

# Enlightenment

Over the last couple of decades we have become increasingly accustomed to hearing the word Enlightenment. It has crept, almost unnoticed, into our everyday language in a variety of contexts, from household duties to confectionery, to esoteric and even clairvoyant experiences, as well as being associated, more traditionally, with the various forms of meditation. Television and poster advertisers frequently blazon the word enlightenment in their campaigns which is a sure sign that the word has "arrived" in the English language, but what exactly are they talking about?

I would like to lift some of the confusion that surrounds "Enlightenment".

There seem to be so many uses for the one word, which is rapidly becoming over played as the "buzz word" of the moment. As a consequence, one extremely valuable meaning has become buried under the more mundane uses, that of **Spiritual Enlightenment**: the goal of mankind.

I would like to attempt to lift some of the confusion that surrounds the word "enlightenment" which as it becomes more and more popular seems to be becoming increasingly ill defined. I would also like to clarify the meaning and value of Spiritual Enlightenment, as spoken of by mystics since time immemorial, who state the possibility of attaining a profound state of consciousness, knowledge of the Ultimate Cause of the Self - the Ultimate Reality of Existence, known as Enlightenment.

Mystics describe the expansion of the conscious awareness until it knows no boundaries: an expansion that begins with a journey or a "path". Most importantly perhaps, is the observation that Enlightenment is our natural state of consciousness, and that the journey of self-discovery is an innate part of human life.

# Enlightenment

Colloquially, we use the term enlightenment as a way of describing degrees of illumination and understanding. We might say that something was an "enlightening experience" when an event broadens our horizons. Sometimes it is used to explain levels of self-development, or a sudden and unexpected intuitional experience, or simply when our awareness has been heightened. Just about everyone will be able to recall a moment of delight when a problem, be it physical, emotional or mental, suddenly "makes sense".

These are little "illuminations" if you like; the emergence of reason from chaos; of joy from sadness; and of understanding from confusion. They offer insight to the problems that we face within our lives, and as such are inspiring and uplifting. If we are lucky, they will give us a hint of a greater intelligence than our own - enhancing our lives with richness and colour as well as bringing a feeling of fulfilment. This illumination though is often disappointingly temporal and worldly - and offers us only a transient glimpse into what really makes us tick. Not quite the expansion of consciousness that the mystic speaks of, but certainly a change in our awareness to some degree which inspires us on our journey through life.



The expansion of our conscious awareness has often been associated with the development of "Siddhi powers", such as clairvoyant or astral sight and hearing. This association is misleading. When clairvoyance is present, the person can see and hear the astral reflections of the physical world, which is parallel to, and interpenetrates the physical world. The astral world, (sometimes known as the astral plane or level) is not formed into "hard" objects like the physical world, but exists as shape, colour and sound very much like the world we see in our dreams and in our imagination. Similarly, perception and time are not limited to the range of the physical senses, nor by the slow and cumbersome movement of the physical body. Instead, the astral plane is witnessed through the use of supra-senses, a situation that allows the clairvoyant, and indeed the astral traveller, to see and hear past and future events, as well as present events in other locations, again very much as we do in dreams.

**The expansion of our conscious awareness has often been wrongly associated with the development of "powers".**

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We all have supra-senses to some degree. We have "feelings" about things, or occasionally know when something is about to happen or what someone else is thinking. In some people this is stronger than in others. Just as some people are more intuitive than others, so some are taller; some are able to sing; some are capable of great kindness and so on. It is part of being human, but not really part of the journey to discover the Ultimate Reality of Existence (Spiritual Enlightenment). Sometimes these powers are naturally present and they may develop or they may wane with time. We all have the **potential** to develop Siddhi powers, as their source, the kundalini energy, is a natural creative energy present within everyone.

**Kundalini energy is simply the supra-physical source of all physical body systems.**

You may have heard of kundalini energy before. It is sometimes called the Serpent Power, or the Serpent Fire, as it is a complex collection of energy that lies coiled at the base of the spine. It has its own patterns of movement, just as its reflections in the physical body do. Just as the heart beats and the lungs swell, so the kundalini flows. Kundalini energy is the supra-physical source of all body systems - including the senses. By specific meditation exercises, this energy can be re-routed to awaken the supra-senses.

