

# **A CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS QUALITIES**

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There are a series of specific conditions to do with the nature of consciousness that make it a deeply outstanding concept. Thanks to them we can analyze meditation practice and also build a profoundly interesting epistemological model of reality. The first condition is that Consciousness is self-illuminating; the second is that it itself indicates an integrating process; the third is that consciousness in and of itself is unexplainable, and the fourth condition is that it has a connotation of simultaneous reality.

### **1. Self-illuminating condition**

What the Vedanta states with respect to consciousness and its self-illuminating character is that it on its own is the source of knowledge itself. Consciousness has no genesis through which we can trace its beginning, it has no prime condition through which we can say that its knowledge process entails the beginning of knowledge. Consciousness in itself, is an act without a beginning, without conditions, without causes. It would seem to be a process isolated from causality, as it does not require the sum of a series of processes to emerge. Consciousness is a condition in itself and on its own, and only depends on itself to be and exist.

We cannot find a reason, however much we probe into the process of consciousness itself, for consciousness being, for it to exist. We cannot find any prime condition that might be antagonistic or prior to consciousness. Consciousness itself exists for itself, it is an element lacking causality.

The fruit of consciousness is knowledge, and this knowledge has a synonym, understanding. No one is taught to know or to understand (at the most one is taught how to reflect), as it would seem that understanding is derived from a condition of existence itself.

This self-illuminating condition pertaining to understanding is found in all human beings who have their own system to be able to understand in a coherent manner. There is even understanding in a mistake. We are not referring to the validity of information or the validity of judgement that we are realising at a mental sphere of activity, but to the fact that even people who are not right have an understanding that allows them to validate what they know. The Vedanta simply supplies the confirmation that understanding is found in all human beings. Every human being can understand, but no one is taught how to understand. Understanding comes into being on its own, and it would seem that it is a condition of the nature of human beings to be able to recognise themselves, to be aware of their own existence.

Of all potential understanding that human beings have, the most fundamental one is understanding we exist. We know we exist! This is unalterable and it is something we are born with. It is something which arises in the very fact of existence. Everything in nature tends to know that it exists. Hence everything in nature has its own level of understanding.

Existence has another condition, and it is that we do not know where we have come from, we do not know why we exist; however, we are aware that we exist. If there is something within human nature which has the same self-illuminating condition as understanding, it is existence itself. We know we exist, in other words, we exist knowing. The act of existence and the act of *being* both have this self-illuminating quality and they exist on their own.

The source of life oozes from every nook and cranny. The source of life is everywhere. It organizes itself in such a majestic fashion that in one way or another it always expresses itself in many forms. And all of them induce the condition understanding itself exists that life is superior to all other conditions.

The power of existence is profoundly interesting. But the Vedanta finds the power of understanding much more so. The very act of knowing, residing in consciousness itself. Understanding is not thinking. It is not reasoning either. The act of understanding is much deeper and is more primary than the acts of reasoning, judgement or mental synthesis.

To reason we need to have experience and a point where we can make a comparison with other mental processes that we have. To be able to reflect upon things we need to recur to our own past in order to give judgement. This does not happen with the act of understanding. It would seem that the act of understanding is a product of reflection; but it begins just at the moment where reflection ends. We only have to stop the condition of reflection and dialectic movement, and at that instant the act of understanding takes over. There is no boundary of causality between understanding and reflection. We know that understanding is only given at the very moment dialectic reflection ceases. The act of understanding is profoundly vivid and interesting, unique and without cause. We are stating that consciousness is the source of knowledge or understanding.

We think and reflect upon things; we believe that it is through these processes that we know. We also feel, we are emotional, passionate, and we firmly state that it is through these processes that we know. No one can deny the cognoscitive condition that entails the appreciation of feeling, being passionate or emotional. Nor can anyone deny the apparently paradoxical condition that thinking constitutes. But the Vedanta does not base the act of understanding on a previous reflection nor on a previous emotional, passionate or sensitive condition.

However, in our experience we see that the world has this order, which is the opposite to what really happens from the standpoint of the Vedanta. We believe that understanding is something that occurs after a previous process in the mind. We assume that the understanding operates via an experience of feeling necessarily requires a previous experience of feeling. We mistakenly assume on many occasions that the act of understanding comes from reflection or from the emotional, sensitive and passionate condition. And this is false. Understanding does not come about in this way.

The Vedanta states that consciousness, or the very deed of understanding, do not need a reflexive or emotive cause. It assumes that the condition of understanding is, simply, a reality that acts for itself on its own, without causality, without any future potential. It exists because of itself. Consciousness is the ultimate reality in itself. The act of understanding goes beyond intellectual reflection which we have about things. It is an act without causality, without roots in anything else except itself. We are wrong in believing that we understand more intelligently through correct reflection. Evidently, things are known by means of reflection; but it is not that they are known and understood through reflection itself. It is precisely the opposite, understanding arises just when reflection has momentarily retired; and with the presence of attentiveness, understanding comes about by itself and on its own.

