove that *mithya* has no location, and if it has no location then it can't really be here. If it's not really here, then how can it be real? It cannot.

It's actually quite simple to understand that there is no time if you think about it. Have you ever noticed how it's always now? No matter what happens it is always happening now. Where is yesterday? Does it have a location somewhere other than the thought of it? Can you go back and fetch me yesterday or anything from it? If you try you will only end up fetching me things from today, as every object is here now. Even the person you were yesterday is different, the changes may seem minute but they are there nonetheless. The person you were yesterday has changed into the person you are today. So where is yesterday's person? Can you go back and be yesterday's person? In fact where is 60 seconds ago? Once an experience has happened it no longer exists. It appears for that moment and then goes, but where does it go? Nowhere, because it wasn't really there to begin with, it was just an appearance. If there is no time, as time is just a thought in the subtle body, then there cannot be any corresponding space?

Arlindo: Space is “apparently real” since it is one of the elements of Creation; it is the container for all other apparent elements. It is only conceptual from the standpoint of *Isvara* (pure *sattva*), but not from the *jiva* standpoint.

But time is not just “apparently real” but rather absolutely non-existent, since it is a subjective concept in the mind of the apparent *jiva*, which is but an object in *mithya* (not-real). The “location of objects” teaching proves that all objects resolve themselves into pure consciousness. They “seemingly” appear in the “now” only because past and future are *jiva*'s concepts born of recollections of mental impressions (experiences).

But the attempt to dismiss the existence of space with the argument that one cannot find the location for yesterday or tomorrow is not valid, since yesterday and tomorrow are absolutely non-existent.

Even the “present moment” concept does not have a location, because the “present” too is a concept which involves time. It only stands against past and future. The apparent reality of *mithya* (*Isvara*'s creation) are phenomenal objects appearing first in space, then in the mind, and consequently in consciousness.

Peter: After hearing the *Mandukya Upanishad* I was under the impression that nothing existed in consciousness, as it's non-dual. So *mithya* has no location, only an apparent location when viewed from a *jiva* "within" it, like a dream seems like it's somewhere when you're in it.

If there's no actual location, only an apparent one, then space too must be as real as time, which is absolutely non-existent. So there's really only *satya* and *mithya*, and everything in *mithya* is *mithya* – no *jivas*, objects, space, time, etc. – all of it is *Isvara*. And *mithya* is *satya*, and if *mithya* is understood to be *satya*, then ultimately there is *satya* alone.

Arlindo: Yes, you are correct, Peter. Ultimately, Creation is not real and the only reality is consciousness. This is the truth presented by the *Mandukya Upanishad*. As you know, there are two orders of reality of the "one reality": *satya* and *mithya*. But from within the "apparent" *mithya* we find three sub-orders of apparent reality: *Isvara*, *jiva* and the world.

All elements/objects in the apparent universe exist not only from the standpoint of *jiva*, but also from *Isvara*'s. I was only attempting to bring into the equation the fact that there are two kinds of objects in Creation: *Isvara*'s apparent objects and *jiva*'s conceptual objects.

This is not to say that *Isvara*'s Creation is not a concept. All of *mithya* is a product of thought-energy. But *Isvara*'s manifested Creation has a higher degree of existence than *jiva*'s creation. *Jiva*'s projections are like a "dream within *Isvara*'s dream."

This can be illustrated by the two mental states of consciousness experienced by the *jiva*: waking and dreaming. In the waking state *jiva* is called "*viswa*," the one experiencing the material world as created and maintained by *Isvara*. In the dream state *jiva* is called "*taijasa*" (the shining one), and it experiences its inner world, the dreamworld – its own subjective projection.

You are right, a rope is rope, but since 99.99% of *jivas* are unable to see the rope, believing the snake to be real, it is better to provisionally grant reality to *Isvara*'s Creation (*vyavaharika satyam*) and deny reality to *jiva*'s creation (*pratibasika satyam*). That's why Ramji does not often teach in-depth the "non-existence" teaching. At a later stage we can come back and assert that the only reality is the self/consciousness (*paramarthika satyam*), and that *Isvara* and its "Creation" are both not real.

As I said, I was just attempting to make the distinction between *vyavaharika satyam* and *pratibasika satyam* by pointing out that "space" is an element created by *Isvara* and time is a concept created by the *jiva*.

Peter: Ah, yes, I may have misunderstood it. So *Isvara sristi* appears as the objective world, or *mithya*, in which space is the subtlest element from which the other four elements emerge. *Jiva sristi* is then projected onto *Isvara* and can often be misunderstood for (apparent) reality. The *jiva*'s desire causes it to "create" the concept of time, which is just a way of measuring the interval between the events the *jiva* fears or desires. However, as everything in *mithya* is *Isvara*, every object, inasmuch as it appears, is actually of equal value. So a *jiva* with this firm knowledge would have preferences, not binding *vasanas*, so time still appears as a concept but

does not weigh heavy on the mind, as it's understood to be unreal, just like the rest of *mithya*.

Thank you for your clarity, Arlindo. It's an important distinction to make. Yes, we are all The Self, but *mithya* is still here from the *jiva's* perspective, so it's best to have a good, clear and complete understanding of this magic show.

Many thanks.

Arlindo: All very well said, my friend. Good work and good luck.