

Short Texts Of All Faiths And Philosophies

Decoding **Short Texts Of All Faiths And Philosophies**:
Revealing the Captivating Potential of Verbal Expression

In an era characterized by interconnectedness and an insatiable thirst for knowledge, the captivating potential of verbal expression has emerged as a formidable force. Its power to evoke sentiments, stimulate introspection, and incite profound transformations is genuinely awe-inspiring. Within the pages of "**Short Texts Of All Faiths And Philosophies**," a mesmerizing literary creation penned by way of a celebrated wordsmith, readers embark on an enlightening odyssey, unraveling the intricate significance of language and its enduring impact on our lives. In this appraisal, we shall explore the book's central themes, evaluate its distinctive writing style, and gauge its pervasive influence on the hearts and minds of its readership.

Sacred Stories Marilyn McFarlane 2012-03-06 This comprehensive collection of timeless and powerful stories puts the wisdom of world religions in the hands of young readers. When attempting to find a simple, engaging, and unbiased approach to world religions for her own family, Marilyn McFarlane discovered

such a book did not exist. Understanding how important it is for children to build both respect for and knowledge of a variety of religions, regardless of their own faith, McFarlane created *Sacred Stories: Wisdom from World Religions*. Each captivating story and accompanying sidebar facts and spot illustrations brings to life the key tenets of a

particular belief system, while the comprehensive glossary and resource list enable readers to expand their explorations. Including easy-to-understand descriptions and essential stories from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Native American, and Sacred Earth, Sacred Stories is perfect for parents and teachers who want to expand young readers' understanding of world traditions. The simple, informative, unbiased language of Sacred Stories, combined with its comprehensive resource list and glossary, makes it an ideal learning tool for teachers, librarians, and other educators.

Philosophers without Gods

Louise M. Antony 2007-08-08
Atheists are frequently demonized as arrogant intellectuals, antagonistic to religion, devoid of moral sentiments, advocates of an "anything goes" lifestyle. Now, in this revealing volume, nineteen leading philosophers open a window on the inner life of atheism, shattering these

common stereotypes as they reveal how they came to turn away from religious belief. These highly engaging personal essays capture the marvelous diversity to be found among atheists, providing a portrait that will surprise most readers. Many of the authors, for example, express great affection for particular religious traditions, even as they explain why they cannot, in good conscience, embrace them. None of the contributors dismiss religious belief as stupid or primitive, and several even express regret that they cannot, or can no longer, believe. Perhaps more important, in these reflective pieces, they offer fresh insight into some of the oldest and most difficult problems facing the human mind and spirit. For instance, if God is dead, is everything permitted? Philosophers without Gods demonstrates convincingly, with arguments that date back to Plato, that morality is independent of the existence of God. Indeed, every writer in this volume adamantly affirms

the objectivity of right and wrong. Moreover, they contend that secular life can provide rewards as great and as rich as religious life. A naturalistic understanding of the human condition presents a set of challenges--to pursue our goals without illusions, to act morally without hope of reward--challenges that can impart a lasting value to finite and fragile human lives. 'This Atheists R Us compilation differs markedly in tone from Hitchens and Dawkins. Excellent fare for Christian small groups whose members are genuinely interested in the arguments raised by atheists.'--Christianity Today 'Rather than the foolishness of Dawkins or Hitchens, these [essays] are compelling and sophisticated arguments that religious people ought to confront....'--Tikkun 'Taken as a group, these readable, personal, and provocative essays make it clear that there are many kinds of non-believers, and even many different elements that make up a single skeptical outlook. Contrary to the

popular image, atheism isn't all rebellious trumpets and defiant drums. That part of the orchestra is essential, but here we have all the varieties of unreligious experience, a full symphony of unbelief.' -- Free Inquiry 'This collection strikes me as an excellent example of how comprehensible philosophical writing can be at its best. By and large, the essays are written in a clear and direct style, free of philosophical jargon. Many who read it will find themselves also engaged at a level that is not merely academic.'--George I. Mavrodes, Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews Critiques of God Peter Adam Angeles 1997 Essays on atheism by Kurt Baier, John Dewey, Paul Edwards, Antony Flew, Sigmund Freud, Erich Fromm, Sidney Hook, Walter Kaufmann, Corliss Lamont, Wallace I. Matson, H.J. McCloskey, Ernest Nagel, Kai Nielsen, Richard Robinson, Bertrand Russell, and Michael Scriven.

American Philosophic

Naturalism in the Twentieth

Century John Joseph Ryder
1994 A collection of essays on philosophic naturalism by 20th-century philosophers such as Justus Buchler, Thelma Lavine, and George Santayana.

Naturalism holds that nature is objective, but the philosophy includes nonmaterial aspects of human existence--thoughts, feelings, values, and free will--within its scope. The essays demonstrate the range of naturalistic inquiry and discuss conceptions of nature; nature, experience, and method; ethical, social, aesthetic, and religious values; and naturalism and contemporary philosophy. Lacks an index.

Annotation copyright by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR
Religion Hurts John Bowker
2018-10-18 The world contains a bewildering variety of religions, each containing an equally bewildering variety of practices and beliefs. How have religions developed and become so widespread? Why do they matter so much to so many people? Why do some believe that their faith requires

them to terrorize and kill others? Why do religions do harm as well as good? This is a book for those who ask such questions. Some of the answers we hear today seem entirely uncritical of religion, while others dismiss it as inherently toxic and destructive. John Bowker, one of the world's most distinguished scholars of religion, delivers a timely analysis of the issues. He shows how recent research, particularly in the neurosciences, genetics and evolution, throws new light on what religions are and on the part they have played in human life and history. His explanation of why religions are a force for both good and evil offers hope as well as insight for all who want to understand the many complex interactions between religion and politics today.

The Problem of Evil Marilyn McCord Adams 1990 This collection of important writings fills the need for an anthology that adequately represents recent work on the problem of evil. This is perhaps one of the

most discussed topics in the philosophy of religion, and is of perennial interest to philosophers and theologians.

Understanding Philosophy of Religion Aqa Text Book

Libby Ahluwalia 2008-08 A thorough and detailed approach to the material makes this subject accessible for all AS and A2 students, and will particularly help ensure higher achieving students attain their best grades. For use with the 2008 AQA specification. Each Textbook has an accompanying Teacher's Book containing much of the active learning and testing of knowledge and skills. They contain discussion ideas, worksheets, revision tests and games as well as sample exam questions and mark schemes. There is a Textbook and Teacher's Book for each major exam board.

The Perennial Philosophy
Aldous Huxley 2012-02-14 An inspired gathering of religious writings that reveals the "divine reality" common to all faiths, collected by Aldous Huxley "The Perennial Philosophy," Aldous Huxley

writes, "may be found among the traditional lore of peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions." With great wit and stunning intellect—drawing on a diverse array of faiths, including Zen Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Christian mysticism, and Islam—Huxley examines the spiritual beliefs of various religious traditions and explains how they are united by a common human yearning to experience the divine. The *Perennial Philosophy* includes selections from Meister Eckhart, Rumi, and Lao Tzu, as well as the Bhagavad Gita, Tibetan Book of the Dead, Diamond Sutra, and Upanishads, among many others.

The Religious Aspect of Philosophy; a Critique of the Bases of Conduct and of Faith
Josiah Royce 2013-09 This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without

typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1885 edition. Excerpt: ...difficulty lies. The aspect of the facts that we now mean is this. It is not because progress is to endure on this planet for a short or for a long time, but because the world in which this progress is so to end seems, thus regarded, wholly indifferent to progress, --this is the gloomy aspect. To-day, even while progress is so swift and sure, at this moment, we are living in a world for which, as science displays it to us, this progress is as indifferent and unessential as the fleeting hues of an evaporating soap-bubble. Is the physical fact of progress, thus regarded, a moral help to us? Yet men turn away from these plain and often-mentioned facts to all sorts of fantastic dreams of a coming golden age. They make of future humanity a saintly people, living in devotion, or a merry people, always dancing to waltzes yet undreamt of, or a scientific people, calculating by some higher algebra the relative positions and motions

of the molecules in the rocks on the other side of the moon. Every dream of progress is to be realized in that blessed time, and we are invited to praise a nature that could produce all this blessedness by pure physical law. Now we must indeed wish well for the men of the year A. d.

1,000,000, but we can receive no religious support from the knowledge that if all goes right and if the sun keeps well at work, the men of that time will be better than we are. For still the world as a whole gives no support to our real moral needs, for only by a happy accident will this blessedness be possible. Or, in short, two tendencies are seen before us in the world, one working for evolution, for concentration of energy in living beings, for increase of their powers, for progress; the other for dissipation of energy, for death, for the..

Among Our Books Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh 1903
Kant: Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason
Immanuel Kant 1998-11-26

Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason is a key element of the system of philosophy which Kant introduced with his Critique of Pure Reason, and a work of major importance in the history of Western religious thought. It represents a great philosopher's attempt to spell out the form and content of a type of religion that would be grounded in moral reason and would meet the needs of ethical life. It includes sharply critical and boldly constructive discussions on topics not often treated by philosophers, including such traditional theological concepts as original sin and the salvation or 'justification' of a sinner, and the idea of the proper role of a church. This volume presents it and three short essays that illuminate it in new translations by Allen Wood and George di Giovanni, with an introduction by Robert Merrihew Adams that locates it in its historical and philosophical context.

Exploring Philosophy of Religion Steven M. Cahn 2009

What are the inherent claims that lie at the core of religion? Which of them are defensible by reason, and which are not? Potential answers to these questions and more, from influential philosophers past and present, may be found in this short book edited by Steven M. Cahn. Featuring fifty-two classic and contemporary readings, *Exploring Philosophy of Religion: Text and Readings* is a topically-organized anthology that presents broad coverage of seven major areas in the philosophy of religion - the concept of God, the existence of God, religious language, miracles and mysticism, belief in God, resurrection and immortality, and religious pluralism - in a clear and accessible format. With guiding introductory material from Professor Cahn, each of the readings has been carefully selected and edited for maximum clarity and comprehensiveness; only the most essential material is included. To further foster understanding, the text also

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features an appendix consisting of Professor Cahn's monograph, *God, Reason, and Religion*, which provides a synthesis and interpretation of the crucial issues raised throughout the readings.

Naturalism Stewart Goetz 2008-04-29 This inaugural *Interventions* volume introduces readers to the dominant scientifically oriented worldview called naturalism. Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro examine naturalism philosophically, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. Whereas most other books on naturalism are written for professional philosophers alone, this one is aimed primarily at a college-educated audience interested in learning about this pervasive worldview. Read a related blog post by the authors on *EerdWord*.

The Golden Cord Charles Taliaferro 2012-12-15 The title of Charles Taliaferro's book is derived from poems and stories in which a person in peril or on a quest must follow a cord or string in order to find the way to happiness, safety, or home.

In one of the most famous of such tales, the ancient Greek hero Theseus follows the string given him by Ariadne to mark his way in and out of the Minotaur's labyrinth. William Blake's poem "Jerusalem" uses the metaphor of a golden string, which, if followed, will lead one to heaven itself. Taliaferro extends Blake's metaphor to illustrate the ways we can link what we see, feel, and do with deep spiritual realities. Taliaferro offers a foundational case for the recognition of the experience of the eternal God of Christianity, in which God is understood as the fount of all goodness and the subject and object of our best love, revealed through scripture, tradition, philosophical reflection, and encountered in everyday events. He addresses philosophical obstacles to the recognition of such experiences, especially objections from the "new atheists," and explores the values involved in thinking and experiencing God as eternal. These include the belief that

the eternal goodness of God subordinates temporal goods, such as the pursuit of fame and earthly glory; that God is the essence of life; and that the eternal God hallows domestic goods, blessing the everyday goods of ordinary life. An exploration of the moral and spiritual riches of the Christian tradition as an alternative to materialism and naturalism, *The Golden Cord* brings an originality and depth to the debate in accessible and engaging prose.

Arguing about Gods Graham Oppy 2006-09-04 In this book, Graham Oppy examines arguments for and against the existence of God. He shows that none of these arguments is powerful enough to change the minds of reasonable participants in debates on the question of the existence of God. His conclusion is supported by detailed analyses of the arguments as well as by the development of a theory about the purpose of arguments and the criteria that should be used in judging whether or not arguments are

successful. Oppy discusses the work of a wide array of philosophers, including Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Kant, Hume and, more recently, Plantinga, Dembski, White, Dawkins, Bergman, Gale and Pruss.

Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion

Michael L. Peterson 2004

Recent years have seen growing popular absorption with "spirituality" in all its forms. But as this study shows, it is largely separated from theology. Spirituality has grown more self-referential and is subverted by consumerist mentality, while theology has grown critically proficient but uneasy in speaking from or to the heart of Christian mysteries. Through a study of exemplary writers such as Gregory of Nyssa, McIntosh recovers an understanding of the inner integrity of mystical consciousness and theological expression. The final chapters test the possibility of renewed conversation between spirituality and theology by

drawing on spiritual traditions to re-think contemporary problems in Trinitarian thought, Christology, and the understanding of the self. This book offers not only an analysis of spirituality and theology in the eras of their united activity, but also a hermeneutic for the theological appropriation of spirituality and a sustained argument for the renewal of mystical theology.