Understanding does not require deduction or being thought about, or shown or established. It is an act that comes about on its own. The Vedanta does not imply that understanding is brought about by someone who understands. In the act of learning, understanding does not come from a subject that has the condition of being able to reflect, thanks to which knowledge emerges. One of the most novel consequences that this fact implies is that knowledge does not require the condition that there should be someone who knows.

Knowledge, or the act of knowing is beyond any momentary and differentiated condition of a subject who claims to be in possession of knowledge. The Vedanta and our own experience affirm that understanding can only be understood by itself; that knowledge can only be known by knowledge itself. When human beings know things, what they grasp are records of differentiated information; but these are not exempt from causality. Therefore, all of these depend on momentary and relative conditions. However, neither knowledge nor understanding form part of such circumstances. Understanding is subsequent to what is relative, even though it does nevertheless include it; but then again it is nothing relative either.

The Vedanta asserts that understanding is such an absolutely unlimited act that it cannot be restored or apprehended by means of a limiting condition. We call this basic limiting condition "selfness", egoism, and subject. The subject seems as if it knows, but really it does not. It only has a glimpsed memory of a reflection of a marvellous image of reality that can only be known on its own and by itself.

If consciousness is self-illuminating, any fraction of reality that shines on a subject does nothing more than brighten up a momentary condition, in spite of the fact that it is absolutely valid, real and consistent. Any value judgement we may have concerning any conscious appreciation of this world is changeable. Hence, the condition of understanding of what we perceive is usually momentary. The notion of understanding that the Vedanta establishes – the act of knowing itself – is far beyond the conception human beings have of their own personal history. What it establishes is that the flow of existence is of such magnitude that it indicates with all evidence that consciousness knows itself, and the brilliant flashes we get when we emit personal judgement are no more than the residue of the brilliance of consciousness itself.

The personal judgement we express on every object we analyze is always a relative, specific, provisional, momentary representation. The Vedanta searches for the “provocation of a knowledge that knows itself”. And we know that this possibility exists. There is a condition of understanding where it understands itself without any division. It is a condition such that when it is stable, real and unique, it is an understanding with no division, in other words, not associated with time or space. This understanding is the source of all cognition. It is cognition itself and it is the source of knowledge itself. Nothing evades this understanding. It fills everything, it is everything and it knows everything. Everything is within it. This type of knowledge is that which pertains to consciousness. When consciousness knows from its own nature, what it knows is the absence of differentiation in such knowing. It contains such a power of knowing, such a power of learning and understanding that its limitlessness can only be known by it itself; and it itself is unlimited.

Self-illuminating Consciousness illuminates itself, depends on itself and knows for itself. Understanding has no cause in an object, nor in any function, nor in any reality either. What the Vedanta calls Understanding must not be confused with what we usually mean by the understanding of our own realities and judgements. The same word is used but they do not mean the same thing. It must be understood that personal understanding is the fruit of an individual conscious condition. You can only express judgements on relevant conditions associated to personal history. Hence, the learning which comes about, the judgement which arises and the reality which appears after an expression of judgement, are clearly personal, relative and profoundly changeable, solely depending on the information in your own memory.

The understanding which the Vedanta postulates is not this personal understanding, but one which understands itself. It is very similar to the intuitive act. Intuition allows momentary understanding of a reality without creating a fractioning of time and space for it to come about. The understanding which the Vedanta alludes to is very much akin to intuition, although it is much more than just mere intuition. Consciousness, in itself, is similar to a kind of intuition that is found in all the potential conditions of knowledge. Whereas intuition is a fraction with a situation or direction, consciousness emits knowledge and understanding itself without time and space, at all moments and in every direction. This knowledge is an

understanding that knows everything. However, intuition is already an exquisite fractioned understanding without sensory or mental intermediation, and without the intermediation of time and space.

The understanding that we are talking about is not even the divided up understanding that feeling provides. Because, in spite of the fact that feeling provides understanding, as does thinking, there is still the problem that the judgement which accompanies this understanding is exclusively implemented by options existing in our own history. This means that the personal option based on feeling is momentary and relative.

The understanding we are talking about is a type of intuition at all levels. It is an understanding that knows everything that can be known without any intermediation whatsoever, which, when it is expressed naturally in the form of knowledge, perceives that knowing is knowledge that in itself flows, that it knows itself and that consciousness is the only valid thing in itself. When we look at it from this perspective, we know that everything exists without cause, we know that everything has always existed and always will. We know that things are and always will be, and this, not from the condition of rational judgement, but from the condition of non-limitation that consciousness itself provides to all its own judgements.

