

# Why Evil?

Ram (James Swartz)

2014-05-10

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/37>

**Jessica:** Dear James, this is your bumbling sheep Jessica writing in, sending you my deep thanks every day for the teachings which I continue to plug myself into like a lamp in a socket. 😊

Maybe you can shed some (more) light for me on the question of suffering. It seems the mind is stuck here.

Even though I'm not a "save-the-world" doer, the mind keeps getting hooked on this aspect of the apparent reality.

How can everything be perfect and as *Isvara*/the Field would have it when there are so many beings suffering? Or such faulty systems operating? Why would awareness want to project seemingly horrible things?

**James:** Lovely to hear from you, Jessica. Let's see. Awareness does not want to project such horrible things. It is not a big person with desires and fears. Awareness is limitless consciousness.

Because it is limitless, it has every conceivable power – and then some. But it is not its powers, just an artist is more than his or her creative powers.

One power of awareness is called *maya*. *Maya* is ignorance of awareness.

If ignorance is excluded from awareness, awareness becomes limited which, when we investigate, we know is not possible. The evil that one sees is a result of ignorance. We know this because individuals who understand their nature as awareness do no evil. And even those who don't, but understand the nature of *Isvara/maya*, don't do evil either because they know that *Isvara/maya* creates good and evil. This is why Christ said, "Father, forgive them for the know not what they do." *Maya* makes awareness think it is an individual who does not know that it is actually whole and complete awareness. When awareness is under the spell of *maya* it does actions that cause suffering to it and to others.

At the same time there is as much good in the world as there is evil. *Maya* also makes awareness realize its nature as awareness, follow *dharma* and do many wonderful things, etc.

So is awareness responsible for the good and the evil? It is the awareness of (apparent) good and evil. So it cannot be either good or evil. You are never what you know.

So *maya* or *Isvara* is responsible for good and evil, not awareness. *Maya* is not real. We know this because it disappears with self knowledge. If *Maya* is not real, then the effects of *Maya* – good and evil in the apparent reality created by *maya* – are not real either. Suffering is taking something that is not real to be real.

When we say the world is perfect as it is, we mean that it cannot be anything other than what it is. If it could, assuming *maya* thought that it was not serving awareness,

it would make the world a different place. But it never does. So it must be that there is a good reason for suffering. And indeed there is. Although it makes awareness as *jivas* seemingly dull and evil, it also makes them sensitive and awake, which provides them with indirect knowledge of their nature as awareness thus motivating their quest for direct knowledge.

**Jessica:** Various versions of that question keep arising and causing doubt.

**James:** Why not help if everything is perfect? If it is your nature to help, you will help. If not, not. If it is your nature to sometimes help and sometimes not, then that is the way *maya/Isvara* created you.

**Jessica:** And subsequently, the question “what is the ‘correct’ response of the doer in terms of action in the apparent world?” If it’s all awareness, then do I step over the man in the gutter or stop to help? Why help (ever) if everything’s perfect?

All right, you get the idea.

I greatly appreciate your last few responses to me and consider myself extremely fortunate to have found my shepherd! Have Vedanta, Will Travel.

**James:** Funny you say that. At one time back in the '60s in Honolulu I lived next door to Richard Boone, the *Have Gun - Will Travel* guy. I say, “Have fun, will travel.” Even if these arguments are not convincing, Jessica, what use is suffering because of the suffering you see? It not only does not change the suffering, it adds a bit of suffering to the total. There are some things that we *jivas* have no control over. And those things need to be surrendered to *Isvara*. If you want to help, help. But it is a thankless task.

Why have I not given up teaching by now? For every spiritual genius that gets enlightened through this teaching, *Isvara* sends me ten more idiots who seem incapable of enlightenment. What am I to do? It is my nature to teach, so I teach. I have no choice about it. In the old days when I was a younger and more willful I used to swear off teaching but before long I was back at it. Eventually I realized that I am doing what I am doing by no will of my own. *Isvara* made me this way and it is futile to resist.

For every bit of good you do, someone else does some evil. You cannot beat the system. So you have to do what you need to do and leave the results to *Isvara*. It is the only way to peace. We all want the world to be a better place but it is what it is.

Finally, you can ask yourself “Where is this world that needs saving?” There is only one answer: “It is in my mind. I have constructed a story of woe around the idea that there is an actual object called ‘the world’ that needs to be different.” Then you can consider the fact that since you have created this world with your negative thoughts, you can just as well construct a world out of your positive thoughts, or you can create no world at all. It is up to you. When you look at it in this way, then the world is a proxy for you, the conclusion being that you think you need saving.

If this is true, then saving a world out there is not going to save you.

Furthermore, even if there is a world out there that needs saving, how are going to save it if you are not saved? The logical conclusion is to save yourself first. Once you have done that you will discover that the world is already saved.

Dear James,

This is very helpful. Thank you for responding so quickly and thoroughly. It is a gift. I realize that I'm trying to understand the limitless with a limited instrument, but there is expansion.

For all of my "spiritual life" I have lived under the spell that there is something wrong with my nature - too this, too that - which extends to the world being too this, too that. And the seeking has largely been about how to change what is, if I'm honest.

If I give up on that idea and accept my nature and the nature of the apparent world, then there's no problem. This is easier said than done. The programming is hardwired!

I will follow my nature and trust that if *Isvara* wants me to be different in the world, I will be.

I love your story; "Have fun, will travel." 😊

~ Many thanks and much love, Jessica