

A Course in Miracles, Channelling and Vedanta

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

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Seeker: I searched a few times the *satsang* facility on the website for references to *A Course in Miracles* without any luck. Maybe I wasn't looking properly, because I'm sure you and your colleagues must have been asked countless times for your thoughts/assessment of those teachings with reference to Vedanta.

If articles already exist in *satsang* that highlight the differences/similarities and robustness of *ACIM*, etc. then I would very much appreciate you highlighting one or two for me to look at.

Otherwise, I would very much welcome your thoughts on this body of work, if you read it and have any with your understanding of Vedanta.

From what I can tell, they both are trying to highlight the same thing using a Christian language.

Sundari: I have not had any inquiry regarding *ACIM* in all the time I have taught Vedanta, which is about seven years, although James had some many years ago, in the nineties, when it was most popular. It seems to have pretty much died out now; maybe I am wrong. James had a friend who asked him to teach a class on *ACIM* way back then and expound on the similarities/differences with Vedanta. He does not have anything written on it either. I read it ages ago, but honestly, it did not give me the tools I needed for *moksa*. Only Vedanta is capable of providing them.

Although I am not an expert, it seems clear that the basic principles of the *ACIM* are in line with the Vedanta scriptures, namely that this is a non-dual reality and the world is only apparently real, that the person you take yourself to be is for the most part, a fear construct. *ACIM* is somewhat like Neo-Advaita teachings in that it tells you that you are the Self, but it does not explain what that means or what it entails for the teachings to translate into your life. Even though there are parallels with the Indian concept of *karma* and the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, its teachings are muddled and badly organized, there is no proper methodology. Although it does make it clear that there is not "a God" but ONLY God, and that God is love, it does not explain the identity between pure awareness/Self/love - *Isvara* (God) - and *jiva*, the individual.

Additionally, though it presents daily lessons for the acolyte, it does not come close to explaining what proper Self-inquiry and the preparation for Self-inquiry entails:

Preparation for Self-Inquiry:

1. ***Karma yoga*** - surrendering results of action to *Isvara* with an attitude of gratitude taking all results as *prasad* (a gift) to lessen the grip of the *vasanas* and negate the idea of doership;
2. ***Upana yoga*** - reflection/meditation and developing all the qualifications for Self-inquiry. *ACIM* never mentions qualifications, but without them, Self-knowledge

cannot assimilate.

ACIM does not have a rigorous methodology (*jnana yoga*) for *moksa*, such as Vedanta does.

Jnana Yoga, Vedanta - Self-Knowledge Entails:

1. *Svranna* - listening/hearing the teachings leaving your own ideas out of it - which requires the first and most basic qualification, faith in the teachings pending the outcome of your own investigation;
2. *Manana* - contemplating the teachings without interpretation, i.e. not according to your ideas and beliefs, and very importantly, having the teaching unfolded by a qualified teacher. You cannot work out the teachings on your own, you must be properly taught or the teachings will be contaminated, and you need the other qualifications present. These are carefully explained in countless *satsangs* and in most of James' books.
3. *Nididhyasana* - purification of the last vestiges of mental/emotional patterns once Self-realization has taken place. We call this Self-actualization, and it is usually the longest and hardest stage of Self-inquiry. But if all the stages are not completed (and they are not necessarily linear) *moksa* will not obtain.

What Is *Moksa*?

If freedom from limitation and existential suffering (*moksa*) is truly your aim, you need something to get your teeth into, not just an inspirational teaching. There is no way to deny the existence of the world, even though it may not be "real," what is the definition of real? *ACIM*, to my knowledge, does not provide it. Vedanta states that the world is *mithya* - that which is apparently real, defined by the fact that it is always changing and not always present. *Satya* - the Self - is that which is real, defined by the fact that it is always present and never changes (the only constant factor), the non-experiencing witness of the experiencing entity, or *jiva*.

Moksa is defined as freedom from dependence on objects and, very importantly, the ability to discriminate between *satya* and *mithya*, 100%. How do you discriminate if you don't understand exactly what the Self is, who or what God is and how the *jiva* fits into the equation? What good does it do you to know you are the non-dual Self if you don't know what this means for you as the *jiva*? The *jiva* does not miraculously disappear. Therefore, for *moksa* to obtain, we need a very different teaching, one capable of elucidating the difference between the Self and the objects that appear in or to it, which is why Vedanta is called "the knowledge that ends the quest for knowledge." There is no other teaching like it and once people find it, they usually realize the futility of comparing it to other lesser teachings.

Vedanta is also referred to as *apauruseya jnanum*, meaning beyond human logic, of divine origin. While most religions and many channelled works also make this claim, they are all based on the interpretations or "divine inspiration" of a living person from a deity or channelled work such as *ACIM*. Vedanta is unlike any other known doctrinal or scriptural knowledge in that it is not the contention of any person or persons. It stands independent of any deity, belief, inspiration or interpretation. Vedantic scriptures are called *sruti*, meaning "that which is heard." *Sruti* is knowledge that is revealed to the human mind, not interpreted by it - much like the

knowledge of physics is revealed to minds capable of understanding such subtle concepts. It is thousands of years old and has been handed down through the ages to a long line of qualified teachers, called the *sampradaya*.

The teachings of Vedanta are not “channelled.” They are proven knowledge and cannot be negated by any other knowledge, because they very powerfully and completely elucidate the logic of existence. Vedanta is also called the science of consciousness (*brahma vidya*) because it relies on objective analysis of experience, not on a personal or philosophical theory of life. It is the science of life as far as life is consciousness. The revelations of Vedanta are taught in the form of proofs (*prakriyas*), much like any scientific method employs to prove anything – through disinterested, independent, impersonal and rigorous investigation of the facts and the application of knowledge.

Vedanta predates all known religious or philosophical paths because it is the knowledge that underpins all knowledge – the irreducible and irrefutable experience, albeit mostly unexamined, that consciousness is the nature of all things. I am always experiencing consciousness because it is who I am, but if I am ignorant of this fact, I think it is something separate from me that I must gain. So I chase objects to complete me and suffer.

For this reason, the main purpose of Vedanta is not to prove the existence of the Self, because the Self/consciousness, is self-evident. Its main aims are to prove that non-dual consciousness is the nature of reality and to reveal that the Self is consciousness. Vedanta does this by carefully unfolding the truth that the world of objects, including the physical body, mind, and senses, are known to me, the Self, therefore they cannot be me. Everything is evident to me, the Self, and all evidence is in terms of knowledge, not experience. *ACIM* does not explain the difference between experience and knowledge AT ALL.

All knowledge implies consciousness, the invariable essential ever-present factor. Vedanta dissolves the subject/object split by revealing that though the Self never becomes the world and is always free of it, the belief that the subject (consciousness) and the objects you experience are two different things – is false. It collapses the hypnosis of duality by removing ignorance, not filling your head with new ideas.

The main purpose of Vedanta is not to explain the Creation, though it does do that, but one cannot understand the true nature of reality without examining and understanding the Creation (*Isvara*), the forces that run it (the *gunas*) and how that relates to me as an individual (*jiva*). Vedanta deconstructs the Creation in the light of Self-knowledge, the knowledge of consciousness.

I hope this answers your question

~ Much love, Sundari