THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF GOD

A New Map of Spiritual Awakening

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Answers From Silence

Inside the Book

Jeffrey Chappell's international bestseller, *Answers From Silence,* affirmed that enlightenment can come to everyone, not just saintly hermits.

The Enlightenment of God serves as a guidebook to what you may experience before, during, and after enlightenment. It de-mystifies matters such as:

- what to expect while you adjust to a new level of expanded consciousness
- what happens to your relationships and your physical health
- how to deal with mundane activities, frustrating situations, and strong emotions within the enlightened experience

With a new look at one of the world's oldest topics, *The Enlightenment of God* clarifies these and other issues to accelerate you, the reader, on your path of enlightenment.

In the process, *The Enlightenment of God* provides a rare first-hand account of what it's like to undergo transformations of consciousness from one stage of enlightenment to the next.

Sample Excerpts

INTRODUCTION

The first stage of enlightened experience is characterized by qualities of freedom, total fulfillment, boundlessness, and inner silence, and by the separation of self from outer phenomena and activity. Chapter 7 of *Answers From Silence* describes all of this extensively.

I knew that potentially there were more stages to arrive at, but I wasn't questing after them. Arriving at the first stage doused any ambition to advance. If this were to develop further, I was content to wait for it to happen.

This was not only because the first stage was so magical and so extraordinary that it was hard to imagine anything greater. It was also because I had the awareness that my own efforts didn't cause enlightenment to happen.

This idea might be hard to accept, especially if you are a spiritual seeker who has devoted your life to doing everything you can to become enlightened: meditating, practicing yoga, reading books, attending retreats and seminars, and so on.

What you need to understand is that all of those things are just invitations that you are sending to enlightenment. And by all means, keep sending them! They point you in the direction of enlightenment, and they align you with it.

However, they no more create the event of enlightenment than surfers create the wave that they ride their surfboards on. You can stake out the wave, you can swim toward it, you can position the board, but you don't engineer the wave, and its timetable has nothing to do with your preferences. You just have to let it carry you when it shows up.

PART ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Answers From Silence ends with a section called "Beyond Enlightenment." The section refers to a well-known saying: "I am That, Thou art That, All This is That."

You might hear the saying and think that it holds a single redundant message. The message is that all of the multiple things that you can refer to are actually just one thing, whether you refer to yourself, or to whomever you're speaking, or to the total environment.

Answers From Silence says otherwise. It says that the three parts of the saying are three separate topics, and it identifies an implied fourth topic. The topics are the attributes of consciousness as it progresses through stages of enlightenment.

"I am That" corresponds to the stage where the Self is known as separate from the outer world.

"Thou art That" corresponds to the stage where the outer world is known to be Self also.

"All This is That" corresponds to the stage where the distinction between inner and outer is removed.

The silence following the saying corresponds to the last stage.

PART TWO: WHAT IT'S LIKE

Following the first-stage enlightenment event, you can expect to go through a period of adapting and stabilizing over days and weeks. While it's settling in, it might feel like there's an increase and a decrease of the new functioning. But it will keep showing up.

It can be hard to believe that this exalted way of being and functioning will last. You will want to hang onto it and not lose it because it's so wonderful. You will find yourself constantly checking to see whether it is still there or whether you have reverted to how you were before. Doing this can become a distraction.

You may mentally try to relive the moment of the shift, looking for thoughts or words that could reinforce the experience. You might take inventory of what you were doing at the time and what circumstances you were in.

But that is unproductive, because those thoughts, words, and circumstances didn't create the event. They just happened to accompany it. The glorious experience of that entry point into timelessness was just the entry point. You don't need to relive the entry into enlightenment over and over.

Another reason that you might keep checking is that your ego is still there, and it is used to driving the school bus of your life. It is reluctant to relinquish the wheel. It wants to advocate reasons for staying in control. But now you know that the ego is just one more phenomenon. You have bypassed it. Your identity is elsewhere.

PART THREE: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION: Is it really so difficult to become enlightened?

JC: The actual event of enlightenment is the easiest thing that there is, because you don't do anything.

But you can make enlightenment difficult by putting up a fight. You can resist becoming enlightened, driven by a need to be in control, or by being afraid, or by being closed to the possibility.

I know from personal experience that someone can be right at the brink of making the shift and come up with stubborn reasons not to do it. What I said at the time was, "Who needs it? What good is it?"

QUESTION: Is it really possible for everyone to obtain enlightenment?

JC: Yes. But let's put the word "obtain" to rest. Enlightenment isn't about obtaining. It's about giving away. *Answers From Silence* says, "Enlightenment is a bargain. The trade-off is to give up everything you have."

But the quotation goes on: "In return, you get all of it back, plus everything in the universe."

This means that when your identity shifts to that which is eternal and infinite, everything that was you is still there.

It's like the air inside a bubble. Before the bubble bursts, a portion of air is localized inside the bubble. When the bubble bursts, the air that was inside isn't lost; it still exists. It just goes into the totality of the atmosphere, trading in for a new gigantic bubble.

PART FOUR: BEYOND THE COMMON WISDOM

There is a phenomenon that is fairly common among people who are on a path of spiritual seeking.

What happens is that they find something.

What they find is a glorious peak experience that seems like the greatest spiritual experience they ever had.

But then something else happens. A mistake.

The mistake is that they think having the peak experience is the goal of their spiritual seeking. So they start trying to duplicate it.

When they can't duplicate it, they experience frustration, unhappiness, and disillusionment. They might even give up on spiritual seeking altogether.

The correction to this mistake is to know that a glorious peak experience is just one possible effect of spiritual seeking.

An effect comes from a cause.

What you should seek is the cause, not the effect.

The cause is aligning yourself with eternal Being.

What you want to duplicate is the cause, over and over. Keep doing that, no matter what kind of temporary experience you have.