

# Why Has the Science of Enlightenment Stopped Evolving?



“The horror! The horror!”

— Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

When we look at what is taught about the path to self-realization, what we see is the endless recycling of past ideas. Some of the concepts in past teachings have deep value, but everything in existence is evolving, and so should the science of spirituality. Evolution is not merely the process of reaching static goals, such as enlightenment; it is the nature of life. When life falls into stagnation, it is inevitably lulled into a slumber, and eventually it dies. In this day and age, it seems the science of enlightenment is either in a coma, or even worse, already dead. Those who are responsible for that decline and death are both spiritual teachers and seekers. Both groups agree to perpetuate a fragmented understanding of reality. This is a sad truth indeed, and it seems very important to voice it. Otherwise, how will we know that we are involuntarily supporting a culture that is living in the past and blocking the unfoldment of truth, stunting the growth of the spiritual tree of life? And how will we break free of holding mediocre expectations in regards to our ultimate spiritual potential?

We have previously written in depth articles on some of the most influential masters of recent times, such as Jiddu Krishnamurti and Osho, who appear on the face of it, to be true originals who sought understanding beyond traditions. However, if we look deeper into their teachings, they too



were largely reprocessing past concepts. They were not pioneering new paths of their own or revealing anything significant in terms of the awakening process itself, and a new form of expressing a traditional teaching does not constitute a new teaching per se.

Many seekers are curious about some of the well-known contemporary teachers. What is the nature of their understanding of truth? The answer is: What understanding? What are they saying that is alive and new, that cannot be known by anyone who has read a few spiritual books about non-duality? Which of these teachers is really saying anything original, anything that is not a mere imitation of the past? The hard truth is that these teachings are largely based on a type of guru worship that ultimately serves to disempower the seeker. It is not the true seeker's lot to sit in ignorance, waiting to receive a scrap of grace, and blindly conditioned by non-dual philosophies. There is so much more to the spiritual path than this.

Any seeker with a minimal spiritual background can understand what most contemporary teachers write about, even without doing any real enquiry into the nature of reality and meditation. Hence, these teachings are appealing to seekers. It is not that these teachings are 'wrong'. They are simply lacking any true depth and grossly over-simplifies the rich truth of the path. The problem with the over-simplification of truth is that there comes a point where it ceases to be truth at all. It becomes empty poetry, words that cannot really help anyone anymore.

For instance, typically the practice of meditation is described as creating detachment from thoughts, emotions, and perceptions, and learning how to open a space of so-called 'awareness' that exists independently from the mind. Many non-dual teachers describe 'exalted' meditative states in which our sense of self is almost entirely eliminated, as if this was our desired goal. But to revere such a state in fact reveals a desperate attempt to exclusively identify with impersonal consciousness, and this kind of state creates a conflict within one's very existence and self. While these instructions on meditation are not incorrect, the understanding of meditation they convey is extremely basic. They certainly cannot serve as a real tool with which to awaken and embrace our multidimensional existence beyond the mind. Our true self is rich and needs to be met on several essential levels; it is not just an abstract state of 'being' that is reached through so called 'surrender' or by letting go of all relative experiences.

There tends to be a deeply engrained stubbornness among those who teach non-duality to commence even a basic enquiry into the nature of their self, to awaken and embrace the mystery of the one who makes consciousness possible and who illuminates 'being' with recognition. The result



of following a non-dual paradigm is that the consciousness of me is not embraced; these teachers attempt to fully identify with a deeper consciousness and therefore embody neither essential nor pure me. To embody essential me, one has to embrace one's real identity behind the observer, and to embody pure me, one has to meet the essence of pure subjectivity within consciousness as one's original self.

This refusal to go beyond the static concept of non-duality and passive acceptance of the hypocrisy and fragmentation inherent to this vision of reality is truly mystifying. How can anyone who is not open to the spirit of exploration teach about truth? How can one discover new dimensions of understanding if one refuses to question one's past assumptions (which are, in any case, borrowed from others)? The seekers who follow simplified paths are not seeking to become whole, to realize complete consciousness, or to unify the mind with their pure nature. They are seeking to reach a semblance of peace, to escape their suffering. They are seeking confirmation that enlightenment is easy to attain, so that their ego can assert its own value through the concept of awakening. This implies an innate insincerity and dishonesty, as it requires one to turn a blind eye to the truth and live instead in the pretense of being on the path.

