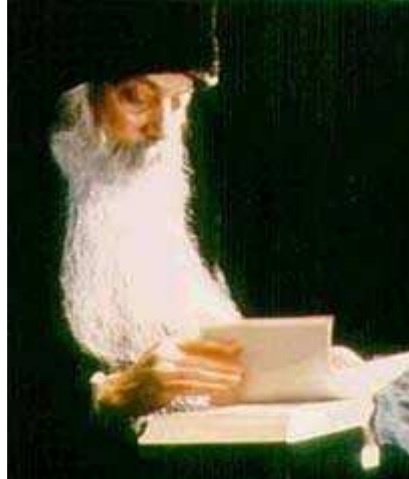


My Awakening

This may be the most vivid description ever written of what it feels like to become enlightened.

By OSHO



I AM REMINDED of the fateful day of twenty-first March, 1953. For many lives I had been working -- working upon myself, struggling, doing whatsoever can be done -- and nothing was happening.

Now I understand why nothing was happening. The very effort was the barrier, the very ladder was preventing, the very urge to seek was the obstacle. Not that one can reach without seeking. Seeking is needed, but then comes a point when seeking has to be dropped. The boat is needed to cross the river but then comes a moment when you have to get out of the boat and forget all about it and leave it behind. Effort is needed, without effort nothing is possible. And also only with effort, nothing is possible.

Just before twenty-first March, 1953, seven days before, I stopped working on myself. A moment comes when you see the whole futility of effort. You have done all that you can do and nothing is happening. You have done all that is humanly possible. Then what else can you do? In sheer helplessness one drops all search.

And the day the search stopped, the day I was not seeking for something, the day I was not expecting something to happen, it started happening. A new energy arose -- out of nowhere. It was not coming from any source. It was coming from nowhere and everywhere. It was in the trees and in the rocks and the sky and the sun and the air -- it was everywhere. And I was seeking so hard, and I was thinking it is

very far away. And it was so near and so close.

Just because I was seeking I had become incapable of seeing the near. Seeking is always for the far, seeking is always for the distant -- and it was not distant. I had become far-sighted, I had lost the near-sightedness. The eyes had become focussed on the far away, the horizon, and they had lost the quality to see that which is just close, surrounding you.

The day effort ceased, I also ceased. Because you cannot exist without effort, and you cannot exist without desire, and you cannot exist without striving.

The phenomenon of the ego, of the self, is not a thing, it is a process. It is not a substance sitting there inside you; you have to create it each moment. It is like pedalling bicycle. If you pedal it goes on and on, if you don't pedal it stops. It may go a little because of the past momentum, but the moment you stop pedalling, in fact the bicycle starts stopping. It has no more energy, no more power to go anywhere. It is going to fall and collapse.

The ego exists because we go on pedalling desire, because we go on striving to get something, because we go on jumping ahead of ourselves. That is the very phenomenon of the ego -- the jump ahead of yourself, the jump in the future, the jump in the tomorrow. The jump in the non-existential creates the ego. Because it comes out of the non-existential it is like a mirage. It consists only of desire and nothing else. It consists only of thirst and nothing else.

The ego is not in the present, it is in the future. If you are in the future, then ego seems to be very substantial. If you are in the present the ego is a mirage, it starts disappearing.

The day I stopped seeking... and it is not right to say that I stopped seeking, better will be to say the day seeking stopped. Let me repeat it: the better way to say it is the day the seeking stopped. Because if I stop it then I am there again. Now stopping becomes

my effort, now stopping becomes my desire, and desire goes on existing in a very subtle way.

You cannot stop desire; you can only understand it. In the very understanding is the stopping of it. Remember, nobody can stop desiring, and the reality happens only when desire stops.

So this is the dilemma. What to do? Desire is there and Buddhas go on saying desire has to be stopped, and they go on saying in the next breath that you cannot stop desire. So what to do? You put people in a dilemma. They are in desire, certainly. You say it has to be stopped -- okay. And then you say it cannot be stopped. Then what is to be done?