Short Texts in Faiths and Philosophies James George Roche Forlong 2018-01-29
Excerpt from Short Texts in Faiths and Philosophies: Or Some Sentiments of the Good and Wise; Arranged Chronologically to Show the Movements of Thoughts Through the Ages With the view of testing such theories, we began many years ago to carefully study and collect all available data, not only from books, but many capable adherents of the ancient and modern religions Of Asia with whom we held sympathy intercourse for a third of a century. TO this has been added laborious research,

through the dusty tomes Of bygone ages, and the following is a selection summarizing the views Of many great leaders, so far as these dared to make their opinions public. If we are as accurate as we have tried to be in this chronological epitome, the reader will have before him a most valuable record of the growth of nearly all pious and philosophic thought from the earliest known times, down to Christianity - too well known to the majority Of our readers to be here entered upon. The summary embraces the deepest thoughts of the best and wisest of the world on man's past, present and future, and with the general result, that religions like all else have slowly and steadily evolved; that they never leapt into existence through any supernatural agencies, and that their prominent great ones - quasi divine founders -were but the apex Of pyramids which had been slowly maturing centuries or ages before their births. They but guided the currents Of their

time, and the streams flowed on assuming devious courses, concrete and sensuous forms none could stay or anticipate. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

Short Texts in Faiths and Philosophies James George Roche Forlong 2015-06-24 Excerpt from Short Texts in Faiths and Philosophies: Or Some Sentiments of the Good and Wise; Arranged

Chronologically to Show the Movements of Thoughts Through the Ages The great advance of research and discoveries in the science of Comparative Religion and Archæology, makes it advisable to consider how we actually stand in this respect at the close of the XIXth century. We here therefore give a brief chronological epitome of much ancient thought, culled from well-recognised sources: from writings on rocks and stones, mummy cases and cloths; from temple walls, buried tablets, lats or stelæ, papyri, bibles and sacred records; and, for clearness and brevity, will throw together the more prominent teachings in the form of free but carefully-translated texts, and in modern language - summarized so as to clearly bring out the leading points of each teacher, sect or school. This ought to enable us to trace the veritable footprints of each and all, as they wandered along - often in doubt and darkness - towards a truer conception of the universe, the unknown and

unfathomable future. It will be a passage adown the Rivers of Life or progress, which ought to show ethnographically, as well as sectionally, the part which each race and nation has borne in the struggle upwards to light and learning; as well as those obstructing influences which have retarded the march of truth by superstitions, self-interests, heredity, or other circumstances peculiar to race, time and climate. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections

that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

Monthly Bulletin Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh 1903
The Philosophical Contexts of Sartre's The Wall and Other Stories Kevin W.

Sweeney 2016-05-16 The Philosophical Contexts of The Wall and Other Stories presents a philosophical analysis of all five stories in Sartre's short-story collection, concentrating on characters' acts of bad faith. Kevin W. Sweeney argues that each of the five stories has its own philosophical problem that serves as the context for the narrative, and that Sartre constructs each story as a reply to the philosophical issue in the context and as support for his position on that issue.

Oneness Jeffrey Moses 2007-12-18 "An impressive array of selections. They show common ethics that transcend the narrow confines of sectarianism." ATLANTA JOURNAL & CONSTITUTION Beneath the seeming differences of all the world's

great religions, lies a pool of universal truth. ONENESS collects these beliefs together for the first time, in the actual words of each religion's scriptures. These universal principles act as a guide to inner development, and allow each individual to achieve spiritual richness.

Body, Text, and Science M. Sawicki 2001-11-30 What is "scientific" about the natural and human sciences? Precisely this: the legibility of our worlds and the distinctive reading strategies that they provoke. That account of the essence of science comes from Edith Stein, who as Husserl's assistant 1916-1918 labored in vain to bring his massive *Ideen* to publication, and then went on to propose her own solution to the problem of finding a unified foundation for the social and physical sciences. Stein argued that human bodily life itself affords direct access to the interplay of natural causality, cultural motivation, and personal initiative in history and technology. She developed this line of approach

to the sciences in her early scholarly publications, which too soon were overshadowed by her religious lectures and writings, and eventually were obscured by National Socialism's ideological attack on philosophies of empathy. Today, as her church prepares to declare Stein a saint, her secular philosophical achievements deserve another look.

Augustine: A Very Short Introduction Henry Chadwick 2001-02-22 By his writings, the surviving bulk of which exceeds that of any other ancient author, Augustine came to influence not only his contemporaries but also the West since his time. This *Very Short Introduction* traces the development of Augustine's thought, discussing his reaction to the thinkers before him, and themes such as freedom, creation, and the trinity. ABOUT THE SERIES: The *Very Short Introductions* series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books

are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester John Rylands University Library of Manchester 1908

Arguing for Atheism Robin Le Poidevin 2003-09-02 First Published in 2004. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

Perceiving God William P. Alston 2014-01-21 In *Perceiving God*, William P. Alston offers a clear and provocative account of the epistemology of religious experience. He argues that the "perception of God"—his term for direct experiential awareness of God—makes a major contribution to the grounds of religious belief. Surveying the variety of reported direct experiences of God among laypersons and famous mystics, Alston

demonstrates that a person can be justified in holding certain beliefs about God on the basis of mystical experience.

Through the perception that God is sustaining one in being, for example, one can justifiably believe that God is indeed sustaining one in being. Alston offers a detailed discussion of our grounds for taking sense perception and other sources of belief—including introspection, memory, and mystical experience—to be reliable and to confer justification. He then uses this epistemic framework to explain how our perceptual beliefs about God can be justified. Alston carefully addresses objections to his chief claims, including problems posed by non-Christian religious traditions. He also examines the way in which mystical perception fits into the larger picture of grounds for religious belief. Suggesting that religious experience, rather than being a purely subjective phenomenon, has real cognitive value, *Perceiving God* will spark intense debate and

will be indispensable reading for those interested in philosophy of religion, epistemology, and philosophy of mind, as well as for theologians.

Faith & Philosophy of Buddhism V. S. Bhaskar 2009
Russell on Religion Bertrand Russell 1999 Bertrand Russell's religious convictions were controversial, and one of his best selling titles is 'Why I am not a Christian'. This is a comprehensive and coherent survey of Russell on religion, with notes for students.

Essays Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion Baron Friedrich von Hügel
2015-06-17 Excerpt from Essays Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion The following collection of some dozen papers arose in a very simple way. About half of these essays, ever since their several appearances in print, have been a good deal sought after. Hence I have thought it well, pending the re-issue of my *Mystical Element of Religion* and the completion and publication of a new large work

on religious fundamentals, to publish in book-form, from amongst my accumulated papers, such studies as appear to possess some abiding interest. One of the papers given here (as No.3) has already appeared in a collective volume of essays; and Nos. 2, 3, 6, 9 have previously been published in magazines. But four papers (Nos. 1, 4, 5, and 10) are quite new to print. Yet all the papers were written, in part also spoken, at the invitation of single persons or of societies; and all have benefited by questions and criticisms raised on occasion of their first communication. They have thus had some good chances of a certain maturity. There is, assuredly, not a paper here which does not raise more questions than it solves; nor a piece which could not be improved considerably even by myself. But life is short at sixty-nine, and my remaining strength is required for larger tasks. Also such freshness as these essays may possess would doubtless largely fade

away in the process of any considerable re-writing of them. I have, then, restricted myself simply to the formal improvement of my texts, especially in the second Troeltsch article, and to the silent withdrawal or correction of some half-dozen errors of fact. Perhaps the chief formal defect now remaining is a certain repetition. But this I trust may help to drive home one or the other conviction which might otherwise fail to impress the reader. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast

majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

God's Gravediggers Raymond Bradley 2022-06-29 Few can offer a more experienced view on religion than Ray Bradley. Having been raised as a 'winner of souls for Christ' in the 1940s, he spent the next 40 years as an atheist professor of philosophy and an outspoken critic /debater of religion. Revered for his work in logic and his meticulous approach to debate, *God's Gravediggers* is Bradley's coup de grâce to religion. A career's worth of work on a subject that could hardly be more important. Approaching the moral, logical and scientific arguments - using rich analogies, rational arguments and examples that non-academics would understand - he explores not only whether God exists, but also what damage the concept of God does. A timely book in an age of religious fundamentalism, hatred and conflict. "Bradley does not

gloss over difficult points of logic and reasoning. A pleasure to read." Professor Graham Oppy, Chair of Council of the Australasian Association of Philosophy "From a young person's rejection of Christianity, to a mature philosopher's cogent critique of all religions. This compelling defense of atheism is a brilliant read." Professor Robert Nola, University of Auckland.

"Bradley's forte is logic and he brings that to bear throughout the work. It is well-written and thoroughly absorbing. I have nothing but praise for his project." Theodore Drange, Professor Emeritus, West Virginia University

The Philosophy of Religion

Gwen Griffith-Dickson 2005

There is a long tradition of study of religions in their own right, traditionally with a linguistic, philological and textual methodology, and in recent decades with a phenomenological approach. More recently scholars have begun comparative work in which more than one tradition is studied; only very recently

has philosophy of religion begun to be comparative. Here in SCM's Core Text: The Philosophy of Religion, Gwen Griffith-Dickson examines the thinkers and ideas of different traditions and brings them together in the examination of philosophical questions such as the problem of evil, the existence of God and the concept of God.

The Good and the Good

Book Samuel Fleischacker

2015-07-02 'It is written ...,'

says the believer in a sacred text, and proceeds to justify all manner of terrifying things. Or so runs a popular caricature of religious faith today. Religions that center around a revelation—around a 'good book,' like the Torah or Gospels or Quran, which is seen as God's word—are widely regarded as irrational and dangerous: as based on outdated science and conducive to illiberal, inhumane moral attitudes. The Good and the Good Book defends revealed religion and shows how it can be reconciled with science and liberal

morality. Samuel Fleischacker invites us to see revealed texts as aiming to teach neither scientific nor moral doctrines but a vision of what life is about overall. Purely naturalistic ways of thinking, he argues, cannot make much sense of our overall or ultimate good; revealed texts, by contrast, do precisely that. But these texts also need to be interpreted so as to accord with our independent understanding of morality. A delicate balance is required for this process of interpretation—between respecting the uncanny obscurity of our sacred texts and rendering them morally familiar. The book concludes with an account of how believers in one religion can respect believers in other religions, and secular people.

A Short History of Europe, 1600-1815 Lisa Rosner
2015-03-26 A concise survey that introduces readers to the people, ideas, and conflicts in European history from the Thirty Years' War to the Napoleonic Era. The authors

draw on gender studies, environmental history, anthropology and cultural history to frame the essential argument of the work.

HERMAN MELVILLE Ultimate Collection: 50+ Adventure Classics, Philosophical Novels & Short Stories Herman Melville
2017-03-17 This carefully crafted ebook: "HERMAN MELVILLE Ultimate Collection" is formatted for your eReader with a functional and detailed table of contents: Herman Melville (1819-1891) was an American novelist, short story writer and a poet. His writing draws on his experience at sea as a common sailor, exploration of literature and philosophy, and engagement in the contradictions of American society in a period of rapid change. Novels: Typee Omoo Mardi Redburn White-Jacket Moby-Dick Pierre Israel Potter The Confidence-Man Billy Budd, Sailor Short Stories: The Piazza Bartleby, the Scrivener Benito Cereno The Lightning-Rod Man The Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles The Bell-Tower

The Apple-Tree Table Jimmy
Rose I and My Chimney The
Paradise of Bachelors and The
Tartarus of Maids Cock-a-
Doodle-Do! The Fiddler Poor
Man's Pudding and Rich Man's
Crumbs The Happy Failure The
'Gees The Two Temples Daniel
Orme Poetry Collections: Clarel
- A Poem and Pilgrimage in the
Holy Land Battle-Pieces and
Aspects of the War Timoleon
and Other Ventures in Minor
Verse Weeds and Wildings,
With a Rose or Two John Marr
and Other Sailors Bridgeroom
Dick Tom Deadlight Jack Roy
The Haglets The Aeolian Harp
To the Master of the "Meteor"
Far off Shore The Man-of-War
Hawk The Figure-Head The
Good Craft "Snow Bird" Old
Counsel The Tuft of Kelp The
Maldive Shark To Ned
Crossing the Tropics The Berg
The Envable Isles Pebbles
Poems from Mardi We Fish
Invocation Dirge Marlena Pipe
Song Song of Yoomy Gold The
Land of Love Other Poems
Essays: Fragments from a
Writing Desk Etchings of a
Whaling Cruise Authentic
Anecdotes of "Old Zack" Mr.

Parkman's Tour Cooper's New
Novel A Thought on Book-
Binding Hawthorne and His
Mosses Criticism: Herman
Melville by Virginia Woolf
Herman Melville's Moby Dick
by D.H. Lawrence Herman
Melville's Typee and Omoo by
D.H. Lawrence

**The Will to Believe; and
Other Essays in Popular
Philosophy**

William James
2013-09 This historic book may
have numerous typos and
missing text. Purchasers can
usually download a free
scanned copy of the original
book (without typos) from the
publisher. Not indexed. Not
illustrated. 1911 edition.
Excerpt: ... of a feather's
weight; a long phrase may have
its sense reversed by the
addition of the three letters n-
o-t. This life is worth living, we
can say, since it is what we
make it, from the moral point
of view; and we are determined
to make it from that point of
view, so far as we have
anything to do with it, a
success. Now, in this
description of faiths that verify
themselves I have assumed

that our faith in an invisible order is what inspires those efforts and that patience which make this visible order good for moral men. Our faith in the seen world's goodness (goodness now meaning fitness for successful moral and religious life) has verified itself by leaning on our faith in the unseen world. But will our faith in the unseen world similarly verify itself? Who knows? Once more it is a case of maybe; and once more tmaybes are the essence of the situation. I confess that I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world may not in part depend on the personal response which any one of us may make to the religious appeal. God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity. For my own part, I do not know what the sweat and blood and tragedy of this life mean, if they mean anything short of this. If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private

theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But j(it feels like a real fight, -- as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulnesses, are needed to redeem; and first of all to redeem our own hearts from atheisms and fears. For such a half-wild, half-saved universe our nature is adapted. The deepest thing...

Beliefs About Text and Instruction With Text Ruth Garner 2019-06-06 Every day in classrooms, teachers and students think about and with text. Their beliefs about what text is, who created it, and how to evaluate it are an influence, often a profoundly important one, on how they use text. This book brings together research on epistemology, belief systems, teacher beliefs, and text -- research that is usually presented separately, and in different disciplines. The editors illustrate what a cross-disciplinary body of work looks like, what varied insights are possible, and when the central concerns are beliefs and text.

Written by respected researchers in the fields of psychology and education, the chapters are clustered thematically into three sections: * childrens' and adults' beliefs about text. * beliefs about what should be taught and how particular content should be taught and assessed in classrooms. * commentary on knowing versus believing, on the literatures that inform this body of work, and on belief systems. The first to address this important topic in a single volume, this book provides an essential synthesis of current research in an active area of inquiry. The chapters are pieces framed in a time and place with particular intentions -- one of those intentions is that they separately and as a whole stimulate discussion about beliefs and text.

Catalogue Bernard Quaritch (Firm) 1901

Understanding Philosophy of Religion Edexcel Text Book

Libby Ahluwalia 2008-06 This new approach to the Philosophy of Religion option is perfect for the all-new revised

AS and A2 Religious Studies qualification. A thorough and detailed approach to the material makes this subject accessible for all AS and A2 students, and will particularly help ensure higher achieving students attain their best grades.

