

Chapter 17

Liberation, Enlightenment, and the Cosmic Joke

Topics in this Chapter:

- * Reaching the goal of spirituality
- * Drinking a fresh cup of grace every day
- * Laughing with life

Okay, so you've come to accept that you and the world arise from a divine source. You follow spiritual practices and principles and use your resulting spiritual powers only for good. Well then, what's next?

Dessert! The crown jewel of spirituality! The big cherry on top – enlightenment, nirvana, fanaa, moksha, God-realization, oneness, bodhisattva, the pearly gates, satori, self-realization, the kingdom of God, liberation!

Zen masters often speak of enlightenment as being like a moon that shines brightly in the dark sky. Teachings about enlightenment are like fingers that point up toward the moon. What is important is to look at what exists where the finger is pointing. However, many people prefer to look at easy, tangible things and end up staring relentlessly at the pointing fingers instead of at the moon.

In this chapter, I share ideas that can help point your attention toward the elusive state of enlightenment.

What Enlightenment Is Like

With enlightenment, you move beyond mere relaxation techniques or positive thinking. Enlightenment is a complete shift of perception, in which you flow with absolute inner freedom in an awareness that reaches deeply into the unseen realms. With the blessing of enlightenment:

- You have no more fear, no more greed, and no more aggression.
- Your love becomes unconditional and untainted by mundane expectations.
- You're able to let things happen naturally rather than trying to force them to happen.

- Every action you perform springs forth from the flow of universal energy through and as you.

To experience enlightenment, you have to be willing and able to let go of who you thought you were so that you can paradoxically become that which you have always really been.

Giving up all you think you are is a big sacrifice to make. But remember that if you don't do it now, Father Time will come and do it for you one day. Therefore, the Sufi sages gave the command to "Die before you die!" Die to your small self before the small self dies. Loosen your identification with the leaf and remember that you are the great tree. Then, when that particular leaf turns brown and falls to the ground, dissolving particle by particle into the elements of the earth, you will still be here in all your grand and divine glory.

Spiritual Wisdom

People ask 'What do you get by realizing God?' You get eternal peace and bliss. You are in a state of bliss in all conditions and circumstances because it comes from the source of your being. The fountain of joy will open in you and you will be flooded with it. In that state of happiness you work in the world, and that will be for the good of all.

—Papa Ramdas

You know how big the whole physical universe is, with endless blankets of stars, galaxies, and unfathomable distances and warps of time and space? Surely, you've seen the Hubble telescope images, and on clear nights have looked up to see planets and stars sparkling across the dark sky.

Well, enlightenment is like going through all the day-to-day events of your life—including brushing your teeth, feeding your pet, working at the office, taking a walk, and buying groceries – while remaining constantly and completely aware that you are a speck within this huge blanket of massive universe. Imagine walking through your day being equally as aware of the universe filled with stars as you are when you look into the nighttime sky. Except with spiritual enlightenment, you're not only aware of the immensity of the physical universe, but of its spiritual breadth as well.

With an enlightened perspective, you know that you are a speck of nothingness in the grand scheme of things and you also know that you are greater than you've ever imagined.

What Enlightenment isn't

Along with “finger-points” toward what enlightenment is, here I share a few “thumbs down” about what it isn't:

- Enlightenment is not about stuffing more and more information into your head.
- Enlightenment is not about feeling superior and going around pronouncing judgments about who is or isn't enlightened.
- Enlightenment is not about changing external appearances or looking more spiritual, but is a shift of awareness that may or may not be visible to others.
- Enlightenment doesn't mean that a person will only act in nice or pre-approved ways. Even an enlightened person can appear to act like a jerk sometimes!
- Enlightenment isn't something that you pay a certain amount of money to acquire during a course that ends with you walking away with a certificate of enlightenment. Enlightenment is not that cheap (even though it's technically free)!

Spiritual Wisdom

Keep two truths in your pocket and take them out according to the need of the moment. Let one be “For my sake the world was created.” And the other: “I am dust and ashes.”

— Rabbi Simcha Bunam

Here are some more descriptions that point toward what enlightenment is like:

- **Being enlightened is like being an actor in a play and knowing that all the scenes are just dramas for entertainment.** Even if you get angry or pleased with someone, you remember that you're really the actor, who is free from anger and is just playing his role. Those who remember that they are actors in this universal play get to smile at one another from behind the scenery even if outwardly they appear to be at odds.