The desire has to be understood. You can understand it, you can just see the futility of it. A direct perception is needed, an immediate penetration is needed. Look into desire, just see what it is, and you will see the falsity of it, and you will see it is non-existential. And desire drops and something drops simultaneously within you.

Desire and the ego exist in cooperation, they coordinate. The ego cannot exist without desire, the desire cannot exist without the ego. Desire is projected ego, ego is introjected desire. They are together, two aspects of one phenomenon.

The day desiring stopped, I felt very hopeless and helpless. No hope because no future. Nothing to hope because all hoping has proved futile, it leads nowhere. You go in rounds. It goes on dangling in front of you, it goes on creating new mirages, it goes on calling you, 'Come on, run fast, you will reach.' But howsoever fast you run you never reach.

That's why Buddha calls it a mirage. It is like the horizon that you see around the earth. It appears but it is not there. If you go it goes on running from you. The faster you run, the faster it moves away. The slower you go, the slower it moves away. But one thing is certain -- the distance between you and the horizon remains absolutely the same. Not even a single inch can you reduce the distance between you

and the horizon.

You cannot reduce the distance between you and your hope. Hope is horizon. You try to bridge yourself with the horizon, with the hope, with a projected desire. The desire is a bridge, a dream bridge -- because the horizon exists not, so you cannot make a bridge towards it, you can only dream about the bridge. You cannot be joined with the non-existential.

The day the desire stopped, the day I looked and realized into it, it simply was futile. I was helpless and hopeless. But that very moment something started happening. The same started happening for which for many lives I was working and it was not happening.

In your hopelessness is the only hope, and in your desirelessness is your only fulfillment, and in your tremendous helplessness suddenly the whole existence starts helping you.

It is waiting. When it sees that you are working on your own, it does not interfere. It waits. It can wait infinitely because there is no hurry for it. It is eternity. The moment you are not on your own, the moment you drop, the moment you disappear, the whole existence rushes towards you, enters you. And for the first time things start happening.

Seven days I lived in a very hopeless and helpless state, but at the same time something was arising. When I say hopeless I don't mean what you mean by the word hopeless. I simply mean there was no hope in me. Hope was absent. I am not saying that I was hopeless and sad. I was happy in fact, I was very tranquil, calm and collected and centered. Hopeless, but in a totally new meaning. There was no hope, so how could there be hopelessness. Both had disappeared.

The hopelessness was absolute and total. Hope had disappeared and with it its counterpart, hopelessness, had also disappeared. It was a totally new experience -- of being without hope. It was not a negative state.

I have to use words -- but it was not a negative state. It was absolutely positive. It was not just absence, a presence was felt. Something was overflowing in me, overflowing me.

And when I say I was helpless, I don't mean the word in the dictionary-sense. I simply say I was selfless. That's what I mean when I say helpless. I have recognized the fact that I am not, so I cannot depend on myself, so I cannot stand on my own ground -- there was no ground underneath. I was in an abyss... bottomless abyss. But there was no fear because there was nothing to protect. There was no fear because there was nobody to be afraid.

Those seven days were of tremendous transformation, total transformation. And the last day the presence of a totally new energy, a new light and new delight, became so intense that it was almost unbearable -- as if I was exploding, as if I was going mad with blissfulness. The new generation in the West has the right word for it -- I was blissed out, stoned.

It was impossible to make any sense out of it, what was happening. It was a very non-sense world -- difficult to figure it out, difficult to manage in categories, difficult to use words, languages, explanations. All scriptures appeared dead and all the words that have been used for this experience looked very pale, anaemic. This was so alive. It was like a tidal wave of bliss.

The whole day was strange, stunning, and it was a shattering experience. The past was disappearing, as if it had never belonged to me, as if I had read about it somewhere, as if I had dreamed about it, as if it was somebody else's story I have heard and somebody told it to me. I was becoming loose from my past, I was being uprooted from my history, I was losing my autobiography. I was becoming a non-being, what Buddha calls anatta. Boundaries were disappearing, distinctions were disappearing.

