

*Madame Blavatsky annotates  
Joseph Edkins' essay  
on Buddhism*



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[The well-known scholar, Rev. Joseph Edkins, D.D., contributes a long essay in which he discusses with much learning the ideas prevalent among the Buddhists concerning the future state of man and the hope of an after-life. He attempts to trace the origin of these beliefs. A number of footnotes have been appended by H.P. Blavatsky to various expressions of Dr. Edkins, which appear below within square brackets. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]



[ – union with Buddha . . . attained by the loss of personality – ]

The loss of the *false* or temporary personality by its transformation into the ABSOLUTE “Ego.”<sup>1</sup>

[ – many prefer to meditate on the Paradise of Amitābha, the Buddha of a world situated in the West . . . as the home they may attain this hope exists among the Buddhists. And it is a curious question whether it was occasioned by Persian or by Christian influence, or . . . was entirely self-originated – ]

Most undeniably the idea was originated by neither of the above-named influences, no more than the knowledge of the Zodiac,<sup>2</sup> astronomy or architecture was ever originated in India “by the Greek influence,” agreeably with Dr. Weber’s and Professor Max Müller’s favourite hobbies. This “hope” is based on *knowledge*, on the secret esoteric doctrines preached by Gautama Buddha, and flashes of which are still found even in the semi-exoteric tenets of the schools of Mahayana, Āryāsanga and others.

[ – Buddhist works began to be translated into Chinese about the year 67 A.D. ]

Buddhist works may have appeared in China not earlier than 67 A.D.; but there are as good proofs and evidence, from Chinese and Tibetan History as much as from Buddhist records, that the tenets of Gautama reached China as early as the year 683 of the Tzin era (436 B.C.). Of course in this instance we accept Buddhist chronology, not the fanciful annals of the Western Orientalists, who base their chronological and *historical* computations on the so-called “Vikramāditya era,” while ignorant to this day of the date when Vikramāditya really lived. [136]

[ – Belief in the magical powers of the Buddhists had much to do with the spread of their religion, and not less influential was the superstitious regard for the sacred books . . . ]

No more, we say, than the “miracles” of the *New Testament* had to do with the spread of the Christian religion. Then why should any fair-minded person, even if a

<sup>1</sup> [Consult “Higher Self and Higher Ego,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> [Consult “The Zodiac is a veil thrown over Cosmogogenesis,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

missionary, denounce the reverence of Buddhists for their sacred books as “*a superstitious regard*,” while enforcing the same “superstitious regard” for the Bible, under the penalty, moreover, of eternal damnation?

[ – *Akshobya*, the companion Buddha to *Amitābha* and ruler of the Eastern Universe . . . these two Buddhas are mentioned together. They were . . . contemporaneous in origin – ]

That origin must be archaic indeed, since both the names are found in the *Book of Dzyan*, classed with the Dhyāni-Chohans (*Pitris*), the “Fathers of man,” who answer to the seven Elohim.

[ – Parthian Jews . . . returned from keeping the Pentecost at Jerusalem to their own country, and carried with them Christian convictions – ]

It would be more correct, perhaps, to say “Gnostic,” instead of “Christian” convictions. The Jews could be Gnostics without renouncing Judaism.

### **The only hell is life here on earth.**

[ – world of punishment (*Naraka*), which to the Buddhists are prisons, fiery hot, or icy cold, where every kind of torture is used – ]

Which, however, are all metaphorical expressions, whenever used. Buddhists have never believed in their philosophy in any Hell as a locality. *Avīchi* is a *state* and a condition, and the tortures therein are all mental.

[ – forgiveness<sup>1</sup> of injuries, contentment, pity are very Christian – ]

They are “Christian” only because Christianity has accepted them. All these virtues were taught and practised by Buddha 600 years B.C.; as other Chinese and Indian good men and adepts accepted and taught them to the multitudes thousands of years B.B., or before Buddha. Why call them “Christian,” since they are universal?

[ – the *Vedanta* philosophy finds the origin of transmigration and other evils in God who is the cause of virtue and [137] vice – ]

The *Vedanta* philosophy finds nothing of the kind, nor does it teach of a God (least of all with a capital G). But there is a sect of Vedāntins, the *Viśishtādvaita*, who, refusing to accept *dualism*, have, *nolens volens*, to place the origin of all evil as of all good in Parabrahman. But Parabrahman is *not* “God” in the Christian sense, at any rate in the *Vedanta* philosophy.

