

14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## Enlightenment

**“The Tathagata has realised the Middle Path: it gives vision, it gives knowledge, and it leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment ...”**

*Pali Tripitaka, the earliest collection of Buddhist Texts,  
First Sermon of the Buddha, 'Kindred Sayings'*

On a daytime TV programme from a UK Safari Park, I watched the unfolding story of Spud, a tree-climbing Brazilian porcupine, who'd escaped from its enclosure. He disappeared for ten days, and despite the use of CCTV cameras, drones and extensive searches, he was nowhere to be found. The Park Keepers were in despair. Then, on the eleventh morning, they checked Spud's enclosure and found him back in his bed. His adventure was over. He'd decided to come home.

In his 1989 book, *The Heart of the Enlightenment*, the spiritual writer, Anthony de Mello, recounts a Hasidic tale of Rabbi Isaac who had a similar adventure. He'd been told in a dream to dig for treasure under a bridge that led to the palace of the king. So, he went on a search. The bridge was heavily guarded, so he waited and watched for several days. Eventually, he was spotted, and the Captain of the Guard asked him what on earth he was doing coming to the bridge day after day. Embarrassed, the Rabbi told the captain about his dream, and the man roared with laughter. "You, a Rabbi, take dreams seriously? Goodness! If I did that, I would be all over the country. Indeed, I have a recurrent dream that tells me that if I ever come across a Rabbi called Isaac, I've to follow him home, and dig for treasure in the corner of his kitchen." The Rabbi thanked the captain for his story, hurried home, and dug up the corner of his very own kitchen. And there he found treasure sufficient for his needs till the day he died.

An anonymous 7<sup>th</sup> century poem offers us this:

*Pilgrim remember  
For all your pain  
The Master you seek abroad  
You will find at home –  
Or walk in vain.*

Whether it's the Buddha's "middle path" or not, you might find enlightenment closer to home than you ever expected.

### **A prayer for today**

*The adventure is to find enlightenment right where I am – thank God! Amen*