Mind was disappearing; it was millions of miles away. It was difficult to catch hold of it, it was

rushing farther and farther away, and there was no urge to keep it close. I was simply indifferent about it all. It was okay. There was no urge to remain continuous with the past.

By the evening it became so difficult to bear it -- it was hurting, it was painful. It was like when a woman goes into labour when a child is to be born, and the woman suffers tremendous pain -- the birth pangs.

I used to go to sleep in those days near about twelve or one in the night, but that day it was impossible to remain awake. My eyes were closing, it was difficult to keep them open. Something was very imminent, something was going to happen. It was difficult to say what it was -- maybe it is going to be my death - - but there was no fear. I was ready for it. Those seven days had been so beautiful that I was ready to die, nothing more was needed. They had been so tremendously blissful, I was so contented, that if death was coming, it was welcome.

But something was going to happen -- something like death, something very drastic, something which will be either a death or a new birth, a crucifixion or a resurrection -- but something of tremendous import was around just by the corner. And it was impossible to keep my eyes open. I was drugged.

I went to sleep near about eight. It was not like sleep. Now I can understand what Patanjali means when he says that sleep and samadhi are similar. Only with one difference -- that in samadhi you are fully awake and asleep also. Asleep and awake together, the whole body relaxed, every cell of the body totally relaxed, all functioning relaxed, and yet a light of awareness burns within you... clear, smokeless. You remain alert and yet relaxed, loose but fully awake. The body is in the deepest sleep possible and your consciousness is at its peak. The peak of consciousness and the valley of the body meet.

I went to sleep. It was a very strange sleep. The body was asleep, I was awake. It was so strange -- as if

one was torn apart into two directions, two dimensions; as if the polarity has become completely focused, as if I was both the polarities together... the positive and negative were meeting, sleep and awareness were meeting, death and life were meeting. That is the moment when you can say 'the creator and the creation meet.'

It was weird. For the first time it shocks you to the very roots, it shakes your foundations. You can never be the same after that experience; it brings a new vision to your life, a new quality.

Near about twelve my eyes suddenly opened -- I had not opened them. The sleep was broken by something else. I felt a great presence around me in the room. It was a very small room. I felt a throbbing life all around me, a great vibration -- almost like a hurricane, a great storm of light, joy, ecstasy. I was drowning in it.

It was so tremendously real that everything became unreal. The walls of the room became unreal, the house became unreal, my own body became unreal. Everything was unreal because now there was for the first time reality.

That's why when Buddha and Shankara say the world is maya, a mirage, it is difficult for us to understand. Because we know only this world, we don't have any comparison. This is the only reality we know. What are these people talking about -- this is maya, illusion? This is the only reality. Unless you come to know the really real, their words cannot be understood, their words remain theoretical. They look like hypotheses. Maybe this man is propounding a philosophy -- 'The world is unreal'.

When Berkley in the West said that the world is unreal, he was walking with one of his friends, a very logical man; the friend was almost a skeptic. He took a stone from the road and hit Berkley's feet hard. Berkley screamed, blood rushed out, and the skeptic said, 'Now, the world is unreal? You say the world is unreal? -- then why did you scream? This stone is unreal? -- then why did you scream? Then

why are you holding your leg and why are you showing so much pain and anguish on your face. Stop this? It is all unreal.

Now this type of man cannot understand what Buddha means when he says the world is a mirage. He does not mean that you can pass through the wall. He is not saying this -- that you can eat stones and it will make no difference whether you eat bread or stones. He is not saying that.

He is saying that there is a reality. Once you come to know it, this so-called reality simply pales out, simply becomes unreal. With a higher reality in vision the comparison arises, not otherwise.

In the dream; the dream is real. You dream every night. Dream is one of the greatest activities that you go on doing. If you live sixty years, twenty years you will sleep and almost ten years you will dream. Ten years in a life -- nothing else do you do so much. Ten years of continuous dreaming -- just think about it. And every night.... And every morning you say it was unreal, and again in the night when you dream, dream becomes real.