Probability in the Philosophy of Religion Jake

Chandler 2012-04-26 These specially written essays show that philosophy of religion is fertile ground for the application of probabilistic thinking. The authors examine central topics in the field: the status of evidence relating to the question of the existence of God; the rationality of religious belief; and the epistemic significance of religious disagreement.

Will The Real Buddha

Please Stand Up! Will Willis 2019-09-15 This selection is quite easy to read and gives a good idea on the philosophy and workings of modern Buddhism and it's relationship with the impersonal non-dual teachings of Sri Shankaracharya. The

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superiority of Dualism and the authenticity of Vaishnavism is explicit throughout the text. By BV Avadoot Swami

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS Before beginning this short book we must acknowledge those who have given impetus and inspiration in presenting Will The Real Buddha Please Stand Up. The holy master who first ordered that an article be written on the history of monism and voidism was the most far-seeing and deep-thinking spiritual revolutionary, His Holiness Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. His disciple, Srila Bhaktiprajnana Keshava Maharaja compiled the authorized philosophical treatise, Vaishnava Vijaya or The History of Mayavada to please his master and which became the basis of this small rendition. It is simply rehashed from the above work for those who otherwise would have never had the opportunity to read and understand the logic and erudition of this guardian of pure Vaishnavism. Thirdly, I would like to offer my prayers

and heartfelt thanks to my present holy master, the most worshipable personage on this earth planet, BV Narayana Maharaja who has always projected the philosophical and devotional acumen of his predecessors above himself although he is fully qualified and unfathomably wealthy in terms of pure love and affection. He is also the present vice president of the Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti of Nabadwipa, West Bengal, India, which holds all rights to the original publication by Srila Keshava Maharaja. References are taken from the above book by their kind permission and all other references of Sanskrit translations from the texts of the Srimad Bhagavatam, Srimad Bhagavad-gita and the Brahma-samhita are from the original translations of these texts by AC Bhaktivedanta Swami, owned by Krishna Books, Inc. of Los Angeles, California. Whatever I have presented is shamefully incomplete and piecemeal. Yet, my boldness and pride pushed me beyond the mind's control

to write anyway. Finally, I would ask my readers to forgive any transgressions I may have made in trying to present the real Buddha. BV Avadoot Swami San Diego, California, USA PREFACE In the summer of 1968 I had taken my first course on Buddhism at an extension course offered by the University of California Los Angeles. I sat through a number of the classes and also heard from an American Buddhist, which unfortunately did not make the subject any clearer. I then visited the local Los Angeles Buddhist shrine and still remember a little drama that was put on by the then representative. We also were given a small sample of the discipline and scared by the feigned threats of someone who carried a bamboo rod for those who dozed off or were selected to receive a "wake-up call." The whole regimen and austerity frightened me to the point of never returning or pursuing the matter any more. Later in life I would observe the Buddhist monks in Bangkok

as they went from door-to-door begging, wearing their robes and shaven-headed. It was not until the 1980s that I was able to understand to some degree the actual philosophy behind the "religion" which had until then always left me completely confused. Whether others have experienced this same confusion or not I thought that a book which would not only delineate the essential teaching but also distinguish between the original avatar of Buddha (Adi-Buddha) and the more popular Buddha who appeared in Nepal approximately 1,000 years later. In this way a reader will at least have a good basic understanding of the essence of Buddhism so that if perhaps he also comes across a monk belonging to the order he will have some idea of what that person is pursuing and represents. I have also made reference to the followers of Shankaracharya who are seen predominantly in India and besides wearing saffron colored garments are more particularly noted for the three horizontal lines running across

their forehead. It has been shown conclusively in the text that there is really no basic difference between the two sects, so that the observations one will achieve by understanding Buddhism can also be applied quite readily to the "Advaitavada" or monistic Hindus. To many people this information will be very striking since both the non-devotional Hindu monks and the Buddhists represent a very large section of the world's so-called religious majority. For those who subscribe to a particular faith outside of these sects this book will also reveal some cutting-edge facts regarding the personal nature of the Absolute Sentient. I am a very simple person who has no real ability in the writing field but hopefully the reader will forgive my inexperience in this matter for the strength of this book really lies in the information gathered by the consummate monk and founder of the Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti, Bhaktiprajnana Keshava Maharaja. If there is any tribute at all to be made then it

should be directed to him. Although he left this world in 1968 his publishing firm is still active through the main efforts of his disciples Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja and Bhaktivedanta Vamana Maharaja. Completed on the 26th of February, 2003 Ekadasi Tithi Definition of God If you are not privy to the ramifications of Buddhism in general then this book is designed to help. Buddha is the avatar of Vishnu as predicted in the first canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam or Bhagavat Purana, which was written down some 5,000 plus years ago. The Puranas, like the Upanishads, are part of the expansive Vedic literature, which predates any world scripture, and because of its superior authority in philosophical and religious matters can be compared to our Mother. Therefore it follows that if we at all want to know our Father then the best recourse is to approach our Mother. Vishnu is the four-armed form of Transcendence or, in other words personal,

spiritual excellence visible only to yogis and meditators who see him measuring roughly nine inches high and dwelling within the area of the heart. Lying in slumber on the universal ocean, simultaneously he consciously acts for the welfare of all by incarnating when there is a need of reformation. Buddha came as predicted in the Bhagavatam and performed the activities of a reformer. His name, parents, activities and place of birth were all mentioned in this Purana thousands of years before his advent. Yet, although the Bhagavatam stated Gaya would be his place of birth, there was yet another Buddha from Nepal who achieved a so-called state of Nirvana sitting under a tree that marked the birthplace of the original Buddha close to 1,000 years later. The original Buddha or Adi-Buddha was also referred to as Gautama. The later Buddha was a student of Gautama Muni and inherited the name of Gautama thus adding to the confusion of the two Buddhas. Gautama

Buddha, or Shakya Singha Buddha to whom or to whose utterances and philosophy we are conspicuously opposed for reasons we will henceforward point out as clearly as we can, appeared in Nepal and propounded the philosophy of voidism or “sunyavada.” This last term is Sanskrit for the concept of emptiness or voidism and will be elaborated upon throughout this presentation with the hopes of uprooting a major defect in philosophical understanding. We should define here what we mean by God. For us the Almighty is the supernatural source of all existence, all powerful and all knowing. He is so many things in the superlative but bottom line, he is a person. After all we are made in his image, as the Christian Bible points out. But ask yourself this question, dear reader—do the Buddhists believe in a personal creator? The answer is no. They believe in the void, nirvana, nothingness, emptiness or zero as the original cause and reality. Whether it is one sect

or another sect of Buddhism does not matter. They do not believe in God as defined in the above manner, that is, an individual being of infinite power and wisdom. Then again, if you are a Buddhist you believe in Buddha as “God.” In the case of Buddhavatar or the incarnation of Vishnu who appeared in the Indian city of Gaya, this would be true. God’s incarnations are also God. That is to say whenever and wherever the Lord appears it is a transcendental form and feature, which does not die or grow old. The various incarnations of Lord Vishnu as described in the Vedic Puranas as a God-lion, God-fish, God-tortoise and so on were not material beings but spiritual avatars who came for a specific purpose. To the Judeo-Christian mentality this may all seem either fictional or fantasy but rather than increase the number of pages herein for the sake of argument, suffice it to say that God cannot be defined by our limited brain in limited terms for a limited understanding. He is what he is

and when described in divine words or His own words, who are we to object? The Vedas being the “breath” of God are as good as God. For example when it is said in the Vedas that the stool of a cow is pure we should accept that statement without argument. But if someone persists in objecting to such a statement then we can suggest that a sample of cow stool be examined in a laboratory. There we will find full confirmation that the product although produced from the anus of the animal is completely antiseptic. When there are things beyond the purview of our limited range of sense perception then we have no other recourse than to accept the Vedic authority. The appearance of Buddha, the Avatar (a divine descent) is based on the statements of scripture. Scripture here meaning the Vedas, specifically the Srimad Bhagavatam or Bhagavat-purana where in the 1st canto of the sacred Sanskrit text a description of the advent and purpose of Buddha is

predicted as well as the history (His story) of the above mentioned animal-like incarnations. Remember also that the compilation of the Bhagavatam took place long before the advent of the Buddha, which certainly adds credence to the legitimacy of the Vedas. Along with others in the list of avatars or divine incarnations, Buddha is mentioned along with His place of origin and parents' names. However, there is another Buddha whose place of origin differs from the original Buddha and whose teaching is altogether different. The other Buddha, or Shakya Singh, sought enlightenment at the same place where the original Buddha appeared in Gaya. In his "enlightened" state he proclaimed that the material world or the cosmos was a big fat zero, or void. He was not a divine incarnation but of flesh and blood, a mortal. His teaching shed no light on the nature of God or the soul. Buddhism under the tutelage of this Buddha from Nepal is not a religion because it does not

accept the Almighty Person as the source of existence, nor does it embrace the concept of a soul in each individual as part of the divine Being. Nor does it accept virtually anything since the crux of the philosophy propounded by the new Buddha was negation of everything, leaving us with nothing. The original Buddha's purpose was to reform the tendencies of the human being. Because the people at that time used parts of the Veda to substantiate flesh-eating, Buddha had to denounce the Veda altogether in order to achieve civil sanity. God, whether in his role as the Buddha or any other incarnation, loves one and all. For society to eat his creatures as food, as opposed to eating the grains of the earth, defeated his real objective. Eventually people followed the Buddha, renouncing their reliance on the Mother Veda for direction and regulation. But the world devoid of its original regulatory scripture, the Veda, was very inauspicious. For that reason

the Lord ordered another incarnation to appear and re-institute Vedic following. His name was Shankaracharya. But that part of the story will come later. In order to apply the cure on the body of humanity, Buddha, and here I am speaking of the Buddha of Gaya origin, had to denounce the literature that formed so much of world culture. The Veda was scripture not just of choice but default. There was no other source of absolute authority. Humanity was in its grip, so to speak, and yet since we know that humanity means human and human means to err, it was inevitable that the independently minded would alter the Vedic law to suit their own needs. The absolute would eventually give sway to the relative to the discredit of the latter. The relative, meaning our very selves, being subject to the whips of material nature in the matter of birth, death, disease and old age approaches the absolute omniscient for shelter but due to an inability to adhere to the principles of "dharma" or religion turns the

law inside out in order to feel comfortable. Human Frailty and the Mission of Buddha To be human is to make mistakes. Imperfection has a way of bringing the absolute down to relative terms. The world dharma corrupts from Satya-yuga to Kali-yuga. According to the Vedic clock, the universe passes through four ages continuously; the first age or Satya-yuga lasts for 1,700,000 years and begins with 100% of the populace pure or sinless until the Treta-yuga begins at which time humanity declines to a state of 75% purity. Then the Dvarpara-yuga begins after 1,200,000 years of Treta-yuga. Initially 50% of the world populace is pure until the Kali-yuga begins some 800,000 years later. At that point in time the world is 25% pure or 75% sinful until the end of the yuga, which comes in another 432,000 years. In the Kali-yuga society corrupts completely, which is why eventually the Lord will have to come and put a complete stop to everything. The Srimad Bhagavatam predicts the future advent of

Kalki, the avatar who rides a white horse and with a blazing sword annihilates all the miscreants of the world at the end of the Kali-yuga. Vedic knowledge is absolute and eternal and does not change, but in the period prior to the appearance of the avatar Buddha men adjusted its laws due to lack of self-restraint. Just as the devil quotes scripture for his own purpose, so the maligned people of Kali made amends such that meat could be taken. The strictness of Mother Veda was too much for the “Kali chelas” (the citizens born during the last cycle of four Vedic time periods). By exploiting certain codes of sacrifice people were able to justify the consumption of animal flesh. With the Vedas being the original scripture of the world we can judge the quality of any other scripture by making a comparison. After all if scripture is the word of God then we would expect to see similar laws established for humanity. The Biblical commandment “Thou shalt not kill” is thus more perfectly

interpreted literally and universally, which is to say the same basic tenant that no living being or creature’s life should be taken except, of course, in either self-defense or curbing a dangerous overabundance of a species. Vedic Time Reference The universe passes through four periods or ages repeatedly. The first and best is the Satya age or “yuga” as it is called in Sanskrit. This age is characterized by longevity and wisdom. As time moved on this age gave way to Treta-yuga, which began with 25% of the populace under the sway in “adharma,” or irreligion. The longevity characteristic of Satya-yuga, wherein a man who could have lived to a ripe-old-age of 100,000 was now decreased by a factor of 10. “Tretayugees” would “enjoy” a life of 10,000 years at best. Proceeding to the next period, Dwarpara yuga, we would find the same principle to be in effect. Life’s duration was curtailed again by a factor of ten. Mankind could hope at best for 1,000 years of

existence and whereas 50% of the population was adharmic or sinful at the end of Treta-yuga, 75% of the population would be so at the end of the Dwarpara age or the beginning of the last age, Kali. After the end of the age of Kali, then again the cycle would repeat itself beginning with the Satya-yuga. The Principle of Nonviolence The Veda had given certain conditions under which an animal could be sacrificed. That situation called for expert priests or Brahmins to bless the occasion with “mantras” or prayers and oblations such that the sacrificial animal was rejuvenated. Thus, an old cow was made young again. The power of the mantras was such that no creature had to die in vain. The seeming cruelty of slaughter was only an outward gesture that magically gave way to instant youth. At least this is what transpired in other ages. But, this being the age of quarrel and hypocrisy typified by the element iron, and signifying an age of dependence on machinery, Kali is bereft of good men. It is

literally stated in the Puranas that demons from the previous age of Dwarpara would reappear as so-called Brahmins in the Kali-yuga. Therefore, it is not at all incongruous for Brahmins in this age to be impotent. The mantras are preserved in the Veda, but without a proper person to chant them they are like computer software in the hands of ignorant children. For this reason the sages and rishis forbade the sacrifice of cows or horses in the age of Kali. The Vedas made some allowance for animal killing, for drinking and for sex. If the animal could be revived, then it was OK to “kill” or sacrifice the animal. If the life taken was replaced then what is the problem? As for liquor, there was some permission for smelling the offering of brewed starches. As for sex, allowance was made via matrimony, and polygamy was not disallowed. A man could marry whatever he could maintain. Polygamy was a way of ensuring every girl a maintainer. Vedic sacrificial rites had the butcher repeat

into the right ear of the animal that it would be able to kill the one who was killing him in the next life. Such was the lust for flesh that even if the tables were turned in the next life, immediate satisfaction was more endearing and the stronger prerogative. The principle of pleasure obviates the fear of repercussion when ignorance predominates. Of course, some have no idea of the future consequences of their actions, but still others do and blatantly continue with the misdemeanor. Is mankind that foolish that it will bear pain to any extent just to taste a drop of sensual pleasure? Is that not what we would call madness? For a little happiness, a mere token of pleasure, a little fraction of satisfaction man and woman will forget everything else. Just imagine what great things could be achieved if we applied the reverse principle. What if everyone was ready to sacrifice his or her own pleasure just to get a glimpse of the Truth? We would all become saints like Lilasuka. Who was Lilasuka? When