- **Enlightenment is to be comfortable with paradoxes and seemingly opposing viewpoints.** Psychologist Abraham Maslow described *self-actualization* as a state that resolves dichotomies, where, “Opposites are seen to be unities and the whole dichotomous way of thinking is recognized to be immature.” Maslow continues by saying, “For self-actualizing people, there is a strong tendency for selfishness and unselfishness to fuse into a higher subordinate unity. Work tends to be the same as play; vocation and avocation become the same thing. When duty is pleasant and pleasure is fulfillment of duty, then they lose their separateness and oppositeness. The highest maturity is discovered to include a childlike quality. The inner-outer split between self and all else gets fuzzy and much less sharp, and they are seen to be permeable to each other at the highest level of personality development.”
- **With enlightenment, you see both the perfection and imperfection of the universe at the same time.** You realize that everything is perfectly complete even when there is still much to be done. You feel the perfection of everything even while you enthusiastically act to make improvements.
- Being enlightened is like someone in a dream who starts saying to other people, “I really do believe that this is all a dream.” Even if you don’t go around saying it to other people, you know in your heart that everything that takes place in life is like a dream in the mind of universal Consciousness.
- **With enlightenment, you’re not afraid of all the turmoil going on in the world, nor are you too obsessed with it.** Even as you take steps to help improve the world, your vision stays focused on the spiritual realm of universal creation that is bigger than all the concerns of this physical world. You remember that many sides and points of view can coexist, depending on how you choose to look at a situation.
- **When you’re enlightened, you may notice yourself becoming a conduit of grace.** Synchronicities may occur more often around you, and the spiritual presence of your company may inspire people around you to go through various transformations that bring them to a better place of awareness. Of course, keep in mind that grace doesn’t always look like grace at the beginning. Sometimes grace comes in the form of revealing a problem so it can be resolved.
- In the state of enlightenment, you are fully present in your life and also fully ready to leave this world when the time comes. You enjoy life while remaining detached from it. You don’t get trapped by things. You live with a sense of allowing, acceptance, and inner freedom.

Consider

Two conditions come together on a successful quest for enlightenment: You have to want it, and you mustn’t want it too much.

Living the goal

Enlightenment is like the feeling you have when you're standing in the middle of an awe-inspiring scene of magnificent nature – when you're at the precipice of the Grand Canyon, or at the foot of Niagara Falls, or walking through the amazing beauty of Machu Picchu. But when you're enlightened, you have this feeling even when you're sitting in your home, walking down the street, shopping for groceries, or doing your job. Even if the external situations you're in are not exactly beautiful or awe-inspiring, you still have a sense of the inherent awe and beauty that comes from seeing the world through enlightened eyes.

A popular Zen saying says, “Before enlightenment, I chopped wood and carried water; after enlightenment, I chopped wood and carried water.” After enlightenment, your outer life may look just as it did before you were enlightened, with the same usual daily tasks to do. However, when you're living the goal, your inner state is free and expansive. Your mind is quiet and serene. Your heart is peaceful and warm, and your attitude is good!

When you live your life with an enlightened perspective, your enlightenment automatically helps the world, even if you don't speak about it. When you live in an awareness beyond limited ego, your positive vibrations and thoughts become amplified and extend throughout the world. In this way, many unknown monks and sages uphold the positive energy of this world through their enlightened meditations.

You become yourself but more so

Spiritual Wisdom

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

— Oriah Mountain Dreamer

One of the biggest myths of spirituality is the idea that you have to become something or someone very different from who you are — as though you'll come out of the other side of enlightenment acting emotionless or robot-like. Many people make the mistake of assuming that becoming self-realized means they won't have any personality characteristics — or certainly not the ones they have now.

Maybe you have the idea that achieving inner peace means that you must act very serious, without ever becoming excited, or that you'd have some other limited behaviors. However, when you see the great saints, they're not limited at all. They're free. Many of them laugh and joke around. They're spontaneous and can even appear to get angry.

Don't Forget

Self-realized beings still have personality traits, but with one big difference. They know they are divine, and they know that you are divine. This awareness is the key to spiritual self-recognition.