In a dream it is so difficult to remember that this is a dream. But in the morning it is so easy. What happens? You are the same person. In the dream there is only one reality. How to compare? How to say it is unreal? Compared to what? It is the only reality. Everything is as unreal as everything else so there is no comparison. In the morning when you open your eyes another reality is there. Now you can say it was all unreal. Compared to this reality, dream becomes unreal.

There is an awakening -- compared to THAT reality of THAT awakening, this whole reality becomes unreal.

That night for the first time I understood the meaning of the word maya. Not that I had not known the word before, not that I was not aware of the meaning of the word. As you are aware, I was also aware of the meaning -- but I had never understood

it before. How can you understand without experience?

That night another reality opened its door, another dimension became available. Suddenly it was there, the other reality, the separate reality, the really real, or whatsoever you want to call it -- call it god, call it truth, call it dhamma, call it tao, or whatsoever you will. It was nameless. But it was there -- so opaque, so transparent, and yet so solid one could have touched it. It was almost suffocating me in that room. It was too much and I was not yet capable of absorbing it.

A deep urge arose in me to rush out of the room, to go under the sky -- it was suffocating me. It was too much! It will kill me! If I had remained a few moments more, it would have suffocated me -- it looked like that.

I rushed out of the room, came out in the street. A great urge was there just to be under the sky with the stars, with the trees, with the earth... to be with nature. And immediately as I came out, the feeling of being suffocated disappeared. It was too small a place for such a big phenomenon. Even the sky is a small place for that big phenomenon. It is bigger than the sky. Even the sky is not the limit for it. But then I felt more at ease.

I walked towards the nearest garden. It was a totally new walk, as if gravitation had disappeared. I was walking, or I was running, or I was simply flying; it was difficult to decide. There was no gravitation, I was feeling weightless -- as if some energy was taking me. I was in the hands of some other energy.

For the first time I was not alone, for the first time I was no more an individual, for the first time the drop has come and fallen into the ocean. Now the whole ocean was mine, I was the ocean. There was no limitation. A tremendous power arose as if I could do anything whatsoever. I was not there, only the power was there.

I reached to the garden where I used to go every day.

The garden was closed, closed for the night. It was too late, it was almost one o'clock in the night. The gardeners were fast asleep. I had to enter the garden like a thief, I had to climb the gate. But something was pulling me towards the garden. It was not within my capacity to prevent myself. I was just floating.

That's what I mean when I say again and again 'float with the river, don't push the river'. I was relaxed, I was in a let-go. I was not there. IT was there, call it god -- god was there.

I would like to call it IT, because god is too human a word, and has become too dirty by too much use, has become too polluted by so many people. Christians, Hindus, Mohammedans, priests and politicians -- they all have corrupted the beauty of the word. So let me call it IT. IT was there and I was just carried away... carried by a tidal wave.

The moment I entered the garden everything became luminous, it was all over the place -- the benediction, the blessedness. I could see the trees for the first time -- their green, their life, their very sap running. The whole garden was asleep, the trees were asleep. But I could see the whole garden alive, even the small grass leaves were so beautiful.

I looked around. One tree was tremendously luminous -- the maulshree tree. It attracted me, it pulled me towards itself. I had not chosen it, god himself has chosen it. I went to the tree, I sat under the tree. As I sat there things started settling. The whole universe became a benediction.

It is difficult to say how long I was in that state. When I went back home it was four o'clock in the morning, so I must have been there by clock time at least three hours -- but it was infinity. It had nothing to do with clock time. It was timeless.

Those three hours became the whole eternity, endless eternity. There was no time, there was no passage of time; it was the virgin reality -- uncorrupted, untouchable, unmeasurable.

And that day something happened that has continued -- not as a continuity -- but it has still continued as an undercurrent. Not as a permanency -- each moment it has been happening again and again. It has been a miracle each moment.

