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Religious Revelation

James Kellenberger

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ISSN 2634-6176 ISSN 2634-6184 (electronic)
Palgrave Frontiers in Philosophy of Religion
ISBN 978-3-030-53871-2 ISBN 978-3-030-53872-9 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53872-9>

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Cover illustration: WanRu Chen / Getty Images

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To Mariana

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of the manuscript for helpful comments, to Brendan George for his editorial advice, to Lauriane Piette for her editorial support, and to Vanipriya Manohar for seeing the book through production.

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Introduction

When Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu, reveals himself to Arjuna in his divine form – as Vishnu in his cosmic godhead – Arjuna is overwhelmed with awe and prostrates himself.¹ Such high-relief epiphanic revelations occur in the Torah when God reveals himself to Moses and in other religious traditions. At times revelations may be heard but have no visual aspect or be communicated without physical hearing. Revelations are often of God or a god, or manifested by an angel through which God speaks. These and other types of revelations are phenomenally experienced in theistic traditions. However, religious revelations are not limited to the theistic religious traditions.

The definition of revelation that we will use is: a communication or message, or a disclosure or awareness, whose source is phenomenally received as the divine or religious reality or the transcendent. Phenomenally – as they are experienced – revelations are epiphanic. In some manner God or the divine or religious reality or the transcendent is experienced in communication with, or as disclosed to, the one who comes to have the revelation.

¹ *Bhagavad-Gita*, Chap. 11. Several translations.