

Isvara and Software

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Mary: I hope you are well.

Ram: I am very well, Mary. Life is just grand. If it gets any better I do not know how I will stand it. ☺

Mary: I've never felt comfortable about the idea of *Isvara*, because I've never been comfortable about the idea of a BEING dispensing rewards and punishment, giving this to some, denying that to others. Then recently I heard on a recording of Swamiji's talks that everything is software, an unerring software (my interpretation: that it's perfect). This rings completely true to me. The software fills the field. The field is the software, just as there's no distance between the mind (consciousness?), the software, and objects, the field. Everything is *jnana*. There are no *jnanis*, or the *jnani* is *jnana*. The body is programmed *jnana*, as are my *vasanas*, the constellations, cars and trees all have traces of the original software on which all manifestation depend. Is this wrong?

Ram: No, it is an excellent metaphor. One reason secular people have so much resistance to the idea of God is that they conceive of it as some kind of big parent in the sky dispensing rewards and punishments, to use your words. They personify it. They think it is a being. It is being, consciousness. It is not a willful person with an agenda. It is just the intelligence that operates the whole field of existence through an amazing software program. It is completely impersonal. If you look at a species of tree, for example, how does it survive for millions of years? An individual tree eventually dies, but out of its seed another tree comes. How did that tiny seed become a huge oak tree? "Tree" is just an idea, an executable program, that grows and shrinks because it is illumined by awareness. The electricity to run the computer is awareness and it is always switched on. You cannot turn it off. So tree - Plato understood this - is an eternal idea, an archetype that endlessly repeats itself. It is just knowledge. And it is pure, true to its program. It never becomes a dog or a cat. Cat-knowledge is also eternal. And *Isvara* is just the intelligence that wrote the software. It is an amazing mind because it not only creates the software that operates each and every object in existence, it sets up the rules that keep all the objects functioning together. It is so intelligent that it figured out how to make it all work in harmony. It even told the program what to do when one of intelligent life forms tried to act against the program. It caused the field to respond in a certain way so that that form, i.e. man, would become aware of the rules.

Mary: But the self is not software. It is that which illumines the software that is knowledge. Is this wrong?

Ram: It is right. The self is that which illumines knowledge. Knowledge is not intelligent. It seems to be intelligent. It is just a set of ideas operating as instructions to keep the hardware - the macrocosmic subtle and gross bodies (whose programs it

has also written) – functioning. It is like electricity, except that it is conscious, that powers the software. Software does not work without electricity, energy. The energy, in this case, is conscious. It is intelligent. It can think, and using the substance it has created – the five elements – it can write the software that keeps the cosmic computer functioning.

Human beings are very human-centric. They think of everything in terms of themselves. They know that they are living in a conscious universe, a self-aware universe, and they imagine that the intelligence that operates it is just a big version of themselves. But it is not a big version of us, a capricious creature with likes and dislikes, a big parent in the sky.

The self also illumines ignorance. This is why you know what you know and you know what you don't know.

~ Ram