That night... and since that night I have never been in the body. I am hovering around it. I became tremendously powerful and at the same time very fragile. I became very strong, but that strength is not the strength of a Mohammed Ali. That strength is not the strength of a rock, that strength is the strength of a rose flower -- so fragile in his strength... so fragile, so sensitive, so delicate.

The rock will be there, the flower can go any moment, but still the flower is stronger than the rock because it is more alive. Or, the strength of a dewdrop on a leaf of grass just shining; in the morning sun -- so beautiful, so precious, and yet can slip any moment. So incomparable in its grace, but a small breeze can come and the dewdrop can slip and be lost forever.

Buddhas have a strength which is not of this world. Their strength is totally of love... Like a rose flower or a dewdrop. Their strength is very fragile, vulnerable. Their strength is the strength of life not of death. Their power is not of that which kills; their power is of that which creates. Their power is not of violence, aggression; their power is that of compassion.

But I have never been in the body again, I am just hovering around the body. And that's why I say it has been a tremendous miracle. Each moment I am surprised I am still here, I should not be. I should have left any moment, still I am here. Every morning I open my eyes and I say, 'So, again I am still here?' Because it seems almost impossible. The miracle has been a continuity.

Just the other day somebody asked a question -- 'Osho, you are getting so fragile and delicate and so sensitive to the smells of hair oils and shampoos that it seems we will not be able to see you unless we all

go bald.' By the way, nothing is wrong with being bald -- bald is beautiful. Just as 'black is beautiful', so 'bald is beautiful'. But that is true and you have to be careful about it.

I am fragile, delicate and sensitive. That is my strength. If you throw a rock at a flower nothing will happen to the rock, the flower will be gone. But still you cannot say that the rock is more powerful than the flower. The flower will be gone because the flower was alive. And the rock -- nothing will happen to it because it is dead. The flower will be gone because the flower has no strength to destroy. The flower will simply disappear and give way to the rock. The rock has a power to destroy because the rock is dead.

Remember, since that day I have never been in the body really; just a delicate thread joins me with the body. And I am continuously surprised that somehow the whole must be willing me to be here, because I am no more here with my own strength, I am no more here on my own. It must be the will of the whole to keep me here, to allow me to linger a little more on this shore. Maybe the whole wants to share something with you through me.

Since that day the world is unreal. Another world has been revealed. When I say the world is unreal I don't mean that these trees are unreal. These trees are absolutely real -- but the way you see these trees is unreal. These trees are not unreal in themselves -- they exist in god, they exist in absolute reality -- but the way you see them you never see them; you are seeing something else, a mirage.

You create your own dream around you and unless you become awake you will continue to dream. The world is unreal because the world that you know is the world of your dreams. When dreams drop and you simply encounter the world that is there, then the real world.

There are not two things, god and the world. God is the world if you have eyes, clear eyes, without any dreams, without any dust of the dreams, without any

haze of sleep; if you have clear eyes, clarity, perceptiveness, there is only god.

Then somewhere god is a green tree, and somewhere else god is a shining star, and somewhere else god is a cuckoo, and somewhere else god is a flower, and somewhere else a child and somewhere else a river - - then only god is. The moment you start seeing, only god is.

But right now whatsoever you see is not the truth, it is a projected lie. That is the meaning of a mirage. And once you see, even for a single split moment, if you can see, if you can allow yourself to see, you will find immense benediction present all over, everywhere -- in the clouds, in the sun, on the earth.

This is a beautiful world. But I am not talking about your world, I am talking about my world. Your world is very ugly, your world is your world created by a self, your world is a projected world. You are using the real world as a screen and projecting your own ideas on it.

When I say the world is real, the world is tremendously beautiful, the world is luminous with infinity, the world is light and delight, it is a celebration, I mean my world -- or your world if you drop your dreams.

When you drop your dreams you see the same world as any Buddha has ever seen. When you dream you dream privately. Have you watched it? -- that dreams are private. You cannot share them even with your beloved. You cannot invite your wife to your dream -- or your husband, or your friend. You cannot say, 'Now, please come tonight in my dream. I would like to see the dream together.' It is not possible. Dream is a private thing, hence it is illusory, it has no objective reality.