Frustration Leads to Emancipation Lilasuka, or otherwise known as Bilvamangala Thakur, was a saintly Brahmin (priest) living in India some years ago when the country was not under the rule of any foreign power. He was well respected in the area and learned in Vedic scriptures. However, despite his vast education and influence he had one fault. He was addicted to the company of one prostitute by the name of Chintamani. Such was his liking for her that even in the middle of a stormy night he ventured across the turbulent river separating their homes with the help of what he thought was a floating log of wood and later discovered to be a corpse. Scaling a boundary wall surrounding her house by grabbing onto a snake that he presumed to be a rope, the Thakur tumbled into the yard and startled the professional maiden from her sleep. On opening the door to her house and witnessing the crazed Brahmin in such a dazed state of mind she

reprimanded him severely for using all his energy for satisfying his taste for sex. Rather, she said prophetically such enormous energy would be better applied in the business of God whom the Thakur had relegated a secondary role in his life being under the sway of illusion. Harkening to destiny's play Lilasuka admonished himself and returned to his religious regimen. However, one day while passing a bathing pond his attention was diverted by a lovely young bride whom the Thakur then followed home. On approaching the young bride's house the husband appeared and humbly beseeched the Brahmin as to what he required. The Thakur, pausing for a moment, thought deeply and with a grave voice requested that his wife please grant him her hairpins. Wondering what the Thakur would want with hairpins the couple stood aghast as the perplexed fellow gauged his eyes from their sockets. Repairing for the forest the blind but contented fellow was

confronted by a young male voice that inquired from him which way he way going. Thakur then said that despite his lack of vision he was journeying to the land of Lord Krishna, Vrindaban. The lad was no other than the very same Lord and took Thakur by the hand leading him to his chosen destination. It was only after the extended association that Lilasuka, the reformed Brahmin was able to recognize the person who brought him to Vrindaban as his very own Lord and Master. With tears in his eyes and a choked voice he began to sing many songs in praise of Krishna as the residents in Vrindaban gazed on in wonder. For Lilasuka lusty desire finally capitulated to the power of repentance. But how many more of us suffer from a weak heart and give in to the demands of the mind and senses despite better judgment? Our attachment to pleasure is a vain attempt to achieve the impossible. Being oblivious to the soul one centers his consciousness on the body and the pleasures

thereof. Despite repeated attempts at satisfaction to date no one has found anything that when taken in bulk satisfies all the more. If we attempt to have unlimited sex there is a point of complete disgust and rejection. If we try to eat gobs of our favorite food, the same rejection occurs. Any material pleasure is self-defeating if it is repeated enough. Play the same song, watch the same show, taste the same dish, smell the same odor and it becomes tedium after a while. The soul is not material, but spiritual and thus the only thing that can satisfy the soul's hankering is spiritual food. The momentary happiness from fleeting stimulation decries our absolute nature and blocks all admission into the higher realms of conscious experience. We therefore should not fall prey to the dictates of a mad mind controlled by the five wandering senses. Satisfaction or Else! Consider the following pathetic story. Jack had ventured too far into the wild on his last vacation. Taking the

Borneo Rainforest Holiday Cruise he had lost contact with his group commander when his cell phone quit. While sitting on the rim of a dry well he noticed a number of serpents slithering around the bottom. The scene was not quite what he bargained for when he had signed up for the cruise package back home. To make matters worse an incredibly loud sound of running boars made his hair stand on end. The large tuskers had appeared out of the bushes and suddenly veered toward where Jack was sitting. Anxious to preserve his tenable existence he grabbed two branches off the tree above the well and hung for some minutes waiting to see if the boars would venture off. Needless to say, the thought of falling into the well frightened him to no end. On the edge of the well he could see the branches were not holding up so well and could snap at any moment. Panicking he cried pitifully and then looking up he saw to his amazement a large beehive in the same tree. The hive was

loaded with honey and was dripping near his face. Sticking out his tongue as far as it would go, Jack was able to catch a drop of the oozing nectar, just enough to take his mind off the horrendous situation he was in. Or was he? No, it was a dream! He had fallen asleep on the ship before even reaching Borneo. Thank God. Here we see an avid instance of the balance of life's dualities, pain and pleasure. Everyone knows you have to take the good with the bad, but what is the real perspective on the balance? Is it always tipping back and forth or is it only rare to find happiness? If we analyze things properly we should come up with the same realization as the Buddha. The Buddha put forward nine basic philosophical issues, one of which being that life is suffering or miserable from start to finish. A child sits within the airtight confines of his mother's womb for months and months. How abominable! After birth and nursing he is forced into an education system where he has to

compete with his peers for recognition. Finalizing a long struggle for academic success he must then find work in order to have the most valuable commodity, money. At work there are many envious people and to rise to greater authority and position is itself fraught with setbacks and bitter frustration. Entering into family life it becomes like a virtual mountain of responsibility as the wife and children yearn constantly for attention. Amidst rising costs, inflation and taxes the unappreciated householder longs for release. When he does retire the body becomes a greater source of anxiety. It now requires constant monitoring of cholesterol levels, blood sugar, inflammation and blood pressure to mention only a few. Statistics scare him to seek more and more advice while the thoughts of prematurely departing from the world and leaving his family helpless mortify him even more. Distraught and sleepless he counts on more and more pills

to correct his distressful situation until eventually he succumbs to the final call. Two Buddhas What the Buddha taught about suffering, everyone has to learn firsthand. Life is miserable and only when some relief appears do we feel that we are happy. Basically we got a bad deal. But the person who deals the cards and shuffles us around has a heart. To extricate the suffering souls from their miserable situation He sends his empowered representative or incarnates as the avatar. Before the Buddha had appeared the Vedas (Srimad Bhagavatam, Canto I) had mentioned his name and place of birth. Considering that the Vedas were written down approximately 2,500 years before his advent it is quite a remarkable prediction (it should be noted that the Vedas, previous to being written, were spoken, which is why they are called sruti or the spoken truth). Of course, this is the Buddha Avatar, an incarnation of God or Vishnu. His appearance was predicted to

be in Gaya, India as opposed to the more recent appearance of Shakya Singh Buddha in Nepal. We have already intimated the reason for the descent of Buddhavatar, being the indiscriminate Vedic pretext used by a populace that wanted to consume flesh. In order to capture the minds of the Indian people Buddha could not contend with allowances made for animal sacrifice in the Vedas. Therefore, Buddha rejected the Vedic laws by saying that the Vedas were man-made and therefore faulty. Considering the fact that the people in India had been following the Vedas from time immemorial this was no small undertaking. Before the Vedas were written down they were followed. Rishis and saints dictated to the people in general the laws of the universe and when the sage Vyasadeva appeared some 5,000 years ago these laws were put into writing. Otherwise, previously the Brahmins or priestly class of men were accepted as living Vedic principles. Whatever

they spoke was taken ipso facto. They were the head of society. A society without a head is virtually dead. There may be a warning not to succumb to mixing religion and politics, but without being guided spiritually by those who have perfect vision a blind secular leader can ruin an entire populace despite the most perfect system of economics and defense. A real leader must be familiar with the principles of religion and follow. If he does not, then naturally everyone else will follow suit. Today there is practically the same indiscriminate slaughter of innocent animals for fun and profit. Why do I say fun? Just listen to the following. A story told by my spiritual mentor many years ago is still in my mind today. A hotel owner in Calcutta had cut off the head of a chicken and was laughing as the bird jumped about in pain. But his small son was shocked and cried loudly. The hotelier tried to calm his son asking him not to cry, but the innocent youth was greatly disturbed.

Such is the rank demeanor of men with no feelings. A young child knows better. Since animal slaughter was the prime consideration for the descent of the avatar Buddha, we can be sure that the profusion of fast-food “hamburgers” is not only disturbing to the Almighty Lord, but having grave consequences for our little planet. Buddha’s purpose as you may remember was principally to save the poor animals from slaughter besides rectifying men who had instigated the deviation. But for the sake of the four-legged in particular he rejected the Word of God, the Vedas, the reason being that rather than argue over the purposes and details of Vedic sacrifice he rejected the whole script. Being God (God and his incarnation or avatar are one and the same) he had every right to so. “He who makes the laws can break the laws.” Would this have been possible for a mortal to do? Hardly. He had to be Vishnu or God himself or fully empowered by God, which is also possible.

Ultimately the Vedas themselves gave the clue to his identity. The avatar Buddha was the Lord himself, Narayana or Vishnu appearing as the son of Anjana in Gaya. The exact Sanskrit terms from the ancient Srimad Bhagavatam (canto 1, chapter 3, verse 24) is given thus: Tatah kalau sampravritte samohaya sura-dvisham Buddhonamnanjana-sutah kikatateshu bhavishyati Translated into English this verse specifically states that the son of Anjana will appear in the province of Gaya, which is in the state of Bihar, India and will delude the envious. "Sura-dvisham" means those persons who are envious of theists and "kalau" indicates the period of Kali, the present age, which is described in the same text as a period of lawlessness and irreligion that began approximately 5,000 years ago and extends for another 427,000 years. The parent's name, the place of birth, as well the mission of Buddha were all predicted thousands of years before his appearance. This incarnation

would appeal to those who would normally not have an inclination towards religion per se. But we are dealing with the greatest personality here. If there is a way that the envious and unqualified are to be reformed then He knows just how and when. However, it must be repeated again that the Buddha predicted by the Bhagavat Purana who appeared as scheduled and the young prince who renounced the world, Shakya Singh Buddha of Nepal, are not one and the same. The Void Shakya Singh or Gautama, appeared in Nepal as the son of a pious king. The date of his appearance was much more modern than that of the Buddhavatar who appeared in Gaya, India. Gautama recognized the original avatar and paid tribute to the place of his appearance. In fact, the tree under which Gautama achieved "bodhisattva," or divine consciousness, was the very spot where Buddhavatar appeared. From this point, however, their purposes diverged. Gautama preached

voidism, which is a suicidal doctrine. It could also be called zeroism, since it lays claim to the fact that everything can be reduced to nothing. That is to say, the cause of all that is, is nothing. And what would be the answer to life's purpose, again nothing. What was in the beginning and ever shall be—nothing or no thing. Thus, all that we see, hear, taste, smell, etc. is a big illusion or dream. It is not real. So, therefore, whatever you are taking serious, forget. It is of no consequence. Everything is ultimately void. Not that I am agreeing with this idea, but certainly there is something to be said for the banal exercises of the world mind and body. As Shakespeare said in Macbeth, "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing." Modern Science and Buddhism Gautama Buddha did not accept consciousness as non-material. Having no concept of spirit, of soul, or of

God, he delineated material atomic combination as the cause of consciousness. The modern Buddha who I just might refer to as Mr. Void says it is all just zero, nothing, no sense, no need to even think. The thinking is also ultimately part and parcel of zero. We might not think that this has anything to do with humanity sciences, but in regards to explaining reality there seems to be a congruence of opinion. After all what does modern science say about consciousness? Well, if you are enrolled in any humanities college you will sooner or later discover that life does not come from life, it comes from matter. Theories on the non-existence of spirit by autocratic academic insistence have become fact these days. The principle of consciousness has fallen under the category of spontaneous generation, similar to the appearance of "bed bugs" arising out of nothing. What was there in the beginning? In the beginning there may have been a big bang according to some

theoretical physicists, but from where has the material come that exploded? Nothing? And what about the whole gamut of living beings from the smallest germ to the largest whale? Was there anything to start the whole evolution of species? Or was life a chance occurrence that came from out of nowhere. Scientific rationale seems to be almost Buddhist. If there was anything that such doctorate postulations describe as the initial something it is so small that it might as well be nothing. As Adolf Hitler said, if a lie is propagated enough it will eventually be accepted as Truth. So, here is the lie. By the proper combination of elements, matter under prime conditions becomes alive according to chance creation theorists. That random combination of atomic elements over time produces conscious forms is something we have yet to see firsthand, but then we would have to be God to verify such early beginnings wouldn't we? So, to continue, a single cell living being suddenly manifests and

has the innate capacity to multiply. One becomes two, two becomes four and so on. Then with a little self-manifested organizational ability organs and a brain pop out of nowhere. But since it is now accepted as fact if we say anything to the contrary we are branded as heretics and non-believers. Science has become the new theology of the age. However, if you are like me or are from Missouri, the Show-Me-State, then the burden of proof is on the mental speculators. If you walk into any chemistry lab and randomly mix a bunch of chemicals do you find life generating at all? Well, try again, and again, and again. According to microbiological magicians if you tried long enough you would hit on the right combination of elements for the first little entity to appear before your very eyes. But so far no one has come up with the right formula for life and for good reason. Life is not and never will be formulated. It is a divine essence that has no beginning and no end. It is non-

material, spirit soul that brings consciousness to matter. The scientists have tried to outguess God but failed despite all the word jugglery. Life comes from life. Even the so-called cloning of human species or animal species of late does not alter the real picture in the least. Spirit can enter matter to bring about life under higher supervision. No living being can be duplicated. There may be twins, clones or look-a-likes but inevitably the personalities are different since an individual soul cannot be copied. But then how is my word any better than anyone else, especially those who have credentials, a name, and letters behind their name? This is where we bring in absolute authority. Absolute authority is free from the faults of humans which are basically four; the propensity to cheat, being subject to illusion, having imperfect senses and making mistakes. There is such an authority, which is not contaminated, and dear reader please read on. Vedic Authority This is where the need for real

authority comes in. Otherwise we will resign everything and ourselves to the void or chance. In school you can imagine what kind of grades you would get if on every test question you answered "zero." The idea that everything can be reduced to nothing may have some appeal to those who wish to annihilate everything. Now that I think about it, how many people are out there whose lives don't amount to anything? Hundreds. Thousands. Millions. Billions. What does it matter? Does anything matter? Maybe Mr. Void was right after all. Life is just a joke. Add it up and it comes to nothing. Divide it by anything. Multiply it by anything. Add zero to zero and you get zero. Here is where we need some reckoning. But who is to tell us what is what? Will you listen to just anybody? If we do not find an absolute authority then anybody's guess is as good as anybody else. Your truth is just as good as mine. Here is where we start the campaign, folks, but not without some inkling of hope and reason. There has got to be

a way, because I for one cannot accept zero. The universe abhors a vacuum and my mind does too. Therefore, with all due consideration I would like to introduce those who are unfamiliar, to the Veda. Veda means knowledge. It is all knowledge worth knowing. The Veda is like the instruction book you find in a new equipment box. When the universe first appeared the Vedic instructions came along with it. It is not temporal. It is eternal and part and parcel of God. The Veda is likened to the breath of God. "Shastra" is the Sanskrit term for Vedic literature such as the Puranas, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Upanishads and the original four Vedas, being the Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda and Arthava-Veda. The Veda is also called "shruti" since before they were written down, they were spoken by highly elevated transcendentalists. It was the great sage Vyasadeva, also recognized as an incarnation of the Almighty who wrote down the Sanskrit Vedas for the people of this age. The

