

# Osho and Enlightenment Sickness

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**Arlindo:** Hi, Jessica. I couldn't resist saying a few words about my first *guru*, Osho Rajneesh. You ask if he had a case of enlightenment sickness. Definitely not! He was terminally ill with it, to the extent that *Isvara* delivered him a miserable premature death. It was as if his whole mind was taken up by it. Possibly he suffered from a large infection of inadequacy, which developed the abnormal autoimmune response we call enlightenment sickness.

Whether he was self-realized or not, nobody knows. I heard Ramji saying a few times that it takes a *jnani* to know a *jnani*. But what that statement really means is that it takes a liberated person to know another.

Self-knowledge and *moksa* are not the same. A liberated person is for sure self-realized because there is no liberation without self-knowledge, meaning that regardless of one's spiritual temperament, eventually, only by knowledge the self can be realized. But a self-realized person is not necessarily liberated.

*Moksa* = freedom, or liberation from the tyranny of one's bindings *vasanas*. A person who is established as awareness is a discriminating person, i.e. he/she enjoys the fruit of self-knowledge, which is *moksa*. The fruit of self-knowledge is the result of a gradual, effortless but constant exercise of the discriminating power that allows the *jivamukta* to say no to any *adharmic vasanas* that may still surface.

Liberation, or *moksa*, can be observed in one's thoughts, words and actions. That's how many fake *swamis* are able to impress the ignorant with the simple trick of withdrawing from action and speech. What goes on in their minds only *Isvara* knows! A liberated person behaves naturally and ordinarily, but in the certain way that his/her sense of freedom transpires it can be noticed by others, especially by another self-actualized/liberated person. He/she does not crave for or fear anything in the world, much less if it is not in harmony with *dharma*.

Self-realization, or self-knowledge, on the other hand, is the clear vision or direct seeing which produces the indubious knowledge "I am the light of consciousness, and everything is IT." Although it represents the most important turn in one's life, it is still just the beginning as far as *moksa*, or liberation, is concerned.

*Nididhyasana*, the constant application of self-knowledge, will gradually dry up the remaining *vasanas* popping up in the conscious mind of the self-realized. The degree of one's *karmic vasana* load and how much purification was processed before self-realization will determine the timing for self-knowledge to fructify as *moksa*.

In the current spiritual world we find innumerable self-realized teachers (without a teaching) being fully operated by their ignorance, *adharmic vasanas* seeking expression, which manifest as compulsive likes and dislikes. Osho Rajneesh was an extreme example of such an individual. In retrospect, my ten-year association with him allows me to say that he was definitely not liberated, or self-actualized.

As far as Osho being self-realized, only *Isvara* knows. My devotional love for him had somehow blinded me at the time. But even before he left his body I had already developed the sense that I needed another teacher. That was when *Isvara* presented me with some of the books of Nisargadatta Maharaj, the teacher (without a complete teaching), with lots of experiential confusing statements who had inspired me the most until I was graced with self-realization and later on with Vedanta.

Osho's teachings were entry-level, kindergarten, mostly based on meditations and psychological and sociological insights. His spiritual teachings were a soup made of very little knowledge diluted by much of his own experiential notions of enlightenment, i.e. ignorance. He was a rebel by nature and against everything – opposed to all traditions, including the one that could have brought true liberation into his life.

He was definitely wiser and smarter than any of us, but was he self-realized? A book can be written on this topic, but it may not be worth it. I heard Ramji say that he was the *guru* who has caused most damage in the modern spiritual world with his vision of “Zorba the Buddha,” a model which combines the attitude of wildly seeking all pleasures of life, with some therapies and a couple of hours of daily meditations. How hilarious!

We will never know how wise or realized he was, but I will share with you something. When he was about leaving his body he gave clear instructions to his close devotees on when, where and how to burn his body. It was all very fast! He left his body in the late afternoon and by the end of the evening his body was consumed to ashes. He also told them to make a tomb to his memory inside the *ashram* with the following epitaph inscribed:

“OSHO. Never Born, Never Died. Only Visited this Planet Earth between 11 Dec 1931 – 19 Jan 1990.”

You see, his last desire was to immortalize himself with what he may have thought to be a very wise statement. But how can that principle which was never born or died visit a planet? Visiting a place implies action, time, space – a beginning and an end of the visiting. I remember being very confused at the time about that statement. With Osho one will always find ignorance and knowledge side by side.