

# Isvara Is the Intelligent Cause and Its Effects

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2014-06-01

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/96>

**Sarah:** What does the word “reflected” mean exactly, i.e. in “consciousness is reflected awareness”?

**Sundari:** When you look in a mirror and see your reflection, do you take it to be the same as you?

**Sarah:** Who/what is looking into the mirror, who/what is the mirror and who/what is seeing the reflection?

**Sundari:** The one looking in the mirror is the self – either self-aware or under the spell of ignorance. The *jiva*, the mirror and the reflection in the mirror arise out of awareness and are made up of awareness (like the wave and the ocean) but they are objects known to awareness. If the *jiva* is identified with being the person (the self under the spell of ignorance) then the person takes the image in the mirror to be who they are and experiences the reflection and the mirror as outside of them.

There is only one awareness out of which everything arises and depends upon, but awareness is always free of the objects. Awareness is *adjata*, unborn. Vedanta is the path of the unborn, because it reveals that although there appears to be a creation, nothing ever really happened, from awareness’ point of view. **All objects are made up of awareness and dissolve back into awareness in that they appear in the mind and the mind appears in awareness.**

The apparent reality ( *mithya*) is a union of *paraprakiti* or higher reality (meaning *Isvara*) and *aparaprakiti* (*jiva*), lower reality. Their common identity is *uparaprakriti*, awareness. ***Isvara* is the both the intelligent cause - that which shapes the materials into form (without ever losing or modifying its own nature) - and the material substance, meaning the effect from which the forms are created,** like the spider’s web emerges from the spider and is made up of the spider.

As consciousness is non-dual, there is no “real” world; duality is a superimposition onto non-duality. Duality is the dream created by *maya*, the power to delude. When *maya* appears, awareness plus the *gunas* becomes *Isvara*, the Creator. ***Isvara* is the name for all forms, not for a particular form.**

*Isvara* is not a doer or a *samsari*. From the *jiva*’s point of view, *Isvara* is unlimited and the *jiva* is limited. From awareness’ point of view, both *Isvara* and *jiva* are limited. Even though *Isvara* is omniscient relative to the *jiva* (because only *Isvara* has knowledge of all objects), *Isvara*, like the *jiva*, depends on awareness to exist. Although *Isvara* is not conditioned by *maya* and is conscious, and the *jiva* is conditioned by *maya* and is not conscious, both *Isvara* and the *jiva* are reflected awareness and make up the apparent reality. Therefore neither *Isvara* nor the *jiva* are real, real being defined as “that which is permanent.”

The reflected reality means just what the word implies: The object is a reflection of the subject. They are the same but exist in seemingly different orders of reality, that of the real and the apparently real. When ignorance is removed from the mind and the eyes looking in the mirror have non-dual vision, the self sees only itself (as it always has) but the *jivanmukta* still sees its apparent reflection in the mirror. The confusion is in thinking that duality disappears for the *jiva* once reality is known to be a duality. It does not – you, the self no longer under the spell of ignorance – still see objects “out there” but you are no longer deluded by *maya* and you know that everything you are looking at is you, awareness. You are no longer conditioned by the *jiva* or *Isvara* and you live as the self while still appearing as a *jiva*, with its own particular character and apparent life situation. *maya*/duality/ignorance is only a problem when you take it to be real.

Although *maya* gives rise to the apparent reality which is not real, *maya* is neither real nor unreal. *Maya* creates the categories of real and unreal. Without *maya*, there is no creation, no *jiva* and no *Isvara*. It is very important to remember that *maya* only “covers” a very small portion of awareness, because awareness cannot be covered. Awareness is that which knows *maya*, the apparent covering. Awareness does not create, but *maya* creates the apparent duality with apparent doers; *jivas* being the “small” doers and *Isvara* being the “big” doer. Once *maya* is transcended, i.e. non-duality and duality understood, ignorance falls away and only awareness remains.

**Sarah:** Awareness has the capacity to produce a dream, called *maya*. The *jiva* inside the dream, you say above, is not conscious. Both *jiva* and *Isvara* are awareness, but they are not both conscious? Where does consciousness come in?

**Sundari:** Yes, *maya* is a power that exists in awareness or it could not be unlimited. You did not read what I wrote last correctly. This is what I said:

“The most subtle ‘aspect’ of this teaching is the irreducible fact that because consciousness implies unconsciousness, it is not strictly speaking true to say that awareness is conscious. Awareness is without qualities, it is the non-experiencing witness and although it gives rise to all objects (who are not conscious) **and Isvara (who is conscious)**, awareness is not ‘conscious’ in the same way. Awareness is that which makes consciousness possible in that consciousness is reflected awareness. Like *Isvara*, awareness is not a person; conscious and unconscious objects (*Isvara* and *jiva* respectively) arise when *maya* (ignorance) appears.”