How is this self-illuminating condition in Consciousness generated? It comes into being the instant, the very moment that the delimiting division of individual consciousness ceases, in the instant that the personal condition breaks up, in the instant that the individual condition ceases its dialectic condition. It is at this instant that pure non-differentiated Consciousness emerges, Consciousness itself.

The great dilemma with this approach is that Consciousness itself cannot be recognised by someone unaware of it or differentiated from it. Consciousness itself can only be known by itself. It is impossible to create a conscious individual condition that takes on the role of knowing what things really are, because this personal condition (which is apparently real and profoundly limiting) can only consider existence through the filter of that which has been perceived as being differentiated.

So, the knowing which the Vedanta talks about is not a secret that has to be discovered in the course of our lives, or something which can be given. It is not a knowing that can be expressed or differentiated. Real knowing arises at the precise moment when the differentiated condition of those who believe that they know something with regard to their own personal history ceases to be. Consciousness knows by itself in the very instant in that the personal and conscious condition stops promoting differentiation in perception.

There is an intrinsic order in all natural phenomena, which human beings would like to know about to be able to obviate. It is an order which exists by itself. Human beings are accustomed to believe that there is an individual consciousness which is superior to all other conditions in nature. They believe

that even God must be like a human being. Humans are so deeply self centred that they assume that the conscious condition is their own. However, they can only get their brain around situations that exist in their own memory and that belong to their own experience. They believe that to be able to know they have to have experience.

Human beings think that there is an order in something we call the "I"; but, where is this "I"? To be conscious of the "I" history has to be drawn upon and judgements given; or to put it another way, we are what we remember about ourselves. So, is there consciousness because the "I" is conscious? Human beings think that there is "something" which is conscious, but really there is "no one" or "nothing" that is being conscious. They think they are conscious because they recall and pass judgement on what they experience; and basing themselves upon this, they remember themselves and consider themselves to be intelligent.

In view of these considerations, the condition of Consciousness is not understood in the West, and they assume that it means being conscious of what is known and what exists. Obviously, this condition generates learning and understanding, but any learning and understanding of this nature, which is founded on the patterns of experience and individual memory, is no more than a brief glimpse of true reality.

The Vedanta tells of a different Consciousness. It is a Consciousness that is in everything and penetrates everything; that underlies all elements, even the void, causing it to be known. It even underlies the past and the future, making these dimensions seem real. This Consciousness is exceptionally subtle and extremely intelligent, and gives rise to an unimaginable and inalterable order, an order without cause that represents a reality without hierarchies and requiring no space or time for its manifestation to be detected in nature and individual existence.

This order is inside and outside the body, when we breathe in and out, when we are born and die or while we are alive. It is a happy, intense, alive flowing order that generates light and existence. It is everywhere, behind, in front, up and down. But it not formed of anything in particular, but is made of not-something, of not-parts, of not-time, of not-space, of not-words, of not-proportions, of not-limits. It cannot be seen, but sees who sees it. It cannot be seen, but sees the one who sees,

Where is the individual, conscious condition of the observer who is momentarily entertained by a cinema screen, the prose in a book or when practicing a sport? And yet there is still understanding. But, who is the one who is knowing these moments? The answer is "That", That which Knows, Consciousness. The Consciousness of vitality, life, movement, reality; it is self-illuminating, it knows itself, it knows and it knows without cause.

Human beings must let That know itself. And for this to happen, a condition of perception that is free of history and boundaries, free of egoist

condition, must be brought about. We have to learn to know what is happening, not what has happened or what will happen.

Consciousness is the prime agent, the basis of reality, that which the world is made up of and which is the basis of the model which the Vedanta lays down.

## 2. Integrating condition

The West usually comes across with a differentiated model of knowledge and analysis with the aim of studying the reality we perceive. The scientific model, as such, is based on detailed analysis of experiments and the normalisation of the subsequent conclusions. Through observation we seek to reach laws that support observation itself. What science is searching for is to describe observation in the most thorough and precise way and by doing this subdividing, breaking apart and delimiting perception itself. This dissociate, differentiating, analytic model, looks to find the essential part which constitutes the whole. In this model the part is important but the whole is not.

There are two basic options for analysing reality in the West. One determines that the part is valid, which is the option that Aristotle's model adopts. The other gives more validity to the whole, this one being closer the Platonic model. When the whole is the essence that constitutes the reality of things, the original reality is known as an "archetype", and this archetype is prior to the potential parts that it develops within the purpose of its existence. Thus, it is that in the platonic model the *whole* is fundamental whereas in the Aristotelian approach it is the *part* which is ascribed fundamental importance.

