

God Stuff

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Joe: Dear Daniel, I am still making adjustments. If someone asked me two years ago if I believed in God, I would have probably said no or made some disparaging remark. I still have problems with “God” even though I should know better, with what I now know.

I still have to come to terms with the fact that our true nature is God, and that God is the consciousness of the universe.

Daniel: Yeah, unfortunately the word “God” has been polluted and distorted as a result of ignorance and misinterpretation. And the dogmatic religious types don’t make it any easier to digest the true implication behind the word.

What is God? God just refers to “the Total.” It’s the energetic forces (the three *gunas*) that are responsible for creating, preserving and destroying the objects in the *dharma* field. One can also refer to it as the macrocosmic mind/field, or as we like to call it in Vedanta, *Isvara*.

What’s important is to understand your relationship to God, both as the apparent person/*jiva* (Joe) and as your accurate nature, awareness.

A subtle point is this: though God/*Isvara* is you, awareness, you simultaneously remain free from God. God is you, but you are not God! In other words, though God is your true nature, your true nature (i.e awareness) is totally free from God.

Another point: though God is made up of consciousness, it’s actually not conscious. The *dharma* field is totally inert. It only apparently appears to be alive because you, awareness, are there to light it up and watch it dance. Awareness in association with *maya* (ignorance) is referred to as *Isvara*, or “God.”

I’m not sure how familiar you are with Vedanta, Joe, so I won’t go on further, but after contemplating the link [Isvara/Jiva/Jagat](#), or at the [NonDoodle](#) site, then you are most welcome to reconnect with me if you have any questions or wish to explore this science further.

God bless you! ☺

Joe: Thank you for your reply. Having done the *Tattva Bodha*, and when I have finished the *Gita*, I want to start looking at Advaita Vedanta more deeply.

To help a bit more with clarification of “us” and God, is this where the “wave and ocean” analogy comes in, where the ocean is God/consciousness/*Isvara*, and we are the wave, *atma*?

Daniel: These questions are good, Joe. A qualified, inquiring mind guided by a complete teaching such as Vedanta will undoubtedly be liberated.

The core essence of Vedanta is unfolding the non-dual nature of reality, the non-separation of subject and object. Though there is only one thing that is real, you, awareness (the subject), there is an apparent field/existence of objects that is made from you and that appears to/within you.

This is where the ocean/wave analogy comes in. The wave depends on the ocean, yet the ocean remains unaffected by the wave. The ocean is the essence of the wave because the wave depends on the ocean for its existence. The wave is a by-product of the ocean.

The ocean (the subject) is a substitute for you, “pure” awareness (*satya*). And the wave refers to the apparent reality, the field of objects (*mithya*).

Anything other than you, awareness, is an object. An object includes an experience and also the apparent *jiva* called “Joe.”

Discrimination is simply understanding the subject-object relationship. And freedom/*moksa* is the firm conviction that you are the subject (awareness) and that you remain unaffected by whatever objects appear in/to you.

Joe: Nothing exists without our awareness; am I therefore right in saying when we shed *maya* we realise our divine nature, *Isvara*, through our awareness?

Daniel: You *are* awareness. Awareness is your nature. Your divine nature is non-dual, limitless, unchanging, ordinary, unborn, deathless awareness.

Joe is an object that appears to/in you. Joe is as inert as a wooden chair or the PC screen in front of him. It's not that Joe is aware, but that you, awareness, is aware of Joe. In other words, Joe doesn't know awareness, rather you, awareness, knows Joe! This is a subtle inquiry.

You are currently identifying yourself as Joe, and therefore the above may sound mind-boggling. If by “shed *maya*” you mean shed ignorance of *maya*, meaning that you don't take *maya* (duality) to be real, then yes, your true nature is revealed as that limitless, unchanging “backdrop” that watches all experiences come and go. The *jiva* (Joe) is a branch of *Isvara*. You, awareness, are free from both. This brings us to another subtle statement: though freedom is for Joe, it is more accurate to say that freedom is freedom FROM Joe.

You can only remove your personal *jiva* ignorance (“microcosmic ignorance”), thus while the world doesn't cease to exist upon the assimilation of self-knowledge, one no longer takes it to be real.

Joe: I assume this because I understand *maya* that is part of the causal body that leads to creation and the phenomenal world.

