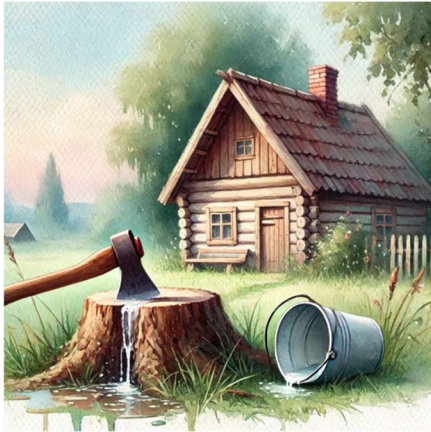


# Sharpen Your Axe, Mend Your Bucket



The phrase “*chop wood, carry water*” is familiar to many and, if you consider yourself on a spiritual path, you will have almost certainly heard or read it.

This simple phrase is believed to have its origins in the Zen tradition and has been stated simply as “*chop wood, carry water*” but also as a kōan:

***“Before enlightenment; chop wood, carry water.  
After enlightenment; chop wood, carry water.”***

This kōan, or riddle designed to provoke reflection, is not stated to be deconstructed with the thinking mind. Involving the mind to “work out” what is happening or to assign meaning can take us only so far.

If we were to be watching someone chopping wood and they became “enlightened” during this activity what would that look like? This kōan implies we may not even notice! The chopping would go on. A mundane, repetitive – some might call tedious – task was chosen here to illustrate that life simply goes on after enlightenment and one continues as before. It is the internal state that reflects a change.

This internal change or shift is best described by your own experience. To experience what is being suggested here, give your complete attention to whatever it is you are doing be it washing dishes or eating a meal. Another Zen saying is “*a person who has attained mastery reveals it in their every action.*” This does not speak to perfection but to their utter focus and dedication to that activity. When focused in this way we experience our own absence. The person is not there to complain or wish to be somewhere else.

There really is no event called enlightenment. Enlightenment is simply the felt-understanding that events are unfolding as they will and there is no “doer” required to claim ownership. There is no person, beyond the belief that a person exists, who becomes enlightened. Everything is always complete and whole as it is whether one sees it (enlightened) or not (ignorant).

This explanation may not seem very interesting to the mind and therefore is easily overlooked. The mind wants to hear a description about enlightenment that has something to grasp, to get, to hold on to.

My suggestion? Sharpen your axe, mend your bucket, get to work, and you might just lose your mind!

Walter  
[www.beingwalter.com](http://www.beingwalter.com)

January 2022

# Sharpen Your Axe, Mend Your Bucket

## Invitation to the Temple of Silence

### A Non-duality Zoom Group

Dear Friend,

You are warmly invited to join the **Temple of Silence**, an online Zoom group dedicated to exploring the essence of non-duality. In this gathering, we focus not on personal stories but on gently turning our attention to the boundless awareness that holds all stories and experiences within it—our true nature.

**The Temple of Silence Mission Statement:** *“The Temple of Silence Zoom group offers a decentralized space where friends gather, some seeking to realize their true nature, others resting in its recognition. Discussions focus less on fleeting personal stories and more on the reliable, wholeness of our True nature. Questions are welcomed, and when attention drifts into mental narratives, it is gently redirected to what never comes and goes. In this open space, all are invited to knowingly experience the oneness that underlies all appearances.”*

**When:** Open meeting on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM Eastern Time on ZOOM

**Meeting ID:** 935 829 6350

**Passcode:** tos

*The Temple of Silence Zoom Group is not a therapy group, and there is no charge to attend the meetings. This document is part of “The Temple of Silence - From Knowledge to Experience” article series and was created as a public service. For those new to nonduality, this series of articles offers clear guidance into this profound understanding. We hope the content resonates with the deeper truth within you. We look forward to your presence in our next gathering.*

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Please visit [www.beingwalter.com](http://www.beingwalter.com) for more nondual articles, poetry and information regarding Walter’s books *“Take Heart, Seeker”* and *“The Temple of Silence”*.