Science has chosen to develop of the Aristotelian approach due to the fact that our mental instrument is more associated to the part than to the whole. Therefore it divides, it delimits and describes the conditions of similarity that there are in the different parts that make up a whole; but preferably deals with the part, more than the whole. Nevertheless, there are some schools in the West that do not have a scientific approach, and which try to engage with the concept of ***the whole*** – for example, the inductive systems like mathematics, psychology and schools of philosophy such as the idealists. But when it comes to engaging with ***the part*** other schools come onto the scene, such as the realists and materialists.

In contrast to what Western scholars mistakenly maintain, the Vedanta is neither realist nor idealist. In the West it is defined as being Metaphysical or Abstract Idealism. From the Vedanta's perspective, it is not ***the whole*** that is important and not ***the part***, nor vice-versa. For the system in the Vedanta, both ***the part*** and ***the whole*** are vitally important, but not fundamental. The problem is that both ***the part*** and ***the whole*** are relative, because ***the whole*** always ends up being part of another whole, and ***the part*** always ends up being part of another part.

The dilemma which is addressed from the perspective of Aristotelian realism or Platonic idealism (taking into consideration ***the part*** or ***the whole***), is that any study that is undertaken on any subject necessarily entails plotting and defining what is analysed.

But, down to how small a fraction can ***the part*** be analysed? And up to what point can ***the whole*** be analysed? What size do this whole and this part have to have for them to be analysed? This is the great dilemma we come

across when we try to apply Western scientific methods. For instance, in idealism, **the whole** can be so big that we call it infinite; but therefore it becomes a fraction since it cannot be experienced by the mind. In realism, **the whole** can be so small that we would even have to become “ideally” abstract to be able to analyse it, as in the case of quantum physics. In quantum physics, most processes are clearly ideal abstractions or probabilistic suppositions.

The big problem with Western systems is that they are differentiated. For example, Plato analysed and considered clearly archetypical considerations. He pointed out that **the whole** is a pre-existing idea upon which the development of **the part** is based. There is no **whole** that circumscribes the total sum of **parts** and **wholes**, in such a way that the **parts** which make up this **whole** could be analysed. When it comes to Western analysis, we arrive at such a delimited, outlined and miniscule description of **the part** that it becomes impossible to experience. And it is in this fashion that the West sets out to describe how the world is created and attempts to analyse it. But there is no single correct, coherent and unitarian solution.

In the Vedanta there is no interest in describing **the part** or **the whole**; or even their integral relationship. From the start, it does not presume that the universe is made up of **parts**, that's why it has no interest in basing its development of the world on **the parts**. Nor has it any need to define the universe as a **whole** that includes everything which includes all that exists, because it does not presume that the universe is a **whole**. It has no need to consider the universe as a **whole** or sum of its **parts**. For this reason it has no need to analyse **the whole** or **the parts**. At least, not in the way it is done in the West.

The Vedanta has an evident and specific approach: **the part** is part and can be experienced as such, and **the whole** is whole and can be experienced as whole. But, all the **wholes** and all the **parts** have one element in common, they all change, they are transformed, they evolve. They all take on new frontiers through time and space.

The Vedanta does not base itself on the condition that the universe is a primary and essential **whole**, nor that it is made up of **parts** that go on to create **wholes**. It does accept the evidence that information that constitutes **the parts** and **the whole** exists. But what does not exist for the Vedanta is independent information that has the capacity of knowing the rest of the information as being different to itself. Or, in other words, there is no “I”; and it is not recognised as a **part** or **whole** because it does not exist as **part** or **whole**. That is to say, the prerogative of the study and analysis of reality is based on the fact that information exists but it is not differentiated. There is no agent that can essentially differentiate information while it and the information are stable.

The Vedanta does not presume that information is differentiated, nor does it accept the agent called “I” or what is known by that agent are stable; since

in the end, by means of appreciating time and space, the representation it has of itself and what is known continue to be transformed, they change. Any **part** or **whole** is impermanent.

The Vedanta assumes there is a reality that sustains information naturally and spontaneously, having the condition of integrating and non-differentiating it. This reality is Consciousness. Even information itself is Consciousness. Information, in itself, is conscious, and so, all pieces of information coming from anywhere are conscious in the same way.

Consciousness manifests itself as information, but it has the natural essence of being non-differentiated. Hence, Consciousness is an integrating act that makes it impossible for information to be differentiated. It might seem to be by illusion differentiated, but information is really non-different..

