

# Siddhartha by hermann hesse



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse is a religious and philosophical book about the teachings of successfully finding eternal happiness. The classic story of a man lost in his own world of cycles begins to realize his suffering due to his purposeless practices and resolves to follow others in order to find himself spiritually. Siddhartha displays the different ways of two major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, in the story and its time.

As the story progresses, the audience will start to understand more about the constants and contrasts between Buddhism and Hinduism, and as to how people can end their suffering, reach enlightenment, and overcome sorrow.

The main character Siddhartha goes through several forms of trying to reach nirvana or everlasting peace. He puts himself through pain of all sorts: physical, emotional, and mental. His physical pain derived from his following of the Ascetics. A dead jackal was lying on the sandy bank, and Siddhartha's soul slipped inside the body, was the dead jackal, lay on the banks, got bloated, stank, decayed, was dismembered by hyaenas, was skinned by vultures, turned into a skeleton, turned to dust, was blown across the fields, (Hesse, 7).

Siddhartha compared himself to a dead animal because it accurately explains how he feels and the sacrifices he's making in order to achieve nirvana, an important notion in the society of the 6th Century BCE. People in this time believed suffering was caused by selfish desires, and tried to perform in ways in order to overcome it. In both religions, the only way to end one's suffering was to reach nirvana or moksha, which means an understanding of the body and self in Buddhism, while moksha requires a

true understanding of the universe and everything inside of it that is a key part in Hinduism

The conclusion of the book demonstrated Siddhartha's overcoming of his selfish desires and reaching enlightenment after a great amount of time. Reaching enlightenment resembles finally achieving a lifelong goal a person has been working on since the day they were born. Many people believe they reach enlightenment when something favorable happens to them, but in reality, it's two different types of understanding of enlightenment. For Hindus, enlightenment or moksha is understanding life and one's self. For Buddhism, enlightenment or nirvana is understanding life and how to reach nirvana without any attachments to the physical world. Buddhism teachings disclose that materialism and greed are preventing one's self from reaching nirvana.

An example of this would be Christianity, with one of the Covenants with God, the Cycle of Redemption, how the people break the Covenant with God due to their own selfish desires, but soon realize He is their nirvana.

Christianity is more similar to Buddhism because it is universal, and ultimately a religion meant for the people, not for the higher society.

Overcoming sorrow can be quite difficult if not known how to execute precisely and effectively. Thus were Siddhartha's thoughts, this was his thirst, this was his suffering,(Hesse, 3). Near the beginning of the novel, Siddhartha comes to an awareness that he will never be happy if he follows his father's path as a known Brahmin. Silent and motionless stood the son with his arms folded, silent and motionless sat the father on the mat,(Hesse,

4). In modern society, this would usually be a father passing down his company to his son whom he's groomed for, and just like Siddhartha's father, is disappointed when the son refuses the family legacy.

As time grows older and older, so do the ways of people and how they live their lives. Siddhartha and modern society are not different in many forms due to the remaining culture around parts of the world such as India. Hinduism and Buddhism, while they conflict each other in some areas, they still support each other in ways that most religions do not; they share definite similarities but also contrast each other in ways that make them their own religions.

Buddhism was created out of inequality from Hinduism for people who were not as fortunate as the elites of their society were. The newfound religion gave the lower class an opportunity to believe in happiness and eternal peace. While the main character struggles to reach but finally achieves his goal, many today remain in conflict with themselves and life itself. With all of the problems people face today, Siddhartha displays humanity's lack of support, acceptance, and utter joy.