

Satya and Mithya, Principles for Teaching

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Don: Thank you, Sundari, for your email of October 30. Your comment on my question on compassion reinforces my understanding of *Isvara* and how compassion is to be understood. However, when I read, "Its 'job' is to take care of the whole field of existence first," I still get the sense of "personality" associated with *Isvara*, whereas I understand *Isvara* to be a principle and the physical and moral order of existence, but I can see compassion now also.

Sundari: You are right, *Isvara* is a principle and not a person, but we need to use some words to describe its function and "brief," so to speak. The important thing is not to get hung up on the terminology but to understand the teaching. In essence, *satya* and *mithya* are principles used for teaching purposes. For the Self there is no *satya* and *mithya*. I think we have had this discussion before, but let's just run through it again:

Satya and Mithya, Principles in Consciousness

The Creation teaching is confusing and extremely subtle. The main purpose of the cause-and-effect teaching (as all other *prakriyas* adopted by the *Upanishads*) is not to make you believe in causation or the Creation. It is to reveal the truth of the Self being attribute-free, limitless, partless, beginningless and endless consciousness – and that the Creation is neither real or unreal, but has a dependent reality on you, consciousness. The aim then of the Creation teaching is to eliminate all the variable non-essential factors (*vyatireka*) which leave the one invariable essential factor (*anvaya*) – the Self, consciousness. The proof works because it is a result of knowledge – only. Experience is a secondary factory, though it is self-evident and cannot be denied that consciousness is the only factor that can never be negated, no matter how materialistic the investigation.

Therefore, since the Self does not undergo any change ever, the *karana karya prakriya* (cause-and-effect proof) is meant to unfold the fact that not only is the Self limitless, you are non-separate from it.

Why James says that the *prakriya* is a set-up is that, once you understand the cause-and-effect teaching, the next step, the non-origination teaching in the *Mandukya karika*, makes sense. The *Mandukya karika* is the most advanced and subtle of all Vedanta teachings, as it explains why the cause-and-effect teaching is not the whole truth.

It answers the logical question: How can *sat*, consciousness, be the basis of the material Creation if it is non-dual consciousness? The material Creation is not material. It is a projection caused by *Maya*, which is not the same OR not different from *sat*, existence/awareness. You can't get something out of something that is incapable of modification. *Sat* is not the cause of anything. How could it be? If it were, it would not be non-dual.

The *Mandukya* also points out that the Self implies not-Self. When you know you are

the Self, there is no *satya* and *mithya* nor *Isvara-jiva*, for you, anymore. They are just concepts/principles used to teach you that you are the Self, and can be discarded. They are teachings designed to reveal your true nature and to destroy the notion of doership. *Mithya* “becomes” *satya* because it was *satya* all along. You see everything as just IS-NESS, a direct experience of existence as your identity, the Self.

So you do not have to understand the whole cause-and-effect *prakriya* by heart, as long as you understand the common identity between consciousness, *Isvara* and *jiva* to be *sat*, the Self, you. Knowing all the details verbatim is not necessary, especially if you understand the non-origination teaching. And if this understanding allows you to discriminate that the existence of all objects belongs to consciousness, that all objects have a dependent existence on you. Then *Maya* is no problem, you understand the principles that run *mithya* and live free of it.

Don: As for the idea of good and evil, like the idea of the body-mind, I see it as a strongly rooted *vasana*.

Sundari: A tough one for everyone because it is heartbreaking to witness suffering of all kinds. The only way out of it is to remember that neither death nor life is real.

~ Much love, Sundari