

World Scripture**ENLIGHTENMENT**

Enlightenment means dispelling the darkness of ignorance. Enlightenment is the primary term used to describe the experience of salvation in Hinduism and Buddhism, yet the experience of enlightenment is common to most religions. According to the manner in which Reality is perceived in the different traditions, enlightenment may be either the intuitive grasping of inner wisdom, illumination by the truth of the Word, or direct apprehension of transcendent Reality. The true self, formerly obscured by false habits of thinking and vain desires, is suddenly revealed. The inner eye, which was blinded by defilements of worldly living, opens to a vision of the true Reality. From that moment life can never be the same, as the enlightened person begins to live by the knowledge he has acquired.

The first group of passages compare God or God's word to a light that shines into the soul. Second are passages which describe enlightenment as inner knowledge, opening the inner eye or the 'eye of the heart.' It is recognizing one's Original Mind, pp. 217-23. Third, we have passages on enlightenment as knowing God, the eternal source of truth. The concluding passage describes one experience of enlightenment: a sudden apprehension of a new gestalt, a quantum leap in thinking, a powerful conversion.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Judaism and Christianity. Bible, Psalm 119.105

The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished away. Surely falsehood is ever certain to vanish.

Islam. Qur'an 17.85

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Qur'an 17.85. Cf. Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.6, p. 630; Qur'an 39.23, p. 159.

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Jesus spoke to them, saying "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Christianity. Bible, John 8.12

Those who believe will stand alongside [the Prophet], their light streaming on ahead of them and to their right. They will say, "Our Lord, perfect our light for us, and forgive us!"

Islam. Qur'an 66.8

Him the sun does not illumine, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor the lightning--nor, verily, fires kindled upon the earth. He is the one light that gives light to all. He shines; everything shines.

Hinduism. Katha Upanishad 5.15; Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.10;  
Svetavatara Upanishad 6.14

It is wonderful, Lord! It is wonderful, Lord! It is as if, Lord, one might set upright that which had been upturned, or might reveal what was hidden, or might point out the path to one who had gone astray, or might bring an oil lamp into the darkness so that those with eyes might see material shapes.

Buddhism. Udana 49

The holy Preceptor by the Word lighted a lamp;  
Thereby was shattered darkness of the temple of the self,  
And the unique chamber of jewels thrown open.  
Wonderstruck were we in extreme on beholding it--  
Its greatness beyond expression.

Sikhism. Adi Granth, Bilaval, M.5, p. 821

Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.

Christianity. Luke 11.34-36

The Atman is the light:  
The light is covered by darkness:  
This darkness is delusion:  
That is why we dream.  
When the light of Atman  
Drives out our darkness  
That light shines forth from us,

Qur'an 66.8: Cf. Qur'an 33.45-46, p. 633; Hadith of Muslim, p. 87. Udana 49: For a vivid pictorial representation of the Buddha's enlightening wisdom, see Garland Sutra 2, p. 99. Luke 11.34-36: Cf. Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi 6, p. 218; Qur'an 22.46, p. 400; Bhagavad Gita 15.9-11, p. 219.

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A sun in splendor,  
The revealed Brahman.

Hinduism. Bhagavad Gita 5.15-16

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth.  
The parable of His Light  
is as if there were a Niche,  
and within it a Lamp;  
the Lamp enclosed in Glass:  
The Glass as it were a brilliant star:  
Lit from a blessed Tree,  
an olive neither of the East nor of the West,  
Whose oil is well-nigh luminous,  
though fire scarce touched it.  
Light upon Light!  
God guides whom He will to His Light:  
God sets forth parables for men, and God knows all things.

Islam. Qur'an 24.35

Since all Dharmas are immanent in our mind there is no reason why we should not realize intuitively the real nature of Suchness. The Bodhisattva Sila Sutra says, "Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure, and if we knew our mind and realized what our nature is, all of us would attain Buddhahood."

Buddhism. Sutra of Hui Neng 2

I am blind and do not see the things of this world; but when the light comes from above, it enlightens my heart and I can see, for the Eye of my heart sees everything; and through this vision I can help my people. The heart is a sanctuary at the center of which there is a little space, wherein the Great Spirit dwells, and this is the Eye. This is the Eye of the Great Spirit by which He sees all things, and through which we see Him. If the heart is not pure, the Great Spirit cannot be seen.

Native American Religions. Black Elk, Sioux Tradition

The Self within the heart is like a boundary which divides the world from That. Day and night cross not that boundary, nor old age, nor death; neither grief nor pleasure, neither good nor evil deeds. All evil shuns That. For That is free from impurity: by impurity can it never be touched.

Wherefore he who has crossed that boundary, and has realized the Self, if he is blind, ceases to be blind; if he is wounded, ceases to be wounded; if he is afflicted, ceases to be afflicted. When that boundary is crossed, night becomes day; for the world of Brahman is light itself.

Hinduism. Chandogya Upanishad 4.1-2

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Bhagavad Gita 5.15-16: Cf. Svetasvatara Upanishad 2.14, p. 843. Qur'an 24.35: See p. 116n. Sutra of Hui Neng 2: Cf. Sutra of Hui Neng 3, p. 218; Seng Ts'an, pp. 221f. Meditation on Buddha Amitayus 17, p. 646. Black Elk: Cf. Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi 6, p. 218; Bhagavad Gita 5.9-11, p. 219.