God is a universal thing. Once you come out of your private dreams, it is there. It has been always there. Once your eyes are clear, a sudden illumination -- suddenly you are overflowed with beauty, grandeur

and grace. That is the goal, that is the destiny.

Let me repeat. Without effort you will never reach it, with effort nobody has ever reached it. You will need great effort, and only then there comes a moment when effort becomes futile. But it becomes futile only when you have come to the very peak of it, never before it. When you have come to the very pinnacle of your effort -- all that you can do you have done -- then suddenly there is no need to do anything any more. You drop the effort.

But nobody can drop it in the middle, it can be dropped only at the extreme end. So go to the extreme end if you want to drop it. Hence I go on insisting: make as much effort as you can, put your whole energy and total heart in it, so that one day you can see -- now effort is not going to lead me anywhere. And that day it will not be you who will drop the effort, it drops on its own accord. And when it drops on its own accord, meditation happens.

Meditation is not a result of your efforts, meditation is a happening. When your efforts drop, suddenly meditation is there... the benediction of it, the blessedness of it, the glory of it. It is there like a presence... luminous, surrounding you and surrounding everything. It fills the whole earth and the whole sky.

That meditation cannot be created by human effort. Human effort is too limited. That blessedness is so infinite. You cannot manipulate it. It can happen only when you are in a tremendous surrender. When you are not there only then it can happen. When you are a no-self -- no desire, not going anywhere -- when you are just herenow, not doing anything in particular, just being, it happens. And it comes in waves and the waves become tidal. It comes like a storm, and takes you away into a totally new reality.

But first you have to do all that you can do, and then you have to learn non-doing. The doing of the non-doing is the greatest doing, and the effort of

effortlessness is the greatest effort.

Your meditation that you create by chanting a mantra or by sitting quiet and still and forcing yourself, is a very mediocre meditation. It is created by you, it cannot be bigger than you. It is homemade, and the maker is always bigger than the made. You have made it by sitting, forcing in a yoga posture, chanting 'rama, rama, rama' or anything -- 'blah, blah, blah' -- anything. You have forced the mind to become still.

It is a forced stillness. It is not that quiet that comes when you are not there. It is not that silence which comes when you are almost non-existent. It is not that beauty which descends on you like a dove.

It is said when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, god descended in him, or the holy ghost descended in him like a dove. Yes, that is exactly so. When you are not there peace descends in you... fluttering like a dove... reaches in your heart and abides there and abides there forever.

You are your undoing, you are the barrier. Meditation is when the meditator is not. When the mind ceases with all its activities -- seeing that they are futile -- then the unknown penetrates you, overwhelms you.

The mind must cease for god to be. Knowledge must cease for knowing to be. You must disappear, you must give way. You must become empty, then only you can be full.

That night I became empty and became full. I became non-existent and became existence. That night I died and was reborn. But the one that was reborn has nothing to do with that which died, it is a discontinuous thing. On the surface it looks continuous but it is discontinuous. The one who died, died totally; nothing of him has remained.

Believe me, nothing of him has remained, not even a shadow. It died totally, utterly. It is not that I am just a modified RUP, transformed, modified form,

transformed form of the old. No, there has been no continuity. That day of March twenty-first, the person who had lived for many many lives, for millennia, simply died. Another being, absolutely new, not connected at all with the old, started to exist.

Religion just gives you a total death. Maybe that's why the whole day previous to that happening I was feeling some urgency like death, as if I am going to die -- and I really died. I have known many other deaths but they were nothing compared to it, they were partial deaths.

Sometimes the body died, sometimes a part of the mind died, sometimes a part of the ego died, but as far as the person was concerned, it remained. Renovated many times, decorated many times, changed a little bit here and there, but it remained, the continuity remained.

That night the death was total. It was a date with death and god simultaneously.

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