

Never Plead Ignorance that Matter is Only an Image

From the moment a person comes into existence, he becomes subject to the steady indoctrination of the society. A part of this indoctrination, possibly the foremost of it, holds that reality is all that can be touched with the hand and seen with the eye. This understanding, which is quite influential in society, is carried unquestioned from one generation to another.

A moment of thought, without being subject to any indoctrination, would however make one realise an astonishing fact:

From the moment we come into existence, all the things surrounding us are simply what our senses present to us. The world, human beings, animals, flowers, the colours of these flowers, odours, fruits, tastes of fruits, planets, stars, mountains, stones, buildings, space, in brief all things are perceptions our senses present us. To further clarify this subject, it will be helpful to talk about the senses, the agents providing information about the exterior world to us.

Our perceptions of seeing, hearing, smell, taste and touch, all function similarly to each other. Images we receive from objects we assume have existence in the external world (taste, odour, sound, sight, solidity) are all transmitted by neurons to the relevant centres in the brain. Hence, what the brain receives are only electrical signals. For instance, during the process of seeing, light clusters (photons) that travel from the object to the eye pass through the lens in front of the eye where they are refracted and fall inverted on the retina at the back of the eye. The electrical signal generated by the retina is perceived as an image in the visual centre of the brain after a series of processes. And we, in a part of our brain called the visual centre, which takes up only a few cubic centimetres, perceive a colourful, bright world that has depth, height and width.

A similar system applies in all the other senses. Tastes, for instance, are turned into electrical signals by some special cells in the mouth and on the tongue and transmitted to the relevant centre in the brain.

An example will further clarify this subject. Let's assume that at the moment you are drinking a glass of lemonade. The coolness and solidity of the glass you hold is converted into electrical signals by special cells under your skin and transmitted to the brain. Simultaneously, the odour of the lemonade, the sweet taste you experience when you sip it and the yellow colour you see when you look at the glass are all transmitted to the brain in the form of electrical signals. The noise you hear when you put the glass on the table is similarly perceived by your ear and transmitted to the brain as an electrical signal. Sensory centres in the brain that are essentially different yet work in co-operation with each other interpret all of these perceptions. As a result of this interpretation, you assume yourself to drink a glass of lemonade. In other words, everything takes place in the sensory centres in the brain while you think that these perceptions have a solid existence.



Something you claim that you see is in fact only a perception in your brain. The world in which you claim you are living is also nothing but a collection of perceptions.

However, at this point you are simply deceived since you have no evidence to assume that what you perceive in your brain has a material correlate outside your skull.

[The subject that has been explained so far is an OBVIOUS fact proved true by science today. Any scientist would tell you the way this system works and that the world we live in is in reality an aggregate of perceptions. An English physicist, John Gribbin states with relation to the interpretations the brain makes](#)

that our senses are like the interpretation of stimulations coming from the external world, as if there is a tree in the garden. He goes on to say that our brain perceives the stimulations that are filtered through our senses, and that the tree is only a stimulation. He then asks: so, which one is real? The tree that is formed by our senses, or the tree in the garden?¹⁶

No doubt, this is a reality that requires profound reflection. The subject briefly explained here is one of the biggest facts you can come to realize in your life; so, you never plead ignorance of this OBVIOUS fact. And start reflecting on this subject.

So far we talked about the fact that we live in our skulls and perceive nothing more than that which our senses perceive. Now let's proceed a step further: "Do the things we perceive have an actual existence or are they imaginary?"

Let's start by asking: is there a need for the external world in order to see or hear?

No. There is by no means a need for the external world in order to see or hear. Stimulation of the brain in any form triggers the functioning of all the senses, forming feelings, visions and noises. The best example explaining this reality is the dream.



When we consider this fact deeply, we encounter quite astonishing facts. The brain, where our sensory centres are located, is only a piece of meat weighing 1,400 grams. And this piece of meat is protected in the skull, a mass of bones. This is such a protection that no light, noise, odour of any kind can penetrate through this bony structure. The inside of the skull is pitch-dark and completely insulated from any light and odour. However in this dark space, we live in a colourful world of millions of different tastes, odours and voices. How then does this happen? What makes you feel the light in pitch-darkness? What makes you feel the odour in a place completely insulated from every kind of odour? Alternatively, what makes you feel other feelings? Who creates all of these senses for you? In fact, every moment a miracle happens...While engrossed with everyday routines, you must never plead ignorance about the

While dreaming, you lie on your bed, in a dark and quiet room, your eyes shut tight. Nothing reaches you from outside for you to perceive... neither light nor noise. However in your dreams, you experience any of the things you are likely to experience in your daily life, just as vividly and clearly as in reality. In your dreams, you also wake up and hurry to work. Alternatively, in your dreams you go on a holiday and feel the summer sunshine.

Besides, during the course of your dreams, you feel no doubts about what you see. Only waking up makes you realise that it was all a dream. In your dreams, you fear, feel anxious, happy or sorry. Simultaneously, you experience the solidity of matter. However, there exists no source producing these perceptions. You are still in a dark and quiet room.

Descartes states the following about this astonishing fact of dreams:

In my dreams, I see that I do various things, I go various places; when I wake up, however, I see that I have not done anything, gone anywhere, and that I peacefully lie in my bed. Who can guarantee to me that I do not dream also at the time being, and even more, that my whole life is not a dream?¹⁷

In this case, just as we experience our dreams as real and only realise that it was a world of fancy when we awake, we cannot claim that what we experience when awake is real. So, it is entirely probable that, we may well at any time be awoken from the life on earth, which we think we are living right now, and start experiencing real life. We have no evidence with which to deny it. On the contrary, the findings of modern science raise serious doubts about the assertion that what we experience in our daily lives has actual existence.

