

Not a Smart Ass, Part II

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/620>

Ben: Dear Ramji, 1. A question about “reflection of awareness” on the subtle body. Is the following line of thinking correct?

Introduction: there is the totality of awareness, “free, complete, whole, actionless, non-dual, immortal and self-luminous” (to quote you). From awareness, through *maya*, creation appears. The individual human form with three bodies appears in this field.

The intrinsic nature of the form is awareness. In the form, it is awareness “mixed” with matter, and this awareness is called *jiva*. When mixed with matter, the luminosity/clarity of awareness is absorbed by the *guna tamas*. Thus awareness is dulled and “forgets”: awareness in the form forgets itself. It identifies with the form and takes on the qualities of the form, limited, incomplete, insecure, frail and mortal. Thus is dullness perpetuated. All this happens as an appearance in the field. It does happen, but this happening is an appearance, not an absolute, ultimate reality.

This dulled awareness in the form is the person, *jiva*. The totality of awareness, which is free of *maya*, free of the appearance, is always self-shining and “shines” on the appearance.

You state that with awareness shining there is a “reflection of awareness” on the subtle body of the human form.

Query: Why reflection? Could the following explanation also be accurate?

When total awareness shines, rather than reflecting off the subtle body, the total awareness “activates” the dulled awareness, which then “resonates.” This process is not a reflection. It is the resident dulled awareness resonating and becoming aware of its inherent nature of awareness. Because total awareness keeps shining regardless, the dulled awareness has a chance to be “reminded” of its true nature.

The degree of resonance is inversely proportional to the density of ignorance. In the ordinary person who is completely ignorant, despite the continuous shining from total awareness, the dulled awareness does not resonate, recollect nor recognise its true nature. In the seeker, there is a “stirring” of the dulled awareness such that the search begins. It does not know it, but this stirred awareness is really looking for itself. In the enlightened being, the dullness is gone because ignorance has been removed by knowledge gained through self-enquiry. This awareness now “shines” fully in its own right, in its own light, as its own nature. Being a non-dual reality, this awareness is the same as the totality of awareness.

So rather than “reflecting,” could it be a “resonating”? The greater the resonance by the resident awareness (ie. the less the ignorance) the greater the clarity and recognition of itself as awareness. When all ignorance is gone, awareness shines fully in the light of its own knowledge.

James: No. This is not how it is. It presupposes that there are two awarenesses that

are conscious. There is one conscious awareness, the “other” awareness is an inert reflection. This is an interpretation of the teaching that is not warranted. It is Ben trying to formulate the teaching according to his own knowledge/ignorance.

Ben: After all, I am awareness all the time, whether with ignorance or with knowledge. Awareness is my nature. I am awareness in this human appearance. It is a case of whether I know and live this fact (enlightened awareness) or do not know it (usual dulled awareness of *jiva*). I begin as *jiva*. In either circumstance, I am awareness.

James: If you want to be in line with the teaching, instead of saying that there are two awarenesses, you would say that the subtle body is *tamasic*, dull. The ideas are okay, but the language is not. If you are going to communicate self-knowledge with others you should stick to the traditional language. The way you present it makes the two-self theory sound credible.

Ben: This idea of “resonance” helped me to appreciate “who” recognises itself as awareness: it is dulled awareness, me, *jiva*, shaking off my ignorance. The explanation of “reflection” suggests passivity: a reflection cannot “do” anything, not even recognise itself as awareness, whereas dulled awareness, through knowledge, can recognise itself.

James: No. It is the always the one conscious awareness under the spell of ignorance, i.e. identified with the subtle body, that RE-cognizes itself. It is not the subtle body that recognizes itself, because it is an inert, passive reflector.

Ben: The clue to a breakthrough is realising that I, *jiva*, appear as dulled awareness in my form which has appeared. Even though dulled, I am still awareness. So the shift is from, “I am dulled and do not know who I am,” to, “I am awareness in this form.” The form will go through its *karma*. But I am free of the appearance. I am the witnessing awareness. Since awareness is partless and non-dual, I am the totality of awareness.

James: No, again. *Isvara* is the “totality” of awareness. You are just simple, ordinary awareness. There is no total or individual from your point of view.

Ben: The resident awareness, even though dulled to its own nature, enlivens the three bodies in the human form. When the resident awareness “leaves,” the whole form disintegrates and returns to the total field. Awareness does not really “leave” as such. What actually happens is that the form arises and passes away in the awareness, as any appearance does. The word “leave” when applied to awareness is just a figure of speech. Awareness does not move. It is the substrate in which the form comes and goes.

James: This is correct.

Ben: The subtle body is an inclusive term covering the mind, intellect and ego.

These three faculties function by taking direction from the *vasanas* in the causal body. These faculties perform their function in either case. When I am dulled awareness, their functioning perpetuates my *samsara*. When enlightened, they continue to serve in a different enlightened mode, until the form ceases. After that, there is only the totality of awareness, me.

James: Yes and no. Knowledge and ignorance sitting side by side. It seems you are, as the Brits say, “too clever by half.” You go off the rails with the sentence, “When I am dulled... etc.” You are never dulled awareness. This indicates the experiential view of enlightenment. You are simple, ordinary awareness always. There is no when. If there is a “when” it is when ignorance or knowledge is operating.

Ben: So who overcame ignorance through knowledge? Not the ego. It is I, *jiva*, dulled awareness. After recognition, I realise the shift happened in the “field of appearance.” That field appeared from, exists in and will return to the totality of awareness. As far as the totality of awareness is concerned, nothing happened to it. That totality of awareness is me.

James: Yes and no. The field does not “return to the totality.” It is the totality. Your knowledge is good, but your language is not.

Ben: A summation of Vedanta: there is only awareness. Through *maya*, there is a field of appearance arising from awareness. In this field are individual forms, also an appearance. Whatever occurs in the appearance is a happening, governed by the laws operating in the field.

This principle applies at the macrocosmic scale of totality of awareness and appearance and also at the microcosmic scale of individual awareness and appearance. Beginning with ignorance, I, awareness, take myself to be the appearance. With knowledge, I realise I am awareness, and that what occurred through ignorance was an appearance. I am free, always was and always will be. I am awareness.

James: This is good.

Ben: Thank you for all your work. Mary and I enjoy watching your DVDs daily. I am slowly studying your book.

Warm wishes to you both from us to both of you.

~ Much love, Ben

James: Appreciation is much appreciated. I admire your dedication.

~ Much love, James