The point of spiritual growth is not to become something other than what you are. Rather, it is a shift of awareness through which you begin to know and express more of who you really are.

Be Careful

Be yourself, but not your obnoxious self!

With their elevated awareness, even when self-realized beings trip and fall, they know that the universal play is tripping and falling in its own ecstasy. Even when they're physically sick, it's the universe experiencing illness through them. Enlightened ones don't limit themselves to judging each event as to how wonderful or horrible it was. They know that you can play the horrible-wonderful game your whole life, and never move beyond the endless cycles of fulfilled and unfulfilled expectations and desires.

Enlightened beings see everything that comes to them as a play of divine Consciousness, as an expression of their destiny, and as one more opportunity to leap up and rejoice in the awareness of their higher Self.

Again, the ideas in this chapter are some general pointings toward the collections of awareness that fall into the category of "enlightenment." Some enlightened ones may have very different experiences of enlightenment.

How will you know?

How will you know when you're enlightened? Some enlightened masters would tell you: "You already are enlightened, but your mind doesn't know it."

That's what all of the spiritual practices and principles in this book are for — to move you beyond a limited view of yourself so you can remember and realize your true nature.

In a way, enlightenment exists within each of us all the time. The trick is to remove the clouds of false thoughts that block the sunlight of supreme reality — the light of Consciousness — and to thereby become enlightened.

A seeker asked the spiritual teacher Poonjaji, "How can I tell if I'm enlightened or not?"

Poonjaji answered, "Open your eyes and look around you. If you still see a world outside and apart from you, you are not enlightened. Why not? The world and the one who sees it are both projections of the mind, and while that mind is there, enlightenment is covered up. When you experience and know directly, without needing the eyes, that the world is an uncaused appearance within your own Self, you will not need to ask whether you are enlightened or not."

Getting enlightened isn't like receiving a degree where everyone who has taken certain classes receives the same degree with the same rights and benefits. For example, Hawaiians have many words to represent all the different kinds of rain – from gentle sprinkles to thunderstorms – whereas mainlanders are usually satisfied with calling them all by the same name: “rain.” In the same way, the word enlightenment actually represents a wide variety of spiritual states of awareness.

Many people have a taste of enlightenment at least once in their lives. These tastes of enlightenment can take different forms for different people. Sometimes it's a feeling of oneness with everything around them, or a sense that the light shining through a forest is also shining in their heart. Moments of enlightenment can also come when someone who has suffered a great loss feels themselves being pared down to their soul, or when someone has the experience of being in a perfect flow of action, such as during sports or creative art expressions. Some may simply shift into an awareness of the unity of life inside and around themselves.

Many people don't recognize these enlightened moments because they don't have a context to place them in. They may look back at their experience of divine oneness and perfection and say to themselves something like, “Hmmm, that was strange,” before going back to life as usual.

Even enlightened masters who are able to hold on to a steady enlightened perspective may still have pockets of growth to unfold – they may make mistakes, go against their own teachings, or do something that modern society thinks isn't appropriate or polite. Let me tell you right now that anyone who thinks that an enlightened person must be perfect in any and every way and that he or she must fit into all of modern society's concepts about how an enlightened or spiritual person should be needs to go back to the fantasy of “Santa Claus Land.”

I've heard many former devotees of enlightened masters who see faults in their teacher and decry how they were fooled and how everything they learned was therefore a sham. This kind of approach to the spiritual journey is unenlightened and unintelligent. It is a distraction to get trapped in arguments about who is or is not how enlightened. Focus on your own enlightenment. Learn from whom you can and keep your attention on the state of your own mind, heart, soul, and spiritual connection with Universal Consciousness.

Spiritual Wisdom

Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?

– Luke 6:41

Of course, if you want to learn from an enlightened master, you also want to do some research and keep your wits about you. Also remember that the teachers' words and examples are like those fingers that are pointing toward where you are meant to look. Don't get trapped by their fingernails or the sleeves under those pointing fingers! Don't get swept away by the other people who are also looking at the master's pointing finger. Keep your focus on what the finger is pointing to.

If you find that a particular path or teacher is taking you *away* from enlightenment, then, by all means, bid a fond farewell and move forward courageously and with trust that the divine will guide your steps and unfold your greatest destiny.

