

# Are You Enlightened?

Daniel Band

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**Jacky:** Hello, Daniel, are you enlightened? If so, was it a felt “experience” or did someone tell you that you already are what you seek?

Thank you.

**Daniel:** Hi, Jacky.

First, we need to mutually define what enlightenment is: enlightenment is not a particular experience even though it does translate into an experience of confident peace within the person (*jiva*). Enlightenment is the conviction that “I am awareness.” Enlightenment is the hard and fast knowledge that, “I am awareness, assuming that it renders my binding fears and desires non-binding and cancels my sense of doership.”

Being enlightened means that you do not depend on any object for your happiness, that you know that nothing can be added to you or subtracted from you, so you do not pursue things in the world thinking they will complete you.

What does it mean to say that, “I am the light, the knower and the knowing”? It means that there is nothing that can be added to me that will make me more than what I am. It means that nothing can be subtracted from me that will make me less than what I am. And how does that translate into practical terms? It means I can relax completely. It means that fulfilling desires is completely optional. It means that fear of undesirable outcomes no longer motivates my behaviour. It means that I am quite content to let the day evolve on its own, irrespective of my “to-do” list. When I lie down to sleep at night, the events of the day dissolve quickly and I fall asleep effortlessly. I am not inclined to start ambitious projects. It means I understand that people wouldn’t be what they are if they could help it, and do not become agitated when they act like jerks. It means I’m not disturbed when the mind thinks a stupid thought or an unkind emotion passes through it. It means that being there for others does not require special effort.

**Jacky:** Daniel, thank you for getting back to me so quickly!

If there is no “experience,” is it not just a head trip? A concept with associated ideas?

It actually comes from an old *koan* attributed to Zen master Linji: “If you meet the Buddha, kill him.”

He talks of the “idea” of Buddha/enlightenment/awakening not being that. It should be dropped/killed and then one carries on. Even if one has what appears to be a full idea(s) of what it is to be that, maybe descriptions are taken as a prescription of behaviour?

What do you think? (It’s not a pun, hee, hee.)

~ *Metta*

**Daniel:** No, it's not just a head trip or a concept with associated ideas. It is the moment-to-moment application of self-inquiry, which rewires your thinking as to what/who you are. It's reprogramming the intellect to identify with/as your true nature, free awareness.

Self-inquiry is not an experience. It is the patient application of self-knowledge that removes self-ignorance. It's hard work because ignorance (misidentification) is hardwired.

I think Linji's statement is to combat what we refer to as "enlightenment sickness." This sticky bug is when the person (*jiva*) claims to be enlightened – which is obviously incorrect, because you can't get enlightened, as you've never not been the light to begin with.

If the apparent individual person, i.e. the ego, is claiming to be enlightened ("meeting Buddha"), then the ego has co-opted the knowledge and is using it to glorify itself. The vision of non-duality has not been assimilated and the apparent individual person is still taken to be one's identity.

The self doesn't get "enlightened," because the self is the light. When you realise who you are, you realise you are not the human being you appear to be. Nor is anyone else. Nor, for that matter, is there anyone else. There is only you, awareness, with innumerable "designs" appearing within your being. This is why we say *moksa*, or liberation, which is what constitutes "enlightenment" according to the scriptures, is from the apparent individual person, not for the apparent individual person. Jacky, if you are serious about freedom, then my suggestion is this: get either one of James Swartz's books, *The Essence of Enlightenment* or *How to Attain Enlightenment*. They offer a practical delivery of the teachings and will clarify everything. You can find them at his website: [bookshop link](#).

You're welcome to write to me anytime during or after you've read either or both of them.

I will add one last thing: enlightenment is not a state or status. Enlightenment is self-knowledge of who you are; it is discriminating what is real (*satya*) from what is apparently real (*mithya*). And when you understand yourself to be that which is real (*satya*) and no longer confuse yourself to be the apparent person (*jiva*) operating in the the world of changing objects (*mithya*), then the seeking game is over. Life continues same as before – minus the existential weight caused by false identification.

**Jacky:** Daniel, the "experience" means there is no "try," there is no "moment-to-moment application of self-inquiry."

**Daniel:** An experience is subject to change, therefore it is not seen as "real" in terms of how we define reality. In Vedanta, we define reality as "that which does not change," and the only "thing" that does not change is you, awareness.

Unfortunately, Jacky, there is work to be done (the moment-to-moment application of self-knowledge), because ignorance (duality) is hardwired.

**Jacky:** It's state of being. It can't be taught or even talked about, really. It's not an intellectual structure.

If a blind man is told that everything around him is light, and he is made of that, until he “experiences” it for himself, sees it, it’s just a fancy intellectual structure.

**Daniel:** Again, the nature of a state is that it’s subject to change. Enlightenment is not a state, but the understanding that “I am free from all states.” This understanding is reflected in the intellect. I understand what you’re trying to say, using the word “being.” If you like, you can rephrase it as: “States appear in me, the ‘being-ness.’” It’s not a great substitute for “awareness,” but it may offer you a bit more clarity.

**Jacky:** If you think you have it, you’ve missed it.

**Daniel:** I don’t think I have it, because I am it.

**Jacky:** Daniel, thank you for your patience with me, and the help you are providing!

There is no work, because afterwards (as such) there is the true detachment from self. The “experience” is the revelation of what you really are. If I could try to word it... consciousness, that contains all. This does not change. If conditioning is to change in the (apparent) temporary form that is the body-mind, then it will happen in accordance with conditions, maybe through conversations such as ours.

Ha, ha, yes, you are it! But do you really know it?

**Daniel:** Jacky, I’m not sure where you found my contact info or what your reason is behind writing to me. I make myself available to inquirers who have sincere questions and who are open to receive the teachings of traditional Vedanta.

I am not here to receive people’s opinions or debate anything. I had qualified myself for liberation by setting aside personal ideas and following the methodology presented by the timeless teaching of Vedanta; it was through this, hard work and by the grace of *Isvara* that I am free today.

As a contribution, I offer guidance to those who would like to live a liberated life too.

From your responses, it’s clear that you are not digesting what I’ve pointed to, nor have you set aside your personal ideas. I cannot do this for you. Again, I suggest that you get that recommended book(s) and digest each page.

~ *Om* for now, Daniel