

A Loving God for Saps

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Tommy: Hello, James. I'm watching the videos. You say the self is going to liberate us from ignorance through the beauty and compassion of Vedanta. I like the sound of this because I'm sappy, but this seems to imply that compassion is a quality of the self, which you also say has no qualities.

I understand that God is the creator of beautiful, intelligent ignorance, if you like, but sometimes it sounds as if you are saying that God is not different from the self.

I know everything in one lump, but this confuses me a bit. As a sap, I'd like to have God be the self loving the creation, so what gives?

~ Your most loving student, Tommy

James: I love you, Tommy. You are so cool. Okay, let's sort this "quality" business. You will be happy to know that you get to be a sap and worship a loving God even if you are enlightened. Here's how.

The word "God," or *Isvara*, refers to two things: the pure non-dual self, awareness, and the pure non-dual self associated with intelligent, beautiful ignorance – which we call *maya*. The pure self is – well – pure, meaning it has no qualities. It is a partless whole that exists by itself alone, revealed to itself by itself without the aid of instruments like a mind. When *maya*, which is a *shakti*, or power, that is potential in pure awareness appears it creates the appearance of a universe out of pure consciousness itself.

Since the creation is actually the self but the self in a form, an apparent duality, it is now possible for the self to experience itself though the human mind – which of course is also the self – and because it knows that what it experiences is itself, it "feels" compassionate toward it. Compassion, or love, is the nature of the self. As pure consciousness, it is *parama prema svarupa*, of the nature of pure experienceless love, but this love becomes experienciable compassion when *maya* operates. Although reality seems to be dual, it is actually non-dual, so it makes it possible for the self to actively love itself.