There are other integrating forces in nature and in human beings, just as love for example. Love itself, when it acts, integrates the boundary that differentiates who loves from the loved one. The same as Consciousness, love has this peculiar condition of integrating what adheres to it. When there is love there are no parts, whoever loves is lost in whoever they love, they have no other option rather than to blend into each and every content of what they love. If human beings loved continually and constantly, they would have no other option than to dissolve and non-differentiate themselves in the acts that they themselves realise.

Analogically, when there is understanding, what is known is integrated with knower, as it generates a feeling of non-differentiation between the perceptor and the perceived. Given that the information is Consciousness and it is a self-illuminating act, without cause and independent, the very process of understanding is converted into a process free of history, time and space. In this relationship, information itself is always non-different. Owing to that, Consciousness is self-illuminating. Thanks to the fact that nothing exists prior to it and it has no cause whatsoever, the act of understanding makes that which is known non-different to the knower. It is Consciousness that promotes the non-dual or non-differentiated condition.

The Vedanta, like realism, supports the idea of the preceptor being independent from information; and like idealism, assumes the existence of information dependent on the observer. But the Vedanta is not realist or idealist. It entertains the notion of both inner and outer information of the subject, but it does not consider the differentiated condition of what is called the subject as being stable and to be recognised as different to what he or she knows. When a drop of water merges into the sea it can be stated that the drop of water is part of the sea, and the sea's condition predominates over the drop of water; in other words, **the whole** predominates over **the part**. But if it is accepted that the drop of water can take on a small, limited and independent condition, then **the part** would predominate over any other kind of condition. But the Vedanta does not propose either option, but rather it introduces non-differentiation. And there is no information within these

parameters that can include the knowledge of the remaining information assuming it to be independent from it.

Thanks to their own mistaken appreciation of themselves, human beings always consider themselves, in the final analysis, to be differentiated, and their understanding is always associated with elements that are **part** of some whole or they are **wholes** made up of parts of other wholes which are added together or multiplied. In the Vedanta, understanding recognises information that always is, and will be, non-differentiated. Therefore, the presentation of **part** and **whole** becomes obviate.

### 3. Unexplainable condition

When human beings began to search for the original prime elements upon which to build a model of reality for the universe they perceive, they found two elements: they called them *object* and *subject*. Nothing came before these. The most previous elements to any condition of existence are called *object* and *subject*.

From the very first, human beings started to think which of the two was fundamentally important, giving rise to the objectivist and subjectivist systems. Others tried to work out which of the two knowledge depended upon, *object* or *subject*, and thus the realist and idealist schools came into being. Philosophy as a whole is formulated in accordance with the realisation that there is nothing that exists prior to *object* and *subject*. Nor is it possible to perceive object or subject as segmented. When something is perceived, it is *something*, and whoever perceives it, is *someone*. This seems obvious, but centuries went by before it was firmly established.

But even though it is blatantly obvious, it is nonetheless mistaken. A tower of Babel has been built upon these concepts, and has generated great confusion. The models which have been based and constructed on them (realism, idealism, dogmatism, scepticism, etc.) are very close to the perception we have of things, and all of them stem from the consideration that *object* and *subject* exist. And all these models agree that *object* and *subject* are the essential cause of cognition. Even science and psychology drink from the same spring of philosophical approaches.

There are a series of paradoxes that these models evoke, which do not have solutions. Wanting to define the reality of the universe, basing it solely on the appreciation of *object* and *subject*, produces absurd paradoxes, and incompatible situations. *Object* and *subject* are only capable of thoroughly defining a momentary defined fraction of reality. The Vedanta accepts the idea of *object* and *subject*, but they are accepted as being unstable, momentary and illusory. They seem to exist, but in reality they don't. We experience *object* and *subject*, but neither are independent entities. Truly speaking the *object* is non-different to the *subject* and vice-versa.

Within one of the potential formulations which describe the model of non-duality, Patañjali tried to discriminate what limits the *subject* and what limits the *object*, where the subject ends and where the object begins. Because, obviously, all conditions of differentiation require limits, since if this boundary did not exist, information would totally embrace what would be left. There have to be limits for differentiation to exist.

But before going ahead, we must first define what the subject and object are. From the perspective of the Vedanta, information is also conscious, and so, defining the subject as an entity possessing consciousness or one that can know itself whilst knowing, is not enough.

Patañjali put forward a very simple scheme to explain the nature of the *subject* and *object*. He stated that the world of objects consisted of everything which could be experienced through using the senses, and the world of the *subject* was all that which could be experienced without sensory presence in perception. Thus, the sensory boundary was established. And on recognising this sensory boundary, along with the possibility of being able to be stably and continuously on each side, or other of the boundary, the latter was given the name of *pratyahara* in Sanskrit.

