

**BUDDHA MAITRYA - ABHITABHA
HAS
APPEARED**



JAMSHED FOZDAR

**BUDDHA MAITRYA-AMITABHA
HAS APPEARED**

JAMSHED K FOZDAR

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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THE COVER

While the complete explanation of the symbolism of the cover is given on pages 388-90, the reader is respectfully requested to arrive at it through proper sequence of the preceding material in order to glean its full import.

To

Maitrya-Amitabha

*But For Whom This Book Would Never
Have Been Written*

And
To
Humanity

“Verily I say unto thee: ‘The Blessed One has not come to teach death, but to teach life, and thou discernest not the nature of living and dying’.”

*The year sees many a birth and death
Of little folk like you and me:*

*His like has never yet drawn breath,
No future age His like will see.*

A Sanskrit Poet

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NOTE: Between the inclusion of rather copious footnotes and the listing of relevant information in the glossary, the former alternative is followed for two reasons. Firstly, in order to prevent the reader's flow of thought from being constantly interrupted by having to turn to the glossary for the pertinent information. Secondly, many of the Scriptural texts are often used to indicate different meanings for the same terms in varying contexts and the footnotes are better able to deal with the specific meaning in each instance. It is suggested that the reader read through the glossary before beginning the book so that he will recollect—however vaguely—the meanings of the terms he will encounter in the text and which will be, in most instances, further refreshed by the footnotes. The same reasoning has been followed for listing the full references on each page instead of having the reader turn to a "master" reference.

INTRODUCTION

This book, which is in two parts, covers the salient features of that unique yet recurrent phenomenon — the Buddha-Avatar. Essentially it is the story of two Spiritual Sunbursts — Buddha-risings — one long ago and the other whose rays are just beginning to emerge above the horizon and disperse the darkness of spiritual night, to awaken and enlighten a comatose humanity.¹

Its aim is to set the reader, especially our Buddhist brethren, to thinking on today's vital need for *spiritual reawakening*. For man is a spiritual being, and the spiritual requirement is in reality, and has always been, his only true need.

*Verily, I say unto thee, thy mind is spiritual, but neither is the sense-perceived void of spirituality. The Bodhi is eternal and it dominates all existence as the good law guiding all beings in their search for truth. It changes brute nature into mind, and there is no being that cannot be transformed into a vessel of truth.*²

We shall achieve this goal not merely by posing questions and listing conditions but also by providing *the answer*. To do so it is necessary to view the problem first — the Human Condition as it now exists in the world and then, within this context, to examine the meaning and

¹ Since this is a book about two Buddhas — (Siddharta and Maitrya) — I have tried to use Siddharta or Siddharta Gautama, or Sakyamuni wherever possible instead of “the Tathagata” or “the Buddha”, and it should be understood that the Buddha (the Fully Enlightened) is meant by these terms in all instances, and the reader should avoid differentiating between the phenomenon that was Siddharta before and after His announcement of Buddhahood.

² **Milindapanha** (All Existence is Spiritual).

Message of the Buddha Siddharta Gautama,¹ who lived over 2,500 years ago, and ascertain what aspects of His life and law can be made relevant to meet the new realities now confronting the Human Condition and, more significantly, discover the guidance and direction implicit in His Message, to enable the sincere seeker to develop the faculties of wisdom and discrimination needed to ascertain for himself the truth of the Buddha's assurance concerning the unflinching operation of the law of Buddha-rising — that vital phenomenon necessary to sweep clean the ancient path of the eternal Dharma, so that humanity may once again, with sure feet and joyful heart, find its way to the ineffable Nirvana.

While it is clear from the title itself that this is not a book on Siddharta and His Gospel as they are now understood, yet, for the purpose of our quest, it is vital that the salient features of Siddharta's Reality — His affirmation of the Absolute, His assertion of His own divinity, omniscience and uniqueness, the essential aspects of the eternal Dharma, the Samgha as it was in its pristine purity, as well as Siddharta's concept of Karma and His statements on Reincarnation — all be assiduously and concisely examined, through the Scriptures of Buddhism and its parent sources of Hinduism. Many, unfortunately, still look upon Siddharta as an anomaly in the annals of Religion and believe that He championed atheism, rejected the soul and proclaimed His Teaching (Dharma) to be simply a set of ethics. We cannot agree with these three aberrations, for the Scriptures of Buddhism clearly refute them all. Hence, it is the Siddharta of the Scriptures — for "the Buddhas are Dhamma bodies" — with Whom we will be concerned and Whose Reality we must first unearth from under the crust of men's fancies, piled on it for well nigh twenty centuries, before we can understand what we are to seek in our quest and how to recognize our discovery upon reaching the goal.

¹ Siddharta means "fulfilled" or one whose desires have all been fulfilled; i.e. the perfect man, free from any passion or desire. Siddham, also a derivative from the same root, "Siddhi" (success), is usually used in the beginning of the alphabet on the palm leaves, denoting "Blessed be" or "All Hail." Siddharta was also called Sarvarthasiddha (meaning "All righteous"). The reader is also asked to treat as identical in meaning such words as Gautama or Gotama, Dharma and Dhamma, Nirvana and Nibbana, Maitrya and Metteya, Arahata (arhat) and Arahant, Sutra and Sutta (Suttanta), Sangha and Samgha, Karma and Kammana, Samsaras and Sankharas (Samskara) and other such variations wherever they occur in the text; the differences in spelling are due to slight variations in their pronunciation (Sanskrit given by the first and Pali by the latter spelling). While the Sanskrit pronunciation is preferred both are used interchangeably.

We will see the real Siddharta by recognizing Him as a recurrent Divine Principle — like the sunrise on the physical plane — and not as a person. We will know Him as a Buddha among Buddhas — an Avatar among Avatars — ever-recurring, albeit at long intervals, as a link in the chain of Divine Manifestations, stretching back through Krishna, and Ram to Manu, the Law-Giver of the Hindus. To all of These — through legend and logos — Siddharta is intimately and spiritually related.

The instruments used to clear away the underbrush of confused and conflicting beliefs are the various Scriptures to which, in one form or another, men still tether their deepest allegiance. Hence, at least half this book is Scripture that has come down to us through the ages. And concerning the squabbles of various Buddhist scholars, as to which Scripture is more genuine and which of greater authority, we have taken up and endeavoured to settle these points on historically verifiable ground without regard to partisan emotionalism, which should have no place in true spiritual growth.

Complete adoration and respect for all the Divine Teachers is repeatedly emphasized in the text. And considerable search has gone into discovering Their identity through whatever can be substantiated of the ancient Past. We have succeeded in this more than most by using the “key” of cross-reference — conceptual, doctrinal and legend — available in all the Scriptures of the extant Aryan Faiths — Hindu, Zoroastrian and Buddhist — which we have investigated in our quest.

This technique of cross-reference of Scriptural texts — begun in the *The God of Buddha* — is now, by virtue of a larger requirement, expanded in the present work to present the full chain of progressive Divine Revelation. We begin at mid-section of this chain — which is where Siddharta and His Gospel are located on the scale of historical time — and investigate the links (e.g. Krishna, Ram, Manu and the names of the other Buddhas mentioned by Siddharta) that preceded Him, in order to gain the correct perspective of the “phenomenon” of the Buddha Himself — the Real Siddharta — and the meaning and purpose of His Dharma.

This same method of cross-reference has also proved to be the best for ascertaining the correct meaning of the Scripture. Precision and scope have, because of the very nature of our quest, been given precedence over abridgment. The reader will miss a great deal if he tires of Scriptural repetitiousness — for that is the tried and true method of ages past to instill in man the deepest truths. And he will see that many an elusive

concept which had been overlooked at first glance is discerned through a second reading. Because this is the first book, long overdue on a subject vital to Buddhism, the intent has been to make it — definitive. A special debt of gratitude is owed to those mentioned in the selected bibliography and from whose works quotations are excerpted, as well as those who must review and publish it.

If this book does nothing more than aid the Buddhists in gaining a true understanding of Siddharta's Reality — the vital first step — then it will have in great measure accomplished what it set out to do. But of course, that is not the main purpose of this book. It is merely the backdrop for the stage on which the central theme of the most momentous event for the human race, is presented. The rare but recurrent phenomenon of the Spiritual Sunburst, the Buddha-rising, the event towards which all the prophecies of Siddharta, explicit and implicit, were directed, the occurrence promised by Him which would herald the rediscovery of the eternal Dharma for enabling humanity once again to advance to Salvation, to the experience of the ineffable bliss — THE ADVENT OF MAITRYA.

Thus, no true disciple of Siddharta can fail to recognize that the fulfillment of his own spiritual destiny is inextricably linked with the next link in this chain of the eternal Dharma. He will be impelled to investigate the challenge presented by this book which, through its second part, decisively leads us to our goal, the irrefutable outcome of our quest: the risen Maitrya¹—Amitabha² — Whose advent is the focus of all the promises and prophecies of Siddharta, and Whose accomplishments Siddharta extolled above His own. The seeker will undoubtedly be astonished at the wealth of prophetic utterances attributed to Siddharta, which is brought to his attention in the second part. No other Divine Teacher has provided such abundance of descriptions and signs to guide the true seeker to his goal of discovering the Promised One of his Faith.

Even if one attempts to diminish their uncanny accuracy — despite the vast span of time which separates us from their Source — by halving this span of twenty-five centuries (which we are unable to do without

¹ Maitrya (Sanskrit), which means "He whose name is kindness."

² Amitabha literally means "infinite glory", from "amit", meaning "infinite" or "immeasurable" and "abha", meaning "glory" or "splendor". By coincidence or compact, "abha" and "bha" or "baha" are the only two words that are identical in both the Indo-Aryan language of Sanskrit and the semitic language—Arabic. Not only do these two words exist as nouns in these two distinct source-languages, but their meaning—"glory" or "splendor" is identical.

also rejecting Siddharta's authorship for the rest of His Teaching) these prophecies in the Buddhist Scriptures are still astounding and surely cannot fail to unsettle even the most cynical.

Hence we we are now embarked on the verification of the greatest phenomenon imaginable to man, *if he is truly cognizant*, and it is the writer's hope that not only Buddhist brethren but humanity at large will seek and attain the goal of true liberty and peace for which Tathagatas¹ arise.

¹Tathagata: "He who has fully arrived; the Perfect One," a title of the Buddha.

1

THE HUMAN CONDITION

So I tell you — Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world: A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream, (A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,) a flickering lamp, a phantom and a dream.¹ Him who looks thus upon the world the king² of death does not see.³

Time changes countries and alters their boundaries. Nations which once controlled the destinies of others stand humbled. Empires and dynasties are obliterated, kings and conquerors are trodden into dust and forgotten. Nothing of human power can endure. For “decay is inherent in all component things and only Truth will remain forever.”⁴

As in the lives of men and in the affairs of nations, so for the first time in our age, in the case of a whole world, the demon of despair is loose and rending human society on all levels with the neurosis of emptiness. Every section, class and stratum has been affected, demolishing its faith in its ideals, institutions and prospects.

Despite our possession of well-nigh infinite power, we feel destitute of the meaningful, and apprehensive of the crumbling values and tottering institutions on which we had rested our faith.

We are already made aware of the fact that while technology and

¹ *Vajra-Sattva*, XXXII(The Delusion of Appearances). See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, II. 51 “For wise men endowed with equanimity, renouncing the fruit of actions and freed from the shackles of birth attain the blissful superstate.”

² Known as “Mara” in Buddhism. Essentially the personification of all the negative qualities of the human psyche, qualities which chain it to the mundane and the mortal.

³ *Dhammapada*, v. 170. See also *Dhammapada*, v. 151.

⁴ *Parajika-Suttavibhanga*: I.1, 4. (Also *Digha-nikaya*, Part II.)

science have placed in our hands the power to change the physical universe around us, yet they are unable to penetrate our hearts and rejuvenate the spiritual within man. This fact of general malaise and hopelessness despite our scientific achievements is all the more thought-provoking when one recalls that only five decades or so ago, fresh from the blood-bath of the greatest war in history, Man, galloping astride his steed of science, seemed but a few steps removed from a secure and ever-progressing civilization, with prosperity and security for all. Science seemed to offer everything under the sun in the way of material attainments. It offered wonders beyond the wildest dreams of men and proved this more emphatically with each succeeding year. Today that security and peace, which only yesterday seemed within reach and only a matter of time from automatically becoming reality, has now receded from the domain of the "imminent" to the realm of the "remotely possible." For Science and its discoveries, mankind has at last recognized, are only products of the human mind—a few human minds, and how these discoveries are used depends solely on the concept of the "purpose of life" held by the users of these scientific discoveries. In short, these discoveries, their present harvest and future fruit, are neither able to satisfy nor educate human desire and are therefore impotent for marshalling the allegiance of mankind for its collective benefit. For Science, while enabling men to unearth the secrets of nature and perhaps even indicating how such knowledge might be applied for their benefit, cannot guarantee that it will be used for good. It cannot do this because it offers no answer for altering the "animal" in man. The greed, the selfishness, the ambition for power which all stem from the frustration of not knowing what comes after the "curtain" falls on his consciousness, cannot be stemmed or eradicated by Science, for it offers no acceptable explanation of the purpose of life and advocates no rational continuity of human consciousness after death. Rather it succeeds in nullifying its claims to a solution. It affirms a discontinuity—a break, the very "thing" which makes man want all there is, while he is "conscious", regardless of the means employed or the cost to his fellows, as he grows heedless of the retribution in the absence of any assurance of continuity beyond death. Meanwhile, humanity's thirst for the meaning of its true identity and the "Why" and "Wherefore" of existence remains unfulfilled.

The last five decades have made it abundantly clear that the West and its much-vaunted material civilization, whose effects have girdled the globe and affected even the most isolated and primitive cultures, is

now fast declining, its glitter of tinsel dulled and its influence swiftly ebbing even in the regions of its birth. Its citadels are seen to be built with foundations resting on soil as slippery as oil. It seems to be possessed of no lasting quality—a thing of no intrinsic worth. In its pursuit of the things of time, our civilization has become detached from the eternal. So shifty-eyed have we become by our constant confrontation with the kaleidoscopic Present that we cannot discover the insight needed to deal with the reality of the new shape of things to come. The whole range of human achievement in this so-called civilization has been brought under question and found wanting, hollow and bereft of any lasting goal.

Its values and goals no longer provide any attraction for the mass of mankind. And more ominous for its own survival is the disenchantment spreading like wildfire among its own young and their alienation from the value systems of their fathers. The rebellion caused by the universal abandonment by youth, in both the West and East, of the mores of their fathers is already triumphant and now manifests itself in the form of the “permissive society”, which has, within the span of a single decade, already vaulted from obscurity and condemnation into the accepted praxis of life, espoused by a clear majority. While on the economic front the illusory “good life” for which we so readily barter the highest values and compromise the noblest principles—the very acts that have soured the fruit of our womb, our young, and alienated them from us, making of every single family a house divided—has, alas, also collapsed, though we dare not admit it. Our frantic efforts to stave off the triple threat of inflation, recession and depression are simply, if examined with detachment, the last desperate gasps of a rotting and tottering order, incapable of freeing itself from a downward spiral of its own making, slated for utter collapse. We have lost the spiritual life line to lift us out of this universal whirlpool. We are racked with fear, foreboding and despair. Irrationality, decadence and chaos seem to have become the normal state of affairs.

What solution is possible, unless people throughout the world become aware of the waste of human effort that exists in the ruthless customs and rituals which divide and regiment humanity? Instead of people’s minds being filled with the particular “dogma” of their own racial, geographical and political outlook, which results in the continuous strife of nation against nation, West against East, religion against religion, dogma against dogma, mankind would have to be educated to expand its mind to embrace a world-view before any real progress could

be achieved towards erecting the new edifice in which a distraught humanity could find both its shelter and its solace in this, its time of greatest crisis. The cornerstone of this universal edifice of the commonwealth of man must, of course, involve an act of spirit, without which no external influence¹ can hope to succeed. But the power to regenerate the human spirit has never been in the domain of mortal man or his leaders, and this is the problem of our time. The so-called leaders of mankind have miserably miscalculated the true dimension and gravity of the spiritual vacuum which menaces humanity. They cannot yet recognize, even at this late date, that freedom and independence (whose ultimate embodiment is the wild beast) are not enough, and that acts of spirit and ethics are vital if human society is to survive. The rot has begun from within, and it is fast spreading. A society in which "anything goes" can no longer tell where it is going. It is a society whose consensus on such vital issues as standards of justice and ethics, moderation of expression and conduct, has now become so utterly fragmented that there no longer remains within its structure any rational direction. It has become increasingly entangled in irresponsible hedonism and is headed toward final ruin. It is obvious that "civilization" as we have come to know it with its accompanying "blessings" of economic exploitation, military savagery, class oppression, environmental poisoning and moral degradation is about to expire. Its day for passing on from the center stage of history is now imminent. However, unlike demises of past civilizations, the world of today has grown too small, its links too closely entwined, for any intelligent person to conceive that the passing of western civilization, the values it instilled and the power and influence it continues to wield in an ever-decreasing measure, might leave any part of the globe unscathed, from the lowest depths of its oceans to the highest limits of its atmosphere. While the gods of its military supremacy and economic power may seem to be chained for the time being by the evenly matched strength of the contestants, one can hardly take comfort from history in such constantly shifting equations or have any faith that design or accident will not intervene to upset such a precarious stalemate, in the pervading context of hypocrisy and deceit—on which this very balance is founded—and will not let loose the cataclysmic forces which are so perfectly suited to wipe away both its systems and their adherents.

¹ By this is meant programs and projects which peoples may undertake to alter their predicament.

Nor do the latter efforts by the human mind for peace and progress through the socio-political ideologies and programs of communism, socialism, nationalism or predatory capitalism (masquerading as democracy), demonstrate any degree of potency to resist the disease of rancor and division within their own particular hegemonies. And it is abundantly clear that materialism, whether true or false, is not succeeding. If anything, notwithstanding the recent origins of these socio-political ideologies, the disease of division is even more virulent in them and within the institutions which they have established. Nor can they provide any intelligent choice between the competing cults of the collective human beast and that of the rapacious individual animal. Mercifully, they appear to be simply bubbles on the churning river of time, destined to be of very short duration.

Thinking to deceive a distraught mankind, adrift on the turbulent rapids of ever-accelerating change which, unbeknownst, is irresistibly impelling it to the ocean of the oneness of humanity, these modern ideologues, despite their own awareness of impotence in the face of the sickness of spirit afflicting the human condition, continue to peddle their bogus and discredited remedies by chopping up the patient to fit the "cure" they claim to possess.

Destitute of the real balm for assuaging the spiritual yearning within humanity's breast, the leaders of public opinion and the rulers of mankind, themselves oblivious to the things of the spirit, continue to distract the masses from the inevitable confrontation with reality by continuously increasing amusements and incessantly promising more material possessions. Careless of historical perspective which shows that pursuit of political power and accumulation of economic goods have never been the dominant themes of human cultures and progress, these so-called leaders, themselves bereft of any moral or spiritual direction, have again fallen into that selfsame chasm which swallowed up the empires of Egypt, Rome, Persia, Austria, France and England, to name but a few, and busy themselves in efforts to secure peace and welfare by political negotiations and economic arrangements. Oblivious to all the lessons of the past, which teach that when devoid of the controlling influence of the spirit, human reason has never triumphed over human greed, and themselves bankrupt of the spirit, they try to cut down humanity to manageable proportions by first detaching mankind from its spiritual heritage and that which is intrinsic within its make-up. For the stomach, they promise food, for the heart, love of country, (or race, or

class) and finally, they try to get the brain to accept their “panaceas” all neatly packaged in the garb of “reason”. Too late—if at all—it has begun to dawn on these leaders that by separating and ignoring the spiritual within the human condition they have not made man more manageable but impossibly unmanageable, as unmanageable as the Frankenstein monster. Too late we see that reason can no more guide the instinct for self and survival than Dr. Frankenstein could his monster. For reason is many-faceted and serves each according to his need—as well as greed—for immediate gain. It simply adds new fuel to the fires of prejudice and hatred, increasing conflicting passions; and these primeval passions within the human make-up, no longer restrained by the reason to be good—which could only be based upon spiritual values—use reason to support such baser instincts and enlarge their field of operations to enmesh the whole world.

Reason has become the byword for tyrants and rascals in their efforts to foist their shortsighted and deadly ambitions on a spiritually sick humanity. Under its aegis, brother is made to eliminate brother for the insatiable appetites of the microbes of patriotism, racism and fanaticism, governments and leaders, whether capitalists or communists, republicans or royalists, all have fed and fattened these deadly germs and now find themselves—one and all—impotent before their onslaught.

Nor can mankind discern any ray of light within this fast-enveloping darkness by examining any of the traditional well-springs of guidance of the East. The debris of orthodoxy and superstition has submerged the essential message of the great Religions—Christianity or Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism, Judaism or Zoroastrianism—and deeper investigation into their present structure and effect on society exposes an even more impossible task before any of these great Faiths can stake any claims of relevancy to the urgent problems confronting the world today. In the face of humanity’s paramount need for unity, these Religions stand totally powerless, displaying instead a tragic picture of accelerating fragmentation within the very core of their doctrine and institutions. This is where we stand today, and unless “rational” man is restored to spiritual health, the canvas of existence on this planet—if it is not altogether rolled up into oblivion by one gigantic catastrophe—will certainly turn much more crimson and horrendous. The world must become a single state possessed of a common spirit or it will become a common grave. Mankind is sick. The primary cause is spiritual. Economic imbalance, racial strife, political repression, famine, pestilence, disease and even war are merely side-

effects of the real cause — the sickness of the human spirit.

How long humanity will remain locked in the grip of this universal crisis, with its rapidly-increasing potential for complete annihilation, does not require any extraordinary magic to predict. Only the Ice Ages, which once seemed destined to erase all life from earth, can parallel the situation that confronts us today. Perhaps the coldness of the human heart and the freeze now gripping man's spirit, isolating and alienating us from our fellows, will ultimately precipitate their own counter-force in the form of the deadly warmth and the dreadful heat of the nuclear sunburst to break the grip of this universal disease and restore the inevitable balance. And those who would point out in horror that here the cure would be worse than the disease simply have not understood that every disease precipitates its own cure.

Humanity is faced with extinction. Its survival can only be effected by its conversion to the reality of its new condition. The rapid evaporation of accepted standards, the unimaginable proliferation of the death-dealing instruments at its command, leave no reasonable alternatives to human solidarity — the oneness of mankind. The human condition cries out for radical and universal change. It will not be content by resurrecting moribund institutions and their failed values but, through an active allegiance to the new reality of inter-relationship and inter-dependence of the whole human race, relegating once and for all every vestige of exclusiveness, special interest and power blocs — individual, local, national or regional — to the scrap-heap of the past. The new order of human relations cannot be Eastern or Western. It must be universal. No externally applied balm can hope to reach the core of the problem. For the problem of today is human, we ourselves. And the change has to be within ourself. The improvement must begin with each of us.

