

Two Standpoints of Cognition, Knowledge, Reality

A person sees a Tree and thinks he is seeing a Man.

There are two standpoints: the World-standpoint and the Mind-standpoint.

In the World standpoint, the Tree is Real.

In the Mind-standpoint, the Man is Real.

The Tree, though not identified as such in the mind-standpoint, is still the substratum cognition manifest (as vritti) and illumined in the mind.

What makes it the apparent man is the Adjoining of other imaginations and thoughts, so that the end conglomerate object (in the mind) appears as a Man.

This Man-appearance is real in the mind-standpoint since the object including of additional nama-rupa and thought vrittis added to the Tree-vritti in the mind has existence in the mind and indeed Consciousness illumines that object as a Man.

The knowledge "I am seeing a man at the distance" is Ignorance because it equates falsely an objective reality of the mind-standpoint as being the reality of the world-standpoint. Rather, right understanding would be "I am seeing the man-appearance in the mind because of nama-rupa (imagined) additions onto the cognition of the Tree that alone is real in the world." Thus the man is superimposed onto the Tree outside.

When the Ignorance is removed with knowledge, one has certainty that the object in the world seen is the Tree. The knower who seeks to assume the world-standpoint merges his mind-standpoint with it and sees in his cognition the substratum Tree. That is, his taking the world-standpoint nullifies the nama-rupa additions that only belong to the mind standpoint.

Now a question comes: is it possible to have the Man remain in the mind-standpoint even after the knowledge that the object in the world is a tree and not a man?

There are two differing approaches, possibly taken by opposing schools of thought.

1. Yes. For the man in the mind is corresponding to name-form additions to the substratum cognition of Tree, and these need not vanish upon attaining knowledge that the world-object is only a Tree and not the man in the mind. Only a partial set of thoughts constituting false-knowledge is removed, but that need not remove the name-form additions.

This is analogous to a child wearing a tiger costume in a play: the mother knows its her child and yet sees a tiger due to the costume addition. So the child is seen as a tiger in the play-standpoint (on account of real additions such as the costume) and known at the same time as the child in the "real

world"-standpoint.

2. No. Because when one sees the Man, one forgets the Tree; and when one sees the Tree, one no longer sees the Man. Knowledge of Tree illumines whatever one is seeing as that Tree; there is no question of separately adding name-form to the only real Tree-cognition to bring about an alternate Man-reality in the mind. Once you know the Tree, that alone is known as the object of cognition and all cognition is known as the Tree alone; no other separate identification remains. The mind-standpoint has merged with awareness of the Tree.

(Note: one who upholds the possibility of 1. is not necessarily negating the possibility also of merging awareness in the Tree, as referred to in 2. But he asserts that one can know the Tree-substratum even while being in the mind-standpoint where a Man-appearance remains in awareness, as distinct from and added onto the Tree cognition. It is because he also has realized the standpoint of nondual Reality (where such duality is negated) that he can say that the mind-standpoint is mithya in light of the higher standpoint.)

Let us translate the above scenario to the advaita setting.

There is Brahman the Reality. The "standpoint of Brahman" is called Paramarthika. In this standpoint, Brahman is pure Consciousness, advaitam.

There is also a vyavaharika standpoint in which the Reality is known as ishvara-jiva-jagat, that is based on name-form (or upadhi) identifications. The name-forms that manifest the manifoldness and plurality are said to be product of Maya. Why? So long as name-forms are identified separately and differently in any dualistic sense, an adjunct Power of Brahman (Maya) that projects the name-form universe must be affirmed (or we have to say that Ishvara=Brahman+Maya projects the nama-rupa).

Ignorance is the superimposing (adhyasa) of the multiplicity projected by Maya onto Brahman, the substratum Consciousness. This is the error of taking what is real in vyavaharika to be the paramarthika reality of Brahman.

Does Jnana eliminate the vyavaharika standpoint altogether or simply the error of the above superimposition?

There are two differing viewpoints.

1. The vyavaharika standpoint itself is only ignorance by way of superimposition. Jnana is the merging with the paramarthika standpoint where all dualistic consciousness (based on seer vs seen divide) is absent. The Self alone shines as pure Awareness.

2. Even if such realization of paramarthika is accepted as an outcome of either vichara or vichara+yoga, the jnani can return to the lower vyavaharika standpoint. Thus, jnana can exist in the jnani within the vyavaharika standpoint where the nama-rupa duality based on seer-seen divide is posited. This means the nama-rupa duality is not entirely adhyasa but rather it is mithya, anirvachaneeya, cannot be ascertained as absolutely real or absolutely unreal. Why?

The substratum Reality is nirguna Brahman in both standpoints, but in vyavaharika, the nama-rupa duality is added onto Brahman making it appear saguna. We say added and not superimposed, to emphasize that the duality is not *asat* for a jnani in vyavaharika; so long as he sees the duality, it is a real projection of the Maya of Brahman. He knows however that duality and its cause Maya are transcended/negated (*asat*) in the higher paramarthika standpoint and therefore *mithya* with reference to that.