

Who Is Doing the Inquiry?

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Inquirer: A Ramji quote from True Nature's Dharma Talk: "You can't gain freedom. You are freedom."

Arlindo: And since you cannot gain freedom, all there is left is to understand, accept and fully appreciate the simple fact: "I am free, ordinary, limitless awareness."

Inquirer: Yes – and yet my mind keeps trying to "work it out" on its own terms, as if it were a real problem to be solved in *mithya*.

Arlindo: Yes, my friend, which is where most of the "work" lies, to convince the mind to listen with an open attitude until it understands that its nature is limitless ever-free awareness. It is strange that mind resists so much the truth – it puts up a fight against the irrefutable logic present by *Isvara's* scriptures as if it possesses more valuable concepts.

Be patient and loving with it and keep feeding it with knowledge. If necessary ask the mind: "Why are you defending your notions if they did not produced the security, happiness and satisfaction you are longing for? Are you a happy mind? Are you enjoying a sense of limitlessness and satisfaction which is not dependent on any event? If not, please listen and allow the knowledge to work its magic." It is that simple, but not necessarily easy.

Inquirer: I really like your reply, thank you. But the solution also raises another question that I have been pondering, having to do with contemplation: If I am asking questions of my mind, then who in that case is doing the asking? Is it a case of the mind asking the mind? The intellect asking the mind? This is not an idle question, because sometimes I get confused about knowing "who/what" I am representing in a given moment during, say, a self-inquiry practice, and to "whom" the question is addressed. See what I mean?

Arlindo: Fundamentally, the self is doing the inquiry because all is but the non-dual self. But somehow, due to *maya*, the self appears as the mind (the reflected I). When we say that the *jiva's* mind is no other than the self, we mean to say that there is only one "I," one self, sometimes appearing as the *jiva* under the spell of ignorance and eventually as the *jivamukta* free from the influence of *maya*.

But we can also say that the *sattvic* mind does the inquiry – not that there are two or more minds – but mind modifies according to the composition of the *gunas*. The mind needs to be very refined and subtle so that *sattva guna*, the subtlest energy conditioning the mind, "kind of" does the inquiry. I sometimes like to call it the "subtle intellect," the mirror-like reflector, contemplating its own essential nature with the aid of *Isvara's* scriptures.

The subtler can objectify the denser, not the other way around, meaning to say that the mind (one's thoughts and hardwired opinions) cannot inquire into the intellect. A purified, *sattvic* intellect has the natural ability to contemplate itself, contemplate the revealing logic presented by the scriptures on self-knowledge.

The subtle intellect cannot objectify the self, because the self is "beyond" the reach of objectification due to its absolute subtlety. But in its attempt to contemplate and understand the truth of the Vedanta scriptures the subtle intellect develops the clear vision of its own nature as pure, limitless, simple, ordinary awareness.

Stick to the Vedanta teachings and the qualified teacher, and all else will happen naturally. And by the way, enjoy the trip because Ramji is a safe driver and there is only one bus stop, one destination - and you are it.

Inquirer: Thank you, Arlindo. Great answer, and your discussion of a mind that can modify according to its *guna* composition is really helpful. I don't think I have run into that anywhere else. I like your phrase the "subtle intellect" very much, and the fact that it can develop a vision of its true nature is rather fascinating (as Spock from *Star Trek* would say)!