

Hello,

I have got enlightened about two months ago, or at least I believe I have. Can you please help me verify if that is correct? One big problem that I have right now is that I have no one to tell the truth to. If you could tell me what I have to do to start talking to people I would appreciate it very much.

Thank you,

Dave Michaels

Hi Dave,

Will you please tell me why you think you are enlightened? What does it mean to you when you say you are enlightened? Please tell me about your life circumstances, age, work, spiritual history, etc. It may be that you have had a major epiphany or are in some kind of Samadhi state. It is not wise to talk with others until you are clear in your mind about what has happened. You will get a lot of reactions that will only confuse you. I also suggest that you get my book, *How to Attain Enlightenment, The Vision of Non-Duality* because it describes everything to do with enlightenment in great detail. Read it carefully starting at the beginning and pay close attention to the Second Chapter which should give you some clarity. In the meantime tell me as much about your experience and you life. Maybe I can make some helpful suggestions.

James

Hello James,

You are as nice as it can get.

James: I will be nice, but not quite so nice in this email. OK? I know that you are young and inspired and I do not want to rain on your parade, but I need to ask some hard questions to see if I can help you.

Dave: First of all I have got enlightened before I knew what enlightenment means. After I got enlightened I started reading books. Although the books were nice and made me feel good, my feeling of the truth have not changed one bit.

James: You may have a feeling about it, but is the truth something you can feel? Are you the truth?

Dave: About your book, I will read it with much interest but at this moment I feel the need to talk to someone about this and I cannot tell how much I appreciate that you are willing to listen to my story.

James: You can read it or not but if your question is “am I enlightened?” this book will make it very clear what enlightenment is. I will try to explain it as best I can in emails by asking questions.

Dave: Last night I wrote an email in which I explained what happened. I think I explained it pretty good so I am just going to paste it and after it I will answer the remaining questions.

What happened?

I have been meditating about some forms and colors for some time and at some point I got them so mixed that I could not untangle them. I decided to try something just for the fun of it: keep one in my mind and explode the others. I must have done this wrong also because I ended up exploding all of them. At this point I was nowhere. After being nowhere I woke up and realized that my past was gone, my future was gone, anything that was bothering me in the past it is not bothering any more, any pleasure that I thought to bring me pleasure in the future was unnecessary now. I was completely in the now.

James: I will ask you some more questions. These may be more difficult. I just need more information. You say “I was nowhere.” How do you know you were nowhere?

The rest of the description of are signs of an enlightenment experience and are also signs of enlightenment. I am trying to determine if you have had an enlightenment experience or if you know who you are. If you can make this statement in two years, you are probably enlightened, not that anyone can actually get enlightened. You have always been ‘the light’ meaning awareness. It is the knowledge that you are awareness that is enlightenment. When you say ‘I am enlightened’ do you mean that you were unenlightened before that experience happened? If you are awareness you were never unenlightened, nor can you become enlightened. You have always been awareness. It is a

rediscovery. But if you are Dave, then you can't get enlightened because as you say, Dave doesn't exist. If Dave doesn't exist how can he be enlightened?

Dave: In the next days I was doing my usual work just the same but when I had nothing to do I just wanted to rest my mind. I wanted the mind to shut up, I haven't tried that in the past, and found out that it cannot be done.

James: This is correct. No person can stop the mind.

Dave: This was an objective at this point. I went to the library and found a book on Buddhism. From the book I remembered one word "void", meditate about the void.

I don't know how is "nothing" different from the "void" but the "void" worked. At this point I had a method to go nowhere every time I wanted to. After doing this for about 20 times I stopped wanting to do it again, it was just making me happy and I didn't exist, what is the point?

James: This is correct. You are beyond happiness. But there is a problem with your statement, "I didn't exist." You did exist or you could not report the experience. You mean that Dave did not exist. Dave is not you, meaning awareness.

Dave: That is when I started to address other people's pain. Their pain still seems real somehow, I know that they are not in any danger just like I am not but I still would much rather take care of their pain than mine. That might be because when I am in the truth I don't have any pain either.

James: It is natural to want to help others. Do what you want, but it is not wise to help others at this point. You still have some things to understand before you do and when you understand them you may not feel the need to help. This kind of desire is suspect. It is usually coming from an unfulfilled part of the ego, although not always. If you are the self, you see that the pain is very helpful. If you take someone's pain before they have learned their lesson, the pain will come back and you have not helped them, you have made matters worse. Pain is very valuable. I suggest that you let it be and try to see why it is there. There is a reason. What do you think it is?

