

Chapter 16. Attaining Spiritual Enlightenment



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ATTAINING SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

**WHAT—OR WHO—IS IT THAT LOOKS OUT
THROUGH YOUR EYES AT THE WORLD?**

“Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.”
– Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Attaining Spiritual Enlightenment

There are few mysteries in this world that are as ancient as the mystery of spiritual enlightenment. What is spiritual enlightenment? For thousands of years the quest to reach enlightenment has intrigued people.

Some say it is understanding or knowledge. Others say it is wisdom. Some say it is the ability to heal others instantly. Others point to the Bible and say it is about creating miracles. Various groups define spiritual enlightenment as the ability to love, or maintain continuous peace of mind, or become a millionaire, or cast out devils.

Enlightenment itself is just what the word implies – to become light. Spiritual enlightenment is to reach the state of enlightenment by developing the deeply enfolded spirit that lives within you, bringing it to the surface and living from the center of that Spirit-Self.

This Spirit-Self is the eternal part of you that never dies, is always aware, and is the source of the expanded capacities mentioned above – deep knowledge, intuition, the ability to heal or create miracles, an encompassing love, extraordinary peace, and the capacity to transcend death.

Most people are familiar with Jesus, who was trying to teach the basics of enlightenment to a group of fishermen and holy women by demonstrating it in real time. There have been other great

teachers, but they are not abundant in today's world. Yet we are capable of figuring out much of what has been given to us and putting it into practice. Enlightenment is the end of suffering and the entry into peace and joy. It is the ability to move through the day with a watchful attentiveness, always present in the moment and watching to see what is needed in any given situation because there is an inner willingness to give.

Enlightenment is freedom – from the past, from old habits, from tradition, and from choices and decisions that result in sorrow or frustration. In Buddhist teaching, enlightenment is the ability to transcend one's ego, the body, and all attachments to the material world. This is often interpreted as being willing to be poor, but nothing could be further from the truth. Attachment to the material world results in continuous, grasping efforts to get more money, more power, bigger houses or cars, fancier clothing, etc.

Paradoxically, detaching from these things does not necessarily mean you can't have them. It just means that you are in a state of mind that has not closed down to everything except the thoughts and actions that will bring money, power, or cars and houses. When you open yourself, these things will come to you easily if you want them or need them.

Why? Because you are able to see a much broader palette of possibilities and opportunities and thus can gently and lovingly position yourself so that they unfold right in your lap – where you will typically use these gifts to make life better for all. When people are

not worried about where their next meal is coming from, they have the time and space to become aware of enlightenment and learn about the incredible Spirit that exists within them.

Contrary to what you may think, there are many paths to enlightenment. It is possible to touch the experience momentarily while doing the most ordinary things... from swimming, to sculpting, to driving, at the dinner table, or while making love. People often have difficulty describing the experience because it is so challenging to convey the extraordinary, transcendent love, peace, oneness, insight, and timelessness of the moment.

Even if the experience only lasts a few seconds, the power of it transforms you. Some people go through several years of chaos because the experience tips over their apple-cart and thoroughly uproots their life. Other people return quietly to their work, their families, and some of the activities they were formerly engaged in, but there is the perception that something is definitely different and a slow weeding-out process begins as the reasons for living take on a whole new perspective.

Whether this initiating experience happens spontaneously or in the midst of deep meditation, it is your signal that the eternal Spirit-Self hidden within you is beginning to make its presence known and you are on the path toward full enlightenment. The guidebook to *Attaining Spiritual Enlightenment* and the many other supports and resources offered by Ultimate Destiny can help you take the steps that will lead to your full unfolding. ♦

Self-Assessment Exercise

Complete this self-assessment quiz to discover how well you are fulfilling your ultimate destiny in this area of life. The exercise will also help you discover which of our programs would be of greatest value to you, your family and your work. Select the number that best describes you and then calculate the total. The number 1 means that this pertains to you very little of the time and 5 means that this is always in your life. If a statement doesn't apply to you, circle N/A and count it as a 3.

Attaining Spiritual Enlightenment

While I continue to grow and seek deeper spiritual insights and experiences, I feel completely at peace with who I am and my level of spiritual understanding and perspective on life.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I have a clear and definite set of values and principles by which I order my life and I live consistently by them.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
If involved in a religious institution, I am comfortable with my way of understanding its teachings (as in adequate harmony with my own internalized beliefs) and participating in its rituals and gatherings.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I understand the connections and also the differences between outward religious forms (dogmas, rituals, etc.) and inner spiritual values, experiences, and perspectives.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
If I felt wounded from either a lack of religious or spiritual training or the specific forms in which I received it, I have let go of and made peace with that, both internally and with any specific people involved.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I have regular spiritual practices or "disciplines" that are sustaining and inspiring to me.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I am open to the spirituality of different individuals and groups—able to see how they may parallel what I believe or do, even if very different in outward form.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I live my life effectively in the "now," attending to responsibilities, yet free and spontaneous, with a sense of enjoying the present moment fully.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I have come to a balanced way of orienting to a power greater than myself (whatever you may label that) and knowing, feeling that power as also a part of me.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
I see mystery in the world as a positive, and have no struggles with perplexing questions about the meaning of life, why certain things happen, etc.	<input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5

Total Score _____

Whatever your present score in this area, Ultimate Destiny has programs and services that will help you discover your dreams, realize more of your inherent potential and know how to manifest your ultimate destiny!

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