Response to Commentary

Response to the Commentary of Ram Lakhan Pandey Vimal

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Right off the bat, I’d like to state that I am strongly attracted to Vimal’s definition of consciousness, as elucidated in the abstract. I might quibble and ask for the word psyche instead of mind, which he uses, and I might suggest that for common usage the definition could be even more simplified, but really it stands as is. However, he does not mention conscious transcendence (or, better, transcendent awareness). Aside from this oversight (which is probably implied since Vimal has written elsewhere of higher states of consciousness), it is the most comprehensive definition I have seen stated in the fewest possible words.

However, in the series of unspecified quotations he attributes to me, I see, “Experience is divided into subject and object.” Now I don’t believe that experience-in-itself, raw experience, is divided into subject and object, so I can’t conceive of me saying this except to explain how experience becomes conscious experience, which is precisely by sundering object from subject through linguistic syntax. If, for experience-in-itself, subject and object are one, then it follows that non-conscious functions and non-conscious experiences may also be identical. However, I might add that much non-conscious experiencing could in principle become conscious experiencing under the right circumstances with the right sort of symbols and cognitive tools. Non-conscious functions, on the other hand, might be expected to stay non-conscious since are often only the physical substrate for more subtle mental processes.

I really appreciate Vimal’s carefully thought-out tables and charts. For many, they will clarify the subject of this discussion. I like to keep things simple, however, if only for the reason that trying to get others to give some consideration to this a new (yet ancient) way of thinking about consciousness means avoiding the complexity that will scare them away. This is certainly not to say Vimal is wrong; on the contrary, it is to praise him for going beyond what I have attempted. By making the picture more complex he is also clarifying it.

I can’t agree, however, that non-conscious experience is the same as proto-experience, since, as in my 21 Indicators, real somatic experience (sensations, perceptions, and emotions) clearly happen even when the observing mind is not conscious of it.

Reference