Bhagavad-gita composed of 700 verses is considered to be the essence of the Vedas and the Srimad Bhagavatam or Bhagavat Purana, composed of 18,000 verses is considered to be the cream of the Vedas or graduate level Vedic theology. Complete detailed answers to questions on the nature of the world, God, our self and all the various interactions that can and could take place are to be found in the various Vedic writings. As Lord Krishna stated in the Bhagavad-gita, chapter thirteen, verse 5: "That knowledge of the field of activities and of the knower of activities is described by various sages in various Vedic writings. It is especially presented in the Vedanta-sutra with all reasoning as to cause and effect." We cannot accept other sources of information if in fact they are compilations of human thought. Humans are imperfect and whatever information we receive from imperfect beings is subject to the four fallacies mentioned before—imperfect sense perception, a propensity to

cheat, committing mistakes and being subject to illusion. Philosophy without religion adds up to mental speculation. There are so many philosophers who each present their own concocted ideas on reality. Their own fame rests on the fact that they are able to come up with a new presentation, or a new way of looking at the world. Yet, how can we possibly accept such ideas if every one of them differs from every other one? If no one concurs about basic truth then how could any one be considered superior? If a plurality of humans agreed on certain things, not by merely accepting the statements from others but by realizing such things themselves, then more weight to an argument. If that plurality is also in concordance with the words of the scripture, here the Vedas, then that truth must certainly be considered fact. On the other hand, if there is an opinion that differs from the statements contained in the Vedas then the opinion must be scrutinized for faults. The Vedas themselves being

above human fallacy and misconception should always be regarded as the perfect conception. Take for example the stool or dung of a cow. To an ordinary person the urine and stool of animals is impure and should be avoided. However, it is a scientific fact that can be corroborated in any laboratory that the excreta of cows is antiseptic. Therefore we should accept the Vedic version above the information received through our material senses. After all, what power does a living being have in contemplating things which lie beyond his range of perception? Just as if you were trying to read this page and the size of the letters was a tenth of what you are seeing. Would you squint and try the impossible or use a magnifying glass? The magnifying glass would reveal the words to you clearly and there would be no need to try and decipher the text. In a similar way, there is no need to speculate on reality. With the Vedic wisdom, the knowledge passed down through the most ancient of

times we need not strain our brains working out the equation of Truth. Truth is stated clearly for our benefit. All the research work has already been done. There is no need to reinvent. The only problem lies in interpretation where the text is ambiguous. In case of any ambiguity, there is a safeguard known as "sampradaya." Four Lines of Vedic Authority There is a stamp of authenticity defining and clarifying the Vedic regiment of knowledge. That stamp is the line of teaching passed on from a realized master to qualified disciples. The truth is revealed in the Vedas and explained by realized masters to their students, some of who, in due course of time, also realize the same truth and in turn pass it on to their students. This is called Vedic "sampradaya" or divine lineage. The Padma Purana is one of the most important of Puranas or Vedic histories. Although there are four original Vedic texts as mentioned before, the Rig, Sama, Arthava and Yajur; the

Puranas are considered not only the fifth Veda but being that they were written subsequent to the original four they are considered more important. Whatever is said last carries more weight than what was said first, generally. The Padma Purana is literally the Lotus Purana. It specifies four lines of authority, namely the Rudra-Sampradaya (the line of authority beginning with Lord Shiva), the Laxmi-Sampradaya (the line of authority beginning with Shree Laxmi), the Kumara-Sampradaya (the line of authority beginning with the four childlike sons of Brahma) and the Brahma-Sampradaya (the line of authority beginning with Brahma). If knowledge is received in any of these four sampradayas it is considered perfect, otherwise not. Although this may sound like sectarianism it is not, due to the fact that absolute philosophical truth cannot be compromised. It stands on its own strength and towers above all. It may also sound self-righteous to place the Vedas

above other world scriptures but this is also not the case. It is simply a matter of definitiveness or quality. The Vedas are vast and detailed books of wisdom. Although other scriptures also describe God and Truth they are not as detailed or in depth as the Vedas. If we had two dictionaries, a pocket dictionary and an international collegiate dictionary, which would you choose for a word definition? Obviously, the collegiate dictionary would be the first choice. That is discriminating for achieving a better result. In the same way, without bias or slighting any other scripture of the world we must take knowledge from the Vedas as it is received in the line of disciplic succession of bona fide God-realized souls on the strength of detail and authenticity. Therefore, before anyone speaks on the absolute truth we require, first and foremost, the exact lineage or "sampradaya." Otherwise the knowledge should be considered imperfect. The Vedic Paradox In the Srimad

Bhagavatam, the final work of the sage Vyasadeva and the author's veritable commentary on his highly intellectual text the Vedanta Sutra, there is a verse in Canto One, chapter two wherein the sage Shukadeva mentioned the advent of Buddhavatar. Shukadeva Goswami spoke this prediction long before the appearance of Buddhavatar in Gaya. The Bhagavatam is so exacting and precise. In fact, as a safeguard against any and all contenders for the position of avatar this book also lists the subsequent avatars after Buddha. If a person proclaims himself as God then he had better have his name in this book. Otherwise, any intelligent person should immediately reject him as bogus. In India many persons knowing the naiveté of Western people begin advertising themselves as God-incarnate by displaying a number of mystic powers. To the innocent and ignorant such wonders are certainly astounding. But, compared to the powers of the Supreme Lord such magic is

like that of a firefly compared to the light of the sun. By referring to the Vedic Shastra or scripture any self-declared incarnation or pseudo-Bhagavan can be easily identified as a fraud if his name is not inscribed therein. After, Buddhadeva the Bhagavatam mentions Chaitanya as the next avatar. His parents' names are also mentioned as Jagganath Misra and Sachi and his place of birth Navadwip, West Bengal. The last avatar mentioned in the Vedas for the Kali-yuga is Kalki, who appears many thousands of years henceforward as the supreme chastiser. Other than these three personalities there is no other name given for an avatar. Since Chaitanya or Gauranga (golden limbed one) appeared in the fifteenth century, the only avatar remaining for Kali-yuga is Kalki. The end of Kali Yuga will not come for another 427,000 years. Thus we should not expect any avatar on this planet in our lifetime at least. But returning to the question of the hour. Why would an avatar deny the Vedic scripture

when such scripture is veritably coming from God himself? The avatar being non-different from God, this would be in effect God denying his own work. Why build a house and then tear it down? Well, the reason lies predominantly on the strength of character in the human species. Man let down God, again. Sound familiar? I had mentioned earlier how men had twisted and screwed out the meaning they wanted from the Vedas to suit their own taste. Not being given direct sanction to devour flesh they took sacrificial animal remnants as a way to satisfy their palate. This indiscriminate adjustment of Vedic ritual put the four-legged into a quandary and it became so serious that God himself had to come in order to rectify the situation. How compassionate our Lord is for his creation! Certainly, mankind is more important than the animal species, but not to their wholesale expense. God truly loves one and all. For those who are already vegetarian this reading will be all the more

affirming. But if you are among the class of humans who eat animals, a word of caution is in order. If God incarnated to reform those who ate sacrificial flesh then what would be the position of those among us who eat the same flesh without any tribute or sacrifice? Among the animals recommended for slaughter in the Vedas is the ram or goat and this is performed individually in each case, not that there was an assembly line of butchers to kill and process the animal flesh. The Vedic ritual was such that before slitting the throat of the victim, words were spoken into the animal's ear clearly demarking the occasion as one in which the roles would be reversed in the next life. That is the goat was told that he would be able to kill the person who was about to kill him in the next life. Whether this made the goat feel any better is doubtful, but the fact that it obtained a human birth from the ritual was certainly a boon. For without a human form it is virtually impossible to understand God and the same

may be said of the animal killer (which includes the distributors, buyers, cooks, sellers and cultivators). The same Purana in which we previously referred to, Srimad Bhagavatam mentions this fact, which I will specifically state herein: nivritta-tarshair upageeyamaanaad bhavaushadhaach chrotra-mano-bhiraamaat ka uttamashloka-gunaanuvaadaat pumaan virajyeta vinaa pahughnaat The translation is as follows: "Knowledge of the Supreme Lord is received through the line of authorities known as 'parampara,' which is passed on from teacher to disciple. Such transcendental descriptions are relished by persons detached from the temporal world and are the perfect medicine for the living beings suffering repeated birth and death. Only a butcher or animal killer will refuse to hear such glorification." The Sanskrit word "pashughnaat" means animal killer. Animals are conscious and therefore souls, but the consciousness is covered by ignorance. It has

feelings, very akin to mankind and will protect its young and love its mate. Yet, the animal engages only eating, sleeping, sex and killing or defending itself. It has no power of philosophical inquiry into the realm of transcendence. It is destined to be subservient to mankind and all for good purpose. The bull as it was originally intended, ploughs the field. The cow provides milk. The horse provides transport. The lamb provides wool. All the creatures are part of the arrangement by God for man's benefit. Now, when mankind turns around and slays these innocent creatures you can bet the creator will be upset. Particularly, this could be said of the cow, since this animal nourishes the human species from birth to death with a miracle liquid made from grass. To stop this injustice God incarnated as Buddha. But in order to do that he had to deny the authority of the Vedas, since the sanction for animal sacrifice was in its pages. So it was that India turned to Buddhism and

consequently left the lap of Mother Veda. Buddha replaced the Veda. His words became the Veda. Whoever makes the law can break it or reinvent it. The Buddhistic principles held the people of India for some time until the appearance of another incarnation. This time the incarnation was Shiva in the person of Shankaracharya. Being that there is a subtle distinction between Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, the incarnation, Shankaracharya, is not considered a direct incarnation of God. This designation of lordship is probably the biggest controversy in India and amongst those of Indian descent but if we apply the scalpel of Vedic injunctions the divergence of opinion can be resolved conclusively. Shiva is more or less God. The example given in the Vedic scripture, Brahma samhita, is that Govinda (Lord Vishnu) for the sake of argument is compared to milk whereas Shiva is compared to yogurt. Yogurt is derived from milk and is in once sense the same but also

different. So, likewise when Lord Vishnu becomes transformed for the work of destruction He becomes Shiva. Thus although the two are non-different one is subservient (Shiva) and the other fully independent (Govinda). We have already mentioned the incredible power of influence in the person of Buddha and the same can be said of Shankaracharya, for it was he who drove Buddhism out of India and subsequently reintroduced the Vedic authority. Shankaracharya, the Incarnation of Shiva We find the reasons for the descent of Shiva in the form of Shankaracharya by drawing from the statements of the Padma Purana and Shiva Purana. For those who are immersed in the dialectics of monism this is such a blow to the ego that I will purposefully write the exact words of the Puranas below as well as the translation into English. The first quote is from the Shiva Purana and is spoken by Lord Vishnu to Lord Shiva. Now for those of you who do not have

any idea who either of the above are, perhaps a short description of the personalities involved here is in order as well as something regarding their perspective functions. There is a hierarchy in the universe. In the Vedic scheme of things there are, at least in this particular universe, 33,000,000 “devas” or demigods. The function of such powerful living beings is only a matter of comparison, for in any large operation whether private or public there is a chain of command. So it is with the universe which is divided according to the astronomical Vedic sources into fourteen planetary systems. Amongst these powerful living beings there are a few major roles. Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva are the primal demigods who create, maintain and destroy respectively. Universal Management Lord Vishnu maintains the universe, Lord Brahma acts as the engineer or functional creator and Lord Shiva destroys everything in due course. The creation and destruction goes on continually

and in each instance Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva play their respective parts. As for Lord Vishnu, although he is considered amongst the primal gods, he is actually in a higher category. His power and glory is above Shiva and Brahma. He is principle and independent whereas they are subservient and subordinate. To equate them would be a theological mishap, not just unethical. Vishnu also dwells in the hearts of all living beings as the Paramatma or the Supersoul. In fact, he dwells even within the heart of the atom. He is everywhere. Nothing escapes him. He accompanies the living being until that great day when the "jivatma" or living being is liberated from matter and goes onto the spiritual world. That spiritual world is called Vaikuntha or the land of no anxiety, literally. There is no death, disease, old age or matter in any shape or form. It is forever free of illusion and every day is a perpetual festival. Surrounding that realm wherein there are planets with populations of

eternally liberated souls engaged in loving service to the Supreme Lord Vishnu is a spiritual light called the Brahmajyoti. It is ever-effulgent and full of living beings who are merged in Transcendence, but without any engagement. They sit forever in a type of bliss called "brahmananda" that could hardly be described, except to say that it is the feeling of being totally free from all suffering and illusion. Yet, due to the fact that they have no form or activity it is liberation in name only. The entities there are free from the entanglements of matter and the pain of birth and death, but at the same time they are separated from their real form and identity as eternal servants of God. If a prisoner was being transferred out of confinement into civilization again he would be so happy, but what if he had to wait forever in the transfer room? Such is the predicament of the soul merged in Transcendence. He is out of the world of death but not quite in the world of eternal

life. Something is missing and that one thing is devotion to the Supreme Form of the Absolute as confirmed in the Bhagavat Purana. That the Absolute has form may be to some an indication of limitation but the Vedic statements altercate by emphasizing absolute form without material inebriety, full of bliss and knowledge. Vishnu is and always will be existing as he is. Brahma however will be around only for as long as the universe exists, but that's it. These indications form part of Vedic theology, which we will deal with in a subsequent volume, but for a fact the statements of the Vedas verify the Absolute as blissful eternal sentience with exquisite form and figure—"satchitananda vigraha" as it is said in Sanskrit. As sparks emanate from fire, so the soul is conceived of as a spark of the divine, or as an eternal particle of the Supreme, having form and figure latently invested. Every living being or spiritual spark has an eternal form and personality and by nature

wants to engage in activity. To deny activity of the soul is to deny its fundamental proclivity, which is counterproductive and self-denial. Thus a desire to merge with the One or become One with the Absolute denies the true nature of the soul and its relationship to the Supreme Soul. That having been said we can then look at those aspiring for monistic oneness to be lacking in knowledge. The light of eternity absorbs everything that gets beyond the material world, but for lack of devotion to the Personal source of that light no admission is given to the planets of variegated spiritual wonder. In one sense the Brahmajyoti is a prison for those who deny the existence of form and personality on the spiritual level. Anyone who is attracted to the philosophy of monism is doomed. It is in essence spiritual suicide, for the personality of the soul is denied, in essence killed. In fact, it is even more suicidal than suicide. In normal acts of suicide a person kills the outer dress, or the temporary body. But in the case of "spiritual

suicide” one kills his soul’s essence. He steps into a lonely spiritual transit lounge. If desire again for material activity erupts then the “liberated” soul can return to the domain of birth and death. Full liberation is only guaranteed by entering a spiritual planetary system as emphasized in the Bhagavad-gita, chapter eight, verse 21: “That Supreme abode is described as unmanifested and infallible and is the supreme destination. One who goes there never comes back.” How happy would anyone be on a space station alone if in fact he could live on Mars or Venus with fictionally speaking happy extraterrestrials? As the astronauts eventually return so those lonely semi-liberated souls in quasi-nirvana-land eventually come back to dwell amongst the mortals. One who leaves his body immaturely as in the case of suicide has only to dwell in this world as a ghost and suffer. A ghost may be liberated from the gross material body but that does not ensure his happiness. The

ghost is forever bothering those with gross bodies in order to taste physical pleasures. Pleasure is the goal of life for those with gross bodies, with only subtle bodies and with no bodies.