The age-old conflict between man and man has had a single cause — the absence of a unified standard for human behaviour, a unified conscience, born out of a single standard of morality — one *ethical Faith*, has become the vital imperative. The thrust has to be in re-awakening the spiritual in us. Our heart has to be purified. There is no future for men apart from the dimension of the spirit, and only Religion deals with spirit and faith. The annals of mankind's progress up Time's long curve show no record of any civilization, worthy of that name, having any meaningful history unless sustained by the power of some moral code deriving from the teachings of some great Religion. Despite man's petty ambitions, born of the avarice and ignorance deep within him and buttressed by his

“commonsense”, which unceasingly prods him on to practice the art of survival with the most easily-acquired weapons of force and deceit manifested in the collective might of bullying empires laden with their ill-gotten gains, the naked fact of history is that none of these emerge triumphant on the grand scale of human existence. The reverse is the truth, borne out in the narrative of man’s history on this planet. It is indeed the meek among men that inherit the Earth. The strong and the warlike together with their conquering power sweep each other into oblivion, victims of their own fatal disease. None of the empires have lasted over four centuries — puny indeed on Time’s stage when viewed in the light of Religion and its accomplishments and the strength of its staying power. However, to a planet disillusioned in its gods of science and materialism, and faced with the impotency of its many sects and creeds, the vital question is “which Religion?” and “why?”

Before we answer, let us recognize once again that if history teaches us anything about the solutions applied to this ever present “problem” — the HUMAN — it shows that of all the bottles containing “cures” that have been tapped to effect the restoration of health to societies in the past, only the elixir of Religion has — time and time again — demonstrated success and repeatedly lifted mankind in various parts of the planet from degradation to glory, from superstition to wisdom and reason, from death to life. And without Religion, from which alone rises the irresistible power of inexplicable faith, all other resources are as nothing and have not been able to stay the hand of destruction and hold back darkness from enveloping individuals and nations. History, as it delves into human progress, is simply the story of Religion. In fact religious vision and its history of persistent expansion, provide us with our one ground for optimism. Apart from it, human life is a flash of occasional pleasures lighting upon a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience. Religion, however, if it is to be correctly understood as a gradually unfolding historical canvas, must not and cannot be taken as a disjointed and isolated phenomenon of ethical revelations to different races of man but rather as a planetary process of the spiritualization of society, with a gradual approach toward its final goal on this planet — planetary unity, the oneness of the human race in the most complete sense. Predicating its claim on the premise of a divine humanity, Religion alone offers to man the fulfillment of his quest for immortality and thus enables him to transcend his desire for the mundane and the ephemeral. It alone succeeds in impregnating his psyche with unbounded

faith in his own reality through the assurance that he is much more than the sum of his physical parts. And this faith in his essential indestructibility gives birth, within his psyche, to the twin vital ingredients on which must be based every human relationship of any lasting duration — TRUST and CHARITY — Trust which obviates conflict and Charity which becomes synonymous with self-sacrifice for our fellow beings.

People bereft of faith have never achieved the real miracles of human progress, the miracles of healing the sick, caring for the aged and the mentally ill, rehabilitating the crippled, educating the children, strengthening the weak — miracles which constitute the real difference between the civilized and the savage and separate the true human from the beast.

Hence, while the utter impotence of all human agencies to stave off impending catastrophe and the bankruptcy of our leaders to provide any constructive direction and hope, compel us to admit that the new dimension of human progress, on whose frontier mankind is now poised, is the same dimension of the spirit that it has always been, yet traditional religions and ethics are powerless to take advantage of what would appear as their golden opportunity. For the cutting edge of science and reason has sliced too deep through the ancient beliefs and their traditional edifices and severed the allegiance that once bound the masses to their institutions. The dictates of our reason are at war with our instincts and desires for religious faith. The ancient Faiths are confronted by new questions which demand responses. The vast majority of mankind has ceased to act according to the precepts of the ancient Faiths, since it can no longer live by them. Doubts about their efficacy have long since ceased to plague only a relatively few and now afflict a whole generation, which is voicing its lack of faith in a rising crescendo of profligacy and lawlessness, drowning out all other human utterance. Neither the flickering embers of the ancient Faiths nor the short-lived lamps of modern science can convey any hope to a distraught humanity in this darkest of nights — the night of the soul. With its ancient religious certainties corroded and its ancestral order dissolved by science, the unanswered question confronting us all is: *Where and in what shall we discover the significance to unite our experience and engage our passions?*

Only a Faith capable of relating to the whole of mankind by creating a harmonious interaction between reason and tradition, between the achievements of technology and the needs of the spirit — a dynamic

Faith, “divine in origin and all-encompassing in its scope,” which will reconcile opposites and overcome all other challenges confronting the human condition — can in the last resort provide that all-important “fulcrum” to right once again the sinking ship of humanity and enable it to navigate through its present universal nightmare to the new sunlit haven of certitude and joy.

The Faith on which can be founded the unity of the human spirit must renew the ancient verities which have found expression in other Faiths and embrace these as cherished and valued manifestations of the One Truth emanating from the Single Source. An unbiased comparison of all the great Faiths of mankind will demonstrate that each and every one of these great Faiths have achieved equal success in the context of their particular circumstances and time; and when viewed as an ever-unfolding process of Divine revelation of Truth, the phenomenon of Religion is the only rational process in mankind’s continuing progress toward unity on an ever-expanding scale, from the family to the tribe to the nation and now, onward toward a global whole. Yet this fact notwithstanding, inherent in the human condition, born of its own ignorance, is also that oldest of fallacies, namely that “we or our leaders” as apart from “they and their’s” are the sole repositories of truth, a fallacy born of ignorance and self — the two chains holding the spirit and mind of man from achieving its true perfection — ignorance that truth is universal and cannot be constrained nor locked up, and self, which constrains us and weakens us as a single drop is weakened when separated from the might of the ocean.

We have seen the Human Condition — ourselves. So long have we been enmeshed in the delirium of spiritual disease, that most of us do not wish to know of the cure and would be very resentful — if not violently opposed — to any approach by the Divine Physician. So long have we gone blindly on in spiritual darkness, perpetrating our crimes and lunacies, playing out our perverse games, that like bats and night-creatures we find sunlight painful and would flee from it except that there is no place to flee, literally no refuge, neither in the bowels of the earth nor in the darkness of interstellar space — not even in the deepest abyss of our mind whose recesses have so often before, as they do now, contained the blackest darkness. And, as there are no lights to compare with the brilliance and glory of the Divine Manifestations, the Avatars, hence darkness, which is simply the absence of light, must exist to the greatest degree where the brightest light, the light of Religion, once

shone.

Out of Asia alone have come the only planetary leaders, those Divine Manifestations, whose powers and precepts have transcended the merely mortal, and whose achievements on the planetary scale have dwarfed and eclipsed all human accomplishments. Hence, as peoples and civilizations go, Asia's have been the brightest days. The Buddha was an oriental, as were Krishna and Christ and Moses and Muhammad; so, too, was Zoroaster. And Asia has also known the darkest nights. Even today, by virtue of the overwhelming preponderance of its inhabitants in the scale of the human mass, Asia's is the greatest pain, the howl of its hungry and suffering most shrill and insistent in the midst of the anguished cry of a stricken humanity. The problems of Asia's humanity have now become the problems of mankind the world over. No group however, exclusive and well off, no nation however powerful and astute seems to be able, try as it may, to protect its institutions or its cherished values, and one and all have helplessly become drawn into the vortex of an impending doom of planetary proportions which threatens to suck small and great, poor and rich, into final oblivion. And Asia in the midst of its travail, fearful and prostrate under the clouds of the universal danger confronting humanity, has, as in ages past — once again — given birth to a new Spiritual Sunburst. Its rays of well-being for mankind's withered life are only just becoming detached above the horizon of its dawning, and it is even now tearing asunder, with its message of salvation, the fabric of planetary gloom which has so thoroughly enveloped the human Soul.

As the Spiritual sunbursts of yore and in fulfillment of the signs and promises of the Buddha Siddharta Gautama and other Divine Teachers, Maitrya-Amitabha has appeared with the vision of a truly new world order, equipped with the necessary means to propel humanity as a whole from out of its dilemma of chaos into a new dimension of spiritual growth, on to a grander plane of human awareness and action, based upon the universal application of equity and love and peace and fellowship, devoted to the goal of achieving mankind's full potential. However, before we can know Maitrya, Whose omnipotent Reality is even now swiftly annihilating the accretions of human ignorance and greed, to once again lay bare before mankind the all-redeeming and peerless Dharma (Religion), it is imperative that we recount a former time and reconstruct the truth about the real Siddharta, Who, also, after having rediscovered the Dharma "lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle and lovely at

the ending in the spirit and in the letter," taught this "Brahma-faring,¹ completely fulfilled and utterly pure"² to the humanity of His day. We must rebuild in our minds Siddharta's Hindu heritage, the challenges that confronted Him and from the sources still available to us today, sift the evidence in order to gain some concept of the power and impact of His reality on humanity.

We must know the real Siddharta in order to recognize Maitrya. for the Buddha-nature even when shorn of the magical aura that people weave around it, does not lend itself to easy understanding — it is inexplicable.³ While to all outward appearance Siddharta had a human form, yet He emphatically denied that He was human.⁴ Equally clear was His rejection of being a god, or a demon.⁵ Nor did He ever appeal to the sensational in man by competing with the charlatans of His time. On the contrary, He abhorred such practices.⁶ And He forcefully shunned both mystery⁷ and magic.⁸ His only claim, which He repeatedly proclaimed, was to Buddhahood. He was the Tathagata,⁹ the Buddha, the victor unvanquished, the absolute seer, Who was, "born into the world as the king of Truth for the salvation of the world,"¹⁰ and not what men's imaginations conceived. His alone was the task in His time, to open the gate of immortality to men in the world enveloped by darkness,¹¹ Since His true meaning and miracle consisted only in His Teachings (the peerless Dharma),¹² we have seen from history that His reality was not

¹ Brahma-faring = Pathway to God.

² *Samyutta-nikaya*, IV.314-16. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, IX.17. "I am ... the knowable, the purifier. ... the three Vedas ..."

³ *Ibid.*, III.118.

⁴ *Anguttara-nikaya*, II.37-39. See also *Sutta-nipata*, vv. 455-56.

⁵ *Ibid.* See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, X.2. Where Arjuna asserts, "Krishna ... neither gods nor the demons are aware of Your manifestation..."

⁶ *Digha-nikaya*, Part I, *Kevatta-Sutta*.

⁷ *Digha-nikaya*, II.100. See also *Anguttara-nikaya*, I,3, 134. p. 286 (Bombay Univ. Ed.)

⁸ *Digha-nikaya*, Part I, *Brahmajala-Sutta*, p. 12.

⁹ *Digha-nikaya*, III.135. See also *Mahavagga*, I.6. While there is no precise definition of Tathagata, yet to all schools of Buddhist thought it means, "He who has fully arrived," i.e., the Perfect One whose reality cannot be fully comprehended but can only be said to be "thus" or "like this."

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I.46. See also *Kena-Upanishad*, I.9. "That which is not breathed by life, but by which life breathes; that, verily, know thou, is Brahma and not what (people) here adore."

¹¹ *Majjhima-nikaya*, V. 26 (*Aryaparyesana-Sutta*).

¹² *Samyutta-nikaya*, III. 13, 22-87. See also *Parajika-Suttavibhanga*, I. *Dhammadgata-Ashtasahasrika*, XXXI. 512-13.

recognized during His lifetime except by a few sincerely humble and pure souls.¹

Yet we also see that none today can deny His stupendous achievements or His unsurpassed conquests over humanity — accomplishments matched only by those other Divine Manifestations, the Avatars. For like Them, as He Himself asserts, “His powers were from a wholly beyond,² because an Absolute exalts the Holy Persons”³ And only those “Holy Persons,” the Buddhas, the Avatars have changed the world for the good.

So, our search to extricate ourselves from this fatal darkness which grips the human psyche must be away from the “Metternichs” with their ruinous propositions, and in the direction of the Divine, the Absolute—towards God and His Manifestations.

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, III. 84.

² *Vajra-Sattva*, XVII.

³ *Vajracchedika*, 176, 11a. See also *Majjhima-nikaya*, I. 71-72.

2

THE ABSOLUTE

*Knowing the destruction of all that is made you know the Uncreated.*¹

Man, however high he considers himself, however great he views his capacity to know or understand, is in the end a very limited being. Despite his pride of scientific achievement he is still buzzing around the surface of things, gathering knowledge of appearance, of form and shape, and in no avenue of his quest for learning and power has he penetrated the essential. Nevertheless the “Impenetrable” really exists and to gain, however inadequately, an appreciation of Its presence through Its infinitely varied and inconceivably beautiful and perfect effects is the truest Science and the purest Religion — seeking everywhere the true commandments and through many forms the illimitable Spirit Whose eternal power binds all worlds in one.

Alas, the champions of Science and the devotees of Religion are still far from such breadth of vision, so vital for reconciling these two wings of the bird of humanity which, until these wings beat in unison, will continue to veer towards either rank materialism or superstition. Man needs a new perspective — a new Science and a new Faith or a renewal of Religion. Since this whole book is about the latter, we will now take up the question of how modern science and its fruits can be harmonized with the needs of a new humanity.

While we have the greatest admiration for the accomplishments of modern scientists, it must be stated nevertheless that their science stops

¹Dhammapada, v. 383. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, VII. 7. “There is nothing else besides Me...”

short of its mark because it seems to be afflicted with a mental barrier, a self-imposed taboo which always blocks its reasoning at a certain point. It seems to be allergic to two very simple but vital words. These are “whence” and “whither”. The first one inquires into the source, the second tries to ascertain the final goal. The answer to the questions implicit in these two words, concerning any phenomenon, will also provide the purpose for that phenomenon. Who but the scientists, equipped as they are with all the scientific data, possessed of the best and the most analytical minds, could be in a better position to provide us with logical, unbiased and honest answers to these questions? But science, they say, does not concern itself with metaphysics or magic. Then let us consider briefly the scientific explanation of the universe. In the beginning, they say, all space was filled with a primordial hot cosmic gas, consisting of uniform mixtures of molecules of all the chemical elements. Now, we can see that this is not the beginning at all. Where did the gas come from, and what caused the formation of various elements? What raised the temperature of the mixture? Science does not seem to have a logical answer to these questions. Continuing, due to the internal instability of this gas, it started separating into globules of clouds. These began contracting due to gravitational forces, and as they contracted, they acquired rotary motions and their temperatures increased to super incandescence. Thus our stars were born! But why should a uniform mixture become unstable?

The questions in science, especially in physics, that can find answers are usually, if not only, those that begin with the word “How”, since physics has not yet advanced to the point of tackling the “Why” of things. For instance, *how* two bodies attract each other is well known in the “Law of Gravitation” but thus far science has no explanation of *why* two bodies attract each other. Why gravity? There, only conjecture exists.

Next, says science, the same internal instability caused the stars to combine into the separate swarms which we call island universes and of which our own galaxy is one. These were prevented from collapsing upon themselves by the centrifugal force of their rotary motion. Then all these island universes started flying apart from a common center. They are still flying apart today and the farther they fly, the faster they go. Hence, the expanding universe!

We think this point is getting a bit too farfetched. Suppose we grant this mysterious instability, suppose we say that the chemical elements

just happened to form an explosive mixture which caused it to blow up and sent it scattering in all directions. But none of this accounts for the continuous acceleration, which can only be produced by the constant application of some force. Island universes or, for that matter, inert substances are not equipped for self-propulsion like rocket ships, and science does not provide us with any logical reason for this extraordinary behaviour.

But, “aha” say the astro-physicists, there is a new theory now of how the universe came about and why the galaxies are all flying apart, away from a common centre. They tell us that in the “beginning” about 10 – 15 billion years ago, a primordial atom exploded with a gigantic bang — the BIG BANG — and sent its components flying in all directions and, as they flew away from each other, they converted NOTHING (for obviously how could there be anything else besides that primordial atom?) and evolved that NOTHING into gigantic galaxies, stars and planets, etc. No one can tell us WHO put that single atom there, or where it came from. Notwithstanding these embarrassing questions of how something can come out of NOTHING (“Singularity” to boot) the astro-physicists go on and tell us that they are now fairly certain of the chronological developments of the universe a mere 300,000 years after the BIG BANG and some even dare to claim to know its history just a few seconds after the BIG BANG! Other embarrassing questions of how time in seconds or even in millenniums can be reckoned 10 – 15 billion years ago without radio active decay or residual microwave radiation or any other parameters, are also ignored. Nor has science any clues to what was there **before** THE BIG BANG, or, what set it off? GOD?

Besides all these “unanswerables” Cosmo-chronology with its “tick-tack-toe-if-I-miss-I-take-this” technique of grabbing at straws, also faces the unexplainable paradox of an universe billions of years younger than its oldest stars as well as of giant globular clusters and super structures as “the Great Wall” falling outside the calculation for the age limit of our “known” universe! Even adjusting General Relativity to its limits cannot help the astro-physicists to resolve this contradiction, which should oblige us to reappraise the fundamental ideas of the kind of universe we inhabit.

And then again, how do we account for our solar system and the planets in it? The planets were formed, continues science, through an accidental near-collision of our sun with another sun, which produced tidal disruption on the sun, causing it to throw off portions of its

substance into space. These settled into orbits in accordance with the square law and formed the solar system. Unfortunately the square law cannot account for the mathematical positioning of the planetary orbits. However, science carries on, before the universe expanded too much, the probability of such near-collisions between stars was greater, but as the range of conditions suitable for life is so narrow, therefore, planets able to support life must be very few. Perhaps one in a million. So sentient life is a rare occurrence indeed, according to our science! And this kind of “science” has been responsible to a great degree for giving us our present schizophrenic mentality.

While outwardly cloaking themselves in mournful grandeur at the panorama of their splendid isolation in the cosmos, our scientists, like most of us, feel inwardly relieved at the absence of any contact with some alien intelligence which, like us, might also be attempting to vault across the starry void to examine us — and might just succeed. We are like the virgin bride, desirous of being seen by her man but apprehensive of the eventual consequence of such an encounter! Deep down in our hearts we are uncertain — “fearful” would be a better expression — about the outcome of encounter with alien intelligences from “out there.” Moreover, what havoc would be wrought by such an event to our cloistered concepts of “churchianity” with its mishmash of chosen peoples and chosen races? They would be certainly annihilated. But surprisingly enough, none of the fundamental precepts of any of the great Faiths would be adversely affected, or even touched, for nothing in their basic Teaching is at odds with this fantastic eventuality. On the contrary, they not only hint at it but alert us to its inevitability in the fulness of time. Theirs is the universal vision of a creation, “infinite in its splendor and deathless in duration,” unflinchingly working out the destined course set by the Power that brought it forth from “nothingness.” According to the Avatars, the Divine Manifestations, the universe is teeming with life, the life of the mind, and headed towards the meeting of the minds — and with the Mind. Our scientists too, notwithstanding their apprehension, are now being led inexorably to the same end. For recent discoveries in outer space of molecules of Hydrogen Cyanide (HCN), Cyano Acetylene (CNC_2H_2) and Formaldehyde (HCHO), as well as water (H_2O) on the planets Mars and Jupiter, now confront us with the distinct possibility that Life may have more varied forms than we imagine it to possess. And it follows from this that when we see it, we may not recognize it and (despite the obvious hurt to our ego) that it may not recognize us.

Likewise we must also be prepared to recognize that our physical cosmos, all contained within the spatio-temporal frame, may be only a minute facet of the total reality, just as the surface of our globe is only a small part of the whole universe.

Our scientists today are not even able to sustain their claim to possession of empiric power, and their much-lauded principle of rational verification of facts is turning out to be a waterless desert — if not downright fallacious — in the quest for the really great discoveries, which seem to have a disconcerting penchant for appearing from the clouds of intuition instead of the well-beaten path of logic.

Nor can modern science's idea of rationality, unless it is large enough to also include the seemingly irrational, sustain science's dubious claim to be the breaker of new ground even within its own domain here on earth. For it is the seemingly irrational discoveries emerging of late from the very sanctums of molecular physics and physical astronomy — discoveries such as the tachyon particles, which by their descriptions must travel faster than light, the theoretical speed limit of the universe; the black holes in space which are either whirlpools or warps leading from one universe to another, nay, even more fantastic, from one dimension to another; and the ghost-like neutrino particle having neither mass nor charge and capable of hurtling with ease through the entire earth — which have shaken the compact world-view of science to its very core. And last but not least Extra-Sensory Perception (ESP), that extra-physical aspect of man himself, already scientifically demonstratable through controlled experiments within science's own haloed institutions and so nullifying any denial by science of the existence of such phenomena as *biofeedback*, ability of humans to control their own body temperature and heartbeat, *psychokinesis*, the power of the mind to move objects at a distance, *telepathy*, communication by minds through as-yet scientifically unknown or inexplicable means, and *precognition*, the advance knowledge of an occurrence — these and many other inexplicable or “scientifically irrational” phenomena have now blasted the bastions of science's citadel, so brashly erected only a short while ago on the most myopic of boasts: that within its haloed walls shall penetrate no morals, magic or Religion. Such are the dead-ends to which we would drive the potentials of some of our highest discoveries.

Science is being forced to concede that it will never know the “how, why, where or whence” of the reality of man or the cosmos in which it finds itself. Our insatiable curiosity thus far has only succeeded in

uncovering an endless succession of enigmas. This has been our experience thus far in every vista of our “scientific” search, from the probing of the microcosm, the pursuit for the fundamental particle, on to the macrocosm, to touch the fence of infinity. The *aim* of modern science is to obtain an exact picture of any phenomenon — absolute knowledge — whether it be in physical, biological science or in the social sciences. On the other hand however, the achievement of modern science is quite different. The goal that we have arrived at is the same as if the attempt for achieving “absolute knowledge” had never been made at all. We have finally discovered that absolute or exact knowledge is impossible of achievement concerning any question about anything, not because of some deficiency in our instruments or our techniques but because of an *absolute limitation* — the very nature of man himself. Man is fundamentally limited by his make-up from possessing the exact knowledge of anything. And the wisest are those who have recognized the futility of such endeavours and turned their gaze inward to discover man’s true reality — our Self — and from it have seen emerging the true paradigm, destined to relegate the compartmentalized structure of present-day science and its parochial rules of “is and is not” into the abyss of history.

However, this emergent paradigm, destined to replace the concepts and models of “scientific man”, is not really new. It is something that became lost in the flurry and stridency of science’s discoveries and its conquests of man’s natural environment. Armed with its own dogma as well as its own ignorance, science and its champions brooked no rebuttal, tolerated no alternative to their own mechanistic concept of causality, which was predicated upon the fallacy that the universe was simply a smoothly functioning machine, open to search by our senses, which could not conceal any riddle capable of resisting discovery by our instruments, or when systematically reduced by scientific method to its fundamental components. All that of course has now been thoroughly demolished, and the real behind the facade has now emerged to confront the scientist within his own ramparts of experiment and proof and, unable to contain its meaning, he finds his familiar universe shattered beyond repair. For, as in ages past so too again,

“Just beyond the bright searchlights of science
 Out of sight of the windows of sense
 The old riddles still bid us defiance
 Old questions of Why and of Whence.”

This paradigm now emerging is the same ancient model of man as

the rational soul, which has been conveyed by every Avatar to humanity down the ages — a model predominantly spiritual in the scale of his complete reality, not subject to true analysis by any process of scientific dissection, comprehensible only in the context of his completeness as a being apart from his merely physical environment and inherently superior to it — a model which must, before it is too late, reassert its ancient hold on the human psyche.