Imagine what you'll look like if and when you become an enlightened being. Perhaps you'll end up looking like a guru draped in robes who sits on a throne espousing your wisdom to wide-eyed seekers who are intent on unfurling the meaning in every sentence. Or maybe you'll be a simple person without any outer marks of spiritual attainment other than the light that shines through your eyes and the glowing effects of your words and actions.

Don't Forget

Each person's realization is unique and personal, while still being universal. The key is to find your own realization.

It's a shift of awareness

To lead a spiritual life and reach a state of enlightenment, you don't have to leave the world, hide in a cave, or go to a mountaintop, although these options may work for you based on your personal preferences. Just be aware that simply leaving the world doesn't guarantee that you'll spiritually evolve beyond the world.

What is necessary is to renounce your false ideas and identifications with your body, personality, and circumstances. Without these false ideas, you can experience the world in a fresh and clear way and shift more easily into a higher awareness.

One person may see the sun going down and think, "It's time to bring in the animals and pick up the kids." A more spiritually aware person may stop to relish and appreciate the glory of this beautiful, one-of-a-kind sunset that is symbolic of the beauty of divine spirit setting into your soul.

An enlightened person may go through the same events as non-enlightened people, but his awareness has shifted into a higher perspective where he sees the divine in every event, person, and experience.

Don't Forget

The key to enlightenment is to "get it" so that you don't forget it.

Being in the Flow

Surely you've experienced moments of being in the flow. Maybe it happened while you were in the middle of a sports competition, when every movement seemed to be orchestrated by the gods to make you unbeatable. Or perhaps you were playing a musical instrument and suddenly experienced having the most beautiful music play through you. You were doing it and not doing it at the same time.

Maybe you were sitting peacefully one day, enjoying the beauty of nature, when suddenly you were struck, through and through, with the perfection of it all — and the perfection of you, right where you were and just as you are. Or perhaps you remember a time when it seemed that nothing wrong could possibly come to or through you. These experiences are all signs of being in the flow.

Now imagine that you can be in that flow much more often, perhaps on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis. What if you could intentionally tap into that flow? You can — by cultivating a whirlpool of present-moment awareness.

Being here, now

Spiritual Wisdom

Don't think about the future. Just be here now. Don't think about the past. Just be here now.

— Ram Dass

Present-moment awareness is like resting in the eye of the storm or the center of a whirlpool. The entire universe swirls around you, but you remain centered in the power of *right now*.

Not only does present-moment awareness help calm your mind and allow you to make clearer decisions, it also brings you into harmony with spirit and opens you to divine guidance. When you're not always looking right or left, up or down, back or forward, past or future, you become more aware of who and where you are right now and can rest in the stillness of your own presence.

Consider

Being completely focused and united with what you're doing is also the secret behind great skills. Rather than thinking about the outcomes or rewards that may come in the future from what you're doing, or rehashing factors from the past that are motivating your actions, you keep your focus trained on the Great Spirit that exists beyond all the ephemeral illusions, waves, and fluctuations of the world. From this expanded awareness, great skills flow naturally.

Being totally focused on the present moment also gives you an opportunity to squeeze through the bottleneck of time into the timeless realm I like to call the *eternal now*. This is the highest experience of being “in the moment,” because in the eternal now there is only one moment to be in!

The six stanzas of liberation

Sri Shankaracharya was considered to be one of the greatest sages of India. He expounded many scriptures, and began the tradition of ochre-robed swamis or monks. Shankaracharya wrote a popular Sanskrit hymn about the nature of liberation, called *Nirvana Shatakam: The Six Stanzas of Salvation*. Shankaracharya's hymn reveals the enlightened state of his identity with auspicious universal Consciousness (called Shiva) by paring away all the identifications that he is not (and that you are not):

1. I am not the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego-sense, nor the storehouse of memories. I am not the ear, nor the tongue, nor the nose, nor the eyes. Nor am I the sky (space), or the earth, or fire, or air. I am supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

2. I am not what is known as the life-breath, nor am I the five vital airs. I am not the seven constituents of the body. I am not the five sheaths. I am not speech, nor the hands, nor the feet. I am not the genital organ, nor the organ of excretion. I am supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

3. I do not have any aversion or attachment, nor do I have greed, delusion, pride, or jealousy. I do not hanker after dharma, wealth, pleasures, or liberation. I am supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

