

Who Is God?

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1548>

David: Hi, James. Thanks for your prompt answers, as always. Sorry to persist in this questioning about the God-notion, but it's still not clear. You said, "Awareness plus *sattva* is *Isvara*, pure intelligence, the Creator. The creation is very intelligently designed, so we know by inference that the designer, *Isvara*, or God, is intelligent..."

Just to be sure that I really get what you're saying: everything is awareness, i.e. the self. Within the self, *Isvara* (awareness plus *sattva*...) exists as a separate entity, creating our known universe. Is that it?

Ram: Think of it this way: awareness assumes the role of Creator. In this role it is called *Isvara*, or God. Creation is just a power in awareness. *Isvara* is apparently separate from awareness. It is not an individual, although it is commonly conceived of as a "big" individual for the purposes of worship.

David: The way I understood it, *Isvara* (God) was part of the apparent reality (*maya*), which I think I have correct.

Ram: Yes.

David: But I took this as God not really existing, just some concept cooked up by humans to feed their sense of fear and insecurity.

Ram: Humans personify it to make it easier to worship. Everyone sees the creation – which is *Isvara* – but they do not see that it is only an image appearing in awareness.

David: Now what I think you're saying is that in this apparent reality (*maya*) *Isvara* has as much a place and reality as David, James and Matthew do (in the apparent reality... hierarchy or scheme of things). God is not just a notion, concept or idea, like Alice in Wonderland or Puff the Magic Dragon. Hence the importance of following *dharma* (as part of your last message on intention implied). How am I doing?

Ram: As befits my number-one disciple. Right on.

David: As well, thanks for sending me towards *Atma Bodh*. You don't seem to have a translation among your texts (unless I'm not looking properly), but there is one from Chinmaya on the Web... which I imagine will do. Thanks for your amazing patience... a teaching in itself.

Ram: Yes, I do. It is on the Publications page. It is called *Self Knowledge*.