At this stage, the question must be asked why our scientists, at once the most avowed seekers after Truth become also its most cynical opponents, if presented with that side of its (Truth's) nature which cannot be contained within the parameters of their experimental verifications. Some might say that it is because of a fundamental failing of the human mind. We can only attribute it to ignorance of the true nature of their search, ignorance, born of that same source of ignorance, our own dear egocentric self, which so readily clings to the desire for security that the instant it locates a tree, clambers up it and proclaims either that it is the only tree, or that it is the largest and grandest tree! Entrapped in the coils of their particular specialization our scientists, most of them, have lost touch with the universal unity underlying all things in space and time. They have come to fear ridicule more than ignorance and hence have placed rigid limits on their specialized fields and thus also limits on the whole quest for knowledge itself — limits which they have not transgressed for fear of being laughed to scorn.

In our quest for putting nature and its secrets to work for the benefit of man, specialization is a most necessary and vital step because of the limitlessness of knowledge. But in becoming so specialized we must never lose sight of the underlying thread of intelligent laws regulating all existence — laws predicated on a Reality possessed of Mind and Will. Otherwise, we are simply like the diligent technician at the electron microscope, who, while succeeding in reducing both the brain and a piece of cheese to their primordial atoms, yet, unless he steps back and sees the larger identity of each of these two objects, will obtain no clue as to the nature and purpose of the brain or the piece of cheese. Man is still very far from contacting the Reality immanent in the Cosmos which demonstrates Its presence in the gamut of creation — from the tiniest particle to the giant galaxies — and certainly encompasses the existence and achievements of the dimension of the soul-life, which could not exist, much less progress, but for the perfect condition prepared for its arrival on creation's center stage in an otherwise seemingly hostile

universe.

Our knowledge is, in the end, like our thought processes and languages, symbolic. We can explain and assimilate only through symbols, whether they contain the effects experienced by us in relation to the material universe or the emotions of our personal being and fellows. The intrinsic reality of the material world and its energy continuum is not comprehensible to our minds and can only be understood through symbolic representation of mechanical models and mathematics also based on symbolic logic. A vicious circle.

To test this out ask someone to explain the meaning of energy. The more difficult proposition would be to define ourselves. Yes — Man. We certainly do not know ourselves. The real within us we cannot define. For there are no symbols to equate with that reality in the field of our knowledge of physical things — like explaining a tendon by a rubber band, bone by a wooden stick, tooth enamel by pearls, eyes by camera lenses, etc., etc. And so we do not even really know ourselves! Logic can only confront a phenomenon by reducing it to manageable symbols. Well then, logic by that very logic must admit that it is incapable of knowing the reality — which includes completeness — of any phenomenon. In whatever realm rational man ventures forth with the torch of his mind's logic he finds himself powerless to penetrate and learn of the underlying reality behind the mere mechanics of things. As we have mentioned, humble intuition instead of brash logic seems to be the stairway of the mind for attaining the knowledge of great truths. And this is only natural since intuition is external to us. It is from outside our make-up, while logic is simply a product of the analyses of our own experience. Ages of effort and accompanying defeats have bestowed on us a degree of wisdom. We have become more restrained about our claims and capacities for uncovering reality, and the wisest are those who have learned that the more they discover of the phenomenal creation, the more they recognize how little they know. We are creatures of the half-light. Our knowledge of things is partial, and even that gleaned only from effects and understood only in symbols.

For example, emotions such as love, undeniably one of the strongest forces affecting man, defy scientific proof or analysis. And how analyze hope, without which no mother would nurse her child, nor any farmer till his land? Likewise, it is not possible to prove to someone lacking appreciation, or to a computer, the phenomenon of beauty, or the grandeur of music. Yet, who can deny the existence of beauty? And

while there are still some who claim that the race of man, with its terrifying powers of destruction, could have survived without the vital safety valve of its emotions, they belong to that category of people, which, while being a part of humanity, is totally ignorant of its essence. How long could human society survive without the sex urge and the emotions connected with it, especially without that emotion of love? How explain the fact that infant mortality is lowest and babies advance to adulthood most successfully when they are loved? How account for the innate sense of right or wrong — our conscience, without which all laws, however logically perfect, could not function in the human context, thus precipitating a swift collapse of society? No civilization known to us today could have arisen without these emotions of love, justice, and charity having been built into the human psyche by the all-wise Power, the universal Mind. Unlike the animals, who are totally impotent in the scale of the potential for planetary destruction, since they are bereft of mind, humanity could not have survived as a machine, coldly calculating, devoid of emotions, and lacking intuitive perception, which is something extra and more than mere logic. For, while a computer, however perfect, may decide on the merits of a mathematical argument according to logical rules, it has no power to throw away the rules nor even to originate new mathematical concepts! While a computer can be designed to play passable chess, it cannot humor its opponent nor chuckle over its own errors. Only Man can do that. And there lies humanity's saving grace, the safety valve from its own horrendous potential for destruction.

Here let us ask ourselves a few questions: Are not animate objects superior to inanimate ones? Is not a worm superior to a stone, a dog to a worm, a human being to a dog? Does not the panorama of existence, at least on planet Earth, appear as a further substantiation of the all-pervasive evidence of intelligence and its power over other forms of activity, either animate or inanimate?

This attribute of intelligence, while linking man to an appreciation of the power of that Mind behind all Creation, also makes him a phenomenon totally different from all other forms which do not possess intelligence.

*Monkey, in feet and hands and face
So like the human form,
Why buildest thou no dwelling-place,
To hide thee from the storm?
In feet and hands and face, O Lord,*

*Though close to man allied,
Wisdom, chief boon on him conferred,
To me has been denied.¹*

Yes, wisdom, dreadful wisdom which inspects, perceives, evaluates — grasps the truth and espouses it to the end — is, for the better or for the worse, ours alone. Hence, one can never intelligently put forward the examples of intricate animal societies such as the baboon, or the wolf, or insect dwellings such as a beehive, an anthill, or a tailor-bird's nest, or of the society or life pattern that exists therein, as a comparison to human society. All animal societies are prisoners of inherent and undeviating instinctive patterns which have been, so to say, "built into" those creatures and which demonstrate no signs of change, however far back in time we can probe them. Not so with man. For here we see a gradual development totally outside any instinctive pattern, a development that accelerates in all directions with every increment of time and clearly nullifies any attempt at classifying man as an instinctive creature. Our mind, with its quality of wisdom and the faculty of creative thought which has enabled us alone to dominate our surroundings and radically alter our environment, is totally absent in all other creatures on this planet. The qualities of intelligent guidance and creative thought which we are able to field in the context of our own creations, organizations, and laws, are the hallmark of our mind and leave no doubt of its existence. It must follow then, that the more comprehensive the law and organization evident in a phenomenon the higher the intelligence required to bring it about and the greater the mind behind it.

All this notwithstanding, the concept of the Universal Mind or the Supreme Being has met with unbelief by many so-called scientific minds. Yet at the same time, many of the same individuals talk freely of phenomena which are called "natural" but of whose processes they have no clear understanding at all. Obviously, to call them natural only indicates that they are repetitive, but that does not explain the phenomena. Science is composed in the main of such unproven laws or principles, and yet this lack of proof does not prohibit one from applying these laws to various situations. Then with what rationale do we demand proofs in the realm of the supernatural,² when proofs concerning natural phenomena

¹ *Kutidusaka-Jataka*, 321.

² "Supernatural", we must be bear in mind, no more implies unnatural than superhuman implies unhuman or super-essential means unessential.

are to a great extent lacking? Thus acceptance of specific phenomena at any one point in time, whether natural or supernatural, may be purely a matter of faith. The human mentality, without realizing, finds itself in a schizophrenic state to an almost universal degree. Can any reasoning person possibly believe that insensible and mindless matter just chanced to create itself and this whole cosmos and then just chanced to impose the systems and organizations upon itself, after which such system and order just chances to remain imposed?

Falling back on one's scientific experience, the question might be asked: Is it design or chance which is responsible for the invention and construction of the sonar set, a device of very limited automation? Is it design or chance which is responsible for a bat — yes, a bat! — with its intricate, miniature and effective sonar which needs neither attention nor repair and which can be reproduced ad infinitum? Or for that matter a bee, a bird, a fish? All these creatures have been the prime movers behind man's desire to navigate the oceans of air and water ever more perfectly. They are creatures put in the crib of Creation by an infinitely understanding Mind to assist Its mind-children to learn and progress and to eventually outgrow this spatio-temporal crib and enter their destined domain of the Spirit-mind, where nothing but Mind exists. And this, if we will use our intelligence a little, is as it should be. For what other use are glowing embers, blazing rocks and cold dead stones to the Supreme Intelligence if they do not serve the purpose of "Intelligence-Rising" — of mind? "Therefore, seek thou the life that is of the mind."¹ For, "the mind takes possession of everything not only on earth, but also in heaven..."² And if "Intelligence-Rising" cannot occur in creation, then how possible an Omnipotent Creator, a Supreme? On the other hand, since "Intelligence-Rising" has occurred, Mind exists — Us! Then how not the Supreme? Is not this also the only truth about our own attempts in our laboratories with our own creation? Just what use are globules of gas, chemicals, sparks of energy, etc. in the test tube if not for the attainment of the ultimate purpose of every scientist, the creation of life and if "humanly" possible, in the unthinkable future, of "intelligent" life? To deny this purpose is simply to delude ourselves in order to be able to live with our impotence. The grapes are still sour!

And, ultimately, what is chance itself but simply a term we have

¹ *Milindapanha* (Siddharta's discourses with the Brahmin Kutadanta).

² Buddhist Catena.

coined to express the existence of a cause of whose nature and attributes we are ignorant? Chance, then, is simply an admission of our ignorance and can have no existence in reality. Scientific man's experience has been one of design and causation and he should logically be the first to hypothesize a Master Mind, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and constantly interested in the whole of creation and every infinitesimal part of it.

Hence, if we discern order in the Universe and there is no doubt about it, as Siddharta states, "the Law of Causality is All-pervading,"¹ then such Universal Law must derive from and indicate the presence of Universal Mind. This too is acknowledged by Siddharta, "The Mind is Everything." He affirms "The Cosmos is replete with Mind," and continues, "Subhuti, words cannot explain the real nature of the Cosmos. Only common people fettered with desire make use of this arbitrary method."² Only through Its effects or attributes can we sense the presence of the Supreme, as Siddharta asserts. "How can the Truth which is inexpressible be taught and heard? It is through Its attributes that It is taught and heard."³ Otherwise, our logic, which is simply a product of our own dull faculties and predicated on our limited experience and knowledge, is utterly incapable of perceiving the reality of the Supreme, which must by condition, be supra-logical and as foreign to our idea of physical or metaphysical phenomena as "nothingness." Yet, "nothingness" or "somethingness," the Supreme is not dependent on such helpless notions of the subject for Its reality. Nothing devised by our finite mind is able to define or analyze the Infinite. These inventions of ours cannot even describe their own creator, our mind. How much less the Universal Mind, which can only be felt and known by us at Its point of contact with our own mind. And that point is its effect — the gamut of creation, physical and metaphysical — including ourselves. No thinking person who studies the stupendous marvels of creation can fail

¹ *Samyutta-nikaya*, 12.20, 30. For those early Buddhists, who were tragically misled by the then prevalent anthropomorphic concepts among the Hindus concerning the Absolute, the following excerpt from Krishna's teaching clearly established identity of concept between His and Siddharta's description of the all-pervading Law of Karma and its operation—"The Lord determines not the doership nor the doings of beings, nor even their contact with the fruit of actions. It is Nature that functions (deriving its motive power from God)" *Bhagavad-Gita*, V. 14—and leaves no room for the Buddhists to accuse the Supreme of any caprice.

² *Vajra-Sattva*, xxx (The Integral Principle).

³ *Madhyamika-Vitti*, p. 264. See also Kena-Upanishad, I.3 "There the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind; we know not, we understand not. How can one teach this?"

to attribute superlative intelligence to the Cause behind it all, unless, with the same breath, one is prepared to concede that our own creations are fortuitous products of unpredictable apes. And, to bring our own puny minds into action in the physical realm as, for example, in the practice of our arts and crafts, the exercise of Will is required. And Will denotes psyche — personality. The larger the number of points of contact of our minds with the Universal Mind, the more we study Its effects around us — from the minutest particles to the giant galaxies — the more we are led to admit that all creation is predicated on a Reality endowed with supreme mind and directing irresistible will. Of course, this is not to imply that we must link all that perplexes us to some special intervention of the Supreme, as do those naive persons who consider thunder and storms as signs of some god's displeasure, but simply to recognize the order and design demonstrated by the purposefulness and growth of life. In other words, laws should serve to indicate the presence of the "Law-maker."¹

But the Supreme is not a relentless omnipotence. Its laws are tempered with beneficence, a testimony to the fact that joy and goodness are as much Its concern as the inimitable laws of Nature. The exceptions and deviations that do in fact defy the laws of rigid rationality are in themselves the greatest tribute to Its sovereign and unconstrained will in the operation of Its domain. We shall consider just one of these exceptions, perhaps the most important for life on earth — water. The fact that water, whose formula weight is 18 while ammonia (NH₃) with a formula weight of 17 and Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S), closely related to water, are both gas at temperatures down to minus 33 Degrees Centigrade and minus 59 Degrees Centigrade respectively, is enough to make one pause and wonder that water exists as a liquid at all at normal temperatures. Equally remarkable is its power of absorbing vast quantities of oxygen at low temperatures, its maximum density at 4 Degrees Centigrade, whereby the oceans, rivers and lakes remain liquid, its power of releasing great quantities of heat as it freezes and the uniquely important quality of the density of ice, lesser than that of water, so that it remains on the surface and thus preserves all life in the oceans, rivers and lakes throughout the long winters.

Dry land, while not demonstrative of any exception, is nevertheless

¹ Jamshed Fozdar, *The God of Buddha* (Casa Editrice Bahá'í Srl, Italy, 1995), pp. 117-118.

equally indicative of the marvels of that Universal Mind. Aside from providing a stable platform for much terrestrial life, the soil provides the minerals which are assimilated by the vegetation and then transformed into sustenance for animals. Civilization becomes feasible through the presence of metals near the surface. And finally, another wonder is the atmosphere, tenuous enough for man to see through and examine his universe, yet sufficiently dense to prevent the annihilation of all life on the earth's surface from the daily bombardment of 30,000,000 meteors entering our atmosphere at 30 miles per second. And even if we learn to understand the "How" of these matters, we still seek the reasons for the "Why" of it all.

All that one can ever hope to know of that impenetrable Mystery are the manifestations of Its infinite wisdom and incomparable radiance, manifestations which, while comprehensible only in their simplest forms to our dull faculties, yet clearly reveal the presence of an overpowering Intelligence, omnipotent and omniscient. In such terms only did Siddharta conceive of the "ground-of-being" — the Absolute. In the midst of a multitude of man-created gods and superstitious rituals to which men of that time looked for salvation, His alone was the task to reveal to them the vision of an infinite creation with neither beginning nor end and moving according to a perfect and eternal Law emanating from a Causeless Cause — *Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed.*

It is hard to realize the essential, the truth is not easily perceived, desire is mastered by him who knows, and to him who sees aright all things are naught. There is, O monks, an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed.¹ Were there not, O monks, this unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed, there would be no escape from the world of the born, originated, created, formed. Since, O monks, there is an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, and unformed, therefore is there an escape from the born, originated, created, formed. What is dependent, that also moves; what is independent does not move. Where there is no movement there is rest; where rest is, there is no desire; where there is no desire, there is neither coming nor going, no ceasing-to-be, no further coming-to-be.

Where there is no ceasing-to-be, nor further coming-to-be, there is

¹ See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, XII. 4. "...the unthinkable, all pervading, imperishable, ineffable, eternal, immobile, unmanifest and immutable Brahma..." *Ibid.*, X. 12; *Ibid.*, IV. 6.

*neither this shore nor the other shore nor anything between them.
Even this is the end of Sorrow.*¹

Hence, as Siddharta clearly expresses in the above excerpt, the Absolute which is independent and beyond change or movement (for it is “uncaused”) does not exist anywhere in the space-time continuum — the finite universe — since nothing in the universe is at any time independent of other causes and to be dependent is to be subject to change (Movement). Nor must we confuse the above excerpt as some sort of a description for Nirvana which, while sometimes referred to as “the other shore”² in these lines—

*When the Brahmin has reached the other shore in both laws, to him
who knows, all bonds vanish.*³

—is nowhere acknowledged by Siddharta as the “ground-of-being.” Moreover, Nirvana, as we shall see, is simply a condition of mind inseparable from Samsara⁴ and totally dependent for its being on the operation of Causality (the Law of Karma).

The phrase “neither this shore nor the other shore nor anything between them,” meaning no direct or indirect link between the contingent and the eternal, clearly indicates the Absolute. Or, as Siddharta states in another place (see page 47) “If by the Absolute is meant something out of relation to all known things, its existence cannot be established by any known reasoning,” and as He has told us, its existence can only be indicated by its effects.

The Hindu Scriptures also state this same reasoning with reference to the Absolute. The Absolute is unapproachable⁵ by any thought or generation. And yet Siddharta, like all the other Avatars, could not be more clear in warning us not to equate Its inaccessibility to our puny minds, with the fallacy of Its non-existence. Since, it is with this Eternal Reality, the Absolute, constantly in mind that Siddharta teaches us of the unreal nature of the world and admonishes us to free ourselves from its

¹ *Udana*, v. 81. See also *Svetasvatara-Upanishad*, III. 9, 10. “Than Whom there is naught else higher, than Whom there is naught smaller, naught greater, (the) one stands like a tree established in heaven by Him, the Person, is this whole universe filled. That which is beyond this world is without form and without suffering. Those who know that become immortal, but others go only to Sorrow.”

² *Dhammapada*, v. 348.

³ *Dhammapada*, v. 384.

⁴ Conditioned things. Existence itself. See *Lankavatara-Sutra*, 2. XVIII.

⁵ *Rig-Veda*, X. 129. “The Supreme is without qualities and attributes, neither existent (Sat) nor non-existent (Asat).”

entanglements.

The man who is free from credulity, who knows the Uncreated, who has severed all ties, who has put an end to all occasions, who has renounced all desires, he, indeed, is exalted among men.¹

It was in this wise that we see Siddharta repeatedly exhorting His only son, the reverend Rahula:

Leave pleasure's fivefold strands,² so sweet, so dear, and led by faith, leave home, to end all ills. Choose worthy friends, a distant lodging seek, remote and quiet; sparing be in food. Foster what harbours no appearances. Discard all trend to pride; pride comprehend and thou shalt go thy way serene and calm.³

Siddharta urges us to embark on the path to the Eternal, by destroying the illusion of all contingent things, since they are all transitory and can only end in suffering. Gradually, as one compares the Eternal — conceived as the abode of unceasing, undisturbed, self-controlled bliss of peace — and the mundane — always transitory, enveloped by uncertainty and unpossessable by us — one is filled with revulsion for everything ephemeral, as none of it can dispel our anxiety and convey any certitude to our self. At last our abhorrence of the transitory nature of this phenomenal world finally opens our true self to an awareness of the Absolute, the Unconditioned. The illusion of self disappears and only the Absolute is seen.

It is to this Unknown and Inaccessible Absolute, that Siddharta directed His exultance:

I have run through a course of many births looking for the maker of this dwelling and finding him not; painful is birth again and again. (anekajatisamsaram sandhavissam anibbisam gahakarakam gavesanto dukkhajati punappunam).⁴

These “many births” are merely cognitions, or, “being ‘born’ to the knowledge,” of those illusions that often pose as reality and the accompanying pain at recognizing them for what they are. Siddharta’s

¹ **Dhammapada**, v. 97. See also **Dhammapada**, v. 374. See also **Kena-Upanishad**, i. 6. “What cannot be thought with the mind, but that whereby the mind can think: know that alone to be Brahma, the Spirit; and not what people here adore.”

² These five strands are lust, malice, sloth, pride and doubt. The five conditions to be eliminated are desire for existence of form, formless existence, self-assertion, pride and ignorance.

³ **Sutta-nipata**, vv. 337, 338, 342.

⁴ **Dhammapada**, v. 153.

questing mind having cut through the illusions and exposing their nothingness is bestowed with omniscience by the Absolute¹ in accordance with Its own inscrutable law of Manifestation — Buddha-rising. Siddharta then expresses His exultance at becoming aware of the Absolute (‘the builder of the House’) and recognized that this becoming aware of the Absolute is itself the attainment of Nirvana.

*Now are you seen, O builder of the house, you will not build the house again. All your rafters are broken, your ridgepole is destroyed, the mind, set on the attainment of nirvana has attained the extinction of desires, (gahakaraka! dittho si, puna geham na kahasi sabha te phasuka bhagga, gahakutam visankhitam visankharagatam cittam tanhanam khayam ajjhaga).*²

The illusion of self disappears, and one is made aware of the Eternal. However, one should not equate Nirvana with the Absolute, for, Nirvana, itself, since it is really inseparable from Samsara,³ is also conditioned by the Absolute.

*Further, Mahamati, those who, afraid of suffering arising from the discrimination of birth and death, seek for Nirvana, do not know that birth-and-death and Nirvana are not to be separated the one from the other; and seeing that all things subject to discrimination have no reality, imagine that Nirvana consists in the future annihilation of the senses and their fields.*⁴

Nirvana and Samsara are simply facets of one single⁵ existence and Nirvana, too, can be experienced in this very life.

*Do not sit at home, do not go to the forest,
But recognize mind wherever you are.
When one abides in complete and perfect enlightenment,
Where is Samsara and where is Nirvana?*⁶

¹ **Vajrachhedika**, 176, 11a. (Because an Absolute exalts the Holy Persons.)

² **Dhammapada**, v. 154. See also **Svetasvatara-Upanishad**, V. 6. “There is a Spirit hidden in the mystery of the Upanishads and the Vedas; and Brahma, the God of creation, owns Him as his own Creator. It is the Spirit of God, seen by gods and seers of olden times who, when one with Him become immortal.”

³ Samsara—Karma-formations, conditioned things, impulses, predisposition (Samska).

⁴ **Lankavatara-Sutra**, 2. XVIII.

⁵ **Saraha-Dohakosa**, vv. 103.

⁶ “**na samsarasya nirvanat kimcid asti visheshanam** (In truth there is neither Samsara nor Nirvana, nor is there any difference between them.)” Also see **Dhammapada**, v. 89. Also **Bhagavad-Gita**, V. 23. “He, who is able to withstand, here on earth, before casting off this body, the urges of lust and anger, he is a Yogi—a harmonized soul; he is a happy man.”

Nirvana is that ideal state when the real within us, cleansed of all greed, illusion and pride, becomes the receptacle of the incorruptible Reality. Thus, devoid of what can be lost or changed or destroyed, we experience eternal peace, no longer anxious or fearful of any loss.

*In this very life he is allayed, becomes cool, he abides in the experience of bliss with a self that has become Brahma.*¹

It is this condition of mind to which Siddharta refers when He claims to open for us the door to immortality, the promise of every Avatar — the central theme of Religion, that most vital condition which the questing mind of man has sought since time began. No other way has been found but this to move humanity, and those who cannot discern the positive assurance and comfort embedded in the Dharma simply cannot distinguish the real from the mirage of the fleeting world.

