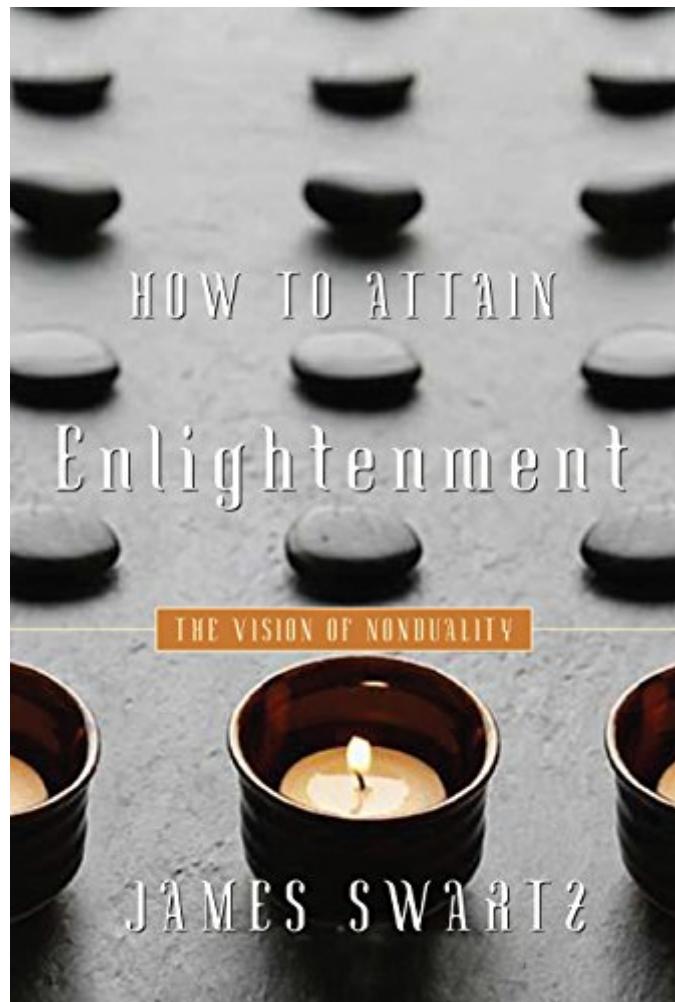


The book was found

How To Attain Enlightenment: The Vision Of Non-Duality



Synopsis

This complete guide to enlightenment presents the wisdom of the ancient science of self-inquiry, a time-tested means for achieving spiritual freedom. The author discusses the purpose of self-inquiry, the quest for lasting happiness, issues of identity and transcendence, the role of wisdom and action, and the subconscious obstacles to freedom. He convincingly refutes the popular view that enlightenment is a unique state of consciousness and debunks a host of other enlightenment myths. In his straightforward style he reveals proven methods for purifying the mind, and includes chapters on love, the science of energy transformation, and meditation. He takes the reader from the beginning to the end of the spiritual path, patiently unfolding the logic of self-inquiry.

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Customer Reviews

Although provocative, this book lives up to its title, as it unfolds the complete methodology of Advaita Vedanta, which purpose is to attain Self realization. I will not explain what Self realization is, as anyone slightly familiar with Vedanta already knows about this. After some initial interest in some modern teachers of Non-Duality (namely Tolle), I decided to read a few classics, such as "Be As

You Are" and "I am THAT", which moved me deeply but failed to provide me with day-to-day tools. I was then led to James' book, "How to Attain Enlightenment", after quite some consideration about where to go next. The author has learned from Swami Chinmayananda in India, former leader of a vast Vedanta mission. He has subjected his mind to the full teaching tradition, removed his self ignorance and went on to study numerous ancient texts for several decades. He walks the talk and is quite agile at delivering clear and down to earth explanations about anything related to the topic of interest. He isn't just throwing at you a few Neo Advaita half-truths, feel good metaphors or even his personal experience of the Self. The whole methodology is exposed in a practical, logical and meticulous way and all of it makes complete sense as you contemplate it. To me, this book is like my bible. I have read it multiple times and refer to it constantly. Since initially getting the book a year ago, I have made a lot of progress and my psychology has totally defrosted. This book helped me develop the qualities such as dispassion and discrimination. Following Vedanta's tradition, you find all relevant topics such as the limitations of object happiness, the qualifications for self realization, the three yogas (karma, bhakti and jnana), the gunas and so forth.

I hesitated on this book at first because of the title but, having read through it once I can say it does deliver on its promise. On going back through and highlighting my original highlights I can see how there are enough gems, and a wide sweep of valuable ideas, to make for an extended and valuable study. As I began reading the first chapter or two I found myself feeling impatient for the author to "get to the good stuff." Having read it all I can see how the beginnings were laying the groundwork for a patient, in-depth and very thorough exploration and preparation for what is to come--and it does come. I don't feel like anything was held back; it's all right here. The last chapter explores what the author considers to be some of the shortcomings of "neo-advaita." The critique is thoughtful and insightful, and the body of the book as a whole furnishes enough in-depth background to understand the basis of his point of view. His occasional characterizations of seekers and teachers is delightfully snippy, bringing a smile and an occasional cringe when the snippy approaches the all too familiar. His website, shiningworld.com, is full of very good content as well. I had to explore the whole site before I finally bought the book. What always used to put me off about yoga and vedanta was the inferred exclusivity of it all, "only for the truly dedicated seeker," etc. And then there was the solace of a possible "payoff" if only one were willing to be patient for what might be just a few more lifetimes. I just never was a gung-ho "seeker-type." But the inner drawing, on the other hand, the mystery that has sustained my curiosity for all these years, has never diminished. Whatever IT is, I used to think, is certainly already right here, right now.

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