Therefore, all information which is knowable via the senses is considered as *object*. And all that which can be known without necessarily relying on sensory interpretation (such as for instance memory, stimulation, imagination, fantasy, intellectual process, etc.) would be considered to be *subject*. So, from this perspective, we know that the world is known by means of the senses and interpreted by means of the mind.

On occasions, this small formulation fails to coincide with the West's standpoint, for example, such as in the case of one's own body. In the Vedanta, according to Patañjali's interpretation, the perception of the body is considered to be an *object*. Another thing would be "remembering my body", which would not form part of the information captured by the senses, and so, would be considered as *subject*. But in the West, the body would be considered part of the *subject*. For example, breathing belongs to the subject in the West, whereas Patañjali considers it as being object, as it is known via the senses. This is a very elegant, universal and profoundly intelligent consideration of Patañjali's and thanks to it the description of reality begins to take on shape that it previously lacked.

Now we can begin to give the world we perceive an order somewhat different to the way it is done in the West. When we investigate the *subject*, what emerges is not a reflection on the *subject's* oneness, but the *subject* knowing inner objects. That is to say, when disconnecting our senses inner objects appear with a *subject* knowing them. And when we perceive *outer objects*, we also discover that there is someone perceiving them. In other words, there is also a subject perceiving and knowing *outer objects* by means of the senses. This creates a great diversification of *subjects* and *objects* that turn this process into a dilemma. It is like trying to cut a magnet in half: there will always be two poles no matter how many pieces it is separated into; it is not important what is known, a subject-object duality always arises.

Therefore, the Vedanta states that if what we recognise is the perception of *inner objects*, for each of them an *inner subject* appears that is doing the knowing. This is the great problem with inner perception: there will always be "someone knowing" attesting "what is known". In this way, we will never really find who it is who knows when attention is placed on *inner objects*. That is, at the very instant of wanting to define the knower, a new subject appears that views the previous one as being an object, and so on *ad eternum*; or in other words, a thought brings on another, which leads to another and so on and so forth.

And so, Patañjali made an absolutely exquisite and intelligent observation. If attention on the inner world were put on the *subject*, and not on inner *objects*, this condition of cognition would become inscrutable. The perception of the *inner subject* is so intense when attention is placed on it, that there is no way to be able to investigate this *subject*; this perception becomes so stable that it makes it inscrutable. And this experience is known as *dharana*, which means concentration.

But the same thing happens in the outer World. If when the senses are active the condition of the observer prevails over the observed, the recognition of the observer is so unstable that the interpretation of the observed changes. The solution to the dilemma of outer perception is achieved when the senses are active, attention is placed upon worldly objects not allowing for the subject to mentally interpret them; and symmetrically in the inner world: when the senses are closed off, the subject has to be attentive on itself and not on the mental objects that can crop up and be evoked by memory.

Therefore, there are two options when approaching meditation:

1) When senses are active we approach meditation by giving attention to *outer objects* without interpreting them.

2) When senses are disconnected, we approach meditation by giving attention to the *inner subject* without interpreting it.

This is what is known as concentration or *dharana*.

What we are looking for with this process is to find a modality of perception which is inscrutable, in both inner and outer worlds. When one knows from this perspective, no fraction exists that is called subject that knows the object: *what we have is "something"* that knows by knowing itself. This expectation of Reality makes consciousness flow knowing itself and only inquiring into itself. It is absolutely unexplainable by any fraction of information. Only it itself can know itself.

The condition of reality which knows without there existing a boundary that establishes a difference between *observed* and *observer* is known as non-duality. If in the outer world awareness of *objects* that appear before us is constant, they recognise the *subject* that knows them knowing itself. It is the *objects* themselves and the field which is established that know. This condition is known as outer concentration.

Thus, what we are looking for are two fundamental things based on the condition of recognition of *object* and *subject*. Our point of departure is that there is no previous condition to *object* and *subject*. So, in the East they explain that the *subject* is that which can be known without sensory intermediation, and the *object* is that which is known through sensory intermediation. When attention is given exclusively to the inner subject, or on

the other hand to the outer object, perception becomes unexplainable. Since it is unexplainable it opens the door to non-dual perception, to real meditation, either by means of the inner world or through the outer world. That's why consciousness is unexplainable.

#### 4. Condition of simultaneousness

Recalling the previously stated conditions, in the first place the Vedanta affirms that Consciousness is, in itself, self-illuminating. It knows because its essence is knowledge itself, and there is not a causal link with any other element previous to it. The power of understanding comes from Consciousness, no one learns how to understand.

The second condition asserts that Consciousness is an integrating act. This model of reality maintains that *object* and *subject* exist, but they are really non-different. The driving force that maintains the absence of boundaries between *subject* and *object* originates in Consciousness' own integrating power.