The allegations of ‘atheism’ attributed to Siddharta’s doctrine for one reason or another by those less perceptive, seem only to dwell on His tirades against the Hindu pantheon of anthropomorphized deities — Brahmin conceived and Brahmin subscribed in the India of His day, where the most farfetched assertions of the Brahmins, claiming all sorts of intimacy with the Supreme and proclaiming detailed knowledge concerning Its nature, Its form and Its dictates, constantly confronted Siddharta, who stood absolutely against such anthropomorphism, both by word and example. All Siddharta’s discourses on this subject of the man-conceived Supreme, or the anthropomorphic concepts of the Absolute or Brahma prevalent among the Brahmins and the masses of His time, are clearly directed toward smashing those idols of vain imaginings and to show His own inherent superiority to such all-too-human gods!

Concerning this point, we relate below just one such episode² of Siddharta’s confrontation with some Brahmins and trust that this will serve both to clarify His distaste for anthropomorphism, and strengthen for us His affirmation of the Absolute — the Unmanifest Brahma of the Upanishads, while at the same time emphasizing reliance on the Law of Karma as the real operative factor of the universe:

The Blessed One proposed these questions to the two Brahmins: “Do you think that all paths are right?” Both answered and said: “Yes, Gotama, we think so.” “But tell me,” continued the Buddha, “has any one of the Brahmins, versed in the Vedas, seen Brahma

¹ *Majjhima-nikaya*, i. 344. *Ibid.*, 11.159. Also *Anguttara-nikaya*, ii. 211.

² *Digha-nikaya*, i. 235. (Tevijja Sutta).

face-to-face?" No, sir!" was the reply. "But, then," said the Blessed One, "has any teacher of the Brahmins, versed in the Vedas, seen Brahma face-to-face?" The two Brahmins said: "No, sir." "But, then," said the Blessed One, "has any one of the authors¹ of the Vedas seen Brahma face-to-face?" Again the two Brahmins answered in the negative and exclaimed: "How can any one see Brahma or understand him, for the mortal cannot understand the immortal." And the Blessed One proposed an illustration, saying: "It is as if a man should make a staircase in the place where four roads cross, to mount up into a mansion. And people should ask him, 'Where, good friend, is this mansion to mount up into for which you are making this staircase? Knowest thou, whether it is in the east or in the south, or in the west, or in the north? Whether it is high, or low, or of medium size?' And when so asked he should answer, 'I know it not.' And people should say to him, 'But then, good friend, thou art making a staircase to mount up into something — taking it for a mansion — which all the while thou knowest not, neither hast thou seen it.' And when so asked he should answer, 'That is exactly what I do. Yea I know that I cannot know it.' What would you think of him? Would you not say that the talk of that man was foolish talk?" "In sooth, Gotama," said the two Brahmins, "it would be foolish talk!" The Blessed One continued: "Then the Brahmins should say, 'We show you the way unto a union of what we know not and what we have not seen.' This being the substance of Brahmin lore, does it not follow that their task is vain?" "It does follow," replied Bharadvaja. Said the Blessed One: "Thus it is impossible that Brahmins versed in the three Vedas should be able to show the way to a state of union with that which they neither know nor have seen, just as when a string of blind men are clinging one to the other. Neither can the foremost see, nor can those in the middle see, nor can the hindmost see. Even so, methinks, the talk of the Brahmins versed in the three Vedas is but blind talk; it is ridiculous, consists of mere words, and is a vain and empty thing." "Now suppose," added the Blessed One, "that a man should come hither to the bank of the river and, having some business on the other side, should want to cross. Do you suppose that if he were to invoke

¹ See *Bhagavad-Gita*, XV. 15. "...I am indeed He who is to be known by all the Vedas. I indeed am the author of the Vedanta and I too the knower of the Vedas."

the other bank of the river to come over to him on this side, the bank would come on account of his praying?" "Certainly not, Gotama." "Yet this is the way of the Brahmins. They omit the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahmin, and say, 'Indra, we call upon thee; Soma, we call upon thee; Varuna, we call upon thee; Brahma, we call upon thee'." "Verily, it is not possible that these Brahmins, on account of their invocations, prayers, and praises should after death be united with Brahma." "Now tell me," continued the Buddha, "What do the Brahmins say of Brahma? Is his mind full of lust?" And when the Brahmins denied this, the Buddha asked: "Is Brahma's mind full of malice, sloth or pride?" "No, sir!" was the reply, "He is the opposite of all this." And the Buddha went on: "But are the Brahmins free from these vices?" "No, sir!" said Vasettha. The Holy One said: "The Brahmins cling to the five things leading to worldliness and yield to the temptations of the senses; they are entangled in the five hindrances, lust, malice, sloth, pride and doubt. How can they be united to that which is most unlike their nature? Therefore the threefold wisdom of the Brahmins is a waterless desert, a pathless jungle, and a hopeless desolation."

It is evident from this discourse, quoted at length, that Siddharta is discrediting not the Unmanifest Brahma or *the Absolute* but only those forms and attributes of Brahma concocted by the Brahmins to assert their superiority over the masses through their claims to portray the Supreme. On the other hand, we see that Siddharta Himself is not diffident about claiming to know the way to Brahma, the very thing he proclaimed was impossible for the Brahmins:

When the Buddha had thus spoken, one of the Brahmins said: "We are told, Gotama, that the Sakyamuni knows the path to a union with Brahma." And the Blessed One said: "What do you think, O Brahmins, of a man born and brought up in Manasakata? Would he be in doubt about the most direct way from this spot to Manasakata?" "Certainly not, Gotama." "Thus," replied the Buddha, "the Tathagata knows the straight path that leads to a union with Brahma. He knows it as one who has entered the world of Brahma and has been born in it. There can be no doubt in the Tathagata."

Hence from the above discourse three things become clear. First, there is not a single assertion here that the Unmanifest Brahma does not exist but only that He is not imaginable by the Brahmins, since the Brahmins themselves, by their actions, have proved to be most unlike the

Brahma, whom they claim to portray. Secondly, that it is Siddharta Who by His acts and achievements can show the straight path to a union with Brahma, since the Tathagata is a denizen of that Divine World, the World of Brahma. Lastly, the Brahma, which Siddharta claims to know, is the Unmanifest Brahma which, according to Siddharta's assertion the Brahmins had never known. Otherwise there would be no point to this discourse or to such assertions by Siddharta if the Unmanifest Brahma did not exist, or if Siddharta did not know the way to "It". For then both He and the Brahmins would be equally wrong or equally right, since each could permit his own claim to gallop on, astride his own imagination, in endless futility. Hence, one should understand that when Siddharta ridiculed the Brahmin-concocted concepts concerning Brahma, He was not referring to the Unmanifest Brahma, the Absolute. As He teaches them, the realization concerning the truth of the Absolute cannot be the subject of intellectual discussion but is something to be known by each, through direct experience in living the life. And Siddharta's alone was the power to show them how to correctly tread this path of life, for attaining to the cognizance of the Reality.

And the two young Brahmins said: "If thou knowest the way, show it to us." And the Buddha said: "The Tathagata sees the universe face to face and understands its nature. He proclaims the truth both in its letter and in its spirit, and his doctrine is glorious in its origin, glorious in its progress, glorious in its consummation. The Tathagata reveals the higher life in its purity and perfection. He can show¹ you the way to that which is contrary to the five great hindrances.

This eternal Reality, whether we call it the Unmanifest Brahma, or the Uncreated, or the Supreme, or God, or the Absolute, reveals Itself to the Buddhas in accordance with Its own law of Divine Manifestation and the Buddhas in turn as perfect mirrors reflect Its truth (Dharma) in their whole being.

And as all things originate from one Essence,² so they are developing

¹ See also *Svetasvatara-Upanishad*, III. 21. "I know that Spirit Whose infinity is in all, Who is ever one beyond time. I know the Spirit Whom the lovers of Brahma call Eternal, beyond the birth and rebirth of life."

² In this and other passages (*Majjhima-nikaya*, I. 137-140) Siddharta unequivocally refutes any denial of the Essence. One can find the same references to the Essence (Asti) in the Upanishads (*Katha*, IV. 13 and *Maitri*, IV. 4 etc.) See also *Rig-Veda*, X. 81. 3. "All that exists is one, whence is produced the whole world." Also *Yujur-Veda*, XXXI. 19. "The Essentially unmanifestable moveth within, the Lord of Generation vividly manifesteth Himself repeatedly; the steadfast behold from all sides the abode of the Original Cause: in that abide the worlds of the universe."

*according to one law, and they are destined to one aim, which is Nirvana. Nirvana comes to thee, Kassapa, when thou understandest thoroughly and when thou livest according to thy understanding, that all things are of one Essence and that there is but one law. Hence, there is but one Nirvana as there is but one truth, not two or three. And the Tathagata is the same unto all beings, differing in his attitude only in so far as all beings are different. The Tathagata, however, O Kassapa, knows the law whose essence is salvation, and whose end is the peace of Nirvana. He is the same to all, and yet knowing the requirements of every single being, he does not reveal himself to all alike. He does not impart to them at once the fulness of omniscience, but pays attention to the disposition of various beings.*¹

Here we read that Siddharta is succinctly acknowledging the four fundamental aspects of all the great Faiths. Namely, all things emanate from One Essence and they are all subject to one law by whatever name it is known, Dharma, Karma, or Religion. By adhering strictly to the precepts of this one Law we can attain the ineffable Nirvana, which as we see is not compartmentalized but is the all-pervading aura of light and joy, open to all who have lived according to the Divine Law as taught to us by the Message of the perfect Teacher — the Tathagata, Buddha, Who, knowing the ability of each person to grasp its meaning according to that person's capacity, reveals the Law in the correct measure perfectly suited to the ability of each person. So we see that there are four distinct concepts involved here: (1) the Essence of all is one; (2) from this Essence emanates the "One Law" to envelope everything in Creation; (3) knowing this, and acting upon this knowledge according to its requirements, one can attain the end of all suffering born of ignorance; and (4) this can only be accomplished by recognizing the Teacher of the Law (the Buddha), Who conveys the requirements of the Law according to the capacity of each to receive and act on it.

It is necessary to state here that, while Buddhist exponents take great pains to stress Siddharta's independence from Brahma and deny that the term "Brahma-carin," — which often comes into the context of Siddharta's affirmations of His Mission — implies any spiritual guidance or instruction's bestowed by Brahma upon Siddharta, yet they cannot refute Siddharta's own statements which contradict their partisan concepts.

¹ Sanskrit **Dhammapada**, v. Also **Aditta pariyyaya Sutta**. Also **Jataka Tales**, p. 82. Bigandet: 130—144.

*The Lord is speaking: "He, Vasettha, whose faith in the Tathagata is settled, rooted, established, firm — a faith not to be shaken by a recluse or Brahmin or deva or by Mara or Brahma or by anyone in the world—he may say: 'I am the Lord's own son, born of his mouth, born of Dhamma, formed by Dhamma, heir to Dhamma.' What is the reason for this? This, Vasettha, is a synonym for the Tathagata: Dhamma-body and again Brahma-body, and again Dhamma-become and again Brahma-become."*¹

The above passage alone should give these Buddhist exponents the clue to the paradox confronting them. Two distinct concepts of Brahma are involved here. The first is the mention of Brahma as one of the gods² of the Hindu pantheon, like Indra or Agni, and so thoroughly anthropomorphized by the Hindus that the Buddha just relegated these gods to the position of beings in need of instructions from Him and stated that the true disciple of the Buddhas could not only attain the station of these gods but even surpass it. Their reality, if they possess any, is simply equated by the Buddha with angels and other spirit-beings. The other mention of Brahma, in the context of equating Brahma with Dharma and the Tathagata (Brahma-body and Brahma-become as synonyms for Tathagata and Dharma-body and Dharma-become), is a reference to the ineffable, the Unmanifest Brahma, the Absolute.

The Buddhist scholars, almost to a man, have confused the commonly held anthropomorphic concept of the god Brahma with Siddharta's affirmation of the Unmanifest Brahma, totally unimaginable to the Brahmins or any one else, but known to the Tathagatas. Unable to make this distinction, they blindly persist in asserting that Brahma-carin³ (following Brahma or Brahma-faring), so often used by Siddharta in describing His mission and the Dharma, does not imply what it so clearly means, since Siddharta, according to their understanding, cannot have been instructed by the god Brahma. Because of their great misunderstanding of Siddharta's clear affirmation of the Unmanifest Brahma and the nature of the Tathagata's enlightenment — "an exaltation from the Absolute" — and not through a process of gradual self-effort or instruction at the feet of some man or god on Siddharta's part, these Buddhist spokesmen are unable to expound on the paradox confronting

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, III. 84.

² Deva. A shining being, angel, also meaning a god.

³ Also Brahmacarī. A young Brahmin in the first asrama or period of his life, (there are four such periods), or, a Buddhist ascetic with his will set on purity.

them in Siddharta's own assertions of His intimacy and identity with Brahma. No true Avatar ever came to destroy, but only to fulfill the Divine Law. As Siddharta declares, "I have seen the Ancient Way, the Old Road that was taken by the Buddhas of old, and that is the path I follow,"¹ and since He elsewhere praises the Brahmins of bygone ages who remembered the Ancient Way that leads to Brahma,² there can be no doubt that the Buddha is alluding to "the ancient narrow path that stretches far away, by which the seekers of Brahma ascend and are set free"—*vimuktah*, mentioned in the earliest Upanishad,³ long before Siddharta's time. He leaves no doubt whatever of the equation Dhamma = Brahma = Buddha = Atma.

The Buddha is an embodied Brahma⁴ just as a perfect mirror perfectly reflects the sun.

*The Tathagata sees the triple world (the world of the Uncreated and Causeless Cause, the world of the Spirit-mind and the world of matter) as it really is. It is not born, it dies not; it is not conceived; it springs not into existence; it moves not in a whirl, it becomes not extinct; it is not real, nor unreal, it is not existing nor non-existing, it is not such, not otherwise, nor false. The Tathagata sees...in His position no laws are concealed.*⁵

The Tathagatas are denizens of the world of the Unmanifest Brahma Who cross over from the other side to work the weal of the world.

¹ *Samyutta-nikaya*, II. 106. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, IV. 2. "Thus handed down from one to another the royal sages (Rajasris) knew it till that Yoga (Dhamma) was lost to the world through long lapse of time, O Arjuna. This same ancient Yoga has this day been imparted to you by Me. As He repeats: "Sarovpanishado gavo dogha Gopalanandana; Partho vatsasudhirbhokta dughdem Gitamritam mahat." This Teaching (Dharma) is the old, old Teaching of the Vedas, and nothing new.

² *Samyutta-nikaya*. IV. 117: Also see *Ittivuttaka* (28, 29): "Those who follow this (ancient) Way taught by the Buddhas are called Mahatmas."

³ *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*, IV. 4. 8. 33.

⁴ *Digha-nikaya*, III. 84. (*Bhagavato mhi ... dhammajjo ... Dhammakayo iti pi brahmakayo iti pi, dhammabhuto iti pi*). *Ibid.*, II, 27, 8; *Samyutta-nikaya*, III. 83 (*Brahmbuta...buddha*). *Ibid.* II. 221; III, 120 and *Anguttara-nikaya*, V. 4. 10, 115, p. 226.

⁵ *The Lotus-Sutra*, Ch. XV. This concept of the triple world is derived from the Hindus. See *Bhagavad-Gita*, III. 22. "Arjuna, there is nothing in the Triple World for Me to do..." Also *Svetasvatara-Upanishad*, I. II. "When a man knows God, he is free: his sorrows have an end and birth and death are no more. When in inner union he is beyond the world of the body, then the third world, the world of the Spirit, is found, where the power of the All is..." Also *Bhagavad-Gita*, IX. 19. "I am being and non-being both."

The Brahma-Faring¹ is lived for the plunge into Nirvana, for going beyond to Nirvana, for culmination in Nirvana.²

Furthermore, as we can see from the *Jataka Tales*, Siddharta Himself often claims to have been Sakka (Indra) in his previous lives. In the Nikayas,³ Sakka acts as Siddharta's protector, just as Indra acts for Agni. In another part,⁴ Siddharta seems to be addressed as Indra (purindado sakko). Hence, it is difficult to see how the Buddhist theologians could have misunderstood this cardinal point and failed to distinguish between the various gods of the Hindu pantheon often mentioned by Siddharta—*By vigilance did Indra rise to the lordship of the gods.*

*People praise vigilance; thoughtlessness is always deprecated.⁵
Not even a god nor a gandharva nor Mara along with Brahma could turn into defeat the victory of such a one (who has conquered himself).⁶*

Who is worthy to blame him who is like a gold coin from the Jambu river? Even the gods praise him; he is praised even by Brahma.⁷

— and, the Unmanifest Brahma, the “Lovely,” the Absolute, the knowledge of Whose Reality was vital for Siddharta's own work of salvation:

This itself is the whole of the Brahma-faring: friendship, association and intimacy with the Lovely. Because of my friendship with the Lovely, beings liable to birth are freed from birth, beings liable to ageing, decaying and dying are freed therefrom. Thus must you train: I will become a friend, associate and intimate of the Lovely.⁸

In view of this very widespread misunderstanding within the ranks of Buddhist scholasticism, confusing Siddharta's affirmation of the Absolute (the Unmanifest Brahma) with His acknowledgement of the gods (Brahma, Indra, Varuna) of the Hindu pantheon, the disputations

¹ Following Brahma (Brahma-carin—walking with God).

² *Samyutta-nikaya*. III. 189.

³ *The Vessantara Jataka*.

⁴ *Majjhima-nikaya*, I. 386.

⁵ *Dhammapada*, v. 30.

⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 105.

⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 230.

⁸ *Samyutta-nikaya*, I, 88-89. For a detailed explanation of the passage see pp. 143—145. Jamshed Fozdar, *The God of Buddha* (Casa Editrice Bahá'í Srl, Italy, 1995). See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, IX. 18. “I am the supreme goal, supporter, Lord, witness, abode, refuge, disinterested friend, origin and end, the resting-place, the store-house, and the imperishable seed.”

amongst the various schools (Mahayana, Mahasangika and Theravada etc.) of Buddhist thought cannot be resolved conclusively and their different viewpoints on this vitally fundamental matter are extended to include other fundamental aspects of Siddharta's teachings, such as His own Divinity, His stand concerning the nature of the Soul-Mind, its existence and "Reincarnation", and His concept of Nirvana, Dharma and Karma. Hence, while the differing Buddhist schools may contend with each other, advancing their claims for paramountcy based on historical dates, that is the least important factor for determining the dynamic essence of the life-force of Religion, and in such circumstances it is like trying to determine the values and organization of an ancient culture whose age we have arrived at by an examination of its empty dwellings. The latter deals with inert matter and is only a knowledge of the empty hull, while values and the organization they give rise to in any culture are derived from a belief — a living, throbbing thing in the very heart of man. And belief presupposes interpretation. If in such fundamental matters as these, and in such clear texts as those quoted above from the Pali Canon, the very champions (the Theravadins) of that Canon are so easily led astray, then what can be said about other passages of equal significance relating to the remaining fundamental pillars of Buddhism's edifice? No school of Buddhism has the monopoly on interpretation of Siddharta's Teachings, and there lies the crux of the disarray and division besetting the Dharma and the Samgha today.

Nor will it be possible, as we shall see in the discussions that follow concerning the state of the Dharma and the Samgha, to arrest the division or alter this disarray and restore any semblance of order and unity among the various schools of Buddhist thought on these vital issues. The sad truth is that even while this book is being written the fragmentation within the Dharma and the Samgha is inexorably spreading and no human effort, however well meaning and astutely directed, can hope to halt, not to mention alleviate, the disputations and divisions besetting the followers of Siddharta. The symptoms afflicting Buddhism are universal and are to be found in the structures of all the other ancient Faiths. The story of the disease of schism is an old one in the body of Religion when there are no clear-cut safeguards, no preventatives applied at the very outset by the Founder, to ward off the virus of human assertiveness born of pride and ambition. Man, whether he uses the instruments of his five senses, deductive logic, tradition or intuition, is simply not capable of ascertaining, in true concert with his fellows, the common truth of any

phenomenon, physical or metaphysical. He is in a sense like the electron in the Exclusion Principle. No two can be exactly in the same place at the same time! Only a higher power —the Divine — has been able to fuse, from time to time, humanity's mind and heart into the common acceptance of Truths, and weld its allegiance and energies into bringing forth great civilizations and cultures, and this power is in the domain of Religion.

For Religion has always affirmed that man is face-to-face with an incomprehensible Entity far greater than himself, an Ultimate Reality, and that this Reality, by virtue of its omniscience in the absolute sense is also the Absolute Good for which humanity pines. Said Siddharta:

Better than absolute sovereignty on earth, better than going to heaven, better than lordship over all the worlds is the reward of reaching the stream. Even in celestial pleasures he finds no delight. The disciple who is fully awakened delights only in the destruction of all desires.¹ Ananda, this is the real, this the excellent, namely the calm of all the impulses, the casting out of all "basis" the extinction of craving, dispassion, stopping—Nirvana.²

Hence, it is not possible to admit that the Eternal Verity which has dominated the formation of the Cosmos and brought it forth is bereft of the power to bring forth sentiency and evolve its perception to a new realm of being, the realm of soul-life, full of yearning, with powerful passions and indomitable vitality. Nor can we delude ourselves about such expressions as "goodness", "truth", "love", and "justice" to characterize in our minds the attributes emanating from that Eternal Verity while at the same time denying to that Verity the crucial attribute of perception — the very quality which enables us to recognize and define "goodness", "truth", "love" and "justice". Otherwise, on what rational premise can it be assumed that perception, the supreme distinction of man in the panorama of creation, was produced by a "Cause" which lacks what it somehow managed to create?

It is this factor — our acceptance or rejection of that Causeless Cause, endowed with Mind and Will—which provides the rest of the human equation with the answer to the purpose of our consciousness and its survival after death, this vital factor which, when all is said and done, dictates the kind of allegiance that we will give to any scheme, ethical or political, by providing us with the motivation for our acts — to either

¹ Dhammapada, vv. 178, 187.

² Anguttara-nikaya, v. 322.

shame the beasts or rival the angels.

Upon deeper examination of the concept of the Ultimate Reality — the Supreme — in all the Divine Faiths, we find no fundamental conflict. Even those Faiths¹ that have been erroneously classed as atheistic do not deny the Supreme but only man's ideas and concepts concerning 'It', while the theistic Faiths affirm the Supreme but reject man's description of 'It'. So, too, Siddharta, when questioned about the Supreme, the Absolute:

*If by the Absolute is meant something out of relation to all known things, its existence cannot be established by any known reasoning. How can we know that Anything, unrelated to other relations; we know nothing that is, or can be related.*²

This statement, attributed to Siddharta, contains the essence of wisdom in dealing with the Transcendent Reality, the Absolute. For as far as the Absolute is concerned, nothing can be said about It at all, nor can anything be done about It. Any effort by us toward an understanding of the intrinsic aspect of the Unconditioned is futile and in vain. Any idea we may derive of the Absolute is, *ipso facto*, false. Nevertheless, some idea of the Absolute as a standard or form for gauging our experiences is vital in all Faiths, even though any such idea is, from its inception, untrue. The Theravadins postulate their concept of the Absolute by approaching It along the *Via Negativa* originally expounded in the Upanishads by the great Yajnavalka,³ and thus everywhere in their literature stress the transcendence of the Absolute — Its total difference from anything which we do or can experience, in or around us. The Mahayana emphasize more the immanence of the Absolute within the creation.

