

If Everything Is Consciousness, Why Don't I Experience "You"?

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Questioner: If everything is consciousness, why don't I experience "you"?

Rory: This question arises from mixing the absolute order of reality with the relative/empirical order of reality.

At the absolute order of reality, everything is undifferentiated existence/consciousness.

The presence of *maya* makes this singular consciousness appear to become an entire universe of different names and forms. Thus the relative order of reality appears within the absolute.

Maya is what we call an *upadhi*. An *upadhi* is a limiting adjunct: something which apparently lends its attributes to something else – for instance, a red glass bottle will make the water inside appear to be red, even though the water is clear.

So *maya* is an *upadhi* making consciousness appear as a universe of separate forms.

Within *maya* we have countless individual body-mind-egos. These are reflecting mediums – they reflect the original consciousness, which brings these otherwise inert assemblages to life.

It's actually the same consciousness illumining and enlivening each body-mind, just as the same sun shines on all the different reflective surfaces in the world. But the presence of many different reflecting mediums makes it seem like there are many different consciousnesses, when in fact there is just one.

Electricity is another good analogy to explain this – the electricity powering my light is the same electricity that powers my computer. So there are different appliances with different functions, but electricity is one. Same goes for us – many different body-minds, but only one consciousness animating them.

In short, "you" don't experience "me" (as a *jiva*), because we have different *upadhis*. It's the same consciousness in fact, but the instruments are different.

At a deeper level, however, "you" DO experience "me" – because the consciousness within you is the same consciousness within me.