When a teacher proliferates or supports insincerity in any way, this is perhaps his biggest failure. Some teachers speak about sincerity and various inner qualities but what kind of sincerity can there be if one is not seeking to become whole? What kind of sincerity can there be if one keeps imitating the past? This is insincerity in action. Regrettably, the one thing we can learn from these contemporary teachers (that is those who have made a career among Western seekers) is that there is great potential to convince and even manipulate their followers with poetic words and flowery expressions. Many, like Osho, have learnt how to manipulate their audience. They are no longer teachers but showmen in the theater of spirituality.

Contemporary teachings often blend spiritual concepts with certain therapeutic techniques, methods of reaching a degree of psychological relaxation, based on the concept of being present or 'in the now' and detaching oneself from psychological content. In itself, this is not harmful, but it should not in any way be confused with the path to enlightenment. Rather, it is a very elementary introduction to meditation and spiritual enquiry, with a therapeutic element included.

Alternatively, there are those whose teachings are very much structured to promote a form of worship of their own personas. This idea of total surrender to the guru is taken from India, where



a guru is seen as a type of god, and worship of the guru is more or less entirely equated with the spiritual path. But many of these teachers can be said to abuse their spiritual authority by creating a false relationship of dependence among their devotees. It goes without saying that the depth of the teacher's presence is an essential component of any teaching, for his role is to open the energetic doorways to the inner realm. However, when the teacher's presence is put on a pedestal, where he is idolized as the very center of the path – this is where the line is crossed between spiritual assistance and spiritual enslavement.

As shocking as it may sound, what consciousness really is remains almost entirely unknown to human beings. And as long as people assume that they do know, and claim authority on these matters prematurely, they will never be able to find out. Even if seekers do gain a partial awakening to one of the layers of consciousness, they will lack the conceptual tools to understand what they experience and the knowledge required to direct them towards their further evolution. At times, the terms 'absolute' or 'beyond consciousness' are being used, but these are hollow statements that are devoid of meaning. How can we speak about what lies beyond consciousness if we do not have a deep understanding of consciousness itself?

How can teachers teach about consciousness if they do not know the nature of consciousness? How can they teach about consciousness if they do not know the nature of me? Even if a teacher has realized one of the states beyond the mind, he invariably does not really know what it is he has realized or what is still lacking inside. This is an inevitable consequence of having a shallow or incomplete vision of the inner realm. Why is their vision incomplete? It is the combination of lethargy, lack of intelligence, and insincerity, on the part of both teachers and seekers, that has degraded our understanding of the path to the level of absurdity.

One of the most unpleasant features of Western spirituality, which is particularly palpable in America, is the energy of fakeness among teachers or spiritual intellectuals. For instance, Western teachers sometimes meet in public in order to discuss or debate spirituality. But it is little more than one mind talking to another mind, one personality talking to another personality. The clever language and intellectual coherency can create the illusion that something has actually been said. But if one is able to discriminate from a deeper intelligence and intuition, one can have the sense that nothing has really been said at all. Why is the audience satisfied with this level of superficiality? Partly because we are too used to it (our whole Western culture is shallow and phony) and these conversations therefore resonate in a familiar way.



There is a considerable lack of understanding in how these teachers understand their own realization (or lack thereof). Not only do they not understand what our ego is, what our me is, what our true individuality is, or what our soul is, they do not even understand what consciousness is, despite speaking about it at length. Due to the absence of understanding, they speak about enlightenment as if it were one single thing, an absolute mystery that requires either their grace or some unexpected transcendental event. They remove it from the context of the complex processes of evolution and transformation. Alternatively they speak about it as a natural condition that does not need to be attained, but more acknowledged as our true nature. Either there is no path, or no path is needed, or there is path, but it has only a very indirect connection to the event of awakening, which is itself miraculous and unpredictable; this is a path to keep seekers busy rather than promoting their real evolution.

