

You Are Awareness, Not *Isvara*

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Cynthia: Hi, Ted. A question has arisen and it's bugging me a bit.

I am awareness. I can never not exist. I am the appearance of everything, including a thought, an emotion, a sight, etc. If awareness is "not there" Cynthia won't know anything.

Isvara is consciousness functioning through Cynthia. *Isvara* brings about the results of the actions. Is this because the *jiva* acts in the apparent world, and because it's a conscious universe it delivers the results? And those results are also *Isvara*?

Ted: The universe itself is not actually conscious. It is consciousness, but it is comprised of insentient matter, gross, subtle and causal in nature. It is a giant mechanism, so to speak, that when illumined by consciousness is set into motion and generates all transactions and experiences, including those on the subtle level of being such as emotions and thoughts, that take place within it. It can be likened to a computer. While the machinery of the computer itself is not autonomously volitional (which would equate with being conscious), when it is fed electricity it carries out its the myriad functions it has been designed to carry out. The grand mechanism of the universe, or apparent reality, is impersonally and inviolably governed by universal physical, psychological and ethical laws (*dharmas*) that produce inevitable results based on the chain of cause and effect that is set into motion by the actions executed within their "jurisdiction," so to speak, which is the entire manifestation. In this way *Isvara* is essentially the results as well. The impersonal and inviolable chain of cause and effect that results from each and every action offered to the *dharma* field, or the apparent reality, is "God's will," so to speak. Thus God is not a personal deity doling out results based on judgments of good and bad or right and wrong. God is simply the field and the laws governing it which return results in perfect accordance with the nature of the action that initiated the chain of events that led to them.

Cynthia: I think what's bugging me is that I read before (can't remember where or who said it) that only God knows everything and everything is the will of God. But I am God!!! And I don't know everything! Or do I? I mean, nothing exists but me so I am therefore God... Can you please say something?

Ted: It is true that as limitless awareness you are everything, so to speak, which includes God. Actually, it is more appropriate to say that God is you while you, as pure awareness, are not God. That is, you are "beyond" or "prior to God," i.e. God the Creator is only a power within you, for God only exists within the scope of and is thus wholly dependent for its existence upon limitless awareness. What we call God (*Isvara*), or the creative power of the universe, is pure awareness "wielding" its inherent power of ignorance (*maya*). It sounds ironic, but if limitless awareness did not have the power to apparently delude itself it would not be limitless. The effect of this conditioning or limitation is the apparent manifestation of the universe, which is essentially nothing more than a dream projected by and upon the "screen" of awareness itself.

You, awareness conditioned by and associated with the mind-body-sense complex of the apparent individual person referred to as Cynthia, however, are not God (*Isvara*), in the sense that you are limited to the scope of that particular mind-body-sense complex. Hence you as Cynthia do not enjoy omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. Just as the space inside pot is the same as the space of the entire room, so the awareness illumining Cynthia is the same as the awareness illumining the entire manifestation. In this way, you and God are one. But God's scope is broader than Cynthia's.

Cynthia: I don't know if I am making myself clear but this is disturbing my mind.

Ted: It makes sense. Everybody has this question. It is simply a matter of not understanding the difference between the all-encompassing perspective of God and the limited perspective of the apparent individual person. While the scope of the perspectives differ, however, the same awareness illumines both.

Cynthia: I used to be Christian and I always heard "the will of God will be done." Now what does that mean?? Does it apply to consciousness?? Consciousness has no will. It just is, so does that statement mean that the will of God is whatever *Isvara's* results are, bearing in mind that this is a conscious universe? So the will of God is just whatever actions were performed in the field and its fruits?

Ted: Yes, that's basically it.

Cynthia: Also, I was led to believe that nothing has a real purpose. I mean, if our apparent life is only the results of the actions of the *jivas*, then really, what's the purpose? We only acted because we were ignorant, but as long as we know that really "no one" acts you are free, right? For example, I am having a bit of a hard time now because I want to be still so that I can contemplate on my real self but because I was living in ignorance for so long I have a *karmic* account and it's a painful one. I am still sometimes during the day caught up in thoughts of ownership and that I can do things my way. But really, who's doing what?

