

Pantheism Does Not Take the Knower into Account

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2018-04-24

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3601>

Dean: Hi, Sundari.

Can I ask you a short but maybe rather academic question? Can one say that Vedanta (and maybe Hinduism in general) is a form of pantheism, which, according to Wikipedia, is “the belief the divine pervades and interpenetrates every part of the universe and also extends beyond time and space” (in contrast to pantheism, which says that God is in fact just a synonym of “the universe”)?

Sundari: Hello, Dean. Hinduism combines pantheism with polytheism. You cannot say that Vedanta is a “form of pantheism,” the immanent God idea, because there are very important differences.

Wikipedia: “Pantheism is the belief that all reality is identical with divinity, or that everything composes an all-encompassing, immanent god. Pantheists do not believe in a distinct personal or anthropomorphic god and hold a broad range of doctrines differing with regards to the forms of and relationships between divinity and reality.”

The important word here is “immanent.” Vedanta says God is not immanent but transcendent, because there is only God; there is no “within or without.” God is consciousness, and reality is non-dual, therefore there is only consciousness. The important differentiation here is, are you talking about *mithya*-God or *Isvara*-God? *Mithya*-God of whatever religious or philosophical origin, may transcend time and space, but it is still stuck in *mithya*, below the line, so to speak, whereas *Isvara*-God is consciousness, also beyond time and space, beyond all religious or philosophical doctrine, above the line, operating *Maya* “below the line.” Time and space are objects known to it. Once Self-knowledge has negated all objects, and you know yourself as the Self, consciousness, discriminating *satya* from *mithya* falls away because you see that there was always only *satya*. As the *jiva* living in the world, you still worship *Isvara*-God, but only as the Self.

The pantheistic, such as the beliefs held by Baruch Spinoza, espoused a pantheistic system, seeing “God or nature” as a single infinite substance, with mind and matter being two incommensurable ways of conceiving the one reality.

This view is perhaps more mature than the religious anthropomorphic or parental God idea, but it still does not take the knower, consciousness, into account. It has no *satya-mithya* teaching, no *karma yoga*, in fact it has no teaching at all.

~ Love, Sundari

Dean: Thanks, Sundari, a clear (and profound!) answer!

~ Bye, Dean