The last statement shows that your enlightenment is not complete. You say 'when I am in the truth.' You cannot be 'in the truth.' This presupposes that you were out of the truth. You cannot be in or out of truth. It is not an experience. You are the truth.

James: (from the previous email) How does it feel now?

I just carry on like before but now when an enquiry appears it always ends up in laughter. Before I was like "if I don't eat I will die. I must eat", now I am "I am immortal, what happens happens." When something bad happens to me I immediately accept it and do not fight it. If I have a bad thought, I accept it, if I have a good thought, I do it.

James: Let's see how long this lasts. It is not wise to be in a hurry to put a name to what happened. What is the reason you laugh? Because you see that everything is meaningless and that you once thought it meant something?

Dave: About the things that might still bother me now, I stopped worrying about them when I realized that all enquiry ends in laughter. At first I was afraid that I might say something unpolished to an unenlightened person and make him suffer but then I realized that any sentence filtered by logic leads to suffering. He will just have to ask again.

Life circumstances, age, work, spiritual history:

I am unemployed at the moment, my qualification is legal adviser. I am 27 years old and I live in Stockholm, Sweden. I have no girlfriend or family of my own. With my parents I have a cold relationship.

I have been baptized as a Christian. I have not been involved with any other religions but I had a natural curiosity about them. That curiosity never ended up in reading.

I have imagined that for any progress you should stay in the forest for like 20 years. Thank God enlightenment is outside of progress.

James: You are right about that.

Dave: You asked why do I think I am enlightened? What does it mean to me when I say I am enlightened?

When I think about what enlightenment is, the first thing that comes into my mind is “nothing.” Enlightenment is nothing.

James: Well, it can't be nothing and something at the same time. If it happened to you, it had to be something.

Dave: But you still have to talk about it and you start attacking it from different angles. I believe that enlightenment is the moment when the illusion reveals itself and you can not be confused any more.

James: That is a good definition. Three questions: 1) what were you confused about? 2) Who was there when the illusion was revealed? 3) Who revealed it? Illusions are not conscious and cannot do actions like revelations. Please do not think I am just being clever with words. Something important did happen to you. I need to figure out how you assimilated what happened. Enlightenment is in the assimilation.

Dave: It makes me no pleasure that I am enlightened, but people have to know about it.

James: The first half of you statement is a sign of enlightenment but the second half is a sign of ignorance. Can you tell me why people have to know about it? Or do you just feel the need to do it? If you do, you are not enlightened. Why? People have to know if people come up to you and deliver a request in writing. If you want people to know, it is for you that you want them to know, not for them. How can you want them to know if you don't exist? If you are the Awareness, you do not have a problem with people's enlightenment or lack of enlightenment.

Dave: People might have different interests in it: just finding out what it is (as a nice story), they might have problems and go to an enlightened person to dissolve them, they might have a dreadful inquiry and it is good for them to stay in a room with someone who is unbreakable or they might just want to get enlightened and use the master as a method.

James: From reading this I think you have had an enlightenment experience but I do not think you are enlightened, at least not according to the tradition. I think you know who you aren't and this is a very big step. When you experience something like what happened to you, it is almost inevitable that you want to ring the bell and get people to come to church. It is usually a mistake. See what it got Jesus. It is best to keep to your self and let what happened work out over a long time...several years. This is advice that almost all people who had an 'enlightenment experience' outside of an established lineage completely ignore. When you see that there is no one to help and that you are not a helper and you genuinely do not want to help...and that the greatest help is to just be what you are...then you can help.

Dave: If I will write any more I am afraid that you will not read it. If you want me to answer more questions just ask.

PS: I would like to emphasize my current objective: I need a method to start doing this.

James: I first need to see what you know and what you don't know.

Thank you very much for your support,

Dave

James: You are welcome, Dave

Hello James,

Before I sent you the previous message I read it and came to the conclusion that my message was rather mean. I got to wondering why is that? I have realized that my desire of spreading the truth is making me unable to do that. Thank you for your enquiry. It was exactly what I need it. For the moment being I have no more questions.

James: Too bad I didn't read this before I read the other one. Oh well, no harm done. But read it carefully anyway and contemplate on what was said about enlightenment, not about you. In any case I didn't think your email was mean. I think you are just a bit obsessed with making something out of enlightenment.

Enlightenment is the gift that does not need to be given. Take it easy. Go fishing. When the world is ready for you, it will come knocking at your door. Good luck to you.

James