

Revelations

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

Nearly every religion has some form of revelation that has informed its scriptures, customs, and traditions in general. This lesson explores the nature of revelations in several religious traditions.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

[1. Revelation and Inspiration](#)

[2. Examples of Revelation](#)

1. Revelation and Inspiration

Nearly every religion has some form of **revelation** that has informed its scriptures, customs, and traditions. Those that don't emphasize revelation as much might be considered religious or spiritual philosophies, such as Taoism or Confucianism. These non-theistic religions are generally based on certain principles that they understand to be universal and not revelation.

The concept of revelation refers to a form of direct communication from God to a human recipient, usually through some intermediary. In most cases, what is communicated becomes sacred text as it is written down. Revelation refers to the process whereby some truth of a divine nature is revealed, received, and transmitted, usually in writing.



DID YOU KNOW

Angels are a type of intermediary often mentioned in the Abrahamic monotheistic traditions. Many world religions have several accounts of revelation, and they are treated with great reverence by the community of religious adherents. These communications are an unusual and unique form of religious narrative. They stand apart from other religious narratives that might be considered divinely inspired. Revelations extend directly from God to man or woman. These individuals, in turn, function as a mouthpiece for God. Usually, both revelation and inspiration demand some kind of engagement from the community. These engagements are the unfolding narratives of the various religions.

With revelations, a human is only a mouthpiece for God. The originator, authorizing the release of divine truth, is God, and God is also the **author**. The words themselves, in both form and content, are therefore usually

believed to be divine.



BIG IDEA

The human intermediary is a mouthpiece and scribe only. You could say he or she is a stenographer taking dictation.

The immediacy that this suggests, the direct link with something believed to be beyond and other than human, sets it apart from divine inspiration. Someone divinely inspired is an interpreter of truth that was revealed in some form at some time. The difference with divine inspiration is that an additional process takes place. The human agent participates as a co-creator in the process of conveying the particular truth that's being conveyed. In this sense, the religious narrative is considered to be delivered indirectly.



TERMS TO KNOW

Revelation

In religious studies, a direct communication from God.

Author

One who authorizes, permits, or approves; e.g., Christians believe that although human hands wrote down the words in the Bible, God is its “author” and used human beings as instruments in its writing.

2. Examples of Revelation

Spiritual revelations form the centerpiece of many religions. In Judaism, there are numerous examples of revelation. In the book of Exodus, God reveals himself to Moses in the burning bush. God instructs him to lead the Israelites out from captivity in Egypt and back to their home in Canaan, the promised land.



DID YOU KNOW

In the narrative on Mount Sinai, Moses is entrusted with the Ten Commandments directly from God. In Christianity, it could be said that the ultimate and supreme revelation of God is the person of Jesus Christ. His life, teachings, death, and resurrection combined form the religious narratives of the tradition. For Muslims, it is the prophet Muhammad, who received God's final and ultimate revelation through the angel Gabriel. This direct communication with God, or Allah, is the Qur'an.

Among the Eastern religions, Hinduism has different categories of sacred text: Shrutis and Smritis. Smriti refers to “what is remembered,” and Shrutis means “what is heard.” Certain texts are believed to have been heard, or revealed, from a divine source.



SUMMARY

There is a difference between **revelation and inspiration**. Divine revelation has to do with communication between a divine source and a human recipient. The divine source is considered the author of any spiritual text created in this way. With divine inspiration, on the other hand, there is a co-creative process that occurs. Human agency is involved, and there is some kind of interpretation of

truth. You looked at **examples of revelation** in the Abrahamic traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. You also looked at Hinduism and texts that are categorized according to whether they are remembered texts or whether they are directly revealed and heard texts.

Source: THIS TUTORIAL WAS AUTHORED BY TED FAIRCHILD FOR SOPHIA LEARNING. Please see our [Terms of Use](#).



TERMS TO KNOW

Author

One who authorizes, permits, or approves. E.g., Christians believe that although human hands wrote down the words in the Bible, God is its "author" and used human beings as instruments in its writing.

Revelation

In religious studies, a direct communication from God.