



### Why we cannot see the waking world as Mithyā, even after studying Vedānta?

By Acharya Tadany

A frequent and sincere question that students often ask is:

“Guruji, if I clearly see the dream (svapna) as unreal when I wake up, why can’t I see the waking world (jāgrat) as mithyā?  
And why does nididhyāsana remain difficult even after years of study (śravaṇa and manana)?”

This question goes to the very core of Advaita Vedānta because it demands **shifting one’s standpoint from the individual (jīva) to the Self (ātman)**.

So, let us explore this deeply.

### Why the Dream is easily recognized as not-real.

When we wake from a dream, we instantly know it is not real. Why?

Because our **standpoint has shifted**. You are no longer inside the *Svapna* (dream-world), you are outside it. So, from this “higher” standpoint, the dream loses its authority.

Similarly, when you wake from deep sleep (*suṣupti*), you know it was not “nothingness.” There was an experience of absence (*abhāva-pratyaya*), and the one who knows this is **you**, the unchanging Awareness (*cit*).

In both cases, the recognition takes place because “you” stand above the state.

### Why the Waking State is harder to see as Mithyā.

In the waking world (*jāgrat*), you are trying to declare the world as **Mithyā** (dependent reality) while still standing **inside** it. However, the mind is engrossed in *viśaya* (objects), and the experiences appear solid and unquestionable.

Consequently, a sincere Vedānta student faces **three major obstacles**, as follows:



### 1. Deep habitual identification (dṛḍha-abhimāna)

For countless lifetimes, the mind has been conditioned:

- “I am the body” → *dehātmā-buddhi*
- “I am the mind” → *antaḥkaraṇa-abhimāna*
- “The world is real” → *jagat-satyatva-buddhi*

These conditionings, shaped by *vāsanā* (impression of anything remaining unconsciously in the mind), *rāga* (affections), and *dveṣa* (dislikes), create deep impressions (*saṃskāra*) in the psyche.

Consequently, one lifetime of study cannot instantly erase conditionings shaped over many births (*aneka-janma*).

Therefore, *Nididhyāsana* exists precisely to weaken these old grooves.

### 2. The mind wants experiential confirmation

Even after understanding the *śāstra*, the mind subconsciously waits for a sensory or mystical experience:

- “If the world is *mithyā*, why does it feel real?”
- “If I am *Brahman*, why don’t I feel it?”
- “If Awareness is always present, why don’t I experience it like an object?”

This is a misunderstanding.

**Brahman is the subject (pramātā), never an object (prameya).**

The Self cannot be experienced as “something other.” It is the very Awareness because of which all experiences are known.

Thus, waiting for a special experience keeps the student trapped in the standpoint of the *jīva*.

### 3. Emotional patterns override intellectual clarity

You may know:

“I am not the body” → *aham na dehaḥ*

But when pain comes, *duḥkha-bhaya* takes over.



You may know:

**“I am the witness”** → *sākṣī-caitanya*

But when anger or fear arises, the old *saṃskāra* reacts.

This shows that *śāstra-jñāna* is present, but *jñāna-niṣṭhā* is not yet established.

*Nididhyāsana* is the bridge from intellectual clarity to emotional assimilation.

### How to practice Nididhyāsana effectively

*Nididhyāsana* is not mechanical repetition of “*Aham Brahmāsmi*.” It is the conscious shifting of identity from *jīva* to *ātman*.

Therefore, the practice rests on three movements:

#### 1. Shift the vision/standpoint (*drṣṭi-parivartana*)

Whenever the mind is disturbed:

- Step back into the position of the witness → *sākṣī-bhāva*
- Recognize the experiencer → *pramātā*
- Disengage from the experienced → *prameya*

This is the subtle “waking up” within the waking state.

#### 2. Recognize Mithyā, don’t reject the world (*jagat-mithyā jñānam, not jagat-nindā*)

*Mithyā* means **dependent reality**, not “false, illusion, unreal.”

Just as:

- the dream world depends on the dreamer (*svapna-prapañca* on *svapna-srṣṭi*)
- the waking world depends on Awareness (*jāgrat-prapañca* on *Ātma-caitanya*)

We are not denying life, we are seeing its order:

**Dream appears in Awareness.**

**Waking appears in Awareness.**

**Both dissolve into Awareness.**

You are the constant (*sat*) while the States are passing/distinct phenomena (*avacchedas*).



### 3. Apply the knowledge when it matters most (jñāna-prayoga)

*Nididhyāsana* happens not in perfect silence, but in the turbulence of daily life.

When fear arises:

**“This fear is a vṛtti, I am the Awareness in which it appears.”**

When desire arises:

**“This is a movement of the mind (mano-vṛtti), I am the witness.”**

When praise or insult comes:

**“These are just sounds, I am untouched (asangaḥ ayam puruṣaḥ).”**

When the emotional charge/reaction weakens, the teaching becomes *jñāna-niṣṭhā* (firm abidance in knowledge.)

### Conclusion

We cannot see the waking world as *mithyā* because we are still standing inside its narrative as the *jīva*.

*Nididhyāsana* is the continuous shift to the standpoint of the *sākṣī*, the witness-consciousness.

Just as the dream collapses the moment you wake, the waking world collapses the moment you awaken to your nature as **Ātman** (pure, self-shining Awareness.)

This awakening is not an event in time. It is the quiet recognition of what has always been true.

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