

The *Dharma* Field Operates According to Impersonal Design

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2015-02-27

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2039>

Frank: Ted, I've written and deleted about twenty emails to you. Studying Vedanta will eventually answer most questions!

Here is a question that's been nagging this *jivanmukta* for some time now.

QUESTION: Does *Isvara* "tinker" with the *dharma* field? Already we've hit a problem because *Isvara* IS the *dharma* field, the entire apparent creation, and the *dharma* field is actually me, awareness. But for argument's sake, let's say the *jivanmukta* wants something. Let's keep it very basic: he wants some water to drink. He is extremely thirsty and is having trouble finding water. He decides to pray to *Isvara* for water. Knowing full well that *Isvara* is only a thought arising in awareness, he tries anyhow.

I am looking forward to your sage commentary on these ideas.

~ Peace, Frank

Ted: The answers to requests or "prayers" from the *dharma* field come in the form of the laws of *dharma*. *Isvara* is not some watchmaker in the sky constantly tweaking and adjusting things, accepting requests and granting some but denying others. The *dharma* field is on autopilot and runs beautifully without intervention. There is no one to intervene. There is only awareness, and awareness in association with *maya* projects the dream of the *dharma* field, which runs on set laws.

Praying to *Isvara* is for *jivas* who believe they are separate individuals. "*Isvara* is just a thought too, produced by *maya*, another Vedanta trick to destroy ignorance. Vastness, *jiva*, *Isvara*, universe, *maya*, etc. are all just thoughts, objects in you." ~ James Swartz

When we "ask" the *dharma* field for something, it is the impersonal laws of *dharma* that respond. If the *jivanmukta* doesn't understand the laws of the desert and he wanders out into the desert without water, he is being *adharmic* and might die of thirst, exposure or a scorpion bite. This goes for everything. No matter what an apparent individual might "ask" for, it can only be obtained according to the laws of *dharma*. I put "ask" in quotes because the asking is actually an action. If you want something from the *dharma* field you have to act in accordance with the laws of *dharma* to get it. You can't just ask for something and wait for it to appear.

The examples are endless, but to finish off, let's say *jiva* #1 wants *moksa*. He prays to *Isvara* for *moksa*, but sits at home every day watching TV and smoking weed. *Jiva* #2 wants *moksa*, but doesn't pray to *Isvara*. Instead she buys James' books and videos, reads Sundari's, Ted's and Vishnudeva's articles and *satsangs* and diligently studies Vedanta. Which *jiva* is more likely to remove their ignorance and gain self-knowledge? Is this because *Isvara* decided one deserved it and the other didn't? Or is it because the *dharma* field simply runs perfectly on set laws and one

jiva behaved in harmony with *dharma* and another did not?

The *dharma* field (i.e. the manifest universe in both its gross and subtle aspects, which is otherwise known as the apparent reality) is governed by a collection of impeccable and inviolable physical, psychological and ethical laws (i.e. *dharmas*), which are personified as *Isvara* (i.e. God, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe).

Isvara is not a volitional entity with a personal agenda, and thus *Isvara* does not “tinker” with the functioning of the *dharma* field or mete out rewards and punishments to those apparent individuals whom he deems deserving of them or based on his affection for those who please him and derision for those who displease him. Such a view is nothing more than a childish fairy tale.

Or at best it can be seen as an anthropomorphized account of the cause-and-effect functioning of the *dharma* field that reflects its infallible production of results appropriate to the *dharmic* or *adharmic* nature of the chain of actions leading to those results. In this regard, *dharmic* actions are not necessarily what we might consider “good” actions and *adharmic* actions those we might consider “bad.” They are simply actions that accord with the laws that govern and thus determine (though not according to the willful design of any personal deity) the inevitable results of the cause-and-effect functioning of the *dharma* field.

The bottom line is that the results of all actions are determined by the impersonal laws governing the *dharma* field. If one performs an action that initiates or contributes to a chain of causes and effects that by lawful design lead to the result for which one hoped, then one will get what one wants. If not, then one won't. It is solely in this sense that one gets what one deserves rather than such being determined by the worthiness of one's moral character.

Putting it in terms of your question, the *dharma* field runs perfectly on set laws, and the *jiva* (i.e. apparent individual person) who gets what he wants enjoys that result because he behaved in harmony with *dharma*, meaning that his actions contributed to a web of factors whose cause-and-effect interaction unavoidably led to the specific result that ensued.

I hope that clears up the issue.

~ *Namaste*, Ted