

Enlightenment: An Initial Discussion

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Introduction

As our society moves forward in its study and growing understanding of different spiritual paths, one of the things required is a dialogue concerning the nature of personal enlightenment. Or said another way, after studying a particular spiritual path, for the average traveler, what does personal spiritual development look like?

Often, travelers start out on a spiritual quest uncertain about outcome. Having only a strong feeling that a particular path is calling, unsure where this study will lead; perhaps, their point of reference being a specific teacher or what they have heard from other students or read. Sometimes, travelers define their search in terms of outcomes such as reading minds, gaining mysterious powers, spiritual states, being at peace, or wondering how learning will set them apart from others, that is, make them individually special.

The following is a beginning discussion concerning possible outcomes of spiritual learning.

Life is Spiritual

Let's begin by stating the obvious and what all religions and spiritual paths offer in some way or another; by nature and design, humans are fundamentally spiritual. That is, the spirit is basic to our construction and presently understood to be a form of energy which is shared by all things throughout the universe. In fact, ancient teachings offer, it is this energy or spirit (housed in the soul), which gives life, form and substance to our physical body, emotions, thought process and conscious awareness.

Second, all physical life consists of varying forms of spiritual energy and after we leave our physical body, a part of us returns to a dimension that is increasingly most like this energy. In our modern scientific view, as presented above, some have chosen to define man's spirit, as consisting of a supra life force energy which is somehow connected and shared with everything else in the universe. Note this 'modern view' is consistent with many ancient mystery teachings.

In the physical universe, something which in the past was termed spiritual ether was credited with generating the physical and was linked throughout the worldly, physical aspect; as previously indicated, this spiritual directing element provided conscious awareness and life energy. Consequently, it was held all life forms existed simultaneously on multiple levels of physical and spiritual reality; similarly, within each person, each of these two dimensions having numerous levels.

It is said, the Light or Supra Life Force Energy (God), originated beyond the physical and spiritual; and in order to manifest in the physical universe, operates through master spiritual energy forms- directing and creating. Consequently, there is a spiritual form for man/woman, one for every type of animal, plant, fish, and insect variety. Further it is said, spiritual beings

exist in endless variety; with every form having its own specific higher directing and delineating element or over soul. These multiple higher directing elements are created through the Light and consist of differing spiritual energy; providing overall form and substance to the universe.

Similarly, the human soul is made-up of a type of unique spiritual fabric or substance. This fabric or spirit comprises the soul, has been called ether and provides the soul with life energy. The soul has a center or 'heart' which governs both its higher and lower nature.

By Higher Design, each person and soul has conscious awareness- along with the ability to create, destroy, and freely choose. This is different than other spiritual forms and is most like the Light. Consequently, within each person there is an aspect or spark of what has been termed Divinity; internally, this energy (spirit) is our soul's center and is the driving force or heart which governs and expresses mind, emotion, body and soul. When our physical body ceases, it is this heart or primal directing spiritual energy which helps lead our soul's travel to the next place.

Building upon this introductory discussion, it is accurate to say, everyone has spiritual ability, and that a complete life expresses this dimension. Additionally, in our modern times, it is recognized every person is unique and different; therefore, one would expect endless levels of spiritual ability and capacity; these levels dependent upon each person's individual nature, development, focused learning and what some term luck or destiny.

Increased Capacity

Within some spiritual traditions, it is understood and taught that enlightenment, or increased spiritual capacity, occurs within the ordinary balanced personality. Further, enlightenment is a possibility for everyone and may be reached through a course of guided study. Remember, enlightenment does not free us from being human; it helps us by adding another level of capacity, which at times, helps us transcend ordinary thought or consciousness. For every one, life is a series of ups and downs and to be human means we react physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually to every day events.

Further, individual spiritual paths teach, far below the surface of our every day personality there is awareness, consciousness and a guiding presence which is our lasting, true spiritual nature. Daily, as we are shown through directed learning how to dip into this ocean of awareness, we connect with another level of our consciousness and reality; this aspect is always in tune with the Life Force and emerging design of life around us and within the universe.

Enlightenment is higher spiritual awareness which comes and goes- depending upon the situation. This capacity is individual and varies within each person. In order to have this capacity come forward, routinely, there must be a balance within the personality, a period of extended training and what is termed latent 'sincerity.' Basically, what is meant by 'sincerity' is that higher abilities and learning are not sought for personal gain. This higher connection is sought because the traveler loves and wishes to complete self by merging with the Divine.