Brahmananda or the pleasure of merging in Brahman, the spiritual effulgence of the Vaikunthas or spiritual world cannot satisfy sufficiently, otherwise why would such “happy” liberated souls return to the world of mortals again? A ghost has a form, albeit subtle, but a “spiritual ghost,” those who have “merged” with the Absolute, have neither gross nor subtle form and cannot be delivered to the spiritual world except through the agency of special mercy. Generally, such lonely souls again desire activity in the material realm and return to live in the same situation they once considered illusion. Thus, even though they are happy to be free from the gross material existence such “liberated” souls again become agitated. Therefore, one has to find a higher ground of complete

liberation to be fully satisfied. That primal objective will grant “sevananda” and “premananda” or the bliss of loving service to the Supreme Lord for one who follows the system of “parampara” or authorized revelation coming in line of true spiritual professors. The goal of merging with God, becoming one with God, or becoming God all may sound sublime to those who have no information of spiritual love and service. The basic nature of the soul is to serve. This is reality. The soul is a person whether it takes birth as an ant or a tree or a human. Within the body is a spark of divine energy, which automatically progresses within the species of plants, insects, fish and animals until it comes to the human form of life. Once human life is achieved the soul by good fortune can understand and realize its true nature and relationship to the Absolute Primal Lord of all beauty. The soul has a distinct spiritual form finer than any material form and which can only be

revealed by coming in the line of bona fide transcendental teachers or acharyas. That sacred “parampara” or “sampradaya” is not a closed club. It is open for anyone who wants out of this world and into the spiritual world of love and service. The process of spiritual training purifies the heart until one’s spiritual form and qualities can be understood. We then become “ourselves.” Until then we are not ourselves. We are instead acting under the sway of material conditioned responses. Just like a puppeteer moves the strings of a puppet and manipulates his hands, legs and mouth, so under the spell of illusion everyone acts under the control of the illusionary energy, which has three strings that she pulls in various ways. Those strings are the mode of ignorance, the mode of passion and the mode of goodness. All living beings are under the control of Maya’s (the material energies) three modes until they become actually liberated and that process of liberation is

given in the Bhagavad-gita wherein Lord Krishna says in chapter seven, verse 14, "This material energy of mine (Maya) is very difficult to overcome, but those who surrender unto me, can easily cross beyond." If this process is applied under proper direction one then becomes a free agent. He or she is no longer to take birth again in the material world. We should claim our true identity as a lover of God. This is the goal of life despite what anyone else may say. It is authorized Vedic conclusion. For lack of this realization we will all have to live with an identity-crisis birth after birth. Be All That You Can Be The other day there was a bumper sticker on the back of somebody's car, which read, "Be All That You Can Be." It was an advertisement for the Army or Navy. The gist, of course, is that by enrolling in the defense of the country one becomes or achieves the most in life, the very best of his self as a servant of the country. And this may be true to some degree. Initially we all serve ourselves

for personal gratification. Even with friends and lovers personal satisfaction always reigns. Then later we may marry and serve our wife and children. At work we serve our employer and when we offer to serve others in charity or selflessly then we become greater. If we serve our city or county in further charitable acts we do become greater as long as our motives are pure. If we rise to the level of serving our country and the whole world for the sake of peace and happiness we may become recognized for generosity and magnanimity. However, above all is service to God. That is where a soul really finds himself and becomes all that he can really become. Whatever one may do for his family, country or the world will be finished at death but one who realizes his actual self and loves God, his service places one another step higher in the evolution of the soul. The more he serves the more he realizes, until all the levels of pure devotion carry him out of this world to the supreme abode.

Thus nothing is ever lost when one applies himself to the love and service of the absolute whole. By serving the lower ranks of family and country great recognition may follow but not necessarily the transcendental objective, which is to return to the deathless planets abounding in perpetual happiness of direct divine service. As one who joins the Army or Navy receives many months and years of training before he is sent out to serve, so similarly many months and years of tutelage by a perfected spiritual master eventually stabilizes one so that he can serve the Supreme Being in an eternal blissful relationship without the least attachment for the world or worldly philosophies. Ultimately one must find a teacher who comes in one of the four bona-fide disciplic lines of acharyas and follow his instructions for achieving perfection. This is called "abhideya" in Sanskrit or practices to achieve full self-realization. The initial linking up in a bona-fide chain of spiritual teachers and abiding

by their instructions is called initiation. Once these two factors are in place then it is expected that one will reach the goal of pure love of God in due course of time. To come to this point in life is glorious but many do not because of attraction to other processes and philosophies which miss the goal altogether. That is why we now want to proceed further in examining the philosophy of Shankaracharya and how he achieved his ends by plagiarizing Gautama Buddha's concept of the Void. Once free from such impersonal voidist ideologies then by following the bona fide hearing process we shall come to the perfect conception and revel in our success. The Srimad Bhagavatam or Bhagavat Purana, tenth canto, fourteenth chapter, verse three fully agrees with this proposal: "My dear Lord, those devotees who have thrown away the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth and have therefore abandoned discussing empirical philosophical truths should

hear from self-realized devotees about Your holy name, form, pastimes, and qualities. They should completely follow the principles of devotional service. Surrendering themselves fully with body, mind and words they can live in any position. Indeed, O Lord, although You are unconquerable, You are conquered by such persons.” Let us now investigate the hows and whys of “Sunnyavada” (voidism) and “Mayavada” (impersonalism) the two respective philosophies of Buddhism and Shankarism. The Order to Reinterpret the Vedas In the Shiva Purana, Lord Vishnu speaks the following to Lord Shiva (Sanskrit text) Dvaparadau yuge bhutva Kalaya manusadisv Svagamaih kalpitais tvam cha Janan mad-vimukhan kuru (English translation) “In the Kali-yuga, mislead the people in general by propounding imaginary meanings for the Vedas in order to bewilder the mass of people” And in the Padma Purana Lord Shiva told his wife Parvati, (Sanskrit text) Srinu

devi pravakshyami Tamasani yatha-kramam Yeshan sravanamatrena Patityam jnaninam api Apartham sruti-vakyanam Darshayal loka-garhitam Karma-svarupa-tyajyatvam Atra cha pratipadyate Sarva-karma-paribhramsam Naisharmyam tatra chochyate Paratma-jivayor aikyam Mayatra pratipadyate (English Translation) “My dear wife, hear my explanations of how I have spread ignorance through Mayavada philosophy. Simply by hearing it, even an advanced scholar will fall down. In this philosophy, which is certainly very inauspicious for people in general, I have misrepresented the real meaning of the Vedas and recommended that one give up all activities in order to achieve freedom from karma. In this Mayavada philosophy I have described the jivatma (individual soul) and Paramatma (Supersoul or the Supreme Lord as the indwelling guide) to be one and the same.” Again, in the Padma Purana the following is spoken by Lord Shiva who incarnated

as Shankaracharya to carry out the above order of Lord Vishnu, (Sanskrit text) Mayavadam asac chastram Pracchanam bauddam uchyate Mayaiva kalpitam devi Kalau brahmanarupina Brahmanas chaparam rupam Nirgunam vakshyate maya Sarva-svam jagato'py ashya Mohanartham kalau yuge Vedante tu maha-shastre Mayavadam avaidikam Mayaiva vakshyate devi Jagatam nasa-karanat "This Mayavada philosophy is impious. It is covered Buddhism. My dear Parvati, in the form of a Brahmin in the Kali-yuga I will teach this imagined Mayavada philosophy. In order to bewilder the atheists, I describe the Supreme Lord to be without form and without qualities. "Similarly, in explaining Vedanta, I describe the same Mayavada philosophy in order to mislead the entire population toward atheism by denying the personal form of God." There you have it straight from the pages of the Vedic Puranas. It may not mean much to some people but

for those who understand how deep the monistic theory or impersonalism runs in the world even in so-called theistic circles these statements are real eye-openers. Just think about the implications propounded in this concocted philosophy: God and the individual self are non-different. In other words, my dear friend, you and I are God. We are Brahman. There is no separate person, God. We are all God. Sound familiar? It is actually a very popular idea in certain circles and why not? If we are God, we are not obliged to anyone. We are independent. We are completely free and have all the power to do as we like. It is only a matter of realizing the fact and there are plenty of people out there who will lead you to believe that they have realized that fact and can help you to do the same. Now, remember what Lord Vishnu instructed to his devotee Shiva in the Shiva Purana, "propound imaginary meanings to the Vedas." If the philosophy is imaginary then the goal must

also be imaginary. No one becomes one with God. He remains God and you remain as a tiny individual soul.

Deceptive Philosophy of Shankara The theory of oneness, that we are all the Supreme Brahman or God, is imaginary. Oneness may exist in quality since the tiny soul and the Supreme Soul both are "cinmaya" or transcendental spiritual substance. However, the former is infinitesimally small. The Upanishads mention the dimension of the jiva as 1/10,000th the tip of a hair. The latter is infinite, as we should expect. By various grammatical interpretations of the Vedas, Shankara forcefully defeated the Buddhist pundits and reintroduced Vedic evidence. However, in order to reintroduce the Vedas he had to mask the concept of a personal God. Shankara being Shiva was actually a devotee of the Lord. At the end of his life, he told his disciples to worship Govinda. His exact words were: Bhaja govinda bhaja govinda Bhaja govinda mudha mate Sanprapte sannihite kale na hi

na hi Rakshati dukrin karane "Just worship Govinda. Just worship Govinda. Just worship Govinda. You fools! Jugglery of philosophical grammar, logic and reason will not save you from the hands of death!" The Srimad Bhagavatam or Bhagavat Purana also gives a similar verse in this connection in canto ten, chapter fourteen, verse four wherein it is said: "My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the only auspicious path. Those who reject the path of bhakti and try to reach the infinite with their finite brains will never succeed. O Lord, those who want to have a clear conception of You through their intellect find that their attempts are useless. Their endeavors end only in trouble and frustration, like the frustration of those who try to beat rice from empty husks." The Higher Taste There have been many converts to Vaishnavism or Personalism from the ranks of impersonalist and Mayavada followers and yet not one soul has every converted to impersonalism or

voidism after becoming familiar with the complete tenants of Vaishnavism. The great speaker of the Bhagavat Purana, Shukadeva Goswami was at first persuaded by impersonalism until convinced by his father, Vyasadeva otherwise. In the twelfth canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam one can look in the twelfth chapter and find verse sixty-nine as follows: "Let me offer my respectful obeisance's unto my spiritual master, the son of Vyasadeva, Shukadeva Goswami, who defeats all inauspicious things within this universe. Although in the beginning he was absorbed in the happiness of Brahman realization and living in a secluded place, he became attracted by the wonderful pastimes of Lord Krishna and ultimately spoke the supreme Purana, Srimad Bhagavatam, the bright light of the Absolute Truth." Personal Logic Anyone who follows Shankara's philosophy of oneness should not hold his self as very dear for on achieving "moksha" or final beatitude that final

essence becomes indistinguishable from that which it enters, Brahman. According to Shankara once we realize we are God, we lose our individuality. The example often given is that of a drop of water and the ocean. Once drops of water merge in the one ocean they become one with the ocean. Or once a small pot is broken the sky in the pot merges with the entirety of the big sky. However, for the sake of argument there are also many aquatics in the ocean itself. They are all different and individual. There are not merged or homogenous with the ocean. A bird may disappear in a tree but not that he becomes one with the tree. It is a fact that the soul is non-material. All living beings are souls whether in the body of a worm, a fly, a whale, a germ or a human. Whatever grows must have life and therefore must have an individual soul. All souls are unique. No one is the same. This fact is expressed physically but is also true spiritually. Every soul is a person complete with spiritual

senses, mind and body, which manifests in the stage of spiritual perfection. Just like someone who is diseased acts differently than his normal self. But once freed of the sickness he returns to his normal state. Due to the power of illusion we identify with the external self, consisting of gross (flesh and blood) and subtle (mind and ego) material bodies. We act abnormally due to the material conditioning covering our real self - the soul. However, once that conditioning is removed and our disease is gone then our real self manifests itself automatically. The Bhagavad-gita or Gitopanishad is respected as the essence of the Upanishads. In the second chapter of the Gita, verse twelve, Krishna tells Arjuna, his forlorn disciple who is bewildered about the prospects of war, "Never was there a time Arjuna, when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings, nor in the future shall any of us cease to be." In other words, we will remain individuals forever despite the change of body. To deny that

eternal individuality is ignorance of our actual self. We are persons and God is a person. He is great and we are very small. We are forced to change our physical form whereas His form never changes. Presently, covered by Maya or illusion we think "Oh, I am American" or "Oh, I am Mexican" or "Oh, I am Jewish" or "Oh, I am Christian," but in actuality we are none of these designations. We are pure spirit, part and parcel of the Supreme Spirit Whole who is also a person but He is never under illusion nor is He forced to take another body since His body is cent-per-cent spiritual. This is Dualism or the distinction between God and the individual souls. If we were God originally, as the impersonal Mayavada philosophers say, then how is it possible for matter or Maya to overcome God? If God can become bewildered then he is not God. He must be always in the liberated condition. Only by recognizing the individual soul as an eternal part of the Supreme Spirit Whole can we

understand our true nature as an eternal servant. It is Maya or illusion, which dictates to us that we are lords and instead of serving God we become a competitor. Thus a conditioned soul bound up by illusion tries to exploit the whole material nature just to satisfy his unlimited desires for pleasure. This is total ignorance of our real self and causes the soul to suffer repeated birth and death in the material world. Self-realization means to accept the principle that I am an eternal servant of God. Illusion dictates the opposite, "I am lord and everything is meant for my pleasure." Such a diseased mentality perpetually entraps the soul in the nature's recycling program. Sometimes I may take birth as a human, but other times I may live as a bird in a tree, or a frog in a well, or a cow in the field. Nature awards and punishes one with a higher or lower birth according to the activities or karma of the individual. If we were God then why are we forced to accept suffering under the dictates of illusion..

