

Isvara 1 and Isvara 2

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Uma: Good morning, Arlindo. Aren't awareness and *Isvara* the same? Because awareness is consciousness! Please throw some light on this.

Arlindo: Good afternoon, Uma. Fundamentally, *maya*, *Isvara*, *jiva* and *jagatha* are all awareness. Scripture sometimes makes an effort to differentiate the "non-manifested" principle we call awareness (free of attributes) as "pure awareness," which may be misleading because it implies that awareness may be also "impure" if manifested, which is not the case. Language often falls short when trying to describe the non-dual (one without an other) nature of awareness through the use of dualistic language, hence the importance of a teacher.

The Hindu religious trinity presents *Isvara*, the Creator, as "Brahma" in association with Vishnu, the maintainer (the laws governing the field of creation), and Shiva, *Isvara's* power/knowledge or ability to break down and recycle all objects (the elements) of creation into new objects. But as you probably have noticed, scriptures often refer to awareness (the unmanifested principle) as "*Brahman*."

They sometimes use the word *Isvara* to refer to *Brahman*, and other times refer to Brahma (the Creator.) I don't know if it was James' idea or not, but sometimes he brings in the concepts of *Isvara 1* (the unmanifested principle, or awareness) and *Isvara 2* (pure awareness in association with *maya* to produce *Isvara*, *jivas* and the world). We need to keep in mind that *Isvara 1* pervades *Isvara 2*, meaning that *Isvara 1* always and ever exists, and *Isvara 2* always "includes" *Isvara 1* because it is dependent on it.

Awareness is attributeless, but in order to facilitate *jiva's* understanding of the non-dual nature of reality, scriptures say that awareness can be experienced and known "as oneself" by the observation and acknowledgement of *jiva's* own self-evident, self-existing and self-conscious ordinary experience of the attributes called *sat chit ananda*. "*Sat*" refers to one's own existence; "*chit*" one's self-luminous consciousness; and "*ananda*" the limitlessness of one's own nature as awareness. You are awareness, the substratum pervading and vivifying all *jivas* and the entire creation.