**There is no greater value in the manifestation of a gold ring than to forge one from molten metal.**

However, there is a draw back, as a vast amount of extremely volatile supra-physical energy is released when the kundalini energy is aroused, which can result in serious psychological and physical distress. Consequently, expert guidance is always needed for the safe arousal of the kundalini energy, as it truly is the untamed serpent of the physical universe. It doesn't need to be forcefully aroused - and is really best left alone to follow its natural patterns. If it is appropriate to an individual's spiritual development it can be aroused, under guidance, in the fullness of time.

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Some people though do try to develop specific Siddhi powers through particular meditation exercises such as kundalini meditation, Siddhi mantras and sophisticated breathing exercises. These powers include such things as remote listening, translocation, great strength, levitation and the manifestation of objects.

They sound very grand, but the mystic or serious seeker of truth, would scoff at them. To him they are just distractions, and tantamount to child's play. There is no greater value in the manifestation of a gold ring, for example, than to forge one from molten metal. Both are simply the manipulation of form. Neither does he seek the movement of translocation. He longs instead to know the stillness of that which never moves - the Cause of all the movements of the universe.

**The Kundalini energy can be seen to be desperately inadequate for the expansion of consciousness.**

These powers are in many ways the misuse of what is basically physical energy, all be it supra-physical. They are part of the created Universe, whereas Enlightenment brings proof of the Cause of the Universe. The development of these powers is a bit like a well-developed bodybuilder, who has over done the protein powder, and spent too long in the gym. He does himself no favours in the long term. His energies are out of balance and his muscles will eventually weaken. The seeker after powers is following the same route. It's a dead-end to nowhere, however fascinating the route may seem, whatever value these abilities appear to have.

**There is one Siddhi power that interests the true seeker, that of the ability to reveal within another person the source of their life.**

Whilst many people may well put these "powers" to very worthwhile use, perhaps by diagnosing illness not yet manifest in the physical body, offering healing, or contacting the so-called "spirit world", this does not reflect an expanded state of consciousness akin to Spiritual Enlightenment.

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It is nothing more than a change in perception, from physical to supra-physical, which is a very small change indeed. It could be likened to focussing on your palm, and then re-focussing to the lines upon it. Where though is the *cause* of that palm?

There is one Siddhi power that interests the true seeker, that of the ability to reveal within another person the source of their life. This source is an inner energy stream, so fundamental it is the seed of existence. Throughout antiquity this seed energy has been known as the Path of Light and Sound. This is the inner teacher, perfect in itself, which can guide us on our journey of Self-discovery. Its nature is such that even the development of Siddhi powers or the supra-senses will *not* allow us to find it. Its revelation is dependent on a teacher whose nature is *intrinsically* linked to the Path of Light and Sound, which allows communication with seekers physically as well as within the finer levels of consciousness.



Traditionally, such a teacher has been known as a Perfect Master, which simply means a neutral representation of the Path of Light and Sound on all levels of creation, from the most gross (the physical plane) to the finest levels of the Path of Light and Sound itself. Just as the kundalini energy is the source of creative energy of the **physical body**, so the Path of Light and Sound is the source of **all created things**. It is fundamental to the existence of the Universe, and the bridge that links the formed aspect of creation to its formless Cause.

## The Path of Light and Sound is the source of all created things.

In comparison to the Path of Light and Sound, the kundalini energy can be seen to be desperately inadequate for the expansion of consciousness, as it is basically a physical energy giving shape and integrity to physical forms. The Path of Light and Sound on the other hand contains all the knowledge required for building the many levels of creation, and for maintaining their integrity. It is also the link that brings the possibility of knowledge of what lies behind the created worlds, the illusive Cause of all - the Ultimate Reality of Existence.

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Throughout time people from many different cultures have all longed for this same Truth. Many have tried to name the Ultimate Reality they seek using terms such as The Almighty, the Causeless Cause, God, Atman and Allah. These words are confusing as they have become personified, even race and gender-biased, and for many of us they are absolutely loaded with memories and negative associations picked up over the years.