[ – Buddhism . . . being atheistic – ]

Atheistic, inasmuch as it very reasonably rejects the idea of any personal anthropomorphic god. Its secret philosophy, however, explains the causes of rebirths or “transmigration.”

[ – retribution follows all actions by unseen fate compelling it – ]

This “unseen fate” is KARMA.

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<sup>1</sup> [Look up Notes by the Series Editor, on pages 6-7.]

### Lord Buddha preached against unreasoning faith.

[ – producing and strengthening faith – ]

Buddha preached against *blind* faith and enforced knowledge and reason.<sup>1</sup>

### It was the Gnostics, who were influenced by Buddhist doctrines, not the other way around.

[ – concerning the alleged influence exercised by Christians upon Eastern beliefs, etc. ]

It would be far more correct to say that it is the early Christians, or the Gnostics rather, who were influenced by Buddhist doctrines, than the reverse. All these ideas of Devachan, etc., were inculcated by Buddhism from the first. No foreign influence there, surely. It cannot be proved *historically*, that the “Apostle Peter” had preached the gospel in Parthia, not even that the blessed “Apostle,” whose relics are shown at Goa, went there at all. But it is an *historical fact*, that a century before the Christian era, Buddhist monks crowded into Syria and Babylon, and that Buddhasp (Bodhisattva), the so-called Chaldean, was the founder of Sabism or *baptism*. And Renan,<sup>2</sup> in his *Vie de Jesus*, says, that [it was] “the religion of multiplied baptisms, the scion of the still existent sect, named the ‘Christians of St. John’ or Mandæans, whom the Arabs call *el-Mogtasila* or ‘Baptists.’ The Aramean verb *seba*, origin of the name *Sabian*, is a synonym of *βαπτίζω*.”<sup>3</sup>

### Babylonia was once the seat of the Sanskrit language.

[ – regarding Babylonian astrologers and diviners residing at Indian seaports and being at the courts of Rajahs, bringing with them Babylonian and Egyptian doctrines – ] [138]

There is one little impediment, however, in the way of such a “Weberian” theory. There is no *historical* evidence that the “Chaldean astrologers and diviners” were ever at the courts of Indian Rajahs *before* the days of Alexander. But it is a perfectly established historical fact, as pointed out by Colonel Vans Kennedy, that it was, on the contrary, Babylonia which was once the seat of the Sanskrit language and of Brāhmanical influence.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> [Lord Buddha said: We are earnestly enjoined to accept nothing whatever on faith; whether it be written in books, handed down from our ancestors, or taught by the sages. Our Lord Buddha has said that we must not believe in a thing said merely because it is said; nor in traditions because they have been handed down from antiquity; nor rumours, as such; nor writings by sages, because sages wrote them; nor fancies that we may suspect to have been inspired in us by a deva (that is, in presumed spiritual inspiration); nor from inferences drawn from some haphazard assumption we may have made; nor because of what seems an analogical necessity; nor on the mere authority of our teachers or masters. But we are to believe when the writing, doctrine, or saying is corroborated by our own reason and consciousness. (*Kalama Sutta* of the *Anguttaranikāya*; quoting H.S. Olcott’s *Buddhist Catechism*, pp. 55, 56, 1881 ed.) — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> [Ernest Renan, 1823–1892]

<sup>3</sup> [Pages 102-03, in 65<sup>th</sup> ed., Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1923. Title first published in 1863. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

<sup>4</sup> [The actual passage from the works of Col. Vans Kennedy which H.P. Blavatsky has in mind is not definitely known, but the idea itself is very clearly expressed on pp. 199-201 of his *Researches into the Origin and Affinities of the principal Languages of Asia and Europe*. London, 1828. 4to. See Bio-Bibliographical Index, s.v. KENNEDY, for other works by this scholar. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

## Notes by the Series Editor.

### 1. Resist not evil.

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. — *Matthew v, 39* (KJV)

### 2. Forgive but not forget.

Says Colton:<sup>1</sup>

We should freely forgive, but forget rarely.

“I will not be revenged, and this I owe to my enemy;  
but I will *remember*, and this I owe to myself.”

