

PERCEPTION IS BRAHMAN: Raphael/Sankara Comment on Gita 2.17

The unreal never is; The real never is not. The truth about both has been seen by the knowers of the Truth (or the seers of the Essence).

[[What does not exist cannot come into being, of being there is no cessation. This ultimate truth was revealed by those who have seen the essence of things.]]

Raphael comment: ... *being*, inasmuch as it *is*, may not cease to be, or otherwise it would not be. If any form that we see with our senses ceases to exist, and disappears, it means that it *is not* real being, or we would always find it.

Samkara defines as real (*sat*) that which does not change, which remains, which is identical to itself and does not depend on any other reality other than itself. The non-real is all that changes, that is impermanent phenomenon. Plato uses the same definitions as Samkara.

Sankara: [paraphrase] Although heat, blue, form are known through valid means of knowledge (in this case perception, which is one of the 5 non-ultimate forms of valid knowing) they are not real. Why? Because these perceptual forms come and go, and because they do not have a self-existence: i.e. do not exist independently of their cause/essence. In mentalist terms: forms are inter-dependent with the knowing of the forms: or like waves on the ocean.

"in perception (*upalabdhi*) there is a twofold knowledge. There is a real knowledge [i.e. a consciousness of being, of the essence of things] (*sadbuddhi*) and a non-real knowledge (*asadbuddhi*) [i.e. knowledge concerning the appearance of things. Therefore there is an awareness of essence and an awareness of form, which are always associated in the knowledge of an object]. That knowledge, whose content never ceases [therefore the knowledge of being] is real: that knowledge whose content ceases [therefore cognition of a becoming form-appearance] is non-real.

The two knowledges present in perception are distinguished as real and non-real. They are recognized in relation to the same substratum [consciousness] in the form: "an existing pot", "an existing cloth, "an existing elephant" "an existing thought" [where a form-entity, which is variable and changing, qualifies, is superimposed on, the consciousness of existence, which is invariable]. This qualification (existing tree) is not like the qualification in a form such as "a green tree" [where an attribute qualifies a form-entity]. It is so in every case [because in perception of different objects, awareness of existence is unique, but is qualified and made apparently multiple by the specific forms [as in the case of gold appearing as lion, etc.]

Of the two knowledges the knowledge relative to the pot etc may cease, as it was shown, but real knowledge does not cease [*or: actually the content of real knowledge, the Real, does not cease*]. Therefore the content of knowledge of the pot, etc. [as the perceived form-modification] is non-real as it is destined to cease, but not the content of real knowledge, which is not destined to cease [as it is consciousness without modifications] [*My comment: immediate, intimate, immanent, infinite.*]]".

Being represents the absolute constant that is always existent, while all phenomena superimposed on it come and go, are and are not, appear and disappear, are perceived and a moment later they are not, as they have disappeared. Being, therefore, through *maya* appears as this or that.

PB: Because it is known directly--and not through the medium of thoughts or words--it is called immediate knowledge. ([21:5.202](#))

[My comment] There are two modes of knowing present even in our ordinary perception of a tree. There is a perceptual knowing of the forms of the tree: green tree, rough bark, so many feet away, changing perspectives as I move around. If I look through a microscope I see into cells, microbes, and so on. The contents of this knowing are forms, feelings, images, sense qualities. Then there is the awareness of the unchanging and non-different nature of all perceptions-isness. We express this direct intuition as tree *is*, roughness *is*, sky *is*, distance to tree *is*, I *am*, thought of tree *is*. There is also the direct and immediate awareness of these qualities as known: *Known* tree, known roughness, known thought of tree, known sense of I, etc.

The being-ness in being, the awareness in consciousness, the interest in every experience—that is not describable, yet perfectly accessible, for there is nothing else. I Am That Ch 44

since it is awareness that makes consciousness possible, there is awareness in every state of consciousness. I Am That Ch11

[From the awareness of the unreal to the awareness of your real nature, there is a chasm which you will easily cross, once you have mastered the art of pure awareness. Ch. 99](#)

NM: Let go of the unreal, and the real will swiftly take its place. 1

Even when you are experiencing contents—cup, thoughts, etc.--what later will be pointed to as awareness of the unreal or experiencing of the unreal. Rafael was pointing out that even to have experience of the unreal, there must be along with it the awareness of the real. To say the cup IS, thought IS, red IS... there is awareness of, or is, Is-ness. And there must be the awareness which is the real. Already Awareness of Being is bliss. The next step? Even the unreal, the cup, the form of the cup, the sense qualities and all that, the enjoyment of the cup, all of those forms, all of the qualities, all the feelings are also none other than expressions of the real. And they're also made-up of consciousness. So not only does the experience of what we call unreal have along with it the real, but what we call the real includes what we usually call the unreal. So that says that what we call unreal is unreal when we separate it from the real. But when we see that it's pervaded by R, or in the famous words of PB, reality continuous with the App, then it's restored to its proper place in things and you don't have to get rid of it. Just like with the ego, you don't get rid of the ego, you simply stop identifying it simply you no longer take it as a separate vehicle and there's no longer take it as a separate. Finite, local, limited. Right now in the very experience of the unreal, there is the real and also right within the real there is the Potential for the expression of appearance. And better to call it appearance than unreality anyway.

“Mind in Tibetan Buddhism.” Padma dKarmo. Tr. Herbert Guenther.

Although as far as immediate experience goes, there is no duality, by not recognizing it as such there is no arising of pure cognition. Due to this failure, a first instant arises as sense field, and a subsequent one as apprehension and feeling-expectation. The perception of external world arises through thought and appearance (imagination). But by recognizing whatever arises as it is, there is sunyata, perception being pure and leaving no trace due to apprehension and feeling-expectation. While these two topics, appearance and sunyata, seem to be different from the point of view of appearance, from the point of view of immediate experience, they are not different—hence the fundamental nature of mind is the nonduality of appearance and sunyata.

“Mind, in the absence of conditions, is without memory and association, divisions and distinctions,” and is open and luminous. “Like muddy water when it is allowed to settle and becomes calm and transparent by itself.” While the primordial nature of mind is not affected by conditioning, with “memory and associations--under the conditions of appearance, traces, dispositions and symbolic expression, it emerges as anything.” --