Ted: There is no purpose. Reality is non-dual. Nothing is essentially happening other than a gargantuan dream which doesn't change the essential nature of awareness one iota. So what purpose could there possibly be? Awareness doesn't need to improve or grow or gain insight. At best, we might conjecture that awareness is simply sporting with itself, giving itself a chance to experience its innumerable powers. Could be. Then again, awareness is not a personal entity with will or indeed even the capacity to act, for action is initiated by desire and measured by change, neither of which are characteristics of whole, complete, limitless awareness. All action (*karma*) only apparently happens due to the deluding power of ignorance (*maya*).

Karma only applies as long as you take yourself to be a doer, an apparent individual person, with autonomous volition, or free will. Once you know that the entire transactional reality is simply the spontaneous play of the *gunas* and the *vasanas* that have formed under their influence, then you know that you are free of action, that even the thoughts that seem to arise from your own intellect

and that motivate your actions are simply objects spontaneously arising within awareness, which you as the apparent individual person did not actually create, though it seems as if you did. This understanding does not eradicate your apparent responsibility to make apparent choices and execute actions intended to effect certain results, but you will realize that you are not actually the one inspiring those choices and actions. It will continue to seem as though you are making choices and taking actions, but you will know that the real instigator is a force beyond your personal control. You are essentially a puppet on a string, acting at the behest of ignorance. Once you know who you are, then you no longer think you are the doer and you simply let ignorance run its course through the vehicle of your mind-body-sense mechanism while you remain ever free of all action happening through the apparent individual person you seem to be. In this way, free will and destiny are essentially the same thing. What we might say is destiny, which is simply the inevitable results of your past actions, reveals itself through the apparent individual person's apparent free will.

On a practical level, you as an apparent individual person act in accordance with your nature and do your best to fulfill your responsibilities but you are free of the sense of being the doer who is responsible for the results of your actions. This doesn't mean you don't observe *dharma* or act responsibly. It simply means that you understand that whatever you feel is the best or most appropriate course of action in a given situation is coming unbidden from a source "beyond" the limited scope of the limited apparent individual person you seem to be. In this way, you do what needs to be done but are free of the burden of responsibility for the ensuing results.

Cynthia: Is this normal?

Ted: Does that matter? What difference does that make? To answer your question, however, yes, it is normal to raise this doubt. Remember, there is only one awareness that repeatedly remembers or recognizes itself through the intellect of innumerable apparent individuals, so every intellect is essentially the same and needs have the same doubts removed.

Cynthia: There is still desires and some fears in me but I am committed to see them for what they are.

Ted: Perfect. This is the discrimination between the real and the apparent (*satya-mithya-viveka*) or the self and the not-self (*atma-anatma-viveka*) that is the heart of self-inquiry and is the basic practice through which the intellect of the apparent individual person gains the understanding of its true nature and thereby gains freedom from itself.

Cynthia: I also sometimes find myself in agitation because my mind is all over the place and is trying to find a place of safety so that it "feels okay with itself" – now that's the difficult part for me because it really looks real – but that's the main reason why I suffer. Ignorance wants a place in me.

I would be grateful if you could throw some light into these dark thoughts!!

~ In gratitude, Cynthia

Ted: As I said in our last email exchange, this is where the application of self-knowledge (*nididhyasana*) comes into play. You need to keep discriminating and applying the knowledge to each and every situation, circumstance, encounter, interaction and experience of your life. When you recognize ignorance approaching or having arrived, tell it to hit the fucking road. Take a stand. Quit equivocating. You, awareness, are the boss. Take a stand in your true nature. Stop pussyfooting around. You understand who you are. Now the task at hand is to assume your true identity rather than waiting for the day when ignorance decides not to bother you anymore. As long as you entertain it, it will not get the message. It won't go away of its own accord. As long as you throw it scraps, it's like an alley cat and will keep coming back. Tell it you've had enough of its bullshit and replace the thoughts with which it taunts you with thoughts that are true to what scripture has to say. If necessary "fake it till you make it." But by all means, having coming this far take the final step and assume your identity as awareness. This is what it's all been about. There isn't any more to "know" intellectually. Now it is time to be the awareness in which all the knowledge appears.

~ All the best, Ted