This is real practical wisdom. It stands between the ferocious “Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth” of the Mosaic Law, and the command to turn the left cheek to the enemy when he has smitten you on the right. Is not the latter a direct encouraging of sin?<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. *Matthew vi, 14–15* (KJV)<sup>3</sup>

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. — *Luke vi, 37* (KJV)

Note that Greek verb *αφημι* (apheēme) has been cunningly transformed into English as “forgive.” What does the noun *aphesis*, as in *αφεσις αμαρτιων* (aphesis amartiōn),<sup>4</sup> really mean? It literally means let it go, drop it, don’t concern yourself, it doesn’t matter.



The prudence of surrendering to evil, or “injustice,” without a murmur, is three-fold:

- 1 Evil inflicted upon us is clearly a karmic debt: once repaid, will not return to bother us again.
- 2 But if we begin defending ourselves, complaining, explaining, arguing (and much worse) plotting retribution, we will end up escalating evil mutually and perpetually. Like a road traffic penalty notice which, if left unpaid, will generate incremental punitive penalties.

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<sup>1</sup> [Charles Caleb Colton, 1780–1832, English clergy]

<sup>2</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 138. Look up “Occult laws and paradoxes,” in our Living the Life Series. — ED. PHIL.

<sup>3</sup> This also part of the Sermon on the Mount. For in-depth analysis, consult “The Kingdom of God is within you by Tolstoy” and “The Science of Life by Blavatsky and Tolstoy,” in our Living the Life Series. — ED. PHIL.

<sup>4</sup> [Let the amartia go, *i.e.*, failure or fault, the ecclesiastical “sin.” However, it is imprudent to forget. See Note 2 above.— ED. PHIL.



- 3 Should we opt to resist, we will strengthen the magnetic bond with the despised offender (our spiritual brother, in actual truth) and become entangled in a vicious circle of tit-for-tat actions in this and future lives — an ever-lasting vendetta.

So can we do? Matthew' exhortation to let evil go has been mischievously interpreted by the priests as "forgiveness," implying the power granted to them by a fictitious god to absolve the sins of those who "confess" — and thus to exploit the blind faith of the flock that they pretend to shepherd by this and so many other wicked and distasteful ruses. And what about the victims of evil? Should they also confess, and to what?

SPARTAN Is it to thee, or to God, that I must confess?

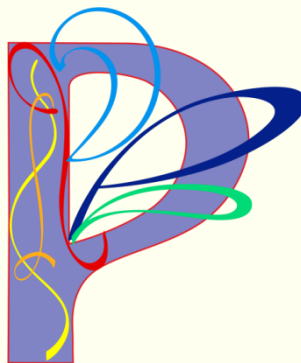
PRIEST To God.

SPARTAN Then, MAN, stand back!

It is a matter of regret that those, who are ignorant of the Laws that govern Universe and Man are unable to perceive the wisdom of "letting go," never mind "forgive" — and, if the latter, begrudgingly. But the Law Karma neither forgives nor forgets: it operates impersonally and unerringly, bringing divine justice on earth and restoring universal harmony — like the balloon that when you press it here, it bulges elsewhere with equal force.

More! If we wound our "enemy" we wound ourselves, for the spiritual essence of our "enemy" is exactly the same as of *That* is us — a spark from the UNCREATED Ray. The unifying spirit of true Brotherhood pulses only in the pure heart, not in the weasel words of politicians and demagogues who have degraded the Brotherhood of Man to the meaningless soundbite of "togetherness."

JOSEPH-LOUIS DE BOUSSAC



## Suggested reading for students.



### From our Buddhas and Initiates Series.

- ALL AVATĀRAS ARE IDENTICAL, WORLD-SAVIOURS GROWN OUT FROM A SINGLE SEED
- ARNOLD NOT AN INITIATE
- ARNOLD'S LIGHT OF ASIA
- AURA OF THE YOGI IN TRANCE
- BLAVATSKY ON APOLLONIUS OF TYANA
- BLAVATSKY ON COUNT ALESSANDRO DI CAGLIOSTRO
- BLAVATSKY ON DIVINE REINCARNATIONS IN TIBET
- BLAVATSKY ON SCHOPENHAUER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE COUNT DE SAINT-GERMAIN
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TRANS-HIMALAYAN FRATERNITY
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPH OF INITIATION
- BLAVATSKY PAYS TRIBUTE TO ÉLIPHAS LEVI
- BUDDHISM IN ACTION IS UNCONDITIONAL COMPASSION, WISE AND MERCIFUL
- BUDDHISM, THE RELIGION OF PRE-VEDIC INDIA
- BURNET AND BLAVATSKY ON ANAXAGORAS' IDEAS AND IMPACT
- CHANT FOR THE NEOPHYTES AFTER THEIR LAST INITIATION
- DATE OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA'S DISINCARNATION
- DRAWING 1 - FORCES AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS
- DRAWING 2 - CHRIST OR HIGHER MANAS CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO THIEVES
- DRAWING 3 - NEOPHYTE ON TRIAL DYING IN THE CHRĒST CONDITION
- DRAWING 4 - NEOPHYTE ASCENDING TO THE CHRIST CONDITION
- DRAWING 5 - THE SECRET HEART SEAL
- DUTIES OF A DHYĀNI CHOCHAN
- EMERSON ON PLUTARCH'S MORALS