In third place it is affirmed that Consciousness is unexplainable, unfathomable. It cannot be the object of cognition of any previous element. Consciousness knows, but nobody knows *it*. And thanks to its truly integrating condition, it is the only thing that in the end can know itself.

To analyse the process of "unexplainableness" in Consciousness, the Vedanta analyses two elements which are the basis of our inner meditation practice. The Vedanta states that the world can be presented as *object* and *subjects* or as *objects* and *subject* respectively, but there is nothing lesser than *object* "and" *subject*. That is, there cannot be just an *object* or just a *subject*, instead there is an *objectsubject* duality that is permanent and present in all places at all times. There is nothing prior to *subject*, as it is the primary, minimal cognitive condition. If something appears to the egoic condition it will be a *subject* or an *object* but never half an object or part of one, for example. It is considered that this part of an object is now already an object in itself.

The Vedanta comes to the conclusion that *object* is all that which requires sensory intermediation so that the mind can perceive it and pass judgement. And that *subject* is all that which requires the absence of sensory intermediation so that the mind can perceive it and pass judgement. The *subject* does not require the senses to know, and *object* is all that which requires senses to be known.

However, if the *subject* is analysed in the world where he or she resides, that is to say, when we find ourselves in the inner world without need of sensory intermediation, what appears is not only the *subject* itself but also *objects* that the *subject* knows. If attention is placed on these *inner objects*, a *subject* will appear as a knower of these *inner objects*. The act of changing the inner world into a differentiated reality causes the *subject* we find there not to be the *subject* that is the basis of all this differentiated reality. It is a paradox but a reality.

But this *subject*, the one which emerges when we place our attention on *inner objects*, can also become the object of another *inner subject* and so on. And none of these *subjects* will be the one which really knows. Hence the

cognoscitive experience is transformed into a constant investigation of "something", there behind it, which is knowing another "something", which lies in front.

Although cognition happens all the time, we do not find its ultimate perceptor. So, what the Vedanta shows us is that, while the condition of attention in the inner world is situated on inner objects instead of the subject, the *object-subject* duality will always remain. Thus, the mistake is to enter into the inner world along with your thoughts, because what we get from this experience is movement, change, mutation and transformation. Nothing we find there is stable. The Vedanta suggests that in this world every time a thought occurs, a *subject* associated to this thought arises, which is not the same subject that observes thoughts from a distance.

So, The Vedanta, in its search of appreciation of stability and reality, chooses the *subject* as the basis of attention and understanding in the inner World. The *subject* that has the capacity to perceive *inner objects* from a distance (which is not the one that emerges when attention is placed on them), is another *subject*. It is an *inner subject* that observes in the state we call "observation", and if we cease to observe, our mind will again return back to the state of consciousness known as "thought".

The Vedanta proposes that the act of placing attention on this *inner subject*, which is an observer that manages to maintain its distance from thoughts, generates such a stable condition of understanding that it makes this *subject* impossible to change into the *object* of some other *subject*. The stable condition of understanding that emanates from this perception is so stable that it is immovable. Hence, this inner *subject*, on being so stable, becomes unexplainable. So stable does it become, that as a *subject* it is even capable of being its own *object*, thanks to the understanding coming from information which resides in that subject, and at that instant it is the *object* and *subject* simultaneously.

Here there comes about a sense of non-differentiation between *object and subject*, thanks to the unexplainable condition of Consciousness. If Consciousness were explicable, that is, if it always existed as a previous agent to all that was known, and that agent could be *object* of another previous one, we would never know what we really are.

The inexplicability of Consciousness makes it possible to establish a type of inner practice where it is initially necessary to disconnect the sensory condition. Attention must be spontaneously, naturally and gently deposited on "the knower" of the inner World, not on "the known". In practice, in the face of the difficulty of being able to establish this condition in a natural way, what can be done is one of the following things:

1. Wait for thoughts. The fact of someone waiting for something prevailing over what is being waited for, causes the condition of the *subject* to prevail over what is observed, and that causes thoughts to appear from a distance.

2. Promote an "attitude" in the observer of awareness of the sensation of presence. It is like being attentive to your own life-force, to the representation of life to which exists in the observer. It is being attentive to attention itself, being present. Being attentive to attention itself is recognising the conscious condition of existence: it is knowing that one is. It is not only being in the present but also knowing that one is.

3. Promote a condition where this *subject* is not represented by a mental form or/and a name. That is, not creating an historic condition of name-form association in the observing subject. By preventing the condition of representation of name and form with respect to the subject there, one avoids the appearance of the complement in the field, in other words, the *object*. The mind is prevented from inducing a sense of name and/or form for this *subject* with the aim of avoiding any kind of judgement being made. This option is known as "the constant investigation of the "I"", because he or she who really knows is being searched for, the one who is the live agent that has the capacity of knowing.