This level of understanding of what enlightenment is, is very low, and yet these teachers assume authority over thousands of seekers. As long as their teaching is a type of sharing, that is fine, but that does take away from the urgency to find true clarity in their own existence, for their own sake. Instead, they tend to address the minds of seekers in order to ‘convince’ them of their spiritual or intellectual conclusions. This trickery is often present in neo-Advaita, but can also be found in other teachings. But to construct non-dual metaphor or develop philosophies is not really a spiritual teaching, it is mere a form of sharing; these people are not teaching but sharing. A teacher is someone who holds the knowledge of the path. He is not interested in sharing but helping sincere seekers to arrive at true peace. A teacher understands the nature of ignorance and knows the way out of it. He is not promising miracles, but offering a clear and constructive vision of spiritual transformation based on dedicated inner work. Here, the responsibility of each seeker to meet and embody their pure subjectivity is fully integrated in the teaching. Above all, a teacher is someone who keeps learning and is open to explore the inner dimension. He is himself an explorer of the mystery of self-realization, and is not above those who learn from him. Rather, he is evolutionarily ahead of them, which is what makes him a teacher, a guide and a spiritual friend.

Anybody has the right to share their perceptions if others want to listen to them, and in some cases, the line between teaching and sharing is blurry. For instance, J. Krishnamurti was more sharing than teaching, but some elements of an actual teaching were also present. On the other hand, U.G. Krishnamurti cannot be considered a teacher, because he simply did not possess any real knowledge of the spiritual path. He criticized everything and everyone, and argued that we don’t need a master because we have no control over the event of enlightenment. He obviously considered himself to



be self-realized, but he had no idea what state he had reached. His method of negating everything else was supposed to be a way of freeing the mind of his followers, but in reality it was just a dishonest way of hiding his own spiritual ignorance. Some seekers perceive him positively, as original and unique, but in any case he was not a teacher. He could inspire some seekers, but he could not give them any real tools for their evolution and awakening.

Why can seekers not discriminate between the real and fake? Why do we become enchanted by the charismatic personas of underqualified and superficial teachers? This is because seekers are not real themselves. They are trying to walk the path from their false self instead of from the soul; they do not seek from the soul. A personality is always drawn to other personalities. The unreal seeks the company of the unreal. A personality can talk for hours about the illusion of ego and absence of self, and all the while that very false self is growing deeper and deeper roots in their existence. The unreal lives in fear of the real, and the biggest irony of all is when the unreal develops the queer strategy of hiding its falseness by assuming the role of a seeker of reality or a teacher of non-duality. Seekers are failing to apply an essential level of discrimination when choosing their teacher. They complain about being hurt or abused, and end up feeling depressed and broken. But were they ever coming any closer to their true self, closer to true peace, by following this person? If not, why did they stay with an immature teacher, someone who teaches from the mind? Seekers need to take responsibility for their own ignorance and recognize the role that their own naivety and insincerity has to play in manifesting these unhealthy relationships.

All this points to a simple question: Why do contemporary spiritual teachings perpetuate an illusion of spiritual knowledge when they are in fact stuck in a very, very basic and immature perception of the path? Why does nobody care enough to understand more, whether they be teachers or seekers? Why have humans become so dull and spiritually dishonest? Why do the majority of seekers follow teachings that do not help them to truly evolve? Many seekers cannot admit that they have chosen to live in denial. They believe themselves to be benefiting from 'meditation' or from the guru at whose feet they sit. But what is really happening there? These seekers are lost, are suffering, and are living in an imagined world of spirituality. Imagination and fakeness has become their reality, and they need to find within themselves the strength and integrity to face it. They have succumbed to a fate of living in falsehood. Unless seekers awaken to the path of their soul, they will continue to blindly follow anything or anyone in the name of enlightenment. They will fail to activate the most basic level of discrimination – that which shows us the difference between truth and falseness.