Thus the basic precept of the impersonalist Mayavadis is illogical and perverse. It can only be eradicated by submitting to the pure wisdom obtained from the bona fide channels of Truth, the Vedic "parampara" system of spiritual masters. Another popular misconception is that God is only light or divine effulgence. However, Brahman, which Shankaracharya emphasized as the supreme state of existence, is really only a partial realization of the Absolute Truth. There is an effulgence emanating from the Supreme God himself, which consists of ever existing spiritual rays called the Brahmajyoti or Brahman. This "white light," or the all-pervasive effulgence is the destination of impersonalist yogis and jnanis (speculators) who are unacquainted with or deny the personality of God. It is also the destination of demons slain by God such as Ravana and Kamsa. God is the Supreme Person but when not seen properly or fully, becomes visible only partially as light.

The Brahman is fully spiritual but living in that light denies the soul its real form and activity. The individual souls all have personal eternal natures. Merging with Brahman is equivalent to being held in eternal custody. Who would volunteer for such lonely confinement, even if it is free from material inebriety. This is the great danger of accepting any impersonal or voidist philosophy. Therefore, it is called the last snare of nescience. The great teacher of Personalism, Shree Chaitanya warned his followers never to read Shankara's commentary on Vedanta or face complete ruination. Shankaracharya gave a twisted impersonal conception to the Vedas on the order of Vishnu as we referenced before in the Padma Purana, as a necessary step but not a complete end in itself. More was to come as other acharyas or divine teachers would appear to take things to the next level. The effect of impersonalism and voidism was so ingrained that the personal form and features of God was

written off as mythology. Therefore as planned systematically by higher authorities Shankara reintroduced the Vedas with his slanted commentary and the focus on the personal aspect was left to the later acharyas or teachers such as Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Vishnuswami and Nimbarka. These four are the more recent leaders of the four sampradayas or lineages of pure uncontaminated personal theology. Shree Chaitanya accepted the line of Madhavacharya. This line is termed the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya Sampradaya since it began with Lord Brahma. Chaitanya took two of the most renowned points of each of the four sampradayas and formulated his philosophy of Achintya Beda-Abeda Tattva or Simultaneous Oneness and Difference which is to say that everything spiritual and material is inconceivably and simultaneously one with and at the same time different from the original absolute source, God. For instance, our soul is

fully spiritual and in quality one with the Supreme, and yet because of our infinitesimal size and potency we are different. Matter is also God in one sense. It is His energy just as milk is the energy of the cow. Still milk is entirely different from the cow. Ultimately the energetic and the energy are one and yet different. We are not God but godly. Shankaracharya started teaching impersonalism although for a fact in previous ages impersonalism also existed. The four sons of Brahma, known as the four “kumaras” as related in the Srimad Bhagavatam were at first absorbed in impersonal Brahman until the time came when the flavor of “tulasi” leaves mixed with saffron from the lotus feet of Lord Narayana entered their nostrils and produced a complete change of heart. Thus whatever leaning they had towards impersonal philosophy came to a quick close. That was in the Satya-yuga, which ended 2,160,000 years ago. In the next age or Treta-yuga, the guru of King

Dasharath was also well known as an impersonalist named Vasishtha who compiled his own version of the Ramayana called the Yoga Vasishtha. Yet, Dasharatha’s divine son being the incarnation of God mercifully changed Vasishtha’s heart forever. Previous to our present age of Kali was the Dwarpara-yuga. In that age Vyasadeva, the compiler of the Vedas had a remarkable son, Shukadeva who remained in his mother’s womb for 12 years. Finally being assured by Lord Krishna that the illusory energy would not touch him he took birth only to disappear into the forest for a life of a hermit. Shukadeva at that time was fully realized in knowledge of impersonal Brahman but by the cunning and compassion of his father, heard the glories of Lord Krishna from the Srimad Bhagavatam. He went on to become the jewel of all history by reciting the full Srimad Bhagavatam for seven days to the then world-emperor, Parikshit Maharaja. The dying king received full knowledge of the Absolute form, pastimes

and qualities of the Supreme Lord and those verses are preserved today in various translations, such as the most glorious work of AC Bhaktivedanta Swami so that the people of this age may also be blessed with the full fledged, final word on transcendental subject matter (spirit). This being Kali-yuga, the last and most degraded of the four yugas, or ages, we find impersonalism very widespread due to many upstarts following in the footsteps of Shankaracharya. People are told that God is light, God is energy, God is DNA, God is love, God is the force; everything but what He really is. For that reason we have published this book with the hopes that the authentic knowledge passed on in the genuine Vedic lineage, "sampradaya," will prevail. Those who see past the illusory concept of being God or being one with God and understand our real nature as an eternal servant of the divine Person will be unlimitedly blessed. Practically everyone on this

planet is facing an identity crisis because they have no idea who they really are. Everyone will say that, "I am Mr. So and So" or "I am Miss So and So." But these names and forms are all material and temporary. How long will we remain Mr. or Mrs. So and So? Everyone is destined to die and be reborn. In each birth we identify falsely with the material body and declare in each life that we are a different person when in fact we are eternal spiritual sparks of the divine possessing an eternal name and form that awaits our getting on the right track. That track is called self-realization or God-realization. This is the only purpose of life and those who deny this fact are subjected to further misery and suffering perpetually in the material world. The Lord reciprocates with love only when his parts and parcels are in perfect alignment with His laws. To not follow the injunctions of scripture is a fault as much as it is to follow such injunctions without understanding why. Therefore,

it is imperative that there be a continuous flow of knowledge in devotion so that at no time will anyone be out of touch with real spirituality. This is preserved in the system of “parampara” or disciplic succession of teachers or fully realized souls. Without such a system of living knowledge being present in the form of the “acharya” or master of wisdom there is every chance that divine theology can become misinterpreted, misunderstood and misapplied by those who are under the powerful spell of the illusory energy or Maya. The Vedic parampara acknowledges four lines of succession, which we have previously mentioned as the Rudra sampradaya, the Laxmi sampradaya, the Kumar sampradaya and the Brahma sampradaya. In this way the knowledge of the ancient sages is preserved and intact. To know who is the present spokesman for the lineage or “parampara” is a matter of finding the best student of the previous teacher or acharya. If the system is to be preserved

then obviously the present teacher cannot change the philosophy an iota. However, the ways and means of introducing that philosophy and sustaining its growth is the prerogative and finesse of the present acharya. A teacher has to judge his audience before speaking. If he speaks too highly then the message may miss its mark. If he speaks too lowly then the audience may just disappear. For lack of such a perfect master the individual and all of society lives in vain. The profit motive must be put on this transcendental footing that real success is overcoming the illusory dictates of the mind and senses for material pleasure. Philosophical Copycat We have been emphasizing the real nature of the soul and how Shankara divested personality from the real picture of the divine. Our soul is divine essence and God is the full repository of divinity. What is quite remarkable is the fact that Shankara even though driving Buddhism from the hills and plains of India, nonetheless borrowed Gautama Buddha’s

voidist precepts. Shaky Buddha studied under the tutelage of the atheist Gautama Muni and thus inherited the name Gautama. The Buddhist philosophy of “voidism” or Nirvana was easily incorporated into the acharya’s monism. Shankara’s plagiarism is evident by examining the philosophical similarities with that of Shaky Singha Buddha. Vishnu-avatar Buddha or Adi-Buddha’s philosophy was based on non-violence or ahimsa and was totally different from Shaky Singha Buddha who appeared a thousand years later in Nepal, or approximately 500 years BC. To see how Shankaracharya’s Mayavada impersonalism and Sakya Singha’s Buddhist philosophy coincide perfectly let us see how the two nullify the existence of the universe, the individual and God in their teachings. If their views do not differ then we can safely conclude that they are the same thing with only the words and names changed. After all logically speaking, things equal to the same thing are equal to

each other. Universal Non-existence According to Sakya Singha Buddha (for simplicity sake SS Buddha) the universe has no existence and did not exist in the beginning. Nothing was in the beginning and nothing will be at the end. Because the past was non-existent and the future will also be non-existent then now must also be non-existent. With this notion we could easily conclude that the Buddha here is also non-existent but let us continue for the sake of the argument. SS Buddha further deduced that any action exists in the future before it is performed. The moment it is performed it becomes the past and since the present is nothing but the illusory space between a non-existent past and a non-existent future, therefore the present must also be non-existent. How it is that SS Buddha was able to establish his philosophy and convert others must by the same token be non-existent. In this way past, present and future were relegated to Nowhere-land or “La La Land” and we find that

Shankaracharya faithfully followed in SS Buddha's footsteps in his book Ajnanabodhini by postulating that the world is an illusion and unreal like a magician's trick. In his book Nirvana Dashaka, Shankara dissolves all existence in the same manner as SS Buddha. SS Buddha's doctrine of non-existence is mentioned in the Buddhist scripture Prajnaparamita-sutra wherein it is stated in the second sutra, "Those who perceive you with contemplation as undecipherable, unmanifest and silent like the sky perceive the non-existent." The sixteenth sutra of the same book says further, "You are very difficult to understand, like an illusion you are seen and not seen." In another Buddhist scripture called the Ashtasaahasrika Prajnaaparamita it is also said, "O' son of God, all religions are an illusion, like a dream, and Buddha is also an illusion, like a dream, and every Buddha is an illusion, like a dream, and the doctrines of even the Bodhi

Buddhas are an illusion, like a dream." This is confirmation of what I said previously about how far the Buddhist go with the theory of illusion. If we look at Shankara's philosophy in comparison to Shakya Singh's we can see how everything is intact but only the names are changed. Thus, illusion or nirvana becomes Brahman. In Shankaracharya's own words in the 45th verse of his book, Aparokshanubhuti, it is said: "The material cause of this world can not be other than Brahman; so the whole world is nothing but Brahman and not anything else." And in the 49th verse of the same book he continues with the same line of thought: "All beings are born from Brahman and become Brahman themselves. One should think in this way." And one last verse from the same work, verse 94 concludes as such: "The Upanishads declare that the material cause of the world is like a pot of clay and that when ignorance is removed, then where is there any sense of the world." So, comparing the two concepts of

SS Buddha's non-existentialism and Shankaracharya's Brahman we see that there is virtually no difference between the two. Salvation is thus, according to these two personalities, merging with the formless-indistinct-void or in Shankara's words Brahman. As the acharya stated in his Stotram Kevaloham, verse three: "Knowledge of oneness with Brahman is the root cause of salvation by which the wise attain the unparalleled bliss of Brahman." The exact word used by SS Buddha to convey knowledge of the cessation of temporal bondage to the world is "prajna." This same word was used many times by Shankara in his Shariraka Bhashya commentary on the Vedanta Sutra. In a book of SS Buddha's which we have already quoted from called the Ashtasahasrika Prajnparamita, there is still more description of the void in the eighteenth chapter, "O' Subhuti, that which is void is also indestructible and that which is void is also immeasurable." "Nirvana is thus immeasurable

or indescribable, or thus indestructible or void, or thus causeless or non-meditative, and thus not transformable or subjugated." Now to add further confirmation of our original contention that Shankara's monism is just a clone of Sakya Singha Buddha's voidism or non-existentialism we will now present the conclusion of Bhaskaracharya who stood undefeated in spite of numerous ontological battles with Shankara. This is verifiable in the book, Shankara Vijaya written by Shankara's own disciple Anandagiri. Remember Shankara's main philosophical thrust was presented in his commentary on the Vedanta-sutra, called Shariraka Bhashya which is so heavily laden with impersonalism that Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the last incarnation of God in the world, told his followers that anyone who reads this commentary is doomed. Bhakaracharya wrote in a 1915 publication by the Chowkhamba Sanskrit Book

Department, "And there is the baseless statement that the transformation happens like yogurt; but this is sung already by the Mahayana Buddhists and by plagiarizing this into mayavadism and turning it around he (Shankaracharya) deluded the people." Nirvana, the Bluff Now that we have come to the conclusion regarding Buddhism being cloned into Mayavada impersonalism another point comes up as to the actual attainment of nirvana or non-existence. Has anyone gone and returned from such a state of nirvana or non-existence to verify its actual existence? If we examine two principle characters, namely the guru of Shankaracharya and his guru as well (param-guru), we will find an interesting antidote. After due analysis we find that neither of the above three proponents of nirvana ever attained that goal. How so? In the authorized biographies on the life of Shankaracharya an account is given of his "darshan" or audience with his guru's guru or param guru,

