

Is *Isvara* One Sick Bastard?

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Karl: Dear James, sometimes Vedanta says that awareness is independent of creation and sometimes it says that awareness and the creation are mutually dependent. Which is it?

James: Good question, Karl. The self stands alone. It is independent and free (*satya*). It is self-existent. It exists prior to the creation. There was a time when there was no creation and there will be a time when there is no creation. The self is existence. It is not created. For it to be created, there would have to be something other than it to create it, but it is a matter of experience that there is only one existence.

The world is created out of existence. So it is dependent (*mithya*). But when you look at reality from the point of view of the creation, the self and the creation are mutually interdependent. You cannot have a creation without consciousness and you can't have a creation with *maya*, i.e. matter.

Maya, the creation, is a very difficult concept to understand, because although reality is non-dual consciousness, consciousness and matter are not the same. Non-duality does not mean sameness. Matter (*prakriti*) is the self but the self is not it (*sat-asat vilakshanam*). They are in different orders or dimensions of the one reality. So they are the same but they are different! It is a logical impossibility. How can there be one reality with two (or more) dimensions? Yet this is the way it is. If it weren't this way, there would be no suffering and no liberation. Liberation (*moksa*) is understanding in which way they are the same and in which way they are not the same. Once this is clear you will never confuse the subject - you, consciousness - with the objects (not-you, the body/mind/world), and you will be free of attachment to objects.

The problem is that the intellect exists in duality, the *mithya* dimension of reality. It thinks in either/or, not in both/and. The teaching on *satya* and *mithya* explains the relationship clearly. All that is required, once you know what is *satya* and what is *mithya*, is to observe this paradoxical relationship in your own experience. I just got an email from a woman who said, "*Isvara* is one sick bastard," because It created Donald Trump. I agree. Then a woman in another email said that *Isvara* is pure love. I agree. So which is it? Both - and neither. The negative and the positive exist "in existence" but existence is neither negative or positive. It seems to be positive when you look at it from one point of view and negative from another. There is not a negative existence and a positive existence. Duality is manufactured by *maya* out of the one non-dual existence/consciousness. It only troubles human beings. The rest of the *jivas* are not bothered, because they don't have intellects deluded by *maya*.

~ Much love, James