In this case, we come face to face with an OBVIOUS fact: while we think that this world in which we live exists, there is no ground on which to base this supposition. It is entirely possible that these perceptions do not have material correlates. Since this is so obvious, you must never plead ignorance that what you see, hear, feel and touch, in brief the "things" you acknowledge as the material world, are only images presented to you.

extraordinary nature of the situation you experience.

If the thing we acknowledge as the material world is merely

comprised of perceptions shown to us, then what is the brain, by which we hear, see and think? Isn't the brain, like everything else, a collection of atoms and molecules?

Like everything else we consider "matter", our brains are also perception... it is surely no exception. After all, our brains are also pieces of meat that we perceive by our senses. Like everything we assume to exist in the outer world, it is only an image for us.

So, who perceives all these? Who sees, hears, smells and tastes?

All these bring us face to face with an OBVIOUS fact: a human being who sees, feels, thinks and is conscious is more than just the sum of the atoms and molecules which make up his body. What makes a person a human being is actually the SPIRIT Allah grants him. Otherwise, attribution of consciousness and all human attributes and skills to a piece of meat of 1.5 kg would be definitely irrational, not to mention that this piece of meat is only an illusion. That is why, you must never plead ignorance that what makes you a person is the spirit Allah "breathed into" you.

He Who has created all things in the best possible way. He commenced the creation of man from clay; then produced his seed from an extract of base fluid; then formed him and breathed His Spirit into him and gave you hearing, sight and hearts. What little thanks you show! (Surat as-Sajdah: 7-9)

Since a person is not a heap of matter but a "spirit", who presents, or to put it more accurately "creates" and presents, the collection of perceptions called "matter" to our spirits?



Another astonishing fact is that, apart from colours, odours, tastes and voices, "width" and "distance" are also perceived in the brain.

As mentioned above, all perceptions of the room we are in, for instance, are transformed into electrical signals and transmitted to our brains. The sensations transmitted to the brain are interpreted as the image of the room. In other words, you are, in truth, not inside the room you assume you are in; on the contrary, the room is inside you. The location of the room remains in the brain, or rather let us say, the location in which it is perceived in the brain is a tiny, dark and quiet spot. However, the vast landscapes you see on the horizon somehow also fit into this tiny spot. You perceive both the room you are in and the vast landscape in the same place. Maybe this is something you have never thought about until today. Yet, now you have been reminded of it. So, never plead ignorance that, just like concepts such as distance and width, vast landscapes and narrow rooms are also inside you.



Someone who hears this for the first time is likely to react in the following way: "I hold with my hand, see with my eyes, so they all exist." Yet one should also think about the following: in dreams, that person also holds with his hand, sees with his eye and even experiences everything as if everything is real. He enjoys, feels fear and pain, takes pleasure...yet, he suddenly wakes up realising that it was only a dream. This is exactly the nature of the life in this world. One day man will wake up from this life as if from a dream and he will face real life.

The answer to this question is explicit: Allah, Who "breathes" His spirit into human beings, is the creator of everything surrounding us. The only source of these perceptions is Allah. Nothing exists but what He creates. In the following verse, Allah relates that He perpetually creates everything and that otherwise, nothing will continue to exist:

Allah keeps a firm hold on the heavens and the earth, preventing them from vanishing away. And if they vanished no one could then keep hold of them. Certainly He is Most Forbearing, Ever-Forgiving. (Surah Fatir: 41)

As a result of the steady conditioning, some people are exposed to from the time they are born, they may be unwilling to accept this fact. Yet, no matter how they avoid hearing or seeing it, this is

an OBVIOUS fact. All the images shown man remain only creations of Allah. Moreover, not only the external world but also all the actions one claims as one's own happen only by the will of Allah. Any action independent and separate from the will of Allah is out of question. Allah draws attention to this fact in the Qur'an as follows:

... Allah created both you and what you do. (Surat as-Saffat: 96)

... you did not throw when you threw; it was Allah who threw (Surat al-Anfal: 17)

As a result of all these we understand that the only absolute being is Allah. There is nothing but Him. He encompasses everything in the heavens, earth and everything in between. Allah relates in the Qur'an that He is everywhere and that He encompasses all things:

What! Are they in doubt about the meeting with their Lord? What! Does He not encompass all things! (Surah Fussilat: 54)

Both East and West belong to Allah, so wherever you turn, the Face of Allah is there. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Baqarah: 115)

What is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Allah. Allah encompasses all things. (Surat an-Nisa: 126)

When We said to you, "Surely your Lord encompasses the people with His knowledge." (Surat al-Isra: 60)

Allah, there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep. Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him.

Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them but they cannot grasp any of His knowledge save what He wills. His Footstool encompasses the heavens and the earth and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent. (Surat al-Baqarah: 255)

You must never plead ignorance of the fact that Allah encompasses you and He is with you every moment in at every place and that He witnesses everything you do and He is nearer to man than his jugular vein.



In truth, every individual is enclosed within his own image that is presented to him by his senses. Everyone has his own world. In this world, it is unlikely for anyone to know what others experience or see. Furthermore, one can never know if others see anything or not. That is because, like every other thing, people too are images perceived within his world (brain). This is actually the most important secret of your life.

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