Goudapad after the latter had left the world. Goudapad appeared to Shankara in his meditation and complimented him on his commentary on his book Mandukya Karika. Goudapad remarked that his disciple Govindapad had conveyed the message concerning the praise Shankaracharya's commentary had achieved, although Govindapad had also left the world. If both guru and the predecessor guru had attained nirvana then Shankara would never have been able to see them since nirvana is a state of existence of uninterrupted bliss in a timeless infinite. All these interruptions spell out clearly the fact that nirvana is a bluff. Even Shankracharya himself was forced to return to the earth and be reborn as Vidyananya! Thus Mayavada impersonalism has been exposed as nothing but Sakya Singh Buddha's void. The Real Nirvana Counter to the formless, indistinct state of being wherein one sacrifices his individuality, mind and senses into some abstract void

is the nirvana of the original Buddhavatar. According to the book Lanka Avatara the ten-headed demon Ravana would journey to Mount Kailash to talk with Lord Buddha. In another portion of that book Lord Buddha gives pertinent information regarding nirvana wherein He states that nirvana is the manifestation of noble wisdom, which expresses itself in perfect love for the enlightenment of all living beings. Thus there is a whole world of difference between the two Buddhas and we should not mistake one for the other. If nirvana is a particular state of consciousness then we should know it by different attributes and qualities. If there are no descriptions of this state of being at all then we have no other recourse than to relegate it to the realm of imagination or hoax. An intelligent man should not accept such a theory with no proof of its existence or admission of its nature. Atheism, the Disbelief in God as a Person We are now coming to the final conclusion

of our essay on the philosophical essence of Buddhism and its clone-monism. Both are atheistic propaganda. In neither system of "knowledge" is there acceptance of the Supremacy of an Absolute Lord, God in his personal feature. To be a theist one must accept the eternal, omnipotent and transcendental form of the Supreme Lord. The common denominator of atheism is the non-acceptance of the existence of a Supreme Person, God. The fact of the matter is that the "holy book" of the Buddhists, principally the Prajnananparamita is compiled by living beings not cognizant of the absolute truth, and is therefore not on the transcendental platform and not of an eternal nature. For that reason there are questions, which cannot be answered by their scriptures and answers, which have changed over time to basic questions regarding Truth. Their conclusions are contradictory and confusing because of premises based on speculative knowledge,

concocted reasoning and emotional sentiment. Religions outside of the Vedic arena are not able to convey the essence of spiritual knowledge in their scriptures. They do not believe in life after death, or the eternality of the soul and neither reincarnation. Any religion, society or civilization, which does not accept vegetarianism as a basic tenet of everyday life, is guilty of being pagan or primitive despite any advancement in technology. On the contrary the pure unadulterated knowledge of the soul and Supersoul contained in the Bhagavad-gita is itself the very foundation and true essence of all religiosity. If there were to be one scripture, which could stand the test of science and logic as well as providing the highest revelation in relation to Absolute sentience, this would definitely be the book of choice. In regards to the pursuit of impersonal understanding, this is what the Bhagavad-gita says in chapter 12, verse 5: "Those whose minds are attached to the

unmanifest, impersonal feature of the Absolute find excessive trouble and difficulty in attaining their cherished goal." And who would not find it difficult, to contemplate nothing, to fix the mind on a void. It is impossible. Form and qualities of a pure transcendental nature can and should be meditated upon. We should do what is practical and in our best interest. Whatever philosophy is devoid of the concept of absolute form and features needs to be reconstituted. We have just pointed out Buddhism and non-devotional Hinduism or Monism, which cover two of the world's major religions as being better classified as non-theistic in essence. We could also point out other major religions for having the same basic flaw but we will avoid that controversy. Religion means the laws of God. However, without any concept of God then there is no need of applying the term religion. Realistically speaking morals or moral codes, which are a precursor to religion are being

accepted as actual religion. But since we defined God in the beginning of this booklet as the omniscient, omnipotent Person then religion should by the same definition enshrine the laws and dictates of that Supreme Personality. In the Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna says in chapter 12, verse 8 to fix the mind on him. Him implies the dark bluish, flute-holding, lotus-eyed cowboy smiling and adorned with a peacock feather in his crown. The mind can easily do this as long as the picture or statue is there. Thus in every household wherever there are devotees of Lord Krishna you will find some painting, picture or Diety. Thus the verse can be practically applied by one and all. There is reference in so many scriptures to remember God or praise God. But someone should ask the question, "Which God?" There must be some tangible yet transcendent person since remembering or contemplating something intangible like the sky is not possible. If we think of the sky, we really think of objects and color, such as

clouds or the color blue. No one really thinks of ether or space. There is want of form and features. God is not a void or emptiness. How can we be more than Him? If we have form and personality, albeit material, then why deny Him, the source of all, a form and personality. There are so many religions and spiritual organizations in the world but who among them ever contemplates the actual personal nature of the Godhead. It is obviously a case of not seeing the forest for all the trees. Our father has a father. His father has a father and his father a father, and so on. But who is the original father of everyone. The only record of such universal genealogy is the Vedic literature. Our English word man is actually derived from the Sanskrit word, "Manu" which refers to the father of mankind, who was a son of Lord Brahma, the engineer or creator of the universe. And it is Brahma who eulogized Lord Govinda in his prayers as the Adi-Purusha, or original

personality of God in his prayers called Brahma-samhita. If there are powerful saints, remembering them is certainly good. But generally the saint if he is true recommends that we remember God and never forget him. But we cannot say that remembering the saints can replace remembering God himself. So, then again we come back to the same position of having to find that supreme person meditating upon whom we shall get the full blessings of immortal life in the kingdom of God. In India there are many worshippers of demigods or semi-gods, who are very powerful beings but not God. Such demigods are extraordinarily powerful and have shown even recently some wonders, such as the Ganesh Diety who some few years back drank the milk that his devotees offered in all parts of the world. As Ganesh can remove obstacles on the path of progress, many people adore him in order to achieve material success which is mostly the case for the other

demigods as well. Drawn by achieving quick results in their endeavors people worship demigods although the power and glory of the semi-god is minuscule when compared to God. Such pettiness is condemned in the Bhagavad-gita by Lord Krishna who warns the followers that they will take birth on the planets of the demigods by such worship and as the demigods are not eternal, nor their planets the followers will not find reprieve from the repetition of birth and death. The fact of the matter is that all the demigods themselves worship and serve the supreme godhead, Govinda as perfectly stated in chapter five of the Brahma-samhita. Brahma, the powerful demigods in charge of creation worships Govinda, or Krishna. Shiva, the powerful god of destruction, the greatest amongst the demigods, is a devotee of Govinda. Durga, the principle of energy, "shakti" executes her service of creation, maintenance and destruction on the order of Govinda. Ganesh, the remover

of all obstacles on the spiritual or material path of life, gets his power from Govinda. The sun, Surya, rotates in his fixed orbit on the order of Govinda. If such powerful living beings who are worshipped by so many followers for material benefits adore Govinda or Krishna then we should take a hint and do the same. Those who worship the impersonal absolute also in many instances offer tribute to demigods. However in this case the demigod is simply taken as a means to focus the mind in order to attain unqualified oneness or Brahman after attaining which the demigod is discarded. Whatever form is worshipped by the impersonalist is simply taken as imaginary since the mind cannot concentrate on a void or the featureless Brahman. The conclusion is faulty since the worship of demigods as well as the worship of Brahman is condemned as per the twelfth verse from the Vedic Shree Isopanishad, wherein it is said, "The worshippers of demigods shall enter the darkest region

of ignorance and worse still are those who worship the impersonal absolute." This same Vedic text in a later verse extols the Supreme Lord to remove the glare of effulgence surrounding his Form thusly, "O my Lord, sustainer of all that lives, your real face is covered by your dazzling effulgence. Kindly remove that covering and exhibit yourself to your devotee." In the process called "panchoupasana" there is a five-tiered approach to the Absolute through the worship of Ganesh, the Sun, Durga, Shiva and Vishnu. Despite the worship of these forms and personalities the ultimate objective is to enter Brahman, or the impersonal Brahman effulgence. However, this light of Brahman is nothing but the reflected rays of the Parabrahman and that Parabrahman, Lord Shree Krishna spoke the following verse to his disciple Arjuna in the 14th chapter, verse 27, of the Bhagavad-gita to establish this fact for all time. "I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal,

imperishable, and the constitutional position of ultimate happiness.” The same point is carried across in the 40th verse of chapter 5 of the Brahma-samhita, or the song of Brahma: “I worship Govinda, the original primordial Lord, who is endowed with great power. His glowing effulgence is the non-dualistic Brahman, which is absolute, fully complete, unlimited and which manifests innumerable planetary systems with variegated opulences in millions and millions of universes.” According to Vedic philosophical foundations the absolute reality can be seen in three features. Shankara only alluded to one feature, the Brahman. But in the 1st canto, chapter two, verse 11 of the Bhagavat Purana or Srimad Bhagavatam these three features are categorized, with Brahman as only the initial feature followed by the Supersoul or Paramatma feature and then the ultimate feature being the full glory of the Person God. “The seers of the absolute reality say that

knowledge of the absolute reality of the one without a second is called Brahman (the all-pervasive bodily effulgence), Paramatma (the localized Supersoul accompanying each individual soul) and Bhagavan (the full form and beauty of Transcendence).” These three aspects can be understood by a simple analogy. At night an oncoming train would first be seen as light. At closer inspection the form of the train could be discerned. But finally once the train stopped one would be able to see the engineer and all the passengers inside. So, if one proceeds in realization of the absolute reality he will see one after another the effulgence of Brahman, the Supersoul within the heart and finally the Lord as He is in His personal form. The name Brahman or Brahma also denotes God in his personal feature in many instances. However, Parambrahman or Parabrahma never denotes the impersonal feature. In the Vedanta-sutra, the great sage Shрила

Vyasadeva wrote in the very first verse, “aathato brahma jijnasa.” This “brahma” refers to the Supreme Person or Bhagavan Shree Krishna and not the indistinct, attributeless, unqualified Brahman as postulated by Shankaracharya in his Mayavada philosophy. The “God” of Shankara becomes covered by Maya or illusion and then takes a form. Illusion thus defeats “God.” But in real terms God is the controller of Maya and is never under its jurisdiction as evidenced in the tenth verse of chapter nine, Bhagavad-gita wherein it is stated by Krishna, “The material nature (Maya) is working under My direction, O son of Kunti, and is producing all moving and unmoving beings. By its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.” Thus, illusion is under the control of the Supreme, not the other way around. It is this type of illogical conclusion that makes one wonder how the monists and voidists of the world were ever taken seriously. Lord Brahma, the

first created being in the universe, also states in the first verse of the Brahma-samhita, “Krishna who is known as Govinda is the supreme controller. He has an eternally blissful spiritual body and He is the origin of all without any beginning and the cause of all causes.” Our body and our self are different, but in the case of God, He and His body are one and the same, non-dual. There should be no confusion regarding absolute matters of transcendence. The impersonal calamity of seeing the light as God or God as light should be understood as Shiva’s trickery in the form of Shankaracharya. Shiva is sometimes known as Pashupatinath, the protector of those acting like animals and Bhutanath, the protector of ghosts. As such those who ascribe to this concocted twist on reality have not in essence achieved the level of humans. By placing faith in the proper channels of simple and straightforward Vedic acharyas like Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Vishnuswami

and Shree Chaitanya we shall never be fooled by any such motivated logicians and word jugglers. We may want to go to Atlanta, Georgia, but if someone politely tells us to go in the opposite direction that will be very unfortunate, unless we take another persons advice who knows better. Thus, we should take our directions from the conclusive source of absolute transcendental knowledge coming in a bona fide sampradya or Vedic lineage and thereby be delivered to the final destination, the spiritual world. To deny the existence of God or to deny Him a form, qualities, name and attributes amounts to the same thing. Any sane man who wishes to please God by his actions, words and deeds has at least to recognize Him. If some tells you that your father has no legs, no arms, no head, no anything then you would be upset. So, similarly if someone says that the Supreme Father has no legs, no arms, no head, and no form then we should counter with our strong argument. The

development of the human species entails consciousness being raised to ultimate heights of purity and understanding by hearing from absolute authorities. Such authorities take the form of guru, sadhu and shastra, or spiritual master, saint and scripture. Each confirms the other. Whatever is said by one should be confirmed by the other two. Tradition and other values may be certainly followed and held in high esteem, but behind all ceremonial concerns consciousness should be developed. One should know his level of consciousness and raise it by spiritual hearing from transcendental books of knowledge. The primary texts of the Vedas, principally the Bhagavad-gita and the Srimad Bhagavatam translated and commentated upon by professors or acharyas coming in the line of bona fide disciplic successions (parampara) will pave the way for such rejuvenation of the heart and soul. As just a token of such personal dynamic philosophy

we will quote just one verse contained in the 18,000 verse Srimad Bhagavatam to illustrate the view from the Absolute dimension (3.25.34): “A pure devotee, who is attached to the activities of devotional service and who always engages in the service of My lotus feet, never desires to become one with Me. Such a devotee, who is unflinchingly engaged, always glorifies My pastimes and activities.” This verse was spoken by the incarnation of the Lord in the Satya-yuga, Kapiladeva. As the Vishnu-avatar Buddha had an imposter by the same name, so similarly there was also an atheist Kapiladeva who taught Sankhya philosophy, which is quite similar to Buddhism as conceived by Sakhya Singh. The Vishnu avatar, Kapiladeva taught the original Sankhya system of philosophy to Brahma, the demigods and rishis and was in full harmony with the Vedas whereas the atheist Kapila Muni taught a concocted doctrine full of faulty logic, inaccurate reasoning and bad arguments

under the name of Sankhya. If we are to examine the religions of the world and look for any clue or dissemination of knowledge regarding the form and personality of the Supreme Lord then except for the Vaishnavas (those in adherence to the four honored paths transmitting absolute knowledge) we would be unable to detect even a hint. We have already made it a firm point regarding the heinous and blasphemous nature of Buddhism and non-devotional Hinduism or impersonal Mayavada philosophy but further to these systems of ignorance we can point without fear or remorse to the other major “religions” of the world as being culpable as well. Unfortunately, when people in general have no idea of real religion then they end up buying second best. Those who appreciate the fact that God does exist in his form of unlimited beauty and loveliness in the ultimate issue will eventually see that same person behind all the ephemeral forms in the natural

environment. As a final word on the conclusion regarding the cloning of Buddhism into Mayavada impersonalism by Shankaracharya the following incident took place in 1946 as recounted by the highly distinguished author Srila BP Keshava Maharaja in Varanasi, India. At that time he was visiting a Buddhist temple in Bodh-Gaya. Low and behold, the president of the Buddhist temple as well as the complete management and moreover the only member of the trustee board was none other than one prominent acharya of the Shankaracharya sect. When questioned by the above author as to whether the followers of Shankara had now subscribed to Buddhism, the manager loudly retorted, "Shankaracharya was never a Buddhist!" Om Tat Sat.

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