

Vedanta Works: Knowledge Trumps Meditation

Hi James,

Just a brief update since I last wrote. For about two weeks now the quality of my knowledge/understanding has deepened and the average day is not the kind of intense dharma combat you warned about. I still don't have the energy for much formal meditation but it does not appear to be particularly important, as my 'ordinary' self-inquiry seems to have strengthened considerably. As an activity it is much less strenuous and energy-consuming than it had been, yet it produces real results; I can re-orientate my mind into self-knowledge 'territory' quite easily when it loses focus. Maybe I have become a bit 'street smart' and now use self inquiry in a more efficient way.

James: This is how it should be. Meditation is good, but knowledge trumps meditation every time. Your perseverance is paying off, Tom. Good for you.

Kerry: Overall the quality of my average day has much improved. The existential load, the sense of being cramped inside an intellectual-emotional prison, and of being a mechanical puppet dancing to the music of the *vasanas*, has reduced a lot. I can usually quite easily regain focus and kind of enter into the 'perspective' of the self. I don't agonise like I used to when I realise a *vasana* or hang-up has temporarily taken over; there is no point in being neurotic about a neurosis. Tom is an object in awareness and so are 'his' hangups.

James: This is so cool, Kerry. I love it when Vedanta works for people. Keep at it. It just gets better and better. It seems you are on the bus i.e. no need to carry your baggage any more. You can set it down, let the knowledge do the work, and enjoy the ride. You will get to the destination that is not a destination before long.

Kerry: I get quite a few 'mini-epiphanies' which last a few seconds or at most a minute or two – a kind of experiential knowledge which confirms the basic teachings of Vedanta. Sometimes I am the self, sometimes the self is an 'object' in my consciousness. I have been reading Sankara writings and somehow doing so has a slow but powerful effect - on the intellect primarily but the ego and the emotional centre seem to like it too, as they seem to quieten down, relatively speaking. I think it is due the purity and clarity of his teachings.

James: Yes, absolutely. I think you are ready to read Swami Dayananda's Vivekachoodamani. It has a bit of Sanskrit but it is as power packed and clear as Shankar and it is good English. You can get it from the Arsha Vidya website.

Kerry: In other words, I think I have found, so to speak, a rhythm by which I can live my daily life in line with the core teachings of Vedanta. (I am a bit surprised that I can at the moment handle reasonably well the madness of daily life, but if truth were not practical it would only be abstract truth and it would not work. Vedanta and self-inquiry are practical.) Anyway, time will tell whether my assessment is correct.

James: You are correct. Just stick with it. It gets easier and easier as you go.

Kerry: I have forgotten the technical questions I had, but, frankly, if they were important I would not have forgotten them.

James: That's right. But if something comes up feel free to write. I think you have a good handle on it.

All the best,

James