

The Neo-Advaita Teachings

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Question: What would you say about the Neo-Advaita teachings?

Arlindo: *Advaita* means “no division,” in other words, “no parts, non-duality.” The problem with the Neo-Advaita movement is that their modern teachers speak of non-duality either in terms of an experience of unity with everything in *mithya* or they refer to *satya*, the absolute nature of reality, as nothingness or emptiness – they love to say that nothing ever happens. Since they do not have a teaching, they say that you do not exist, therefore you do not have a problem to sort out – no problem, no need for a solution, no need for a teaching. Ignorance is very clever!

Vedanta does not dismiss *mithya* as non-existent. It instead says that *mithya* is not real, but it also affirms that it does exist as an apparent reality. Since all apparent *jivas* equipped with a human intellect inevitably experience a deep sense of limitation due to *maya*'s superimposition, a complete methodology of self-inquiry called Vedanta was graciously developed by *Isvara* to remove *maya*'s deceiving power, which is the sole cause of human suffering, the effect of self-ignorance.

The Neo-Advaita teachers have at the most small fragments of recycled scriptural knowledge they read or heard from one another, which they mix up with their own interpretations and spiritual experiences to come up with a “special cocktail” they like to call “my teachings.” As James often says, it is a little bit of knowledge wrapped up in ignorance. They also seem to be lazy and unwilling to get properly educated by the scriptures, and moreover they want to get the credit for their “own” teachings. Vedanta teachers claim no credit for the teachings, because they know that they belong to no one but *Isvara*.

~ Arlindo Nagar