All these practices seek to be able to induce the condition of presence in the *subject* with regards to the *object*. The immobile condition of the *subject* means that in due time, with experience and living presence of understanding in the inner World, this *subject* transforms into the *object* of perception of itself.

When we establish a boundary that delimits what is, with respect to what is not (in other words, what delimits what is in itself from what is with regard to the world), what it delimits is the condition of judging information contained within it. Hence, the *subject* has the capacity to pass judgement on the information evoked by memory. In fact, one can only judge logically and dialectically that which one has previously experienced.

Suggesting that there is a cognitive limit between subject and object, that is, that there is a reality which is contained within a boundary, establishes that you can only be conscious of that information which is established within that boundary and that the boundary itself determines. If you want to establish another reality, another limit or boundary must be installed. Hence, in practice it is possible to jump from the act of viewing a column to viewing a window, for example, or of perceiving a landscape to perceiving a colour. In the instant the boundary is determined the condition of receptiveness to one's own judgement arises.

It is the mind which establishes boundaries, not information itself. For this reason, the mind is "information that establishes boundaries". That is to say, it is also information, but it is the information that establishes boundaries in the information itself. The mind is a kind of information that brings about delimitation within information. When the mind establishes a boundary, it separates the known information from the unknown information.

Non-duality is a condition such that the information cannot be essentially known by the subject different from the objects that are known. Non-duality is not the inexistence of information it is the total improbability of a *subject* being able to really know the *objects*, with the *subject* being *subject*, and the *objects* being *objects*. There is no immobile, individual *subject* that can know objects; this condition does not exist because, essentially, there is no differentiation between *object* and *subject*. This is non-duality.

The Vedanta calls the potentiality of constraints created by the mind "names and forms". Thus, this world of dialectic perception is simply a world of *names* and *forms*. *Maya* is, simply, the representation of the assumption that the names and forms are real, that names and forms are stable. And *karma* is the apparent causal permanence of names and forms. Names and forms, being illusory, appear to be continuous; they are and they prevail thanks to *karma*. In short, karma is believing that a name and a form have a cause in a previous name and form. For the Vedanta, the universe, in the way it is perceived at a dialectical level, with the boundaries that are established at a dialectical level, is simply a universe of names and forms that apparently evolve through causality thanks to the phenomenon known as karma.

The mind does not create information, it delimits it. Information already is; moreover, it is Consciousness. Information is nothing but Consciousness, but Consciousness with its immense integrating power that entails its own self-illuminating. The differentiated world only exists by virtue of the mind delimiting the condition of information. Beyond this delimiting the world is non-dual, non-different. Hence, given the fact that information is conscious in itself, when it is associated with a boundary it would seem that this information associated with the boundary is conscious.

But owing to the boundary, the system (which is delimited at the very moment of knowing the duality) can only be conscious of that which is delimited, and the *subject* can only be conscious of his or her own delimitation, of his or her own personal history and own thoughts; the *subject* cannot be "dialectally" conscious of what is not remembered. We can only be conscious of what we are, by virtue of what we remember.

This implies a condition: to know what is beyond the boundary we establish (for example, an *outer object*) we have to project ourselves by means of our senses to know it. But when attention is placed on the *object* and not the subject, obviously the "I" state of the system that is knowing, is not active; there is a potential ego, but it is not in the act.

Hence, when we intensify the light of an external *object* by means of our attention, the light of the *subject* obviously becomes momentarily inexistent. When we observe an *object*, we cannot observe another one or the subject either. These experiences are not simultaneous. The cognition is transformed into a sort of sequence that unfolds information according to the limits it is contained within.

The mind is the great device behind this condition, because it establishes the boundary that delimits information. And when attention reveals other information, which is then delimited within other determined boundaries, all previous potential boundaries that were delimiting and establishing their own information are weakened. This mental process means that the perception of the world, from the mind's perspective, is clearly sequential, while perception from the perspective of non-difference is simultaneous.

The Vedanta looks for a model of cognition that is simultaneous, and this only comes about when the subject turns into the object of its own perception. At this moment there is no boundary between subject and object. In the Vedanta, this condition of perception is known as non-duality.

In summary, we have seen that consciousness has the enormous qualities of being simultaneous, unexplainable, integrating and, at the same time, self – illuminating. This, on its own, generates an exceptional, special and unique model of reality that provides evidence that information exists, has always existed and always will, in time and space, even though it is non-different, ultimately, from anyone who might know it. There is no *subject* outside Consciousness that, being independent of it, is able to know it, and simultaneously know him/herself also. These conditions of consciousness are what the Vedanta uses as a basis for its model of reality.