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**22. WHAT IS MY REAL GOAL? THE 'I'-PRINCIPLE.**

The word 'I' has the advantage of taking you direct to the core of your self. But you must be doubly sure that you will no longer return to identification with the body.

By reducing objects into Consciousness or happiness, you come only to the brink of experience. Reduce them further into the 'I'-principle; and then 'it', the object, and 'you', the subject, both merge into experience itself. Thus, when you find that what you see is only yourself, the 'seeing' and 'objects' become mere empty words.

When you say the object cannot be the subject, you should take your stand not in any of the lower planes, but in the ultimate subject 'I' itself.

In making the gross world mental, the advaitin is an idealist. But he does not stop there. He goes further, examining the 'idea' also and proves it to be nothing but Consciousness. Thus he goes beyond even the idealist's stand.

The realist holds that matter is real and mind is unreal, but the idealist says that mind is real and matter is unreal. Of the two, the idealist's position is better; for when the mind is taken away from the world, the world is not. Therefore, it can easily be seen that the world is a thought form. It is difficult to prove the truth of the realist's stand; for dead matter cannot decide anything.

The advaitin goes even further. Though he takes up the stand of the idealist when examining the world, he goes beyond the idealist's position and proves that the world and the mind, as such, are nothing but appearances and the Reality is Consciousness.

Perception proves only the existence of knowledge and not the existence of the object. Thus the gross object is proved to be non-existent. Therefore, it is meaningless to explain subtle perceptions as a reflection of gross perceptions. Thus all perceptions are reduced to the ultimate 'I'-principle, through knowledge.

When a Jnyānin takes to activities of life, he 'comes out' with body, sense organs or mind whenever he needs them; and he acts, to all appearances, like an ordinary man, but knowing full well, all the while, that he is the Reality itself. This is not said from the level of the Absolute.