

Many Paths to Liberation?

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Ana: Other than Vedanta, what other ways could anyone “attain” *moksa*?

Arlindo: Hi, Ana. This is a question I am often faced with in my seminars. I think that people often ask me this because of my enthusiasm for Vedanta. They may think that I exaggerate when I tell that there is nothing like Vedanta to produce *moksa*. Some people may even see me as a fanatic.

They often want to argue that there are many “paths” to *moksa*, and that Vedanta is only one among many. But in truth, only by knowledge the self can be “known” and realized, and that alone excludes most of all other so-called action-based “paths” as a means of liberation. Most of the paths are what we call “a leading error” – they will keep you moving in zig-zags. Others will serve only to prepare the mind for self-inquiry – we call them an indirect means of self-knowledge.

But the point to be made is that once you know Vedanta, you get to know the most sophisticated, complete and efficient teaching methodology there is. Of course people from other traditions or even from no tradition may gain liberation – Ramana Maharshi being a good example. But it is very rare.

I like the following analogy: if you want to travel from Seattle to Portland, you have the option to go by foot, ride a bicycle, drive an old car or a modern German SUV. Vedanta is the German SUV, the best vehicle of knowledge to reveal *jiva*’s true nature as awareness.

It is also important to emphasize that *jnana yoga* is the *yoga* of knowledge, that Vedanta is the “perfect” *jnana yoga* and that most forms of *jnana yoga* presented by Neo teachers cannot be called Vedanta because, in most cases, they are only fragments of Vedanta and often presented in an action/experience language that causes much confusion and delay.

As far as the reason why Vedanta comes to some and not others – it is all up to *Isvara* and the *karmic* laws by which It governs the *dharma* field. Merit or maturity is usually the prerequisite before Vedanta begins making sense to people. Rare are the individuals attracted to Vedanta, and even rarer are the ones contemplating and applying the teachings.