

Mutual Superimposition

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Sundari: Hello, Mandy. I am replying on behalf of Ramji.

Mandy: Dear Rama, happy anniversary. I hope this day is a wonderful celebration for you!

Sundari: Thank you, Mandy!

Mandy: It's been a long time since I've written, and for the most part all is well. Old business: it was wonderful to see you in Berkeley, and I am hoping that you will return. Did you see Kozen when you went to Trout Lake???

Sundari: Yes, we saw Kozen. 😊

Mandy: New business: I'm reading Swamiji's *Gita* and I'm a little, well, a lot, hung up on the "delusion of mutual superimposition." Maybe it is the language. He is so beautifully poetic, and it's got to be tough to explain how it is that the world is not real and how the self, "I," bring it to life and project it. I don't understand in what sense this is to be understood.

Sundari: You say, "I don't understand in what sense this is to be understood," speaking as Mandy, the reflected I, and from this perspective it is almost impossible for the ego to grasp.

Mandy: The universe appears to have been projected before "I," consciousness, turned the lights on.

Sundari: There would be no lights to turn on and no one there to turn them on without consciousness. There is only and always has been the light, which is you, awareness. There is nothing prior to consciousness, it is the substrate and everything arises out of it. Here is a brief overview:

The creation comes into apparent existence with the emergence of the *gunas*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; they make up beginningless ignorance, or *maya*, which is a power that exists in consciousness. If consciousness, which is all that is, did not have the power of ignorance, it would not be unlimited. Once *maya* (ignorance) is projected, *Isvara* operating *maya* is a name which refers to God, the Universe, the Creator, the Field, the Total, the Macrocosmic Mind - any other name you can think of for it. It is the self under the apparent spell of ignorance, with a subtle body. *Maya* gives rise to *samsara*, the belief in duality.

When knowledge and ignorance combine, projection begins. This is the mutual superimposition, and is called the apparent reality, or creation (*mithya*), the effects

of ignorance. It cannot be dismissed, because it is available for perception and it exists irrespective of Mandy's projections. Enlightenment is the removal of the ignorance which prevents the self from seeing itself. It is important to understand that although all objects that make up the creation are only apparently real, this does not mean that they do not exist. They do exist, but once you know that they are only apparently real, you do not confuse them with what is real, just like you would not confuse a mirage on the desert floor to be water once you know it is a mirage. So confusing what is real with what is apparently real is called "superimposition."

The teaching that expounds on this point is called *Isvara srsti* (*Isvara's* creation) and *jiva srsti* (individual creation). *Isvara srsti* is *vyavaharika* (empirical reality), which is the consensus reality that everyone agrees with: the speed of light, day and night, high and low, etc. *Jiva srsti* is *pratibasika* (subjective, or dream, reality), which is Mandy's interpretation of reality which she projects onto *Isvara srsti*. Her perception of reality will be viewed through the screen of her *vasanas*, which are created by the *gunas* and do not belong to Mandy.

There are natural laws that govern the creation, and although religion has given God a very bad reputation, the fact is there is a field of existence, call it what you like, that is not under any one person's control. When *Isvara* is operating *maya*, *Isvara* is omniscient and has all power, whereas the *jiva*, or individual subtle body, has limited knowledge and limited power. When Mandy's ignorance of her true nature (*avidya*) is removed by self-knowledge, *maya* (macrocosmic ignorance, or *Isvara srsti*) still obtains, and so the *gunas* still operate of course. It is business as usual in the apparent reality (*mithya*). Mandy's personal ignorance, *avidya*, will be gone forever, which simply means that the *vasana* load that makes up Mandy's conditioning will no longer be interpreting her reality. Mandy will no longer be projecting her reality onto *Isvara*, as she will know that she is not the doer/ego, or *jiva*, ergo Mandy. She will then know herself as the non-experiencing witness. Discriminating Mandy from you, awareness, removes the confusion (superimposition) between Mandy and *Isvara*.

Mandy: In our last chat you told me that my body was dead and that awareness is what keeps it going. As funny as it sounds, this was profound. I can now actually wrap my mind around the dance of *purusha/prakriti*.

Sundari: All objects are value-neutral, i.e. in and of themselves they have no value. Like Ram told you, your body and your mind, which are both objects known to you, are inert without the light of consciousness (YOU) shining on them. Remove you from your body and it is a piece of meat, lifeless. The individual subtle body, Mandy (or *jiva*) is the self under the apparent spell of ignorance which produces superimposition. Therefore it is not the *jiva* (Mandy) that frees herself from ignorance, because the *jiva* is an object in awareness. It is the self that apparently frees itself from ignorance when it is exposed to self-knowledge and then lives free as a *jiva*, or individual, in the apparent reality. The self is already free and enlightened, it does not need to BE enlightened. Vedanta does not enlighten anyone, it removes ignorance of one's true nature as the self. What self-realisation means and self-knowledge reveals to Mandy is her true nature as the self so that as the apparent, or reflected, self (Mandy) she can live free and enjoy her life here, while she is in a body.

Mandy: I can see the dance, the mutual superimposition, but I don't really see that it as an allusion nor do I really understand the process by which I projected it.

Sundari: You must mean "illusion" and not "allusion." Illusion is not a good word for the apparent reality. If you are asking this question as the self or if you are asking this as Mandy, which it seems you are, the answer is above in the previous paragraph I wrote.

The dance, or mutual superimposition, is confusing the self with the not-self, like the snake and the rope.

Mandy: Swamiji asks that I understand that this all as it is all occurring in my mind. This was confusing because... where else would it occur? Maybe it is because I understand the concept of projection in psychological terms, which is taught in HUGELY dualistic terms.

Sundari: Indeed where else could perception be occurring? What Dayananda is saying is that the experience of objects, which are made of consciousness and arise out of consciousness, are experienced in your mind, which is also made of consciousness. As you point out, you are looking at projection from the point of view of the *jiva*, Mandy. *Samsara* is a notion in the mind that is simply the belief in duality, a firmly entrenched view in psychology as well as in the consensus reality, where most people are convinced that they are people.

Mandy: There needs to be an inside and an outside, and there needs to be a me and a you that I project unconscious material onto.

Sundari: If you are asking this as Mandy, this is true. If you see this from the self's point of view, there is no outside or inside, me or you. There is only awareness, and outside and inside, me and you, arise out of you, awareness.

Mandy: But it has not been such a big leap to get that I project my *vasanas* onto the the field and everything in it, and that it is all mind.

Sundari: You are answering your own question.

Mandy: Is there another way to see the world as a projection? Honestly, I can't see how I projected the field. I can only see how I project onto the field, which is basically inert.

Sundari: Now you understand. This is what I said above.

Mandy: Ohhhh, my God... did I manage to get to the question?????

Sundari: Yes, I think you did, and you got the answer. 😊

Mandy: Respond at your convenience. In the meantime I will continue to read and stew. I so love Vedanta, and I so love and I wish you a beautiful day on this your anniversary.

Sundari: I hope the stew is a good one, and thank you for the good wishes!

~ Much love, Sundari