**BUDDHAS AND INITIATES SERIES**  
**SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- EMPEDOCLES, PAGAN THAUMATURGIST
- ESOTERIC VERSUS TANTRIC TATTVAS (TABLE)
- EVERY INITIATE MUST BE AN ADEPT IN OCCULTISM
- G.R.S. MEAD'S ESSAY ON SIMON MAGUS
- GAUTAMA AND JESUS PARALLEL LIVES
- GAUTAMA BUDDHA BEATIFIED!
- GAUTAMA IS THE FIFTH TEACHER IN THE CURRENT PLANETARY ROUND
- HINTS ABOUT THE TRIADIC HYPOSTASIS OF BUDDHA
- HUMILITY IS NO VIRTUE
- IAMBlichUS ON PYTHAGORAS
- IAMBlichUS ON THEURGY (1915)
- JESUS BEN PANDIRA, THE HISTORICAL CHRIST
- JUDGE ON THE DWELLERS ON HIGH MOUNTAINS
- JULIAN AND SOCRATES WERE PUT TO DEATH FOR THE SAME CRIME
- KALI-YUGA AND THE KALKI-AVATĀRA
- LOHANS ARE THE MELLIFLUOUS DISCIPLES OF TATHĀGATA
- MAGIC OR THEURGY, PURPOSE AND PITFALLS
- MORALITY IS MAN'S PRISTINE EFFORT TO HARMONISE WITH UNIVERSAL LAW
- OCCULT METAPHYSICS UNRIDDED FROM MATERIALISTIC MISCONCEPTIONS
- OVID ON PYTHAGORAS' TEACHINGS AND ETHICS
- PARACELSUS BY FRANZ HARTMANN
- PARACELSUS ON SYMPATHETIC REMEDIES AND CURES
- PAUL AN INITIATE AND FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY
- PETER NOT AN INITIATE AND THE ENEMY OF PAUL
- PHERECYDES, AN EARLY WESTERN PHILOSOPHER
- PLUTARCH ON PHOCION CHRĒSTOS
- PLUTARCH ON THE TUTELARY DAIMŌN OF SOCRATES
- PORPHYRY ON PYTHAGORAS
- PRINCIPLES AND FORCES IN NATURE AND MAN (DIAGRAM)
- PRINCIPLES AND FORCES IN NATURE AND MAN (INSTRUCTIONS)
- PROCLUS ON SOCRATES' DAEMON (TAYLOR)
- SAMSON AND HERCULES ARE PERSONIFICATIONS OF NEOPHYTES
- SHANKARA WAS A CONTEMPORARY OF PATAÑJALI AND HIS CHELA

**BUDDHAS AND INITIATES SERIES  
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- THE ADEPTS DESTROY THE WICKED AND GUARD THE PATH OF THE VIRTUOUS
- THE HOLY RITES OF ELEUSIS WERE ARCHAIC WISDOM RELIGION
- THE INITIATE'S CROWN OF THORNS
- THE KEY TO THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA LIES IN THE CLEAR APPERCEPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN
- THE LITTLE ONES ARE ABOVE THE LAW
- THE NOBLE GENIUS OF PARACELSUS
- THE REAL CHRIST IS BUDDHI-MANAS, THE GLORIFIED DIVINE EGO
- THE ROLE OF ADEPTS IN THE GREAT AMERICAN REVOLUTION
- THE TRIPLE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA'S EMBODIMENT
- THEOPHANIA AND OPTIONS OPEN TO THE ADEPT
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS – THE AURA OF SUGATA
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS – THE LOVE OF GODS
- THOMAS TAYLOR, THE ENGLISH PLATONIST
- WHY THE SECRECY OF INITIATES?
- ZANONI BY BULWER-LYTTON