Daniel: There is no difference between the causal body and *maya*. Like *maya*, the causal body is simply the complex of *vasanas* which are conditioned by the three *gunas*: *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

Let's hit it from another angle, Joe. *Maya* is not a thing, like an object that one can pin down. *Maya* is the non-apprehension of yourself and the subsequent misapprehensions that arise as a result of that. *Maya* has two powers: the power to veil (*avaruna shakti*) and the power to project (*vikshepa shakti*). *Maya*

apparently hides yourself from yourself.

Joe: I will read the link and give it some contemplation.

Daniel: The truth is counter-intuitive and ignorance is super hardwired. Constant exposure to the teachings is key.

Joe: I have to adjust my mindset, God/*Isvara* is the creation, not a Creator. Am I right to assume, if the penny has dropped, that the creation/*Isvara* consists of two elements, awareness and *maya*?

Daniel: Let's keep it simple. The Creator and the creation share the same order. We use "*Isvara*" to capture both terms. What's important is to understand your freedom from the Creator/creation.

I will reiterate. *Maya* is a power (*shakti*) that exists in you, awareness, and is the principle that gives rise to duality (ignorance). Once *maya* is operating, awareness "assumes" the role of Creator and apparently identifies with *maya*. Awareness in association with *maya* (ignorance) is then referred to as *Isvara*, or "God."

Joe, if you have not yet read James' book *How to Attain Enlightenment*, then my suggestion is that you order it and digest each page. It unfolds the complete teaching in a practical way and will arm you with a firm toolkit to resolve all doubts. You can order it from the ShiningWorld website. It will be a solid gold investment for you. You are most welcome to contact me after you have read it.

Joe: Once again, thank you for your reply. I have the book *How to Attain Enlightenment* and have read through it, but inevitably more questions arise as your understanding starts to grow.

Daniel: The crux of your problem is this, Joe: you think awareness is something other than you. You speak of it as if it is an object. Joe is trying to objectify awareness. But this is not possible, because you *are* awareness. You are what you seek.

This very ordinary and obvious awareness that is aware of these words right now is the only awareness there is to "get." By "get" I mean to claim this awareness as your true identity and to understand what it means to "be" awareness. To understand that you, awareness, are never stained by experience is liberation. Just as these words and the PC screen are objects known to you, so too is Joe just an object in/to you, awareness. This is the tricky bit because we think enlightenment is some glorious experience for the seeker to get.

You, awareness, are currently identified as/with a limited entity called Joe. This misidentification is what we refer to as ignorance. As Joe continues to inquire and reflect on the teachings, his mind will start to align its thinking with reality, meaning it will identify itself as the unchanging awareness that knows Joe – not the other way around. Currently, Joe thinks he knows awareness, but it's actually awareness that knows Joe. You are free from Joe.

Joe: I suspect I may have been looking for a hierarchy between awareness and *Isvara*.

Daniel: There is no hierarchy, because this is a non-dual reality. There are no levels, only apparent levels. The operative word is “apparent.” You are creating unnecessary divisions, Joe. Come back to the core message of the teachings, the fact that this is a non-dual reality. Keep discrimination simple: subject-object. Even though it may feel fake, stand in awareness as awareness and train the mind to chuck everything that arises into an object bucket, so to speak. These words are objects. The cat is an object. *Isvara* is an object. Joe is an object.

Joe: The logic would therefore suggest that *Isvara* is not real since, once again, it relies on awareness, hence there being nothing outside awareness: non-duality.

Daniel: Again, you are objectifying awareness as something other than you. Correct, *Isvara* is not real, as it is subject to change. Though *Isvara* exists, it's not real, and therefore we refer to it as the apparent reality (*mithya*). The only real “thing” is you, unchangeable awareness.

I know what you are saying, but we need to keep it as accurate as possible. Nothing is outside you, because nothing is other than you, awareness. Awareness is everything that is. There is no inside, outside, top or bottom for you. You are space-less and timeless.

Keep discrimination simple. Come back to the subject-object relationship. Use the ocean/wave analogy if it helps you. Objects don't appear in you, but rather you apparently split yourself (awareness) into an infinite array of objects by the power of *maya*. Again, this too is not very accurate, as there is no actual splitting, only an apparent splitting.

My suggestion is that you reread James' book again – and again. Constant exposure and repetition is key. Inquiry is hard work because ignorance is hardwired, but inquiry need not have to be complicated. Keep it simple and practical. You are on the right track.

Joe: Daniel, once again, many thanks. It is nice to know I am on the right track. I have two books on the *Gita* to finish by Eknath Easwaran, then I will pick James' book back up to reread.