Hail to thee, womb of the void, who are free of all conceits, omniscient one, thou mass of knowledge, knowledge personified, all Hail to thee!

Thou, teacher of the pure essence of truth which makes an end of worldly knowledge, O Vajrasattva, born of the non-substantiality of

¹ Here we should point out that even in ancient China the concept of the Absolute (notwithstanding later developments of many gods as in the case of Hinduism), was well preserved in the meaning of Shang-ti (High God).

² *Tevijja-Sutta*, I. i. See also *Kena-Upanishad*, I. 4. "Other, indeed, is It than the known; and also It is above the unknown. Thus have we heard from the ancients who have explained It to us."

³ *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*, III, 4, 2.

all things, Hail to thee!

*From you, O Lord, there ever rise into existence Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, who possess as their good qualities the great perfections, O Thought of Enlightenment, Hail to thee!*¹

But transcendent or immanent, we are cautioned not to equate such concepts with Its identity, which is both unthinkable and incomprehensible.

*The Element (Cause) is without beginning in time. It is the common foundation of all dhammas. Because it exists there also exist all places of rebirth and the full attainment of Nirvana.*²

Whether we name It “Ishvar”, “Yahwa”, “Allah”, “God” or “Ahura-Mazda”, or conceive the Absolute as “the Essence” to which no name can be given, or as “the Being and the Becoming”, or “the Entirety”, (explicit and implicit; sonant and silent; revealed and hidden, immanent and transcendent), the “Light of lights”, or by any other masculine, feminine or neuter names, no one, least of all the Divine Teachers, has ever claimed to know Its essential identity.

Hence, to Siddharta, the “God” of man’s imagination was as remote from the Absolute³ as unreality is to Ultimate Reality, and there is no other Divine Teacher or Avatar who has ventured any description or definition of the Absolute aside from the thoughts expressed by Siddharta. Thus,

“Silent are the Tathagatas.”

¹ **Prajnopaya-viniscaya-siddhi**, III, 9—11. G.O.S. Vol. 44. 1929. “The light of all lights. It is said to be beyond the darkness of Maya. It is Knowledge itself, as well as the object of Knowledge, and is also worth attaining through Knowledge. It is especially seated in the hearts of all.” See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, X. 2. 8. “I am the Prime Cause in all respects of gods as well as of the great seers...I am the source of all creation.”

² **Ratnagotravibhaga**, pp. 72-73 (Abhidhamma Mahayanasutra). See also **Isa-Upanishad**, I. 14. “There was something formless yet complete that existed before heaven and earth, without sound, without substance, dependent on nothing, unchanging All-pervading unailing.”

³ For greater details on Buddhist Logic concerning the Absolute, refer to Ch. IV, Jamshed Fozdar, **The God of Buddha** (Casa Editrice Bahá’í Srl, Italy, 1995).

⁴ **Lankavatara-Sutta**. Tathagata (See also f.n. 9, page 18) implying “Thus become.” is a Buddhist derivation from the old Hindu exclamation: “Tat Twam asi”—“That Thou Art” an inference to the Absolute or the Ultimate Reality. A little reflection will show no contradiction here between the Hindu and Buddhist terms. The indefinable, incomprehensible and unapproachable Absolute, reflected from the most spiritually and ethically perfect being, the perfect mirror—the Tathagata, who while approachable by humans, yet, is only partially comprehensible and definable by them.

3

BUDDHA-AVATAR

He whom no desire net-like or poisonous can lead astray, by what track can you lead him, the awakened, of infinite perception, the trackless.¹

There is no other way to explain this unique and mysterious phenomenon of Avatar — the descent of the Unmanifest Absolute into the contingent realm — except by the analogy of the sun, whose light pulsations descend upon us and our world. These rays or pulsations of light become distinct to our senses only to the extent that they are removed from their source — the sun — and yet to our world they constitute the sun itself. Nor can we determine any difference between the rays of light and the sun, once these pulsations have returned to their source and become merged again into the solar orb. Likewise the Avatar, Whose distinct individuality to our ken, is only apparent through His physical presence among us, and hence He is spoken of by the Hindu Scriptures as “the distinct without difference.”² To further clarify, the “vehicle” or the individual Soul destined by the mysterious process of Providence to become the recipient of Divine Revelation — an exaltation from the Absolute — has of course its own individuality. But, the operation which transforms that Soul into the receptacle of the Supernal

¹ *Dhammapada*, v. 180.

² The term used in Sanskrit is “bhedabheda”. In this connection the Buddha, too, describes Himself as *ananuvedya* (unknowable) “even here and now.” *Samyutta-nikaya*, I. 23. Also *Majjhima-nikaya*, I. 140. 141. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 1. 6. “Being like the Sun, I cover the whole world with rays, and I am also the sustainer of all beings and am hence called Vasudeva.”

Light is a universal principle that unfailingly repeats itself throughout the ages at long intervals of time.

Just as the ray of light conveys to us information concerning the sun's reality, about which we could not otherwise know, similarly the Avatar¹ — the Manifestation — tells us of the reality beyond the spatio-temporal cosmos, so that we may prepare for a healthy entrance into that new dimension — the spiritual. He is the "Light of lights" and not in Himself "another" light. He is in all respects the absolute in relation to the relative (humanity), and relative in relation to the Source, the Absolute.

¹ Avatar means "descent". Its meaning also ranges from "come over" signifying an "advent" or a "manifestation" of the Divine from the "other side" the "farther shore", to "overcome" signifying the spiritual victor, the Tathagata, the Buddha. "Descent" is also often expressed by the verbs "avakram", "avastha" (Iranian: Avesta), "prati" and "avaruh". The earliest mention of the Avatar of Vishnu is to be found in Taittiriya-Samhita (**Yajur-Veda**), I. 7. 6. 12... "**punar imam tokani-pratyavaroha.**" In substantiation of the view that the Buddha, too, is an Avatar, we have in the **Auguttara-nikaya** (I. 3. 134, p. 286) the reference to the rising of the Tathagatas and in **Dhammapada** (vv. 179, 180, 182) of the Buddhas being the trackless travellers, "come over" from the other side to work the weal of the world. **The Jataka Tales**, I. 50 also acknowledge the Buddha-Avatar when He descends (oruyha-avaroha) from the Tusita Heaven—into the womb of Mahamaya (His mother) to take birth in Jambudvipa (India). The illustration of this event at Bharhut inscribed **bhagavo okanti** (= avakramati). Also see **Dhammapada** Atthakatha, III. 226 where He descends (otaritva = avatirtva) from the Tusita Heaven at Sankrasha.

SIDDHARTA, THE BUDDHA

*Those only who do not believe call me Gotama, but you call me the Buddha, the Blessed One, the Teacher. And this is right.*¹

The times do not allow for games and we shall play none. In the whole ken of man we know of no symbolism for relating the phenomenon of the Avatar (Divine Manifestation), the Buddha, Tathagata, except perhaps one — the sun.² The lesser cannot fully define or truly understand the greater and it is both futile and dangerous to attempt to gauge the Tathagata by the measures of our puny minds.

No measure measures him.

There is no word with which to speak of him.

*All thought is here at an end and so are all paths that words can take, here closed.*³

From the very start let us understand that, while the phenomenon of the Tathagata is incomprehensible in its full meaning to any finite mind, as the sun in the sky — which also can only be understood partially, and even that in great measure due to its effects on every aspect of our lives on this insignificant planet rotating around it — so too, are the effects of the Tathagatas — the Buddhas — only partially comprehended. The Spiritual Sun and the physical sun have some important facets in common and these are self-evident. The first and foremost of these is that

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, I. 46. (See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, VII. 10. "I am the Intelligence of the intelligent, the Glory of the Glories, am I'") *Ibid.*, X. 36.

² *Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 21. "I am...the bright-rayed sun among the luminaries."

³ *Sutta-nipata* (Parayama Vagga). (See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, VII. 24. "Me, the Supreme Spirit beyond the reach of mind and senses").

their reality is both recurrent and unique. The second most evident sign of their reality is their ability to bring forth life. And the third is their assurance, to humanity, of the sunrise to follow and the foretelling of its time of rising. As those who are lost in darkness investigate the various avenues from which the dawn can be expected and recognized, humanity, too, lost in the darkness of this travailing age and pining for the bright sunlit path of the Dharma, is once again expectant of a Buddha-rising.

So, how can we recognize the Buddha? We can only recognize the sun by the sun. And as it makes its appearance every day, its signs and effects are easily recognizable to our memories. The Spiritual Sun on the other hand makes its appearance at very long¹ intervals—

*Rarely, O monks, do Tathagatas appear in the world. To the extent that they understand the rarity of a Tathagata's appearance, to that extent they will wonder at His appearance, and sorrow at His disappearance, and when they do not see the Tathagata, they will long for the sight of Him.*²

— intervals of about a thousand years. And no human being alive can claim to have any personal recollection of two such events, two Spiritual Sunbursts. History, however fragmentary its narrative, is all we have to surmise concerning the time and circumstances of the Buddha-rising of long ago. And its effect on the lives of its adherents through the teachings it inculcated can convey to us some sense of the magnitude of the original dawn and the power and grandeur of its Spiritual Sun — Siddharta,³ the Buddha.

*He whose conquest is not conquered again, into whose conquest no one in this world enters, by what track can you lead him, the awakened, of infinite perception the trackless?*⁴

If occasionally He uses hard words, He does this to help men, like a father who scolds his children for their own good.

Ye are my children, I am your father, through me have ye been released from your sufferings. I myself having reached the other shore, help others to cross the stream; I myself having attained

¹ *Saddharmapundarika*, XV, vv, 268—72.

² *Sutta-nipata*, 560, *Vinaya Pitaka*, ii. 155. The rareness of meeting a Buddha is compared with the difficulty of a blind sea-turtle finding a log to float on, or a one-eyed tortoise finding a log with a spy-hole through it. These same concepts are also embedded in the Hindu Scriptures. See *Bhagavad-Gita*, VII. 3. "Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection and of those who strive and succeed, scarcely one knows Me in truth."

³ He was born in 563 B.C. and passed away in His eightieth year in 483 B.C.

⁴ *Dhammapada*, v. 179.

*salvation, am a saviour of others; being comforted, I comfort others and lead them to the place of refuge. I shall fill with joy all the beings whose limbs languish; I shall give happiness to those who are dying from distress; I shall extend to them succor and deliverance. I was born into the world as the king of Truth for the salvation of the world. The subject on which I meditate is Truth. The practice to which I devote myself is Truth. The topic of my conversation is Truth. My thoughts are always in the Truth. For lo! my self has become the Truth. Whosoever comprehendeth the Truth will see the Blessed One, for the Truth has been preached by the Blessed One.*¹

Thus it is imperative for us to recount whatever we can of the Buddha, Siddharta Gautama, through the signs and evidences of His reality still remaining to us. This is the least that must be done to enable us to seek and discover Maitrya, Who alone can sweep clean the Dharma and once again reveal it in its purity to mankind. Like day follows day and the sun rises after every night to give life to every living thing, so too do the Buddhas arise for the weal of one and all.

*The Buddhas who have been and who shall be,
Of these am I and what they did, I do.*²

Nor is there any difference between yesterday's sun with that of today. The sun is the same, ever-shining. For there are no yesterdays, todays or tomorrows on the sun, and even though the composition of the sun is in constant change, yet it is essentially the same sun. Likewise,

*There is no distinction between any of the Buddhas in physical beauty, moral habit, concentration, wisdom, freedom, cognition and insight of freedom, the four confidences, the ten powers of the Tathagata, the six special cognitions, the fourteen cognitions of Buddhas, the eighteen Buddha-dhammas, in a word in all the Dhammas of the Buddhas, for all Buddhas are exactly the same as regards Buddha-dhammas.*³

These great Spiritual Suns, the Buddhas, are no more different from each other than yesterday's sun is from tomorrow's.

Moreover, while the sun of yesterday, today and tomorrow is the

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, I. 46. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, XI. 43. "You are the Father." *Ibid.*, IX. 17. Also *Ramayana*, "to him who seeks My protection even once and requests help of Me saying, 'I am yours' I shall give him fearlessness from all beings."

² *Mahaparinibbana-Sutta*.

³ *Mahavastu*, I. 160. *Milindapanha*, p. 285. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, IV. 1. "I taught this imperishable Yoga (Dharma) to Vivasvan; Vivasvan told it to Manu and Manu spoke it to Ikshvaku." Siddharta claimed descent from Ikshvaku (Ram). *Digha-nikaya*, I. pp. 103-4.

recurrent phenomenon to our senses, of the same source of light and power, it is still unique. It is of the class of suns. Nothing in our world or even the solar system can be equated with it. The sun is the source of life for everybody in the solar system. The Spiritual Suns, the Buddhas are no less vital for humanity's greater existence — the spiritual life.

Hence Siddharta, while affirming His kinship with the Buddhas of the past and those yet to come, is equally frank in stating what He is not.

I am not a Brahmin, rajah's son or merchant: nor am I any what; I fare in the world a sage, of no-thing, homeless, self completely gone out, it is inept to ask me of my lineage.¹

As the Tathagata speaks so he does, as he does, so he speaks. Because he speaks as he does and does as he speaks, he is therefore called Tathagata.

In the world with its devas, Maras and Brahmas, amid living beings with recluses and Brahmins, devas and mankind, the Tathagata is the victor unvanquished, the absolute seer, self-controlled. Therefore is he called Tathagata.²

A Tathagata is a seer of what is to be seen, but he does not mind the seen, the unseen, the seeable, the seer. So likewise with the heard, the sensed, and the cognized: he thinks of none of these modes of theirs. Therefore among things seen, heard, sensed and cognized he is precisely "such" (tadi). Moreover, than he who is "such" there is no other "such" further or more excellent.³

The Avatar or the Buddha is the Divine manifesting an aspect of "Itself" in human form.⁴ While adhering to the laws governing the

¹ *Sutta-nipata*, vv. 455-56 (condensed).

² *Dighanikaya* III. 135. See also *Rig-Veda*, I. "...we sing hymns of praise to Thee again and again. O never conquered Conqueror."

³ *Anguttara-nikaya* II. 25. See also *Yajur-Veda*, XIII. 36. "The Lord of Generations, the One greater than Whom none else is begotten, the One in the attire of Manifestation (Avatar) entered, inhabiting the worldly abodes, bestowing the richest bliss, He is the Bearer of the threefold splendor."

⁴ The purpose of this is to guide man (the rational soul), through the exercise of his power of free choice. The pure-hearted, not obstructed by pride and worldly status, see the intrinsic good in the Tathagata's message and accept and adhere and thus reap the reward. The others, satiated with power and self, reject and are lost. If on the other hand the Tathagata came in the form of a talking donkey or some such other phenomenon, then the privilege and its commensurate responsibility of free choice would be annulled and all, irrespective of their effort, would be obliged to acknowledge the Buddha through such "miraculous" means. And notwithstanding that His followers of a later age and the chroniclers of His teachings have childishly ascribed various miracles to him in this respect, the Buddha clearly shunned all such

physical existence of man. He is essentially “beyond all ways of telling” (ananuvedya).¹ Of Him it can be truly said that He is and is not, *both* is and is not, neither is nor is not. His is Enlightenment from a totally different dimension, and His actions do not stem from volition or expediency but on Omniscience, which renders superfluous the need for choice and makes Causality inoperative.

Before the presence of the Spiritual Sun we are at best flickering candles. Notwithstanding this evident truth, there are those who continue to believe that just because both the Sun and the flickering candles share the properties of fire, light and heat in common, by burning all the grease in one blaze of light they too could become a pure flame and one with the sun. Little do such naive souls recognize that the grease and the wick of the candle, without which there could be no candles, are simply the insignificant effects of the Sun’s reality. Nor can millions of such candles, all going off in a blaze of light, equal the sun to any least degree. For, while fire consumes the candles and all else, the sun consumes fire and all else!

Nor can the argument be made that Siddharta’s enlightenment (Buddhahood) was the result of the process of trial and error which human beings normally resort to and not something unique, thereby implying that others too could become Buddha by similar practices, simply because Siddharta had at first been a novice to the two Brahmin teachers, Alara and Udraka, undergoing all the discipline of meditation and penance which they had to impart, yet remaining unsatisfied and then seeking denials and self-mortification, also ultimately discredited and rejected by Him. Too much has already been quoted directly from the statements attributed to Siddharta, to here take up further space and time in trying to disabuse the minds of those who make such fanciful conjectures that Siddharta, too, achieved Buddhahood through human teachers and such ordinary methods. Such deluded persons might better spend their time in trying to contend with the historical reality posed by the following question: If such human teachers and ordinary methods — and not some Divine process (“exaltation from the Absolute upon the Holy Persons”) — are the path to Buddhahood, then how account for the prophetic vision² of the Holy man, related in the *Jataka Tales* and accepted

wonder-workings or miraculous acts and neither performed these nor permitted any of His adherents to practice or countenance such phenomena.

¹ *Sutta-nipata*, 1076. See *Majjhima-nikaya*, I, 140 and also *Vajracchedika-Sutra*.

² Ashvaghosha’s *Buddhacarita*, vv. 16—21. Also see *Sutta-nipata*.

by all schools of Buddhist thought, when he appeared before Siddharta in His palace gardens to foretell His destiny of Buddhahood?

This event, which engaged and motivated Him through its promise of certain success, took place well before Siddharta embarked on His quest in the forest. Human beings are best taught by example and not words. The lesson is then most deeply instilled.

*A man is not a supporter of the law simply because he talks much, but he who, little learned, discerns it by his body, he who does not neglect the law, he, indeed, is the supporter of the law.*¹

Now, this force of example as the best teacher applies in both directions — upwards as well as downwards. So it should not be too difficult to understand, in the light of the near universal practice² of the Hindus of His day — seeking enlightenment at the feet of the Brahmin teachers and ascetics in caves and forests as a matter of form and appearance rather than any true desire for the intrinsic content of holiness — that Siddharta, already aware that the savants and ascetics of His time were howling up the wrong tree and fully cognizant of the error of their ways, yet unable to convince the multitudes simply by words and criticism, as an outsider of royal lineage and one who would already be suspect for advancing such criticisms against the old ways — ways which He would ultimately have to abrogate for His disciples — resorted to the best possible method: to become a yogi of yogis, an ascetic of ascetics until His fame spread around that whole region “like the sound of a great bell hung in the canopy of the skies”³ and caused all other savants⁴ and saints, Brahmins and ascetics, to admire and envy Him. Then, when He, the victor above all others in the art of penance and mortification, proclaimed them to be hollow, of no intrinsic worth, none could assert that He was speaking from ignorance. Thus Siddharta, having acted as a novice to Brahmin teachers and practiced mortification of the body before openly proclaiming His teachers inadequate and

¹ *Dhammapada*, v. 259.

² It was general practice for most Hindu boys to be taken from their parents at an early age to live the hard life of a novice under a teacher, for twelve years or longer, before returning to assume the responsibilities of a householder. Even grown men (householders) went to the forests for extended periods to do penance and meditate and prior to embarking on their quest actually performed ceremonies symbolic of the death ceremony.

³ *Bigandet*, p. 49 (first edition); compare *Jataka*, pp. 67, 27.

⁴ It is said that the name and fame of Siddharta aroused jealousy among the six heretical teachers—Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambalin, Pakudha Kaccayana, Nigantha Nataputta and Sanjaya Belatthaputta.

asceticism incorrect for obtaining the peerless Nirvana, was to show to the world that His Dharma was not a system obtained through human agency or one devised by trial and error.

So that we may not confuse the uniqueness of Ram, Krishna and the Buddhas, and their rare appearance at intervals of hundreds of years, with the claims and views of those many naive people who think that they, too, have achieved Buddhahood by some course of exercise, or a formula, or some discipline of study, or privation, we list below some excerpts which, hopefully will serve to disabuse us of such notions and clearly demonstrate that between mortals and those unique divine personages — the holy Prophets and Messengers — there is not only a difference of degree, immeasurable though that may be, but also a difference of kind. They, the holy Prophets and Messengers, are a different creation, destined events, akin to sunrise.¹

Subhuti, what do you think? When the Tathagata was with Dipankara² Buddha, was there any dharma (formula)³ for the attainment of the Consummation of Incomparable Enlightenment?" "No, World-honored One, as I understand the Buddha's meaning, there was no dharma by which the Tathagata attained the Consummation of Incomparable Enlightenment." Buddha said: "You are right, Subhuti! Verily there was no dharma by which the Tathagata attained the Consummation of Incomparable Enlightenment. Subhuti, had there been any such dharma, Dipankara Buddha would not have predicted concerning me: 'In the ages of the future you will come to be a Buddha called Sakyamuni'; but Dipankara Buddha made that prediction concerning me because there is actually no dharma for the attainment of the Consummation of Incomparable Enlightenment. The reason herein is that Tathagata is a signification implying all dharmas. In case anyone says that the Tathagata attained the Consummation of Incomparable Enlightenment, I tell you truly, Subhuti, that there is no dharma by which the Buddha attained it.

¹ Ram, Krishna and Gotama all claimed their clan's descent from the Sun—obviously a spiritual connotation signifying Light, Knowledge, Life—to the peoples of their times and to most of us even to this day.

² A former Buddha, Gautama's twenty-fourth predecessor. By reference to **Dhammapada**, v. 236 and many others, we can see that Siddharta, too, was called Dipankara. It is not a name but a title meaning "One who has made himself into a lamp," i.e., The Enlightened One, The Buddha. This again implies the successive appearance of the same Reality in different individuals.

³ Dharma also denotes Formula.

*Subhuti, the basis of the Tathagata's attainment of Incomparable Enlightenment is wholly beyond: it is neither Sat (reality) nor Asat (non-Reality).'*¹

The reference to Buddha Dipankara's prediction about the future Buddha implies that this phenomenon (Buddha-rising) is an act of grace from a wholly beyond, neither real nor unreal, the "Norm" or the "Mean", entirely outside the scope of dualistic opposites and co-relatives. Upon attaining Abhisambodhi (Consummation of Incomparable Enlightenment), the Buddha (according to the *Majjhima-nikaya*) proclaims even more emphatically the unique greatness of this divine phenomenon — a Buddha, an Avatar, a Prophet. While on other occasions the Buddha states that He is only a preacher,² yet in the following verse, the Buddha claims that He is omniscient and absolutely sinless.

*Subdued have I all, all-knowing am I now, unattached to all things, and abandoning all, finally freed, upon the destruction of all craving. Knowing it myself, whom else should I credit? There is no teacher of mine, nor is one like me; there is none to rival me in the world of men and gods; truly entitled to honour am I, a teacher unexcelled. Alone am I a Supreme Buddha, placid and tranquil. To found the kingdom of righteousness, I proceed to Kasi's capital, beating the drum of immortality in the world enveloped by darkness.*³

And this is attested to by the ancient epithet of Sammasam-buddha, 'the completely enlightened one', written at the beginning of every Pali text. His sinlessness follows as a natural consequence of His omniscience.

