

# Revelation is the act of revealing

Religion



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Revelation According to Wikipedia, revelation is the act of revealing or disclosing, or in the theological perception, making something obvious and clearly understood through active

or passive communication with the Divine. In monotheistic religions, revelation is the

process or act of making divine knowledge understood, often through direct ontological

realization which transcends the human state and reaches into the divine intellect.

Revelation in a religious sense can originate from God, a deity, or agents such as

angels, and discloses a willed outcome, principles, behaviors, laws and doctrines.

For example, most religions have religious texts viewed as sacred and revealed by the

Divine, the monotheistic religions viewing them as the so-called Word of God.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revelation>)

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There are two distinct dimensions to revelation: outer words and deeds, and subjective

human experience. Miracles in the Old Testament are a prime example of the former

type of revelation. Take, for example, the parting of the Red Sea in Exodus, to allow

the Hebrews to pass safely through while the pursuing Egyptian army was drowned.

This direct revelation of the Divine Will obviously had both positive and negative aspects

since it favored the Hebrews as the Chosen People over the Egyptians who had enslaved

them. Another instance of negative revelation would be the Ten Plagues which preceded

the Exodus, as the Egyptian enslavers were subjected to harsher and harsher punishments

for the Pharaohs refusal to free the Hebrews as their leader, Moses,

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demanded. The last

plague, the slaying of the Egyptian first born children, finally forced the Pharaoh to

change his mind and to let the Hebrews go (until he changed his mind back afterwards.)

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One troubling aspect of this latter revelation is the punishment of the innocent. The

first born Egyptian children were totally blameless regarding the Hebrew enslavement.

They had had nothing to do with that wrongful act of their ancestors.

Nevertheless, those

ancestors totally escaped punishment for their actions while the maximum penalty was

later extracted from a future generation. On the other hand, the escalation of the earlier

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plagues should have led the Egyptian leadership to free the Hebrew slaves as they saw

the Will of the Almighty firsthand, without the necessity of their ultimate punishment.

The second dimension of revelation, subjective human experience, is perhaps more

subtle than external words and deeds. Many people argue that the era of direct miracles

is past (if, indeed, it ever existed as more than parables) but that the Divine experience

can change our hearts and minds. Several religions teach that sinners can be redeemed

up to the moment of their deaths, meaning that they can and should have a change of

heart at any time, ultimately becoming good people as defined by that religion. This

process uses inner revelation to achieve redemption of the evildoer, or even <https://assignbuster.com/revelation-is-the-act-of-revealing/>

of the person

who fails to believe in the manner prescribed by that particular religion.

There are also puzzling aspects of the inner revelation process, just as there are with

that of external revelations discussed previously. What, for example, of the person who

undergoes a deathbed conversion to his or her religion in order, it is felt, to achieve some

sort of positive afterlife such as Heaven Does this not potentially reward those who live

despicable lives, only to seek and achieve redemption through a last-minute inner

revelation On the other hand, some faiths believe in predestination, claiming that ones

afterlife is ordained at, or even before, birth, and cannot be affected by ones actions.

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If this approach to revelation is accepted, a Hitler might be predestined for Heaven,

while a saint might be forced to travel in the opposite direction. Even more disturbing,

there is less incentive for human goodness or justice or mercy if it has no ultimate effect

on the fate of the person who is good, just, or merciful. That would be distasteful to

most people, and in truth would represent a form of divine indifference, cruelty, or both.

It can be seen then that, even at an introductory level, both the external and internal

dimensions of revelation are complex and even troubling. Perhaps it will take further

revelations to remove those troubling aspects of the revelations of the past. Or perhaps

further revelations will only make matters worse. But, then again, the age of <https://assignbuster.com/revelation-is-the-act-of-revealing/>

revelation

itself may not be prominent in our brave, new Millennium. All of this remains to be seen.

References:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revelation>

The Old Testament, Exodus, various chapters

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