

The Self Is Not Self-Aware

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2019-11-01

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3971>

Ron: Greetings, Sundari, I hope all is well with you and Ramji.

Back sometime after October 3, I'd written you regarding a question around who is it that knows. You responded soon after saying that you'd been busy but would get back to me the following week. As I had not heard from you since, I decided to go back to look for that email of mine to see if in the meantime an answer had been presented by *Isvara*. I could neither find my email nor even yours saying you'd get back to me.

You obviously did receive it, so even if you cannot respond to it at this time, could you send it back to me to see if the question still remains? Not even remembering the question exactly...

Sundari: Apologies, your email slipped through the cracks and is gone. If you cannot remember the question, it could not have been that pressing.

Ron: It still seems that the only knowing the Self has is self-knowing, awareness of awareness. There can be no knowing of objects by the Self, as there is only the Self.

Sundari: Do you see how this statement attributes qualities to the Self? I don't know how you understand your statement that awareness is self-aware, but it does not mean that awareness is self-aware. It means that awareness is just awareness. The words "self-aware" imply duality, a Self and something for it to be aware of. But that is impossible because awareness is non-dual. There is only awareness, one without a second.

While we say the Self is self-aware in the beginning stages of Self-inquiry, that is not strictly true. The Self is the only knower when *Maya* is operating. Remember, reality is unborn, non-dual existence/consciousness. It is not a knower unless *Maya* provides objects. *Maya* is the material principle, which is not sentient. It seems to be sentient because awareness pervades it, but it isn't. When *Maya* is present it seemingly deludes awareness into thinking that it is incomplete, provides a world of attractive objects and convinces awareness that it can remove its sense of incompleteness if it gets the objects it is attracted to. At the same time, it deludes the awareness into thinking that it is a desirable object, the attainment of which will set it free, which is impossible because it is already free and because there are no objects in awareness to attract awareness. So when the words of the scripture/*guru* are heard, they are only heard by awareness since it is the only sentient being. If you subtract *Maya*, you cannot call awareness sentient. You can only call it existence/awareness.

Ron: If this is correct, all that can be said is the "I am that I am," "existence, consciousness, limitlessness," and anything more, any knowing of any object, is the reflected self in the *guna*-tinged mirror of the subtle body (*jiva/Isvara/Maya/mithya*).

Sundari: This is correct, but if you really understood this statement, why ask if awareness is aware of itself?

Ron: Time is not being spent with these questions as in the past but when I occasionally read or hear something being said it suggests some inquiry may be warranted.

Sundari: As James and I have both said to you recently, you seem to grasp the knowledge, but it slips away from you, not quite sticking. Sometimes it is clear that you are totally clear, and in the next email, it sounds like you are confused again. Sometimes it seems like you manufacture doubts. You have a tendency to ask the same question of us repeatedly, in slightly different ways. It's not the kiss of death, as Ramji would say. I think you should just stick with your *sadhana* and trust the scripture over your own doubts. You basically understand the doctrine.

~ Much love, Sundari