**Words such as the "Ultimate Reality" and "Ultimate Cause of the Self" are helpful, as they give us an opportunity to look afresh at these concepts without prejudice.**

These associations are difficult to shake off, although the need to find an appropriate phrase or noun simply for the sake of communication remains. Words such as the "Ultimate Reality" and "Ultimate Cause of the Self" are helpful here, as they give us an opportunity to look afresh at these concepts without prejudice. Some people choose to call this Ultimate Reality, God. Others use equally appropriate, and maybe very personal, words to attempt to capture the meaning of something that can never really be captured in this way.

The *Ultimate Reality* though is a phrase to express the Cause of all that we can know. Untainted by the Universe, it is without beginning, without ending: Absolute.



This Absolute Reality cannot really be talked about at all: it is beyond words, as words are the product of creation and not of its Cause. The mind, with only thoughts as tools, can't possibly comprehend its source. Enlightenment is absolute and irrefutable proof of the Ultimate Reality of Existence. On attaining Enlightenment the need for belief, dogma, rituals, scriptures, prayers and questioning is resolved.

Once this hidden Reality is known, it cannot be concealed again, as this unified, boundless state cannot be limited by anything. If this Ultimate Reality could hide within itself that would indicate an imperfection. For this same reason there can be no stages in Enlightenment. There is either knowledge of the Ultimate Reality of Existence, or there is not: as there is only ONE reality, that of an indivisible unified Cause.

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## Enlightenment is absolute and irrefutable proof of the Ultimate Reality of Existence.

To be able to claim to be Enlightened, we must therefore be one with the nature of the Ultimate Reality. This is the proverbial "drop" merging into the ocean. In doing so, the nature of that reality becomes our own. Just as the drop that falls into the ocean can never be just a drop again, so after Enlightenment we can never not be Enlightened. We know that we were never born, and can never die; that we have no beginning and no ending. We recognise that we are the infinite, self-creating Cause of all.



The many and varied explanations of the journey of self-discovery, and the quest for Enlightenment can be confusing. The mystic, or seeker, speaks of knowing the *cause* of all created things, whereas others are really dealing with the knowledge of the *effects* of that cause. Sources of information about these effects, such as the development of powers, are ten a penny these days, with clairvoyance and healing being especially popular. They are often portrayed as part of the journey of development leading towards Enlightenment, but they are really akin to taking the country bus to the city - a long, slow, frustrating journey - only to discover that you were on the wrong bus in the first place.

There are probably even more opportunities to learn about *illumination* and *self-development* that "suggest" or "promise" enlightenment. We see books with titles like "Enlightenment in 10 easy lessons", and workshops which tease us with the promise of an easy ride. We know in our hearts that this can't possibly be the Enlightenment the mystics of the past have spoken so highly of, and yet there is still a tendency to be over-optimistic about their potential.

**Many techniques are simply the exploration of the consciousness we already have.**

# Enlightenment

Unfortunately, there is nothing truly "enlightening" about these systems. They are just as transient as the autumn leaves, as they rely (when we peel back all the fancy words and techniques) on the illumination of the mind, the pacification of the emotions and the relaxation of the physical body. This is fine in its own way. It brings us those little illuminating and inspiring experiences I mentioned earlier. But that is all. They have nothing to do with an expansion of consciousness: they are simply the exploration of the consciousness we already have. They are, in effect, experiences that will fade to memories, as they rely on effects and not the cause.

The Path to Enlightenment, since the first seeker looked for it, has always begun with the revelation of the Path of Light and Sound, and has always relied on that intrinsic link, the teacher who can both reveal the Path and be a guide on that path.

**The Path to Enlightenment, since the first seeker looked for it, has always begun with the revelation of the Path of Light and Sound.**

This is the only route to knowledge of the Ultimate Reality - linking the manifest universe with the unmanifest Reality of Existence. The Path of Light and Sound is a naturally occurring phenomenon, an opportune pathway that links the Cause and the Effects.

**The culmination of this Path is to merge with the Ultimate Reality itself.**

To witness this Reality is the mystical meaning of Enlightenment, relating to the quest of man for knowledge of the Ultimate Cause of the Self and culminating in the complete satiation of this longing, with the realisation of the true nature of the Self.

**Explanations** of "Enlightenment" will come and go, as the mind will always struggle to comprehend it. There is only one way to know its reality for yourself: it's a case of, to know it you must become it, for that is the Reality of the Self - *your* self.