Nor can the inclusion of such facts, truthfully transmitted in the texts, which describe Him as being married and the father of a son, as having entered the ascetic life without the permission of His father (against the Indian tradition of filial piety), then, at first following the

¹ *Vajracchedika Sutta*, xvii (no one attains Transcendental Wisdom). Also, *Nidana-Katha*. The same meaning is also conveyed by Krishna to Arjuna proclaiming His transcendence over all Dharmas. "Surrendering all Dharmas to Me, seek refuge in Me alone, for, I shall free you from all sin; grieve not, O Arjuna." (*Bhagavad-Gita*, XVIII. 66.)

² *Dhammapada*, v. 275 (...This path was preached by me when I became aware of the removal of the thorns.) See also *Dhammapada*, v. 276 (You yourself must strive. The Blessed Ones [only] preachers). See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, VII. 24. "(I am) the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss...").

³ *Ariyaparyesana-Sutta* (*Majjhima-nikaya*). He is also known as Saruajnanwahanse 'the Venerable Omniscient One'. See also *Rig-Veda*, 25.1. "The path of the ship across the sea, A soaring eagle's flight He knows, The course of every wind that blows, and all that was and is to be." Also *Yajur Veda*, 8. Also *Bhagavad-Gita*, IX. 17. "I am the sustainer and ruler of the universe, its father, mother and grandfather..."

false way of exaggerated asceticism, and later discovering the correct Dharma, or of having at first studied under the Brahmin teachers Alara Kalama and Udraka Ramputra — to any least degree, detract from His unique station. For those who, through some mistaken concepts of spirituality, would attempt to diminish the Buddha's station by referring to these episodes of His life as not commensurate with Divinity, let us point out that both Ram and Krishna and the other Hindu Avatars were also married and fathered children, as were Moses, Muhammad and others — all family men. And Christ would have been too, had He not been killed so early in His ministry. The Avatar is not constrained by filial piety, for He is in concert with a far greater obligation — that of leading humanity to salvation. And as to filial piety, we note from the earliest birth-stories of Siddharta that His father Suddhodana was told of his son's real destiny and station by Kaladeva, the wisest and oldest among the sages Suddhodana had invited for the joyous occasion. Kaladeva, who was gifted with great foresight, went and saluted the newborn babe and addressed Suddhodana thus:

This boy will reach the summit of perfect enlightenment, he will turn the wheel of the Dharma, he who sees what is exceedingly pure (i.e. Nibbana), this (boy) feels for the welfare of the greater number, and his ideal way of life will be widely spread.

My life here will shortly be at an end, in the middle (of his life) there will be death for me; I shall not hear the Dhamma of the incomparable one; therefore I am afflicted, unfortunate, and suffering.¹

And Suddhodana, at a later time, expressed gratitude to Siddharta for having pursued His destiny in achieving Buddhahood for the welfare of the world:

Wise and fruitful are your deeds, and you have released me from great suffering. Instead of rejoicing at the gift of the earth, which brings nothing but sorrow, I will now rejoice at having so fruitful a son. You were right to go away and give up your prosperous home. It was right of you to have toiled with such great labours. And now it is right of you that you should have compassion on us, your dear relations, who loved you so dearly, and whom you did leave. For the sake of the world in distress you have trodden the path to supreme reality, which could not be found even by those seers of olden times

¹ *Sutta-nipata*, vv. 693-94. Similar soothsaying episodes have accompanied the births of all the Divine Manifestations and we will see it repeated in the birth of Maitrya.

who were gods or kings. If you had chosen to become a universal monarch, that could have given me no more joy than I have now felt at the sight of your miraculous powers and of your holy Dharma. If you had chosen to remain bound up with the things of this world, you could as a universal monarch have protected mankind. Instead, having conquered the great ills of the Samsaric world, you have become a Sage who proclaims the Dharma for the weal of all. Your miraculous powers, your mature intellect, your definite escape from the countless perils of the Samsaric world — these have made you into the sovereign master of the world, even without the insignia of royalty. That you could not have done if you had remained among the things of this world, and you would have been truly powerless, however much you had thrived as a king.

We see Siddharta too, upon attaining Buddhahood, informing His father of having found that hidden treasure (Dharma) and affirming that it is His duty to first present His father with that precious jewel, and thus taking this opportunity to reveal two verses of the Dhammapada:

Get up (rouse yourself), do not be thoughtless. Follow the law of virtue. He who practices virtue lives happily in this world as well as in the world beyond. Follow the law of virtue; do not follow the law of sin. He who practices virtue lives happily in this world as well as in the world beyond.¹

Siddharta has often compared Himself to the beautiful Lotus blossom that grows from the swamp of the world and stands above it.

Just as a blue, red or white lotus, although born in the water, grown up in the water, when it reaches the surface stands there unsoiled by the water — just so, Brahmin, although born in the world, grown up in the world, having overcome the world, I abide unsoiled by the world. Take it that I am Buddha, Brahmin.²

This is a most poignant portrayal, often used by the Hindu Scriptures to symbolize the Divine Manifestation, and it aptly depicts the Buddha. In response to the light of the Sun (the Absolute) the Tathagata, like the Lotus blossom, while rising from the slime of corrupt and corrupting humanity is Himself absolutely unsoiled by His surroundings and serves as the perfect example of detachment from the mundane. His purpose it

¹ Dhammapada, vv. 168, 169.

² Anguttara-nikaya 11. 37—39. See also Dhammapada, vv. 58, 59, 336 and 401. Also Bhagavad-Gita V. 10. "He who acts, offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachments, remains untouched by sin, as the Lotus leaf by water."

is to awaken humanity to the evident reality that all creation is passing and so to summon it to renounce illusions and grasp the incorruptible — the Eternal.

Of the bones a citadel is made, plastered over with flesh and blood, and in it dwell old age and death, pride and deceit. The splendid chariots of kings wear away; the body also comes to old age, but the virtue of the good never ages. Thus the good teach to each other.¹

However high we humans (worldlings) may rise, we cannot touch the sun. To approach its vicinity is to be consumed, to utterly lose our identity. Buddhahood is a station *no worldling can attain* or fully understand.

Not only by disciplined conduct and vows, not only by much learning, nor moreover by the attainment of meditative calm nor by sleeping solitary, do I reach the happiness of release which no worldling can attain. O mendicant, do not be confident so long as you have not reached the extinction of impurities.²

The divinity of the Buddha is unequivocally asserted in the *Mahapadana-Suttanta*. The same theme is also repeated by Ram and Krishna and other Divine Manifestations. Siddharta denounces as vile heresy the view that His Dharma is something thought out by Himself and warns Sariputta and others through him to not categorize Him as merely another wise man who preaches a path of salvation, devised through trial and error.

Whoever, Sariputta, knowing that it is so of me, seeing that it is so, should speak thus: "There are no states of further-men, no excellent cognition and insight befitting the Ariyans in the recluse Gotama; the recluse Gotama teaches Dhamma on (a system of) his own devising beaten out by reasoning and based on investigation." If he does not retract that speech, Sariputta, if he does not retract that thought, if he does not cast out that view, he is verily consigned to Niraya Hell according to his deserts. Even if it were a monk, Sariputta, endowed with moral habit, concentration and wisdom who should here and now arrive at gnosis, I (still) say that this results thus: If he does not retract that speech and that thought, if he does not cast out that view, he is verily consigned to Niraya Hell

¹ *Dhammapada*, vv. 150, 151.

² *Dhammapada*, vv. 271, 272.

*according to his deserts.*¹

No matter what heights of spirituality or knowledge a disciple may attain, if he misjudges this all-important aspect of the phenomenon of Buddhahood (Avatar),² then *he is verily consigned to Niraya Hell*. Not only does He claim here that His own state is beyond man (*further-men*) but also that the Dharma itself has no relationship to any system derived by human logic or investigation, once again confirming that this unique phenomenon of the Manifestation (Avatar), the Buddha and His Message (the Dharma), is from the realm of the *wholly beyond — an exaltation from the Absolute*.

The correct perspective from which to view the Buddha and His doctrine would be, according to His own words, as one of the *fully enlightened Beings*, continuously manifesting Themselves for the guidance and salvation of humanity — *the fully omniscient Teachers of mankind*.

*Do not call the Tathagata by His name nor address Him as 'friend', for He is the Buddha, the Holy One. The Buddha looks with a kind heart equally on all beings, and they therefore call Him 'Father'. To disrespect a father is wrong; to despise him is wicked.*³

We are cautioned from falling into the trap of relating Him to any objective reality. The lesser can never truly define or understand the greater, and it is futile to think of the Buddha in terms of man-conceived dimensions or attributes. The Tathagata cannot be grasped. He leaves no trace by which He can be tracked.⁴ All that can be said is that "He is", and it is idle to pursue and define His Reality in spatio-temporal terms:

Since a Tathagata, even when actually present, is incomprehensible, it is inept to say of him — the Uttermost Person, the Supernal Person, the Attainer of the Supernal — that after dying the Tathagata

¹ **Majjhima-nikaya**, I. 68, 71-72. See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, IX. 11, 12. "Fools, not knowing My Supreme nature, think low of Me, the Lord of creation, who has put on the human body (to be an ordinary mortal). Those senseless persons with vain hopes, futile actions and fruitless knowledge have embraced a nature which is fiendish, demoniacal and delusive."

² Our recognition of the Avatar and not our perfection in asceticism is what is acknowledged by the Hindus also as the highest good. Because only then can we be certain that we have the infallible Guide for leading us to Nirvana. As the **Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad** (3, 8, 10) states "Of a truth, O Gargi," says Yajnavalka, himself a hermit, "he who does not know this imperishable One, though in this world he should distribute alms and practise penance (tapas tapyate) for many a thousand years, thereby wins but finite good."

³ **Mahavagga**, 1.6. See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, XI. 41, 42. "Ignorant of this greatness of Yours, and thinking You only to be a 'friend', the way in which I have wantonly addressed You,...I crave forgiveness for all that from You, who are infinite, O infallible Lord."

⁴ **Majjhima-nikaya**, I. 140, 141.

*is, or is not, or both is and is not, or neither is nor is not.*¹

This is further elaborated in the *Anguttara-nikaya*.²

At one time the Lord was journeying along the highroad between Ukkatha and Setabbya; so also was the Brahmin Dona. Dona approached the Lord and said: "is your reverence a deva?" "No indeed, Brahmin, I am not a deva." "Then a gandharva?" "No indeed, Brahmin." "A Yaksha then?" "No indeed, Brahmin, I am not a yaksha." "Then is your reverence a human being?" "No indeed, Brahmin, I am not a human being." "You answer No to all my questions. Who then is your reverence?" "Brahmin, those outflows whereby if they had not been extinguished I might have been a deva, gandharva, yaksha or a human being — those outflows are extinguished in me, cut off at the root, made like a palm tree stump that can come to no further existence in the future. Just as a blue, red or white lotus, although born in the water, grown up in the water, when it reaches the surface stands there unsoiled by the water — just so, Brahmin, although born in the world, grown up in the world, having overcome the world, I abide unsoiled by the world. Take it that I am Buddha, Brahmin. As a lotus, fair and lovely, by the water is not soiled, by the world am I not soiled. Therefore, Brahmin, am I Buddha."

"Brahmin, it is like a hen with eight or ten or twelve eggs on which she has sat properly, properly incubated and properly hatched; is that chick which should the first of all win forth safely, having pierced through the egg-shell with the point of the claw on its foot or with its beak, to be called the eldest or the youngest?"

"The eldest, good Gotama, for he is the eldest of these."

"Even so, Brahmin, I, having pierced through the shell of ignorance for the sake of creatures wrapped in ignorance, egg-born (as it were),³ I am unique in the world, utterly enlightened with unsurpassed enlightenment. I myself am the world's eldest and highest."⁴

The enlightenment of a Buddha is something without effort, spontaneously emerging. It is not something that can be learned. His

¹ *Samyutta-nikaya*, 111. 118.

² *Anguttara-nikaya* 11. 37-39. Also *Dhammapada*, vv. 58, 59.

³ "As beings born in eggs are called egg-born, so all men, born in the egg-shell of ignorance, are called egg-born" (*Anagatavamsa*, iv. 84). Be that as it may, it is of interest to note that the hen or the "cause" of the eggs is not included in this allegory!

⁴ *Vinaya-pitaka* III. 3-6.

transcendent enlightenment is an intrinsic aspect of Himself, therefore is he called *svayambhu* (one who is self-realized). Buddhist dogma asserts that the Buddha is an arahat who having totally annulled the darkness of illusion liberates humanity from the mire of Samsara and lifts us onto the plain of certitude and bliss. Manifold are his attributes: the revered (*bhagavat*), the thus-come (*tathagata*), the venerable (*arahat*), the completely and perfectly enlightened (*samyaksambuddha*), the one possessing (perfect) knowledge and virtue (*vidya-carana-suampanna*), one who has walked a whole-some path (*sugata*), the knower of the world (*lokavid*), the unsurpassable (*anuttara*), the leader of man-bulls-to-be-tamed (*purusha-damyasathi*), the lord of men and gods (*shashta devamanushyanam*), the awakened (*buddha*).

As with the Pali Canon, the Mahayana Scriptures also constantly list the various attributes of the Buddha. His omniscience encompasses everything in the triple world (creation).

*Thus much should be cognized, i.e., the conventional view of the world and the ultimately real. And the Lord has well seen, well known, well realized this from the point of view of emptiness. That is why He is called the "Omniscient One", There the Lord has seen the conventional point of view as the observed range of the world. But the ultimately real, that is inexpressible, it cannot be understood, discerned, shown or revealed; it is inactive; it is not gain or no gain, not ease or suffering, not fame or lack of fame, not form or no form.*¹

While there may be some fine distinctions between the various schools of Buddhist thought on the exact concept concerning the Buddha's omniscience, yet they all agree that this omniscience is an indispensable corollary of Bodhi (Enlightenment).

Hence, by reference to (p. 41) and other texts we can, through Siddharta's own words — "He does not impart to them at once the fullness of omniscience but pays attention to the disposition of various beings"² — lay to rest the objections and misconceptions of certain Buddhist sects concerning the Omniscience of the Buddha. Objections such as: (a) not establishing the rules of the Samgha at one time but instead conveying His precepts gradually to the monks, or (b) Siddharta's permission for His cousin Devaddata to enter the Faith despite the

¹ The Lotus-Sutra, Ch. XV. Sikhasamuccaya 256, 257 (Pitruputrasamagama).

² Sanskrit Dhammapada, V. This same theme is acknowledged by Krishna, Who does not reveal Himself to Arjuna all at once. Step by step He takes Arjuna nearer and nearer and finally reveals Himself in all His splendor.

knowledge (through His omniscience) that Devadatta would create a division in the Faith.

The explanation in regards to (a), above, is simply that the Tathagata, like the mother to her new-born babe, gives sustenance in accordance with the babe's capacity to digest and absorb it.¹ And regarding (b), it was to demonstrate both sides of the nature of man — the bright, full of faith and humility, as personified by his closest disciple and cousin Ananda, and the dark side, self-seeking and proud, personified by Devadatta, who also was the Buddha's cousin — that permission to enter the Faith was granted. Their interplay as principles on the conscience of man is recorded in the lives of the Founders of all the great Faiths and essentially personify the very meaning of Religion and its relation to the inner voice (conscience) within each of us. The Divine Manifestation, the Buddha, is the clarion-call proclaiming the dawn and arousing humanity from its dark sleep of the soul. The rest is up to each of us — whether by our efforts we eliminate self and greed and on the wings of faith rise to the light and life radiating from the Spiritual Sun, the Buddha,

(The mental) natures are the result of what we have thought, are chieftained by our thoughts, are made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him (in consequence) like a shadow that never leaves him.²

or whether we permit our greed to get the better of us and our envy of the Buddha's glory to goad us to try and banish His life-giving radiance from our dark world.

(The mental) natures are the result of what we have thought, are chieftained by our thoughts, are made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, sorrow follows him (as a consequence) even as the wheel follows the foot of the drawer.³

While the ever-growing fame of the Tathagata and His Dharma was to make Him the target of the many so-called Brahmin leaders and reformers of His day who could no longer contain their envy, yet the act of envy which most hurt Him was directed, as we have gathered, from within His own family — by His cousin and a member of the order of the monks — Devadatta. Devadatta's machinations against Siddharta,

¹ Milindapandha, p. 273.

² Dhammapada, v. 2. See also Bhagavad-Gita, III. 18, 19, Ibid., V. 1, 2.

³ Dhammapada, v. 1. See also Bhagavad-Gita, XVIII. 35.

which created in the 37th year of Siddharta's enlightenment the first real schism in the Dharma, are worth relating at some length, for, as was stated earlier, this kind of treachery is a test, a pattern which confronts every Avatar and with its parallel episode will confront us again in the life of Maitrya. So Devadatta, while still professing himself a follower of Siddharta, asked Siddharta's permission to found a new order under his own leadership, the rules of which should be much more stringent than those adopted by Siddharta. Siddharta's refusal of this prompted Devadatta to break with Him altogether and to attempt to formulate and promulgate a dharma of his own devising. The stricter rules which Devadatta formulated for the Samgha and on which he sought the Buddha's concurrence were that the mendicants should live in the open air and not close to towns, should dress in cast-off rags, should always beg their food from door to door (that is, never accept invitations or food sent to the Viharas¹), and should eat no meat. Siddharta answered that His precepts could be kept in any place, that He had no objection to such members of the Order as wished to do so to keep stricter rules, but that they were not necessary and could not be kept at all by the young or delicate. As to food, the members of the Order might eat whatever was customary in the countries where they were so long as they ate without indulgence of the appetite. It was possible to become holy at the foot of a tree, or in a house, in cast-off clothes, or in clothes given by laymen; whilst abstaining from flesh, or whilst using it. To establish one uniform law would be a hindrance in the way of those who were seeking Nirvana, and it was to show men the way to Nirvana which was His sole aim. Upon Siddharta's refusal of his stricter rules, Devadatta returned to his own Vihara and founded a new Order which also enrolled Ajatasatru, who at Devadatta's instigation, put to death his father Bimbisara, the monarch of Rajagriha, and ascended the throne himself. Devadatta then, in concert with Ajatasatru, made three attempts on Siddharta's life — first through poison, then by a falling rock from Vulture Peak, where Siddharta was giving a sermon. The rock shattered into tiny pieces before reaching Siddharta. Finally, Devadatta prodded a royal elephant towards Siddharta, but the beast was calmed by His presence. Devadatta, however, did not long survive his own machinations, and even though his order gradually gained some adherents, he expired during one of his frenzied trances, detested, as the chronicler states, by kings, and citizens,

¹ Any retreat of monks.

Brahmins and sages.

The sun cannot be stayed. Our efforts to blot it out from our lives harm only ourselves and we gradually become like slinking, fearful creatures of the night and finally, fully blinded, fall into the oblivion of our own making. Ultimately however, the law of Karma (reward and retribution) on which the universe turns enables even the dark soul to emerge to the light of the sun — just as Devadatta did, purified by his punishments in the hells as a result of his crimes. The Buddha foretold his final salvation as the Pratyekabuddha Atthissaro.¹

The Tathagatas tell us that the purpose of existence is to turn the dross material of human nature into the gold of shining souls.

*If a person is reflective, if he rouses himself, if he is ever-mindful, if his deeds are pure, if he acts with consideration, if he is self-restrained and lives according to law, his glory will increase.*²

If the Buddha is simply “a very wise man”, having acquired this great wisdom by a process of self-effort and a unique analysis of experience, then how explain His towering achievements on the panorama of history except by the examples of the other Avatars such as Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Christ and Muhammad? And who beside these Divine Suns have equalled the Buddha’s conquest over the hearts of humanity for so long a period and left such gigantic footprints on the stage of history? And finally, why, if even one person in the world could, by his own human or even “superhuman” endeavours attain to Buddhahood every five hundred or even a thousand years, did the Buddha not specifically indicate so to His disciples during those momentous hours prior to His impending departure from their midst, or at any other time, in response to their insistent questions as to who shall teach them when He is gone, but instead directed them for their immediate spiritual needs to His teachings (the Dharma)—

*Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying, ‘Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence!’*³

— and foretold the advent, some thousands of years in the future, of

¹ Milindapanha, p. 111.

² Dhammapada, v. 24.

³ These were the last words of the Tathagata (“Vayadhamma samkhora, appamadena sampadetha”, meaning, ‘all composites are perishable by nature, strive diligently’), Parajika-Suttavibhanga, I. 1, 4. (Digha-nikaya, Part II), Mahaparinibbana-Sutta. See also Bhagavad-Gita, II. 27. “For to the one that is born death is certain and certain is birth (not physical; See p. 97, f.n. 1), for the one that has died. Therefore for what is unavoidable, thou shouldst not grieve.”

Maitrya. Siddharta realized only too well, that Buddhahood¹ is a world apart, a destined event, and not the result of exercises, physical or spiritual, however strenuous! Hence, if we base our conclusion concerning the meaning of the phenomenon of Buddhahood firmly upon the canonical writings of Buddhism, there is left no room for any doubt about the fact that divinity was attributed to the Buddha by Buddhists from the earliest period of which we have reasonable evidence. Siddharta, too, as we have already seen, acknowledges His identity with the Divine Manifestations of the past and, like them, repeatedly asserts His own Divine² station — Buddhahood — which, as He states, is outside the ability of “worldlings” (humans) to achieve. Even in the earliest Buddhist dogma we see the conception which distinguishes the mere physical form of the Buddha — subject to dissolution and regarded as merely the earthly counterpart of His intrinsic eternal Reality³ — from the body of the Law (His Dharma).

As in every Faith, so too in Buddhism — with the passage of time numerous stories sprang up to illustrate Siddharta’s pre-eminence amongst men. The legend of Siddharta eventually included every conceivable miraculous occurrence. We shall list some of these with the more plausible historical explanations and leave to the reader’s good judgment the importance, if any, of such supernatural phenomena, especially since such wonder-workings are of little use in convincing anyone but the most immediate witness, and that for only a limited time. Knowing this better than all others, the Tathagata refused to stoop to such tricks of the senses and left no doubt of His repugnance for such “supernatural” acts. The correct meaning of the power of the Buddha and His acts in relation to such phenomena ordinarily conceived as “miraculous” can be understood if we recognize that the only miracle that can be related to the Buddha and the other Avatars is Their mysterious power which has generated that unique phenomenon of faith — that irresistible power, which, far more than all other ingredients that make up the human psyche, has most consistently and dramatically demonstrated its capacity to change the

¹ The salient fact which emerges from a study of the orthodox school of Buddhist thought is that the phenomenon of Buddhahood was far removed from ordinary humanity. And the Pali Canon itself contains no hint that even the greatest of the Buddhist rationalists questioned the supernatural character of the Buddha.

² While the Buddha is called “Great Person” and “most Man” (*Mahapurusa nrtama*) this in no way implies that He is “a man”, since these are epithets of the highest Gods in the oldest Brahmanical books.