Why has the science of spirituality stopped evolving? The physical sciences are constantly evolving. Technology is evolving, and so are other disciplines. But spirituality not only lives in the past, it is actually regressing. Life is a movement, and when this movement stops, it begins to wither away. Many assume that a true spiritual teaching, one which reveals the path to self-realization, does not need to evolve anymore because it has already unraveled the absolute truth. But is it so? To mistake the stagnation of understanding for reaching the absolute truth is to block the possibility of opening the doors to a higher evolution of human consciousness.

The stagnation of spiritual understanding is a fairly recent phenomenon. From the time of Buddha right up until the 15th century CE, the various schools of enlightenment were beaming with life. They were in a process of constant development. There were lively debates between the various traditions about the nature of reality and the truth of self-realization. Hinduism was developing conceptually in order to confront its main philosophical opponent, which was Buddhism. Within Buddhism itself, various sects were having fierce debates about the correct interpretation of Buddha's teaching and the correct vision of Buddhism. For instance, in Chinese Zen, there was a schism between the Northern and Southern schools about whether enlightenment was sudden or gradual. Later on, in the 13th century, Zen Master Dogen wrote his famous and very intricate work, *Shobogenzo*, which brought a new wave of enquiry into the nature of Buddhist truth. His work was born from his deep passion to get to the bottom of spiritual truth, and it inspired many generations of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist seekers.

During that era, there were many deep thinkers whose very life was a constant enquiry into the nature of reality. But where are they now? Is there anyone who is truly discovering something new within the Buddhist or Hindu traditions? Everyone seems to be parroting what they have learned from their respective scriptures. This is truly a global decline, and from a spiritual perspective, a veritable disaster.

So we have to return once again to the fundamental question: Why is humanity evolving on so many levels, but not evolving spiritually? Why do we have the passion to explore the world from the standpoint of science, but not the world of the self? What went wrong? Because of the internet and the quick accessibility of information, people have somehow concluded that there is a global awakening happening. All manner of insincere individuals give satsangs, and then their disciples give satsangs too. It seems as if one can find a true master just by googling it. In reality, this is nothing but the false pretending to be the truth.





In the past, there was a clear line between true and false, at least for seekers of the self. One had to put one's life on the line to find a true master, for he was hidden from the collective consciousness and often dwelling in a remote place, away from society. Now the message of enlightenment is out in the open, but because it is out, it is ironically much more hidden than before. For a true seeker who seeks spiritual illumination, it is now much more difficult to receive true guidance than it was in the past. Unless he is highly intelligent and discriminative, he will end up in the sewers of mediocrity and insincerity that perpetuate a ghost-like existence under the banner of 'enlightenment'.

It is difficult to formulate a clear conclusion as to why spirituality has stopped evolving. One possible reason is that there has been a gradual migration of the truth of enlightenment from the East to the West. The East has become increasingly materialistic, and the original interest in inner evolution has waned. However, those who have taken the mantle in the West and assumed the role of spiritual teachers are not really able to carry, in their experience and understanding, the depth of the knowledge of enlightenment. Obviously, then, they are unable to contribute anything new. In their spiritual helplessness, they attempt to bring the knowledge of enlightenment down to a common level, where it consists of a combination of relaxation and the psychological conviction that one is already awakened. Alternatively, they tend to absolutize superficial experiences of awakening and equate them with the realization of the ultimate self. One thing is certain: there is still a vast gap between the deep spiritual culture of the East and the Western mind, and that gap has to be bridged by individuals who seek a higher understanding of reality and who will no longer agree to live through the dull repetitions of past concepts. Not only must contemporary teachers match the teachings of the past – they must transcend them, for transcendence is the very essence of the evolution of spiritual truth.

Nowadays, it seems that all the schools of enlightenment enjoy a deep 'friendship'. No one is challenging anyone else's understanding anymore. Is this because we have evolved so much into tolerance, love, and compassion? Or is it because nobody really cares about truth? Most teachers are too insecure about their own understanding and realization to confidently debate with any other traditions or teachers. It is not love and tolerance, but a global agreement not to care, not to seek higher understanding, to live in lethargy in the name of peace and acceptance. This is the world we are living in. It is not the world of global awakening, but one of global disaster.





Blessings,  
Anadi

*For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website [www.anaditeaching.com/glossary](http://www.anaditeaching.com/glossary)*