Generally, what is meant by a balanced personality, is one that is 'normal' within the society in which the traveler finds self, and for the most part is free of psychological pathology or

excessive need and unbalanced desire. It is generally understood, that in reaching for enlightenment, something additional, and which has previously been asleep, in the traveler, must be added. This is done through a gradual quieting of ordinary needs and awakening what has been asleep to slowly come forward. What slowly awakens and emerges is our own latent higher consciousness; this inner awareness is not static, and in the average person comes and goes, depending upon the needs of the situation.

Within many spiritual traditions, travelers have a profession, participate in the every day affairs of the world, and within their own culture for the most part are viewed as ordinary citizens. Added higher capacity is used in everyday life to enrich, elevate, and serve the emerging design.

Powers, healing capacity, reading minds, higher awareness, intuition, dreams, and visions as genuine- are by products of a higher state of consciousness. These events/capacities come forward to add a nutrient or provide another dimension to every day life. These higher capacities, to know and act, are organic extensions of an emerging pattern, have multi-level usefulness, and generally are not to be viewed outside their own specific context.

Most travelers when they wonder what it is like to have higher consciousness, or to be enlightened, have a fanciful, dramatic, over stimulated view of this awareness. As frame of reference, television shows and accounts of extraordinary people, present exciting phenomena like reading people's minds, performing miracles and seeing into the future. Yet, it is precisely this excitement and over simplification which stands in the way of the emergence of these abilities.

Also, within many religious and spiritual traditions, rarely, is there a straight forward discussion about this varied potential and phenomena. The major reason for this is the one cited above and in ages past this awareness or spiritual capacity was often misunderstood and banned. Further, it is extremely difficult to accurately capture in written or verbal expression, these phenomena; they originate from another dimension, have multiple variation, levels of meaning, and by necessity take on a presentation that is organic to the specific situation. Also, they do not translate well to differing circumstance. Finally, these capacities cannot be taught, only developed.

Humanity's Higher Potential

All spiritual learning, or the road to enlightenment, begins by examining and understanding who Man (Woman) is. What is the higher potential of humanity? What do the great religious and spiritual traditions say about each person's individual reason for travel through the universe?

While traditions vary, here is a composite or one view of this potential. By design, man/woman is a multi-level and spiritual being who enters the earth phase to express many aspects of self, reach toward completion and serve as a representative of a King. All these forms of earthly expression are integral to the Design and the emerging individual life, learning pattern. Always, the highest expression is self-less service that is aligned with the higher destiny of the universe. To connect with this potential and destiny, man was born incomplete with an inner restlessness and yearning. This unease pushes the traveler forward seeking the missing piece; often, in

divergent forms and experiences. Life is the great classroom and within the search, the traveler is encouraged to enjoy the many aspects of healthy living. Finally, when the missing piece is defined as spiritual, real or conscious spiritual learning and service emerge. In time, as the traveler matures, responsibilities and increased spiritual capacity are added and the individual is completed. This completion is necessary to both fulfill individual potential and help make the world a better place.

Man's birth right and potential is to govern a vast personal spiritual kingdom. This potential is aligned with the Higher Destiny and as the traveler journeys through the many worlds, the traveler continues to express self in relation to the Higher Potential and Universal Design.

Higher spiritual capacity has numerous forms and comes and goes; it is dependent upon the situation and its usefulness within the Higher Design. It is a dimension that is to be used in service to others. It is not for the individual; it is to be used in connection with humanity and to help people reach higher. This latent wisdom and capacity exists within every one- emerging when conditions are aligned. These conditions often include: right time, right place and right people.

The Completed Person

Life is filled with seemingly endless forms of experience, learning and potential. It is the same with higher capacity and ability. The completed person, one who has attained within their own ordinary personality a level of balance and added spiritual capacity, lives a full life like others. A complete life is one that is filled with responsibility, being part of the community in which one finds self, and serving a higher call.

According to tradition, on one level, travelers are all equal: joy, reward, love, happiness, sacrifice, work, suffering and death are all part of the human experience. However, what sets the spiritual traveler apart is that through the Grace of the Path- the traveler has added natural, latent spiritual capacity; which by design and function is to be used in connection with helping others.

This capacity, which is born of spiritual energy, is life giving, loving and holistic. Always, it is connected with the greater good and is waiting to be awakened in everyone.

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Also by Dr. Bitkoff, *A Commuter's Guide to Enlightenment* (Llewellyn, 2008) and *Journey of Light: Trilogy* (Authorhouse, 2004); these books are available on Amazon.com or from the publisher. To contact author go to www.stewartbitkoff.com.