4. There is no such thing as merit or sin for me. Nor is there joy or sorrow. I have no need for mantras, or pilgrimage, or Vedas, or sacrifices. I am neither the enjoyed, nor the enjoyer, nor enjoyment. I am supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

5. I have no possibility of death, nor distinction of caste. I have no father, nor mother. I have no birth. I have no relations, nor friend, nor guru, nor disciple. I am the supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

6. I am all-pervading. I am beyond the organs. I am ever the same. There is neither bondage nor liberation for me. I am the supreme auspiciousness of the form of Consciousness-bliss. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

These verses demonstrate how the process of spiritual evolution is not so much an adding of more things, but, in fact, a paring away of all the levels of unreal identifications.

Spirituality in Action

Feeling this eternal moment

Right now, use your will power to focus all your attention on the present moment. Be here right now. Feel yourself as you are in this very moment, naked from all the accoutrements and life experiences swirling around you. Be you. Be here. Be now. Repeat to yourself this contemplation:

This moment, right now, is eternal

Every moment is eternal.

You may want to synchronize these phrases with your breath. Mentally repeat “This moment, right now, is eternal” as you take a long, deep breath in, and repeat, “Every moment is eternal” as you breathe out.

Flowing with time

Spiritual Wisdom

The art of life is to live in the present moment, and to make that moment as perfect as we can by the realization that we are the instruments and expression of God Himself.

— Emmet Fox

While living in a monastic-style ashram for ten years, my experience of time went through some interesting fluctuations. At times, I even felt as though I was transcending time by surrendering to time. Some days felt like years, and some years felt like days. Clock time became secondary to all the underlying flows and patterns rippling over the lake of universal time. Sometimes, for example, I would feel as though all the winters were enfolded into the archetype of winter itself, connected more by the qualities of winter than they were divided by the different year numbers or changing seasons of linear time.

You can practice present-moment awareness anytime by keeping your attention focused on whatever you’re doing. As you walk, be aware of your feet stepping and how it feels as they touch the ground. Pay attention to the movement of your breath, to the sounds around you, to the thoughts floating through your mind, and to the life-force energy moving through your body. Whatever you’re doing, do it fully. Breathe fully! Create fully! Be in the moment fully!

Don’t Forget

As you begin to flow with time by staying centered in each present moment, the natural flow of the universe begins to move more smoothly and profoundly through and around you.

Looking beyond time

What exists outside of time? What exists before time?

Jesus Christ prayed, “Let me have the glory with Thee that I had with Thee even before the beginning.”

This “before” doesn’t necessarily mean before in terms of a temporal place in a timeline. Rather, this “before” is co-existing and simultaneous to all creation and all times. It is eternally before everything and everyone — always and forever — and it also remains eternally after everything fades away. This eternal presence doesn’t die; it cannot die, for it is the essence of life itself.

Dancing through life

Spiritual Wisdom

When you have the feeling of belonging to God, when your heart is God’s heart, you can hear the thunder of his laughter rolling inside you. You feel God’s presence in your being, and the pulse of His love moves you forward on His path.

— Gurumayi Chidvilasananda

Life is always moving and changing, like the winds. Your challenge is to move with life’s inevitable cycles without being trapped in either the pleasant or the difficult times. Every time has a purpose and potential blessing. For example:

- **Times of poverty** can help you stay humble and keep things in perspective during times of wealth.
- **Times of abundance** can nourish your spirit and remind you that true wealth exists beyond mere outer gain.
- **Lonely times** can help you discover and remember that you truly are never alone.
- **Times of emphatic love** can bring a burst of fresh life force into your heart and soul, along with feelings of divine passion and tenderness.
- **Sad times** can guide you to tap into the peaceful surrender and vulnerability that often come through openhearted grief or tears.
- **Happy times** guide you to enjoy life and trust God, and also remind you to see the world through cheerful eyes.

If you can stay centered in the core of your being, allowing yourself to flow naturally with the winds of change, you may find that in every moment, everything is fine. Even if potential problems seem to be lurking about, you'll be able to move your attention from the spinning world and take refuge in the stillness that exists within every moment, the calm eye that gives rest beneath the storms of life. Even those who have difficult challenges to go through are given the resources to bear what they must, if they can just stay centered in that hub of time's ever-turning wheel.

