

# How are Isvara and Jiva the Same

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The reason we say that Isvara and jiva are basically the same is because there is essentially no difference between Jiva and Isvara except in their capacity to create. Isvara creates the objective world and Jiva creates the subjective world. They both appear to be conscious because Consciousness is the common denominator. This is why Vedanta says they are 'essentially' the same. If this is true, then we can eliminate both jiva and Isvara as real and take ourselves to be consciousness.

We can eliminate them as real because their capacities are different. Isvara is not a person with likes and dislikes and Jiva cannot create the sun, moon and the stars. **And we can eliminate them because neither Isvara's creation nor jiva's creation hides consciousness.** It is always present prior to the creation and prior to the birth of individuals. You can't have a macrocosmic creation without consciousness. Something had to exist before Isvara could 'bang' the creation into existence. That something we call Paramatma, pure consciousness, free of both Isvara and jiva.

**Consciousness (me) is never affected by Isvara's creation or by jiva's creation. It is the knower of both.**

Or you can look at it this way: It is clear that jiva is conscious. It is also clear that Isvara is conscious because the creation is consciously designed. Inference tells us that and inference is a valid means of knowledge. We do not have to meet Isvara in person (not that Isvara is a person) to know that it is conscious. So if the jiva's consciousness depends on Isvara's consciousness and Isvara's consciousness depends on Paramatma, pure consciousness, then both jiva and Isvara are pure consciousness. An effect (Jiva) is just the cause (Isvara) appearing in a form. We can't apply the same logic to Isvara except loosely because consciousness does not 'cause' Isvara. Isvara, Beautiful Intelligent Ignorance, is something altogether different. Isvara is not an effect but it is a cause with reference to the creation. There is only one Awareness out of which everything arises and depends upon, but Awareness is always free of the objects. Awareness is *adjata*, unborn. Vedanta is the path of the unborn, because it reveals that although there appears to be a creation, nothing ever really happened, from Awareness' point of view. All objects are made up of Awareness and dissolve back into awareness in that they appear in the mind and the mind appears in Awareness. The mind/*jiva* (Subtle Body) like all objects is an object known to you, Awareness. The thoughts that appear in the mind belong to the *gunas*: *Isvara*.

The apparent reality (*mithya*) is a union of *paraprakiti* or higher reality (meaning *Isvara*) and *aparaprakiti* (*jiva*) lower reality. Their common identity is *uparaprakiti*: Awareness. *Isvara* is the both the intelligent cause, that which shapes the materials into form (without ever losing or modifying its own nature) and the material substance, meaning the effect from which the forms are created. In any case both Isvara and jiva depend on pure consciousness but pure consciousness does not depend on either. If you don't depend on the world or on Larissa, you certainly can't be either one of them.

They are merely ideas appearing in you, pure consciousness. You never experience a jiva or an Isvara apart from the thought of them. They are objects known to you so they cannot be you. The whole problem starts when you identify with the body, which makes it look like the world is out there, that you are dependent on it and that whatever is in charge of it is controlling you.

The world we know is called "apparently real" because it is not always present and always changing. As long as the apparent entity or the *jiva* is still embodied in the apparent reality, enlightened or not, it is subject to *Isvara*, the Creator. We know the world is not real because when you analyze it, it resolves into empty space and space resolves into consciousness in so far as you cannot know space without consciousness. It is an object known to you. There is just you, consciousness, in which the jiva, Larissa, appears in a particular *a priori* environment i.e. Isvara.

Isvara creates, sustains, and destroys the whole universe. Within Isvara's creation are innumerable jivas, individuals: plants, animals, humans, insects, etc. Jivas are living beings with gross, subtle and causal bodies. Human jivas have intellect which makes them self-aware, self-reflective. This means that they can interpret their experiences. The way that a jiva's Subtle Body interprets its experience is its 'world.' Its interpretation is its 'creation.' When we say the world would not be there without the mind (Subtle Body) we mean jiva's interpretation, its projection, would not be there, not that the material world, the senses, Subtle Body and the vasanas would not be here. We call the jiva's creation "*pratibhasika satyam*" or "*jiva srsti*", the subjective reality. There is only one jiva who sees things a certain way owing to his or her conditioning. Isvara's creation is called '*vyavaharika satyam*,' the objective world. This is the world of science, the objects and the laws which are not under the control of any jiva.

We need this teaching so the jiva does not confuse its creation with Isvara's. The jiva is in Isvara's creation and is required to respond to it. This is called dharma, appropriate response. If it responds appropriately to what Isvara wants, it will be in harmony with Isvara, the creation, meaning its environment. But if it is living in its own world and gets a request from Isvara and responds according to its fears and desires, likes and dislikes, it is quite possible that it will run afoul of Isvara (*its circumstances*) and suffer. So this teaching makes it aware of the difference between the subjective and the objective realities. If it is clear which is which, it can choose to follow dharma, not its own desire in case they are different. There is no problem with jiva's desires as long as they conform to dharma.

The jiva looks out through the body, identifies with the senses, perceives a world and thinks that it is seeing what is actually there. It knows it didn't create it. The jiva is seemingly responsible even for Isvara's creation in so far as unless it looks out through the senses and the mind there is no world for it. But the jiva, which is actually awareness, can't perceive a world unless Isvara has already done its job as a creator.

The saying 'the world is there because I see it' is true from the point of view of awareness, not the jiva. The jiva is seemingly responsible for the external creation in so far as it doesn't exist (for it) unless it perceives it. However, it should be clear from the example of deep sleep that the jiva doesn't create the world because there is no world for it when it is asleep. Yet the world is there for other waking jivas. That shows that some other factor, and we call it Isvara, is the creator.