

Alone in Enlightenment by Howdie Mickoski

*"I'm nobody
Who are you?
Are you nobody too?"
- Emily Dickinson -*

Realization is a very misunderstood...I was going to write achievement, but it's not an achievement, just a happening. It is like making a long, steep, tough climb up a mountain, only to get to the top and go, "mmm, nice view." Then you walk back down. That's it, nothing special, but it revolutionizes everything. Enlightenment is the shocking realization that there is only one. Not one thing, or all is connected, just one. It sounds like a simple re-ordering of words, but the meaning of that word order is profound.

Everyone has the constricting belief that enlightenment or God is over "there" somewhere and their job in life is to "find" it. The problem is that we are "here" and will always be "here" – but if enlightenment is over "there," how can it be found? Actually enlightenment/God is also here, always was here, but what it is, is actually not what 99% of seekers really want. Seekers want the enlightenment they have been sold: being happy, important, full of love, no more problems. Like a continuous orgasmic or drug high. That is the reason they are seeking in the first place, the wished-for, blissful finish line. If anyone really understood what awakening was, no one would want it. Enlightenment is about "alone."

A true encounter with the Absolute/God reveals that no one is doing the experiencing, only the absolute revealing itself to the absolute. Nothing exists, yet there is the appearance of existence. Realization is alone (all-one). But everyone fears alone, so they run to spiritual practice, patterns, lovers, food, booze, any distraction to avoid the only true fear. The fear of no self (often called emptiness) is the fear that "I" do not exist. Fear of no self is not the fear of death, but the fear that you as a human being do not exist at all. That is where all the "spiritual groups" get caught, they are looking for what's in it for "them" or "us." Realization is one and alone for there is no other. Everything that tells you that you are separate from anything else falls away. Thus you are alone, with the appearance of others. The initial glimpse of this is so terrifying to ego it responds with the emotions of meaninglessness and despair. But as soon as the mind falls away, those emotions go too and all that is left is What Is, and the marvelous curiosity about the dream and what is going to happen next.

*"The great path has no gates,
thousands of roads enter it.
When you pass through the gateless gate,
you walk the universe alone."
- Mumon -*

Suffering is the belief in the story of me. The question is, who are you without your story? Too frightening is this thought, so everyone keeps struggling because ego wants to keep the story of “me” going. Seeking becomes the strategy to overcome this fear, for as long as there is seeking, there is a seeker. Asleep people have experiences to confirm their existence. I am good, I am bad, I am in love, I am working hard, I am eating ice cream, I am suffering. All are defined with I, but if there were no more I, then who are you? This is the question that takes us to see there is no True Self. Only false self and no self. You don't try to improve self, you kill it to break free of the illusion of the dream state. You kill it by finding out it was never there to be killed. The trick to this is to die while alive and then see what is left. Form will still be here, but now you will no longer be a person, just look like one, but who can you tell this to? And that can make this process a lonely one at times.

We can be in a room full of people and still feel alone. The deepest truth is that everything is a dream or a movie, nothing exists, not even you. Connecting and relationships are the way fictional dream characters hide the fact that nothing exists, and if anyone pulls away, the other characters (your friends and family) will do everything to pull you back into the dream to confirm with them that everything exists and has meaning. Waking up is willingly drifting into that fear to see what will happen, doing it because we can no longer stand the alternative of not doing it.

*“The end of illusion, is
the end of you.”*

- U.G. Krishnamurti -

The road to all of this is a most solitary thing. Even if a few people walk together for a while, each one knows that they are alone and that they cannot expect anything from the others, nor can depend on anybody. The only thing he can do is to share his path with those who accompany him, and know that accompaniment could end at any moment. So it is normal to look for silence in the mountains or forest or the desert. These periods are like a lover's retreat, to be with his own inner silence. Silence becomes their lover.

The world for the awake is a rather solitary place, and learning to be comfortable in this state takes some work because our conditioning to be social is still in strong effect for the body/mind. Once one learns to enjoy themselves just as much with a group of friends as totally alone, that is when they have reached a new plateau in their state. Most people are simply social because they are so alone and want to do anything to avoid that feeling, while awakened realize that loneliness was just the core of what they are, went into it – and now they are like with a lover whether there are people around or not. They know there is no longer an other, so they need no other to feel “connected.” Hard to explain in words.

Loneliness can also affect the newly awake because it is very draining energetically to spend a lot of time around the asleep and their make believe dramas and hopes. It gets hard to play that game, and you wish simply for more time alone. There is still the appearance of other forms, so we still interact with things like we used to – it just gets very hard for the dream to trick us anymore into thinking “something” is happening with some “other person.” But still, you have to act like things are real. It may not be a real rainstorm, but you go inside if “you” don’t want to get wet.

*“The Absolute is a very lonely place.
You’re the only one there.
Of course, everybody is the only one there.”*
- Richard Rose -



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