³ *Digha-nikaya*, III. 84. *Samyutta-nikaya*, III. 120. (*Yo kho dhammam passati mam passati.*)

world. In this regard only were the Avatars, the Buddhas, the unique performers of miracles, Theirs alone the accomplishments that demolish the mountains of human despair and avarice and establish great cultures by civilizing in the truest sense the human race. They alone were able to endow Their teachings with that irresistible power of Their own perfect example and thus penetrate to the core of the human psyche with *the reason to be good* and so bring forth fruit of enduring worth. All other achievements of human history, in the fields of science, discovery, or culture are merely by-products of and dependent upon this unique power of faith, sown in the heart of man by the Divine Manifestation — the Avatar, the Buddha. Those who would claim to be the true disciples of Siddharta Gautama must ever bear in mind His admonition:

... There will be rising and setting, dimness and clearness of the sun or the moon or the stars... Gautama the recluse holds aloof from such low arts.¹

Siddharta, more than all others and like His peers, the Avatars, saw only too well that the tricks of magicians, and manipulation of physical phenomena cannot in the end have any lasting effect on the real purpose of His mission — the salvation of humanity, the restoring of faith and virtue within the human heart — since that could only be achieved through Love, Truth, Justice and living the life. This transformation of human nature effected by the Tathagatas, is clearly the greatest miracle of man's history, for it is the true cause of the flowering of great civilizations, before which a jump from the earth to the moon, the cure for cancer, heart transplants, etc., pale into insignificance and without which none of these could ever have seen the light of day. Small wonder that Siddharta, too, should proclaim that of His three Powers — “riddhi” (or absolute power of action), knowing the thoughts of others, and teaching (*adesa-patihariyam*) — the last is the most important and most productive (*abhikkankataram ca panitebaram ca*).

I do, indeed, possess these three powers (riddhi) of motion-at-will, mind-reading, and teaching; but there can be no comparison of the first two of these marvels (pratiharya) with the much farther-reaching and far more productive marvel of my teaching.²

So, bearing in mind Siddharta's unequivocal aversion —

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, Part I, Brahmajala-sutta, p. 12. See also *The Tevijja-Sutta* (The Maha-Silam), v. 4.

² *Anguttara-nikaya*, I. 171, 172.

*Well, Kevata! It is because I perceive danger in the practice of mystic wonders, that I loathe, and abhor, and am ashamed thereof*¹—

let us proceed to see how an aura of “miracles” is eventually woven around the inexplicable phenomenon of the Tathagata (the Avatar). It is a peculiar human failing that what we do not understand we endeavour to explain to each other, thinking thereby to lessen our own bewilderment by distributing its import to a larger number. It is a type of herd instinct, but not quite.

Since simple achievements of even ordinary leaders become exaggerated as their presence recedes from their immediate followers, how much more magnified is the impact of a world-enlightener, an Avatar, a Buddha! There everything assumes enormous dimensions. Thus, Siddharta’s father, Suddhodana Gautama, probably only the head of an aristocratic republic,² becomes a mighty king. It is reported that Siddharta had 32 nurses as a child and as prince 84,000 dancing girls entertained Him. We can easily surmise that these descriptions are merely embellishments to highlight the extent of His renunciation of son, wife and a pleasant home where earthly want was as unknown as water³ in the ocean. Another of the supernatural events attributed to the legend of Siddharta is that at His conception, 10,000 worlds are filled with light, the blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the crooked become straight, the lame walk, the imprisoned are set free, and so on —

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, Part I, Kevata Sutta, p. 245.

² The Sakya clan, which is said to have wandered from the delta of the Indus, occupied a district of a few thousand square miles lying on the slopes of the Nepalese hills and the plains to the south. Its capital was Kapilavastu. At the time of the Buddha the clan was under the suzerainty of Koshala, an adjoining kingdom. Later Buddhists, in order to surpass the Brahmins, invented a fabulous line of five kings of the Vivartakalpa headed by Mahasammata the last, Iksvaku, reigning at Potala. With Iksvaku the Sakyas are said to have begun. His four sons reigned at Kapilavastu. “Sakyammuni was one of his descendants in the seventh generation.” Later, after the destruction of Kapilavastu by Virudhaka, four survivors of the family founded the kingdoms of Udyanna, Bamyam, Himatala, and Sambhi. These were followed by five cakravartins, the first being Murdhaja; after these came nineteen kings, the first being Cetiya, the last Mahadeva; these were succeeded by dynasties of 5,000, 7,000, 8,000, 9,000, 10,000, 15,000 kings, after which king Gautama opens a line of 1,100 kings! Krishna, too, according to the **Bhagavad-Purana** is said to have had ten billion “gopis” (cow-girls) as His lovers. Such numbers only make sense if they are taken as representing the world at large.

³ This simile may give rise to the thought that while the ocean is indeed full of water, yet the water is salty and not able to quench one’s thirst. This is precisely the purpose of the simile, since Siddharta’s thirst was unique, and the ocean of Samsara had nothing in it to quench it. For He sought the elixir of immortality so that He may “work the weal of the world.”

all nature blooming, all beings in earth and heaven filled with joy, even the fires of hell extinguished and the tortures of the damned mitigated¹—and all other good imaginable occurs. Moreover, as the vessel which held the sacred relics cannot be used any more to guard any less sacred object, so His mother can bear no other child, and on the seventh day after His birth she dies. When the child is born it takes seven steps forward, and exclaims with a lion's voice "I am the chief of the world, this is my last birth," and again the thirty-two signs of joy appear in the earth and heaven.

All this is to show His unique greatness amongst men, whose true liberation and happiness are dependent on His appearance. The keys to all such legends are Interpretation and Recurrence. We can see that the above described physical symptoms (of infirmities and natural phenomena) all have their spiritual and mental counterparts and are therefore simply allegories. And the recurrence of such fantasies can be easily verified by investigating the legends surrounding the lives of Krishna, Ram or any of the other Divine Manifestations.

Other achievements and attributes of Siddharta are equally astonishing, and while some are borrowed from the fables of His predecessors, the Avatars and Buddhas of even more remote times, others are allegorical and hence subject to rational interpretation. Chroniclers of His achievements and attributes report that at the moment of Siddharta's enlightenment the whole earth swayed like a drunken woman as if its equilibrium was upset. This can be easily understood to mean that the newly discovered Dharma shook and toppled the old world and its values. The narrative continues to relate that the sky shone bright with the Siddhas,² who appeared in crowds in all the directions, and the mighty drums of thunder resounded through the air. Pleasant breezes blew softly, rain fell from a cloudless sky, flowers and fruits dropped from the trees out of season — all in an effort, as it were, to show reverence for Him. Mandarava flowers and lotus blossoms, and also water lilies made of gold and beryl, fell from the sky onto the ground

¹ *Jataka Tales*, 51, 52.

² Straight (Righteous) beings. Also means, "beings who have achieved or settled their lives in the pure way." This identical simile was also used by the Hindu Scriptures thousands of years earlier. See *Bhagavad-Gita*, XI. 36. "Arjuna said: 'Lord, it is but meet that the universe exults and is filled with love by chanting Your names and glory; terrified Raksasas (Yakshas or demonic powers) are fleeing in all directions, and all the hosts of Siddhas are bowing to You'."

near the Sakya Sage, so that it looked like a place in the world of the gods. At that moment no one anywhere was angry, ill or sad; no one did evil, none was proud; the world became quite quiet, as though it had reached full perfection. Joy spread through the ranks of those gods who longed for salvation; joy also spread among those who lived in the regions below. Everywhere the virtuous were strengthened, the influence of Dharma increased, and the world rose from the dirt of the passions and the darkness of ignorance. Filled with joy and wonder at the Sage's work, the seers of the solar race who had been protectors of men, who had been royal seers, stood in their mansions in the heavens and showed Him their reverence. The royal seers among the hosts of invisible beings could be heard widely proclaiming His fame. All living things rejoiced and sensed that things went well.¹ All this means simply that the Spiritual Springtime had occurred, banishing the winter of discontent amidst men, unfreezing their hearts from the clutches of despair, and ushering in a new dawn of hope, a new era of salvation.

Other narrators mention His super-human strength and the thirty-two marks of beauty.² Siddharta's body, it is said, was of a golden hue, which of course could symbolize both His purity and His own claim that His clan (gotra) was descended from the ancient solar race Ikshvaku.³ *The Mahaprajna-paramitashastra*⁴ and *Ratnolka-dharani*⁵ treat at great length the aura of six-coloured light-rays that emanate from Siddharta's body, and while there are always other interpretations of such phenomena, the symbol that readily comes to mind is the Dharma emanating from His being in accordance with the different needs of the four corners of the earth and its antipodal limits. Special importance is also accorded, in the *Mahaprajna-paramitashastra*,⁶ to the footprints of Siddharta, describing on them a wheel of a thousand spokes, obviously meaning the wheel of

¹ Similarly, it was stated of Krishna's birth. "The four quarters became radiant. the firmament shone with new stars. Towns and villages were enriched with auspicious objects. Turgid rivers turned limpid. Lotus blossomed. And the forests became alive with the song of birds flitting between clusters of flowers." **Bhagavad-Purana.**

² These attributes were also attached to other **Avatars**, e.g., Ram and Krishna.

³ **Digha-nikaya**. Part 1, pp. 103-104. Also for details of Siddharta's descent from the Hindu Avatar Ram see pp. 16-18. Jamshed Fozdar, **The God of Buddha** (Casa Editrice Bahá'í Srl, Italy, 1995).

⁴ **Mahaprajna-paramitashastra** I, pp. 437-452, esp. p. 446.

⁵ Shantideya, **Shiksha-Samuccaya**, p. 334.

⁶ These so-called holy places of footprints (Pali, pada-catiyas) **Mahaprajna-paramitashastra** I, p. 272.

myriad entanglements constantly crushed under the feet of the truly liberated — the Tathagata. The *Mahavastu*¹ describes Siddharta as possessing five types of eyes (more correctly five types of sights) — the physical, (mamsa-cakshus), the divine (divya), insight-wisdom (prajna), the eye of dharma, and the eye of Buddha.

Most — if not all — of the powers and qualities attributed to Siddharta by the Buddhists are already acknowledged in the earlier Hindu Scriptures for their Avatars and gods. Furthermore, the assiduous seeker will find that all the salient aspects of Siddharta's life as depicted by the Buddhist myths — from the free choice of the time and place of birth to the "lateral" birth itself and the taking of the Seven Strides, and from the Going Forth to the Great Awakening at the foot of the Bodhi tree etc. — are exactly paralleled in the much earlier Vedic mythology of Agni the priest and Indra the king. The Vedas² often apply the designation of "arahat" to these two gods, Agni and Indra. Agni like the Buddha "awakens at dawn" (usar-budh), symbolic of the sun, and Indra is of the "waking mind" (bodhin-manas).³ Like the Buddha, Agni too is spoken of as "the Eye in the World."⁴

The early Buddhists, who were all from the Hindu Faith, were fully aware of this identity of legends, and themselves having been already thoroughly infected by the concept of Karma and the myths of rebirth universally prevalent among the Hindus who were all around them, found it only too "logical" to explain such similarity of beliefs between the Hindus and themselves, with regards to Siddharta and His works and wonders, as the manifestation of Rebirth according to the process of Karma, especially since Siddharta Himself had often talked about His association in past existences with Hindu gods and heroes.

¹ Mahavastu, I, p. 158.

² "Books of Knowledge." Oldest Scriptures of the Hindu Aryans. The four Vedas are: **Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sam-Veda** and **Atharva-Veda**. Each Veda consists of two parts, Samhita (hymns) and Brahmanas (ritualistic precepts).

³ Rig-Veda, V. 75.5.

⁴ Taitiriyasamhita, II. 9.3., II. 5.8.2.

KARMA AND THE FALLACY OF REINCARNATION

...they who know truth as truth and untruth as untruth arrive at truth...¹

There is a great mass of humanity that loves the “miraculous” and, prompted by the hardships of daily existence, develops a strong desire to escape into the supernatural. We of the twentieth century are no exceptions — how much more so our ancestors of the remote past! It has always been a cardinal fact of history that the early followers of every Avatar speedily weave a mythology of wonders around their object of adoration. And so too did the devotees of Siddharta — the Buddha.

Offered the greatest veneration and admiration from the earliest times by His disciples, it was only natural that later ages would swiftly cloak the simple reality of Siddharta with supernatural acts and wonders of their own imagination, wholly removed from the true meaning of the phenomenon of the Tathagata. In the beginning there was as yet no great interest in many events of Siddharta’s life which were to appear important to later generations, but the very paucity of actual details concerning those events would gradually oblige the chroniclers of His life to reverentially surround them with fantasies, some borrowed from the legends of the older Hindu Faith and some invented by themselves. Thus His earliest disciples, too, continuously stressed the extraordinary importance of the Buddha. The Pali Canon tells us that He had full

¹ Dhammapada, v. 12.

knowledge of His previous existences.¹ While popular concept has often confused such assertions as affirming reincarnation and a seemingly endless repetition of the individual personality composed of our *samsaras*, yet nowhere in the sayings attributed to Siddharta is physical rebirth (reincarnation) the only possible or, as we shall see, even a plausible explanation of their meaning. On the other hand, in the case of ordinary mortals, devoid of any recollection of their past existences and their actions good or evil, and thrust once more into the cycle of *becomings, goings and comings*, reincarnation, if interpreted to mean physical rebirth, not only makes no sense, but appears to be a perverse and childish game of blind chance — hardly a doctrine worthy of allegiance from Siddharta's incomparable mind. Nevertheless, as the insidious influence of this fallacy of reincarnation has widely pervaded the doctrine of Siddharta, perverting in great measure the real intent and meaning of the Tathagata's Dharma, not to mention the gospels of the other Avatars such as Ram and Krishna, there is no choice for us — if we are to be faithful to the simple beauty and perfection of the peerless Dharma preached by all the Buddhas of the past as well as by Maitrya who has now appeared — but to completely expose, once and for all, the naive concepts from which this fallacy of reincarnation was first formulated and on which it has continued to feed in order to sustain its fading identity.

First propounded by the thinkers of the Vedas, this concept of physical rebirth (reincarnation) was the mechanism they conceived as being essential towards achieving Nirvana (Salvation), since they could not accept that the rational soul (the human) could become free of sin and imperfection in one lifetime. Hence those ancient Hindus formulated the theory of a succession of births and deaths (rebirth) in order to enable the soul to throw off all its imperfections and achieve salvation. Of course the question those philosophers, and a multitude of later proponents of this fallacy, have never answered is how, without any memory of our failure or achievement in prior existences, are we going to be able to build on those acts to finally achieve salvation?

The problem, as we shall see, has been created by misinterpretation

¹ Some versions of the *Jataka Tales* credit the Buddha with knowing His identity in past existences stretching back to 38,971 million years! Similar claims are also to be found in the Hindu Scriptures. See *Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 33. "I am verily the endless Time (the devourer of Time, God)"; *Svetasvatara-Upanishad*, VI. 1, 2. "He is pure consciousness, the Creator of Time: all-powerful, all-knowing." Also *Rig-Veda*, 25.1.

of the true meaning of Causality (Law of Karma) operating in the human context as propounded by the ancient Divine Teachers of the Hindus. This misunderstanding — inadvertent or otherwise — can be traced to the very constricted and, to an overwhelming degree, physical and anthropomorphic concepts concerning the cosmos and its controlling powers possessed by those early Hindu philosophers. Their influence, even in Siddharta's time, was strong enough to mold the beliefs of the early Buddhists to the extent that they too misunderstood Siddharta's own simple allegories regarding the all-pervading operation of the Law of Karma and confused it with the fallacious concepts of reincarnation with whose primitive "mechanism" their minds had already been so inundated — namely, that the physical rebirth or reincarnation on this earth of the human soul or individual personality occurs after death, without exception, for each of us in accordance with our actions (i.e. Karma); and, depending on the accumulated or individual effects of these actions, we may either retrogress or progress as a result of this transmigration of our soul. In other words we may either return to earth in a lower form, such as insects or animals, or to a lower human station from that held in our previous life on earth, or a higher human position. And, on extremely rare occasions, depending on myriads of previous rebirths, one may at last achieve perfection and wing one's flight to Nirvana (eternal bliss).

Now, first let us ask a simple question: "Why is there any need at all for the Law of Karma to exist?" The answer is that a Universal Justice demands that evil or good actions be appropriately punished or rewarded:

The evil-doer suffers in this world, he suffers in the next; he suffers in both. He suffers knowing "evil has been done by me." He suffers even more when he has gone to the evil place.¹ The righteous man rejoices in this world, he rejoices in the next; he rejoices in both. He rejoices knowing "good has been done by me." He rejoices still more when he has gone to the good place.²

¹Hell. Although both hell and heaven in the final analysis are mental states, they are popularly confused with physical conditions. For a detailed explanation of these states see, Jamshed Fozdar, **The God of Buddha** (Casa Editrice Bahá'í Srl, Italy, 1995), pp. 77-9, 122.

²Heaven. **Dhammapada**, vv. 17, 18. See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, XVIII. 57, 58. "Therefore, mentally surrendering all actions to Me and with Myself as Your sole object, having your mind constantly fixed on Me, resorting to the Yoga of equanimity, you shall get over all difficulties by My grace. And if out of pride you will not listen to Me, you will be utterly destroyed."

Whatever ramifications of thought are involved in understanding this simple statement of the Law of Karma, it is true that its belief in reward and retribution for one's actions are deeply ingrained in the human psyche and form a fundamental characteristic of every human act. Hence, it has always been evident to our conscience that "Goodness" is desirable and something to be rewarded, while "Evil" is something to be shunned. It also follows that if the Law of Karma has any lesson to offer mankind, it is that only by good acts can one elevate one's self and attain perfection. Thus far, the above premise is the soul of reason itself and has been proclaimed time after time by every Divine Teacher. "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." What then is responsible for perverting this perfectly just, reasonable, and basic concept of the Law of Karma and injecting into it the ridiculous and erroneous reincarnation beliefs commonly associated with its application and operation? More on this later. For now, let us examine what the Upanishads say.

In the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*,¹ we note that:

As the sculptor takes the material from a statue and chisels therefrom another newer and fairer form, so this soul also, after it has taken leave of the body and rid itself from ignorance, creates for itself another newer, fairer form, whether of the fathers, or the Gandharvas, or the gods or Prajapati, of Brahma or other beings.

This would indicate that the soul, after it has got rid of ignorance (or become enlightened), can and does exercise its will to create a newer and fairer form. If this is meant to imply that by its choice during its life here the soul, by its performance of good works (thus eliminating ignorance which breeds only evil), makes for its journey in the hereafter an ethically superior vehicle or body, then this concept is in complete harmony with Siddharta's own teachings and no one can quarrel with it.

*The righteous man rejoices in this world, he rejoices in the next, he rejoices in both. He rejoices and becomes delighted seeing the purity of his actions.*²

Nowhere in the above verses is there any mention or even implication of a return to this physical world with a physical body, and all the descriptions given above in the Upanishad of "fairer forms" clearly denote spirit beings. Moreover, if "ignorance" has already been eliminated by the soul according to the Upanishad text, then it must follow that the

¹ *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*, IV. 4.4.

² *Dhammapada*, v. 16. Also see *Dhammapada*, vv. 86, 177.

soul is fully cognizant. But no one in this life on earth has any cognizance of one's past existence. Hence the existence talked of in the Upanishad text, an existence with full knowledge, having already "rid itself from ignorance," which is also clearly confirmed on page 76, by Siddharta's own statement "knowing evil...knowing good has been done by me," cannot be any existence on this planet, certainly not a physical rebirth to this earthly life, where we are nothing if not totally ignorant of ever having had any experience of existence or consciousness in the past. In another place this same Upanishad describes the soul's journey from this physical life as follows:

As a caterpillar which has wriggled to the top of a blade of grass, draws itself over to a new blade, so man after he has put aside his body draws himself over to the new existence. As the soul moves out, life moves after it, and as life moves, the various vital airs depart after it. (After) Him follow his knowledge, his works and his former consciousness.¹

Here again, consciousness is an integral constituent of the rational soul and, given this clear assertion, the "new existence" in the above passage cannot be taken to mean a physical existence back here on earth. Hence, even though the simile given above is quite simplistic and can easily lead a naive person to accept the more imaginable and concrete return to a physical existence, yet the key phrase which, it seems, was purposely emphasized by the Upanishad, is "former consciousness", since without it everything is lost and meaningless. The whole purpose of the process is nullified and so also physical rebirth or reincarnation, since none of us can prove that we possess our "former consciousness." This vital condition of "former consciousness" 'i.e. cognizance and memory which the rational soul must possess in order to continually purify itself, clearly indicates that this process of "rebirth" of our true Self (Soul) indeed occurs, but outside of any physical existence — it

¹ **Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad**, IV. 4.3. And as Krishna also proclaims, "There is no fall for him either here or hereafter. For none who works for self-redemption meets with an evil destiny." **Bhagavad-Gita**, VI. 40 — and the reader will agree this includes the totality of men. For none is averse to the theme of saving himself! Hence, the various descriptions of the condition of one's soul after its departure from this physical life and the processes it undergoes (given in the same chapter vv. 41-45) are merely to describe spiritual states by physical conditions, and one can easily see this by noting in verse 43 "Arjuna, there he possesses the consciousness of his previous birth" — (something which none of us has in this life of our previous existences).

occurs in the metaphysical or the spiritual plane. Let us take an excerpt from another Upanishad¹ which, on the face of it, would seem to contradict our thesis that in each and every instance, the rebirth spoken of can only mean a rebirth of our soul — with full cognizance and memory of its past — into a spiritual plane, and not back to the physical — this earth.

Some souls enter into a womb for embodiment; others enter stationary objects according to their deeds and according to their thoughts. That person who is awake in those that sleep, shaping desire after desire, that, indeed, is the pure. That is Brahman, that, indeed, is called immortal. In it all the worlds rest and no one ever "goes beyond" it. That, verily, is that.

The simplistic approach to understanding this would be simply to equate "a womb" with the primal home of the embryo, "embodiment" to a physical "bodying forth", "stationary objects" to various solid substances such as trees, stones etc. — as the naive masses of those ancient times were wont to do, almost without exception, and as many do even today, mainly because of their limited concepts of cosmogony. But we know now that they erred by such simplistic explanations and we would too, if we accepted them. Such concepts, reducing all meaning in terms of physical phenomena, can appear rational only if they do not try to encompass the rational soul (cognizance and mind) and are restricted solely to such physical life-forms and phenomena as animal, vegetable, or mineral, because, as we have already explained (pp. 28-29), they are all totally bereft of rational consciousness. Therefore it is not possible to prove or disprove the phenomenon of duplication — or return of the identical attributes and characteristics — in these non-rational life-forms. Such difficulty does not arise when trying to apply this theory of reincarnation to man (the rational soul), for man *knows himself*. The Upanishad attests to this by asserting that man is conscious in his life of the acts that he perpetrated while on earth. So if we are not cognizant of our past life, have no memories of our acts good or evil, (and we can categorically state that none of us do, for none of us have ever been here before nor will ever return), then, how prove reincarnation? Why, in the first place, is it ever necessary for us to have a physical rebirth, since the whole process of suffering as proclaimed by both Siddharta and the Upanishads is simply an education for us to learn to free ourselves from all worldly things? As Siddharta and the Upanishads also assert that we

¹ Katha-Upanishad II. 2.7, 8.

are nothing except mind¹ and there is no reality but what is seen of the mind, then what is the purpose for rebirth into this physical existence if the thing that is needed is the purification of the mind — freeing it from the things of this world? Does it not occur to us that the mind (our true Self) would be at least as able to achieve this freedom from earthly entanglements in the next life, in the metaphysical or spiritual plane, away from this earth? Are not hell, heaven and Nirvana also states experienced only by our mind? Then why this constant preoccupation with devising every sort of ridiculous analogy to assert a physical rebirth? Rebirth of what? Certainly not our cognizance or memory. Not our mind. Then reincarnation of what? Nothing, of course. For that is what it is: *nothing*. Or is Brahma's heaven so small and narrow that only a few can be accommodated, while the infinite multitudes are obliged to continue in a blind game of chance, down here on earth? Is Brahma guilty then for permitting such a tragedy? Were the early Buddhists correct when they accused Brahma thus:

*He who has eyes can see the sickening sight;
Why does not Brahma set his creatures right?*

The answer to these three questions of course, is No. The reason for such error lies somewhere else and concerns the constricted physical concepts of cosmogony held by those early Hindus and Buddhists. To their mentality as we have already shown (pages 37-40), Brahma was indeed a very human entity and consequently, Brahmaloaka (Brahma's world) too was very physical. From this outlook (through no fault of Brahma), to assuage their yearning for immortality while at the same time satisfying their concept concerning the Law of Karma, they devised the elaborate structure of explanations and operations which form the fallacy of reincarnation.