Don't Forget

By learning to feel and experience each moment, you'll be better able to move with the tides of life, acting when the tides are powerful, and waiting patiently when they're not.

If you ever reach total enlightenment while you're drinking a beer, I bet it makes beer shoot out your nose.

— Jack Handey (Saturday Night Live)

Enjoying the Cosmic Joke

As Charlie Chaplin once said, "In the end, everything is a gag." Life is funny. God is funny. You're funny. The events of this world are funny. Joy is funny, love is funny, and as some have discovered after intense troubles, even suffering can be funny when you have the benefit of hindsight. As comedienne Carol Burnett has said, "Comedy is tragedy plus time."

Spiritual Wisdom

If a person can laugh totally, wholeheartedly, not holding anything back at all, in that very moment something tremendous can happen because laughter, when it is total, is absolutely egoless, and that is the only condition in which to know God, to be egoless.

— Osho

Beneath this entire universe is the cosmic joke, and tapping into that level of the game is almost like going beyond enlightenment. You're tapping into the very bliss of God, applauding His grand dance, appreciating Her intricate set-ups, and of course, rolling in the aisles at the magnificent punch line.

The punch line of this cosmic joke has many faces:

- You can see the punch line in how big this universe is, in those amazing photos of countless stars, nebulae, and galaxies that exist millions of light years away and are a whole lot bigger than anything you've ever called "big."
- You can see the punch line in how small it all is, in a drop of swamp water seen through the lens of a high-powered microscope that is filled to the brim with invisible legions of life.

- You can see the punch line in how temporary it all is, as those who spend decades ruthlessly pursuing wealth and power end up dying just like everyone else — with their hands empty.

Why do you think they call it realization?

The state of enlightenment is also called self-realization or God-realization. It's called "realization" because the great, enlightened beings have "realized" one fact — a fact that has implications on every element of life as they know it.

They've realized the omnipresence of divinity. They've realized that everything is one, and that knowledge and the knowing of that knowledge are inseparable. They realize that what you see is what you get, what you get is what you see, and what you see is who you are. In other words, it takes one to know one. We are the world, indeed.

Don't Forget

Realization is not just about reading some words and being able to discuss or debate them; but rather to realize the essence behind spiritual insights such as "In the beginning was the word, and the word was God," "Everything is one," "The kingdom of Heaven lies within," or "Thou art That."

Once you realize the essence of spiritual teachings and make them an integral part of your reality, these teachings filter through and transform your entire world. Your sense of limited individuality fades like a mirage that had been blocking the bright sunlight of supreme truth. As this supreme light blasts through you unimpeded by mortal illusions of limitation and separation, you become enlightened. You emanate not only your own personal human light, but also a higher, more universal light.

Consider

Before becoming forever established in the highest realization, you may touch that enlightened space for a while and then return back to limited thinking. Even when you're feeling limited, remembering the higher spaces you've touched helps to keep you moving forward toward your divine birthright of knowing who you are in the highest sense at all times.

And life goes on . . .

Spiritual Wisdom

Enlightenment is the ego's ultimate disappointment.

— Trungpa Rimpoche

One day the master announced that a young monk had reached an advanced state of enlightenment. The news caused some stir. Some of the monks went to see the young monk.

“We heard you are enlightened. Is that true?” they asked.

“It is,” he replied.

“And how do you feel?”

“As miserable as ever,” said the monk.

Here’s the thing: Even after enlightenment, you’re still you! For example, if a moody, sullen person were to somehow become enlightened, he wouldn’t necessarily start running around smiling and laughing all the time. In fact, he may not change so much outwardly, although those with eyes to see the light of spirit would see it shining through his eyes, words, and actions.

Don’t Forget

With enlightenment, you may continue playing your role, but with the awareness that you’re the one who’s playing your role!

Spiritual Wisdom

The laughter of Hafiz

I’ll let the Sufi poet Hafiz have the last word for this part, because he captures so well the cosmic joke behind this book and every other effort to capture reality in words:

I have a thousand brilliant lies
For the question:
How are you?
I have a thousand brilliant lies
For the question:
What is God?
If you think that the Truth can be known
From words,
If you think that the Sun and the Ocean
Can pass through that tiny opening
Called the mouth,
O someone should start laughing!
Someone should start wildly Laughing —
Now!