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It is as if some man goes into an intimate friend's house, gets drunk, and falls asleep. Meanwhile his friend, having to go forth on official duty, ties a priceless jewel within the man's garment as a present, and then departs. The man, being asleep, knows nothing of this. On arising he travels onwards till he reaches some other country where, striving for food and clothing, he labors diligently, undergoes exceeding great hardship, and is content even if he can obtain but a little. Later, his friend happens to meet him and speaks thus--"Tut! Sir! How is it you have come down to this, merely for the sake of food and clothing? Wishing you to be in comfort and able to satisfy your five senses, I, formerly in such a year and month and on such a day, tied a price- less jewel within your garment. Now as of old it is present there, yet you in ignorance are slaving and worrying to keep yourself alive. How very stupid! Go you now and exchange that jewel for what you need, and for ever hereafter as you will, free from poverty and shortage."

Buddhism. Lotus Sutra 8

The enlightenment consists of a mysterious light which the shaman suddenly feels in his body, inside his head, within the brain, an inexplicable searchlight, a luminous fire... for he can now, even with closed eyes, see through darkness and perceive things and coming events which are hidden from others: thus they look into the future and into the

secrets of others.

The candidate obtains this mystical light after long hours of waiting, sitting on a bench in his hut and invoking the spirits. When he experiences it for the first time, it is as if the house in which he is suddenly rises, he sees far ahead of him, through mountains, exactly as if the earth were one great plain, and his eyes could reach to the end of the earth. Nothing is hidden from him any longer; not only can he see things far, far away, but he can also discover souls, stolen souls, which are either kept concealed in far, strange lands or have been taken up or down to the Land of the Dead.

Native American Religions Iglulik Eskimo Shaman Initiation

Brahman is all in all. He is action, knowledge, goodness supreme. To know him, hidden in the lotus of the heart, is to untie the knot of ignorance.

Hinduism. Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.10

Perfect knowledge is attained on the destruction of deluding karmas, of karmas which obscure knowledge and perception, and of karmas which obstruct [faith]. With the absence of the cause of bondage, the annihilation of all karmas is liberation.

Jainism. Tattvarthasutra 10.1-2

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Lotus Sutra 8: For variations of this parable, see Mahaparinirvana Sutra 214-15, p. 219; Chandogya Upanishad 8.3.2, p. 219 Iglulik Eskimo Shaman Initiation: Cf. Yanomami Shaman's Instruction, pp. 528, 376. Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.10: Cf. Bhagavad Gita 15.9-11, p. 219; Kena Upanishad 1.1-2, p. 117; Svetasvatara Upanishad 1.11-12, p. 585; Isha Upanishad 6-7, p. 588.

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To know the eternal is called enlightenment  
Not to know the eternal is to act blindly, to result in disaster.  
He who knows the eternal is all-embracing.  
Being all-embracing, he is impartial.  
Being impartial, he is kingly [universal].  
Being kingly, he is one with Nature.  
Being one with nature, he is in accord with Tao.  
Being in accord with Tao, he is everlasting,  
And is free from danger throughout his lifetime.

## Taoism. Tao Te Ching 16

For support, O Far-sighted One,  
     reveal unto me that which is unique:  
 That of Thy Kingdom, O Lord,  
     which are blessings of Good Thought,  
 Forth, O Beneficent Right-mindedness,  
     dost Thou reveal Religious commands!

## Zoroastrianism. Avesta, Yasna 33.13

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

    What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
     nor the heart of man conceived,  
     what God has prepared for those who love Him,

God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

## Christianity. Bible, 1 Corinthians 2.6-10

The Sixth Patriarch was pursued by the monk Myo as far as Taiyu Mountain. The patriarch, seeing Myo coming, laid the Robe and bowl [of office] on a rock and said, "This robe represents the faith; it should not be fought over. If you want to take it away, take it now." Myo tried to move it, but it was as heavy as a mountain and would not budge. Faltering and trembling, he cried out, "I came for the Dharma, not for the robe. I beg you, please give me your instruction." The patriarch said, "Think neither good nor evil. At this very moment, what is the original self of the monk Myo?" At these words, Myo was directly illuminated. His whole body was covered with sweat. He wept and bowed, saying, "Besides the secret words and secret meaning you have just now revealed to me, is there anything else, deeper still?" The patriarch said, "What I have told you is no secret at all. When you look into your own true self, whatever is deeper is found right there."

## Buddhism. Mumonkan 23

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Tao Te Ching 16: The phrase 'To know the eternal is enlightenment' is

repeated in several passages of the Tao Te Ching; see Tao Te Ching 16, p. 840; 55, p. 231. 1 Corinthians 2.6-10: Cf. 1 Corinthians 1.20-28, p. 798; 2.12-16, p. 805. Mumonkan 23: This incident, when Hui Neng the Sixth Patriarch was fleeing from the followers of his rival Shen Hsiu, is also recounted in the Sutra of Hui Neng. In Zen, Enlightenment frequently occurs in such a manner: a sudden realization grows from an experience of crisis and extreme desperation. When it comes, one no longer depends on cognition or knowledge or secret lore. The authentic self shines forth; cf. Mumonkan 1, p. 841; Seng Ts'an, pp. 221f.

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