

Vedantic Meditation

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Mario: I understand meditation is not a valid means of knowledge, and therefore won't deliver *moksa*, because there is a notion in the spiritual world that through meditation you can "experience the Self" and gain *moksa*. What I wonder though is if meditation can help to keep your mind focused on the self. My logic goes like this...

James: We are on the same page about meditation, Mario. Meditation is for steadying, focusing the mind on the teaching, not for experiencing the self. When are you not experiencing yourself?

Mario: When you hear and understand the teachings of Vedanta, contemplating it, talking about it, thinking about it, etc. your mind starts to calm down and you start to become aware of your essential nature. But when you "get back into the world," you can get caught up in situations and thoughts that take you away from this truth. You start to forget what you just learned and old egocentric thought patterns start to come up again and the suffering slowly comes back. Of course the idea is to keep the teachings on your mind as much as possible, so you can keep inquiring throughout the day and you tend to "fall back" less often. I see meditation as training yourself to remember who you are, to not get identified with your thoughts. So when you spend a certain amount of time every day training this, you will automatically start doing this throughout the day when you're "into the world." You keep discriminating throughout the day, and you are less likely to "fall back" to your old egocentric thought patterns. Of course eventually it would become so automatic to discriminate that you are doing it all the time, never forget who you are, and you could call this that the knowledge is firm? Then of course meditation wouldn't be of any use anymore, because you're actually doing it all the time anyway.

So I just wonder if my way of seeing this is in line with Vedanta. I understand meditation is not a replacement for the teachings, and that you need to keep studying and inquiring until the knowledge is firm. I just wonder if Vedanta sees meditation as a valid aid for getting a full-time discriminating mind. I did get the book *Meditation: Inquiry Into the Self* and I'll start reading that. I hope to find some clarity in there too.

James: Actually, I could not have formulated the Vedantic idea of meditation better. Your understanding is excellent! I'm going to post it in the "Featured Box" on the home page, the *satsang* section and elsewhere.