The overwhelming mass of humanity, until the last half of this millenium, conceived of the earth as the whole of creation,² supporting a roof (the sky) from which dangled bright lights big and small (the sun, moon and stars). Anything different was unimaginable in the face of such "solid" evidence before their visual senses.

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, 11. 157.

² From the meagre accounts in the Vedas, it can be seen that Vedic poets conceived the earth as "extended, broad and boundless, in shape like a wheel." They do not mention of any oceans surrounding it. Their most ancient cosmogony asserts the universe to be comprised of the earth and the sky.

Imprisoned by the barriers of this primitive cosmogony, their minds were incapable of conceiving a “scheme of things” beyond the purely physical in which, as the earth represented the whole creation, the progress or retrogression of the human being was perforce explained as an endless cycle of comings and goings in an infinite variety of physical shapes — insect, reptile, animal and human. Ignorant of the essential nature of the spirit-mind as something exclusively possessed by the human, primitive man found no incongruity in conceiving human and animal characters to be completely interchangeable.

Lacking adequate metaphysical concepts, even the ultimate liberation from this “merry-go-round” and the attainment of final perfection — Nirvana or eternal bliss — were not understood by the vast majority as anything more than an inexplicable unconsciousness or, more simply, as the dead peace of the grave — utter extinction.

Ignorant of the real nature of the human being (the rational soul), and unaware that the difference between him and all the other creatures was not merely one of degree but of kind, primitive man constructed his cosmogony to provide for his limited imagination the answers to the “why” and the “wherefore” of his existence and surroundings, and he was easily able to accept transmigration of one’s individual personality into the animal or the higher human station — governed by the acts in one’s previous existence — as the “natural” order of things. Unable to imagine the cause of disease and its effects on the embryo, he regarded the havoc it wrought in maiming or blinding the newborn babe as further substantiation of his understanding of the law of Karma. In brief, his limited perspective built a limited world-scheme for the satisfaction of his limited mind. But in time the inexorable march of knowledge began to inflict devastating cracks in this compact little world-view of primitive man. The vast and sudden expansion of astronomical knowledge shattered forever humanity’s earthbound view of the universe and opened man’s mind to accept a universe without end in which his little planet was no more significant than a grain of sand on the seashore. Discoveries in medicine, biology and chemistry demonstrated to man that not our actions in a previous life but cause and effect of a very different kind were responsible for the tragedies which afflicted newborn babes, and these tragedies could be cured and even eliminated by human effort through the control and eradication of disease.

Hence every item in the preceding excerpt from the *Katha-Upanishad* can, when we insert the vital factor of “consciousness”, become clear

and logical as signifying a metaphysical concept. “A womb”¹ can be any entrance through which we, i.e. our rational soul, emerge into a new spiritual existence — including the emergence into the mental state or experience of “heaven” or “hell”, as the case may be, depending on our past acts. “Embodiment” simply means to become possessed of a body” — not necessarily a physical body but more logically a spiritual form. “Stationary objects” are objects without the freedom possessed by moving objects. They are rooted to the ground. It does not take much imagination for us to conceive of ourselves as other forms of existence, e.g. that of animals or as “stationary forms” such as trees or stones. And that is what some of us will be spiritually, weighed down by our ignorant acts and grounded — made stationary — to the roots of our ill-conceived desires! And, finally, as the Upanishad states, the highest state of purity merits the highest — Brahma’s world. Now we can see the remarkable identity of expression and meaning between the Upanishad and Siddharta’s own teaching concerning the progress of the soul after death:

*Some enter the womb; evil doers go to hell; the good go to heaven; those free from worldly desires attain Nirvana.*²

Shall we too succumb to the temptation of simplistic analogies and interpret these words in physical terms — a physical rebirth on earth without our former consciousness, not knowing what evil acts we committed? Then how answer Siddharta’s assertion that we are conscious of our evil acts, that we see what we have done?

*The evil-doer grieves in this world, he grieves in the next, he grieves in both. He grieves, he is afflicted, seeing the evil of his own actions.*³

And finally, is “this world”, mentioned in the above, the same as “the next”, in the same text or was Siddharta simply confused? If Siddharta is correct, and there can be no doubt about it, then we must cease trying to equate all ideas with physical things. As Siddharta advises us, we must “destroy illusions and the contact with things will cease to beget misconception.”⁴ Otherwise, as He states, “They who

¹ Can also be any condition in the spiritual realm where we are in a state of limbo, ignorant of our spiritual potential (i.e. our spiritual limbs, eyes, senses, etc.) awaiting further development of these attributes since we did not develop them during our physical existence. Just as a child is supposed to develop its physical attributes in the physical world.

² *Dhammapada*, v. 126.

³ *Dhammapada*, v. 15.

⁴ *Mahavagga*, 1.6. (19-28).

imagine truth in untruth and see untruth in truth never arrive at truth but follow vain imagination.”¹

Scientific research into the nature of instinctive behaviour patterns in animals has proved that creative and rational thought is an exclusive characteristic of man alone and this fact has made wholly untenable the concept of transmigration of the human personality into animals and vice versa. The discoveries of certain aspects of the mind and their effects on physical objects, as well as advances in the use of abstract mathematical concepts to determine and control physical phenomena at astronomical distances, have further broadened our mental horizons to accept non-physical realities and made reasonable to us the possibility that the greater part of our essential selves is mental rather than material.

We are beginning to realize that order and purpose are reflected in every physical phenomenon that we study and that the whole of creation appears as one gigantic machine, delicately balanced by perfectly operating eternal laws, laws which only we (and other rational beings on other worlds), through the power of the mind, can discover, understand and utilize. To draw an analogy of man’s search for better understanding of these laws, it is like a child’s intellect slowly developing to understand the action and purpose of its father. A bond becomes evident — intellect seeks to understand its surroundings and finds that its intrinsic quality of reason is not only the best instrument for understanding this vast creation but also for devising the necessary tools for predicting its awesome operation and utilizing its power for man’s benefit.

Man’s intelligence thus meets with the handiwork of infinitely greater Intelligence and slowly it begins to dawn on him that intelligence, this shadowy and mysterious quality with which he alone among the denizens of his planet is endowed, is not a chance or accidental occurrence in a vast and alien sea of matter. On the contrary, It (Supreme Intelligence) is the cause or the creative force of the whole Cosmos and while ever remaining beyond the scope of our keenest senses or our finest instruments, It nevertheless displays Its presence through endless effects kaleidoscoped within this tremendous creation around us, of which we and our own finite intelligences are also a part. And we are realizing that the more we advance to understand the creation, the more vividly does that Supreme Intelligence display itself through its laws,

¹ Dhammapada, v. 11.

*Laws which govern every state,
Laws as old as nature and as fixed as Fate.*

Now just as we would not expect a lower creation of our own mind — such as a chair or table — to contain the attributes of mobility, power, speed, etcetera, that we build into some of our more advanced creations, such as the automobile or airplane, so also it is manifestly ridiculous to expect an infinitely more advanced and rational Intelligence to be playing a senseless game — destroying the higher attributes such as rational thought, perception and memory (in one word — Consciousness), of its highest creation — the human — and then squeezing the “human”, or whatever remains of it, into the lower mental and physical forms of its other creations, such as insects, reptiles and animals, which are totally bereft of perception and rational thought. We would therefore neither be able to remember our past errors, nor to reason out a correct course of future conduct. Such irrational and unjust action of relegating us to the animal level would be as if an angry airplane designer, irritated at the airplane, were to chop off its wings, break its propellers and wheels, remove its engine and strap the empty hulk onto a table or a shelf so that like the table or the shelf the airplane would be still and no longer irritate its creator, the designer. Such an act, we all agree, would be highly irrational and result in a total waste of the time and love lavished on his creation by the designer. The only way for that airplane to be improved would be to have its shortcomings corrected, allowing it to do what it was created to do.¹ Similarly, how irrational it would be if a teacher, irritated by the errors and shortcomings of a student, should hit him on the head — which might cause him a loss of memory, or blind his eyes, or deafen his ears — or ask the hapless student to crawl on all fours and bark like a dog. By such methods or punishment the teacher, whose only purpose was to increase the intelligence of his student, would have totally negated his own goal (even though he might be silly enough to derive a perverse satisfaction by thinking that he has ruined the student).

The same teacher, however, would not use such senselessly harsh methods on his own son since he would be affected by the strong tie of fatherly love and his desire to have this object of his love progress to ever greater heights, and this would dictate that he be very patient with his son — even to the extent of sacrificing his own wealth or life if need be. Can

¹ All the Upanishadic thinkers agree with this. See *Chandogya-Upanishad*, III. 14. 1 and III. 1. 10. Also *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*, III. 2. 13.

we say now that it is sensible to think that an infinitely perfect Intelligence, which not only gave birth to our own rational selves but also equipped us with the tremendous powers that have enabled us to survive for millions of years, to the point where we are now reaching out to play with the stars — would be continually nullifying its main purpose of nurturing intelligence by annihilating our mental senses of mind, of memory and of thought (our consciousness) by relegating us to the lower existence of the animal? Some may say at this point that our statements claiming that animals are totally bereft of rational thought and perception are merely the product of our own inability to communicate with animals in their own “language” and therefore do not constitute proof that transmigration of the human personality or consciousness into the animal is impossible. To such persons we are happy to announce that they need no longer wallow in this uncertainty if they will but consider the other side of the coin of this transmigration fairy tale: (a) from the animal to the human or, (b) from a higher human position in our previous life to a lower human station in the present or, (c) vice versa. Now the end product of all three (a), (b) and (c) — is a human being fully able to think, to talk and, if “humanly” possible, also to remember! Well, talk to them, talk to any human being — ask him or her whether they have any recollection whatsoever of their past life, their actions good or bad in that life, and the answer will almost always be a resounding “No.”

How senseless and unjust would be the judge in our own courts of law were he to relegate the criminal to prison or commit him to torture or execution without informing or reminding the criminal of his crime. Under such circumstances how could the criminal know what his crime was or what he was expected to atone for and to desist from repeating it in the future? If the criminal were totally ignorant of his crime then to punish him would annul the purpose of justice, since it would be devoid of reason. Likewise the rewarding of some meritorious act would become meaningless if the reason for such reward was not divulged. It must follow, therefore, that the Supreme Intelligence could do no less in Its desire to improve, correct and ensure the progress of the creatures over whom It has lavished such patience and love. It would not capriciously or through impatience consign us to a meaningless path in an animal existence, devoid of our past consciousness and thus helpless to redeem our future conduct through knowledge of our past errors — endlessly stumbling along without hope, a mute testimony to the madness of our creator. Such, of course, is not the case. While our ancestors of long ago,

ignorant of the true nature of the human being and the real difference between themselves and the animals, may be excused for forming their hypothesis of transmigration of the human personality into animals and vice versa in order to substantiate their primitive understanding of the law of Karma, we who have progressed to a wider perspective can easily see that not only the original premise of the Law of Karma stands inviolate, but its actual operation now becomes completely meaningful when extended to a continuum of the human personality and consciousness into the realm of the metaphysical.

A little more thought in this area will reveal to us the reason why the unvarying laws of a perfect Creator will not compensate for the thoughtless actions of parents — actions which result in the tragic effects of communicable disease on their innocent newborn babes. However, when we look upon this scene from the true perspective of an immortal existence, which is the birthright of every rational being, then we can see that the Supreme Intelligence in Its infinite wisdom must have already devised the perfect mechanism to compensate, on the plane of spiritual existence, those of us who through no fault of our own were deprived at birth of some of the necessary means for terrestrial existence.

It is evident moreover that even on earth It has implanted within our minds the power — if we will but develop it in concert and cooperation with our fellow humans — to seek out and eliminate all disease and cure every mishap, not only to the unborn embryo, but to every living being.¹

We see now that the law of Karma is perfect and all-pervading.² Otherwise how can those tremendous beings, the Divine Savants, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster and others who had so steadfastly defended the permanence of the law of Karma, champion anything short of a perfectly just and rational law? They alone enunciated the only correct concept of this law which is clearly compatible with the continuation of our individual personality, equipped with its full consciousness — a

¹ Genetic engineering on the DNA code, even in our day, is already able to correct various defects in the embryo and would be perfected to even cancel all defective tendencies for future diseases, thus resulting in perfectly healthy children. If viewed from the perspective of the “Reincarnation fallacy” such acts by to-day’s surgeons would impute “Karma-suppressing” god-like powers to them, or, that all such children had performed only good acts in past lives! If the latter, then why (again without any memory) return at all, instead of just staying on in Swarga (heaven)?

² *Sumyutta-nikaya*, 12.20.30. “The Law of Karma (Cause and Effect) is uniform and without exception.”

concept divorced from the “merry-go-round” pattern of meaningless comings and goings, and instead, pointing the way to infinite progress into higher states of consciousness, gradually unfolding its full potential into greater degrees of freedom in that true but infinitely more tenuous abode of the soul for which They so willingly sacrificed the gross trappings of physical existence. It is in that plane of spiritual consciousness where we become aware of the effects of those acts which we have committed during our life on earth in either providing for or depriving our spirit-mind personality of the necessary attributes for advancing — either swiftly or sluggishly and painfully — towards perfection in that spiritual plane. Siddharta, too, repeatedly proclaimed the existence of that world of the spirit, as we shall see later, and warned His disciples not to be cynical about its existence:

*He who violates the one law (Dharma),
who speaks falsely, scoffs at another
world, there is no evil he will not do.¹*

From the foregoing discussion of this fallacy of reincarnation, the reader can see at this time that two things have occurred which can now enable us to get a true grasp of the correct operation of the all-pervading Law of Karma.² The first consequence of our thesis is a new understanding of the manner in which the allegories taught by Ram, Krishna and other Divine Teachers for conveying a higher meaning — apropos the onward progress of the soul-mind into immortality — became speedily transformed by the naive to indicate more concrete happenings in their restricted cosmogony, to create for their mentality a neat concept of “explainable” causes and effects — neat, but totally fallacious. And while it persists even to the present day, especially tragic in its maintenance of the caste system, which it was chiefly instrumental in creating and consolidating in the land of its birth, yet with the greater knowledge of the actual interplay of physical forces (economic, scientific, etc.) now seeping into that society, together with the development of a more comprehensive concept of cosmogony and a greater knowledge of man’s intellect and its latent powers, this nonsense of physical rebirth, or transmigration of the

¹ **Dhammapada**, v. 176. See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, XVI. 8, 9. “They say: ‘The world is without any foundation and altogether false, godless and brought about by desire; what else?’ Embracing this view, these lost souls with little understanding, ill-disposed and devoted to cruel actions, are born for the destruction of the world.”

² Jamshed Fozdar, **The God of Buddha** (Casa Editrice Bahá’í Srl, Italy, 1995), pp. 117-18.

individual psyche into other physical forms — reincarnation — is destined, like any other fallacy, for the scrap-heap of the mind.

Now, while we have pursued this fallacy to a deadend in the womb of its conception — the Hindu cosmogony of ancient India — we must also effectively demolish it and lay it to rest within the context of the Buddha-Dharma.

From a comprehensive examination of the sayings on this subject attributed to Siddharta, it appears that among His own early adherents, there existed the same compulsive desire to concretize an idea at its lowest possible level, its simplest form of operation. And in the case of the early Buddhists, sprouting new values amidst a quagmire of Hindu concepts, this simplistic tendency — the most insidious example of which was the fallacy of reincarnation — rapidly reduced Siddharta's own allusions and meanings concerning the modes and stages of a soul's journey to Nirvana into a conglomeration of ideas identical to those advanced by the Hindus. Except, that the early Buddhists, who adopted the doctrine of reincarnation and the Law of Karma, moralized these concepts and, unlike the view held in Hindu philosophy, heaven no longer became attainable through the performance of animal sacrifices or self-mortification but by practicing the virtues¹ emphasized by Siddharta — alms-giving, truthfulness, and forgiveness of one's enemies. However this concept of reincarnation, which has found prominence in the *Avadana-Satakata*,² is not the essence of Siddharta's teachings, whose primal aim is the winning of Insight, Bodhi — Enlightenment. And it must also be our aim. So let us proceed to gain insight concerning this fallacy of reincarnation, adopted by the Buddhists through their too literal and erroneous interpretations of the various allegories used by Siddharta to convey the meaning of His Message.

¹ Of course the Hindu Scriptures, too, subscribed to such virtues often enunciated by Dharmaraja (the eldest of the Pandava brothers) **Maatruvat paradaaraanscha, Paradravyami loshte vat, Aatmavatsarva-bhootam.**

Yahpasyati Sapasyati. ("One who regards the wives of others as his mother, who looks upon money belonging to others as balls of earth and who treats all other beings as he treats his own self is indeed the real seer. He becomes the knower of Brahma." (**Mahabharata.**) But these high sentiments had, by Siddharta's time, to a great extent been substituted by sacrificial rituals and hence Siddharta's goal to restore these through His own Teachings.

² A latter Buddhist work. A collection of hundred stories of present and past lives of various persons and the consequences of their deeds in them. These all have the same moral: "White deeds result in white fruits and black deeds result in black fruits."

Here we will give some examples from the Buddhist Scriptures of Siddharta's discussions on this subject and leave it to the reader to be the best judge of our comments concerning them.

The only way in which it is possible to be sure about the truth of the statement that one's pleasures and pains are exclusively the result of his own actions is by possessing the knowledge of what actions a man has done in his previous lives, because much of the pain and pleasure in this life is said to be due to the actions of previous lives. Siddharta asks the disciples of Mahavira,¹ "Do you positively know that you, as present individuals, have actually existed in the past or that you have done such and such actions, good and bad, as the case may be." On being told that they did not know, He asked them how in that case they could maintain that the happiness and misery of an individual were solely dependent upon his own actions, whether done in this life or in previous lives² — a clear refutation by Siddharta of the theory held by the Jains. It seems that the Buddha regarded Mahavira as holding an extreme form of individualism. While others, who believed in fate or chance, were of the view that the weal and woe of an individual depended altogether on external factors, Mahavira went to the other extreme of believing — that our pleasant and unpleasant experiences were solely dependent upon ourselves. Mahavira's view is stated in the Jain work *Sutra-Kirtanga* as follows:

When I suffer, grieve, repent, grow feeble, am afflicted or experience pain, I have caused it... Pleasures and amusements are not able to help or save me. They are one thing and I am another; they are foreign to my real being. Even the friends and relations who are more intimately connected with me cannot experience, still less take upon themselves, the pains I actually undergo. This is to say, as an individual a man is born, as an individual he dies, as an individual again, he deceases from one state of existence to be reborn into another. The passions, consciousness intellect, perceptions and impressions of a man belong to him exclusively.³

¹ It is now believed, that Nigantha Nataputta is the same person as Mahavira, the revered teacher of the Jain Religion and a contemporary of Siddharta. It appears from Buddhist works, that Mahavira died a few years — probably five years — before the death of Siddharta. The word Nigantha means "free from bonds or fetters." The followers of Mahavira were known among the Buddhists as Niganthas.

² Devadahas-Sutta, *Majjhima-nikaya*.

³ Here, too, there is nothing exclusively implying physical rebirth.

On another occasion a venerable, called Timbaruka, approached Siddharta and asked Him: "are happiness and suffering self-created or not, or created by others or not? Are they neither created by oneself nor created by others?" And we are told that Siddharta answered both the questions in the negative, thus showing that happiness and suffering are dependent on factors both dependent on us and also independent of ourselves. As He clarifies it further,

*There are some sufferings, originating from phlegm, from wind, from the union of bodily humours, from changes of the seasons, from stress of untoward happenings, from attacks from without, and also from our karmans.*¹

And then, so that we may not misconstrue this as meaning any infraction of the principle of freedom of will which is possessed by each of us and from the exercise of which we can never abdicate, Siddharta unequivocally asserts:

*By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself. No one purifies another.*²

And again, by another discussion of Siddharta with some young Brahmins,³ we can see that His questions alone should suffice to demonstrate His aversion to any such belief as physical transmigration or rebirth:

Siddharta: Do you know that there is descent into the womb?

Brahmins: We know this, sir, that there must be coitus of the parents, it must be the mother's season and the Gandharva must be present. If there is conjunction of three things thus, there is descent into the womb.

Siddharta: Do you know, good sirs, whether that Gandharva is a noble warrior or a Brahmana, or a merchant-trader, or a low-born worker?

Brahmins: We do not know that, Sir.

The idea of a physical body as being essential for the soul-mind (Vijnana) to exist and to develop is, as we have already explained,

¹ *Samyutta-nikaya*, Vol. IV. Ch. 36. Pali Text Society, p. 155. Caused by our volition on our character.

² *Dhammapada*, v. 165. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, XVIII. 16. "Notwithstanding that, he who, owing to impure reason views the Supreme as the doer, is of perverse understanding, and does not see at all."

³ *Majjhima-nikaya* II. 156-57.

simply based on the primitive mentality's concept of a very restricted cosmogony. The physical body is no more necessary for the soul-mind than the eyes are necessary for the existence of light or ears for sound. These are simply instruments for the manifestation of those primordial entities, and while one is dependent on the other, e.g. the body, eyes, ears, etc., the primordial entities exist and can manifest themselves independently of such instruments. Now, while Buddhist scriptures talk about four orders or kinds of *Rebirth* (Comings and Goings), namely, *Srotapanna* — one who has entered the stream and may have seven births before he reaches the other shore i.e., Nirvana, *Sakradagamin* — one who returns only once, *Anagamin* — one who does not return, and *Arahat* — one who is perfected and can perceive Nirvana — yet in an often-recurring context Siddharta equates these with the four stages of contemplation (dhyana) of paths of power (riddhipada)¹ similar to the "Aryan Path" which are the means to Omniscience, Full Awakening and Nirvana. The Hindu philosophers also accepted these four stages as the stage of desire (Kama), of volition (Kratu), of action (Kanya) and lastly, the more or less abiding change wrought in the individual's constitution and character (Karman).² The most important stage is the stage of volition or intention, and even after that, if the action is not performed on account of certain unforeseen obstructions, the effect of the volition on character remains. "A man becomes good by performing good deeds and bad by bad deeds" — so says the earliest Upanishads.³

Hence, these stages or orders of "comings and goings" are also, in the final analysis, simply states-of-mind of our souls, just as is the final stage of perfection — Nirvana itself — and nowhere is any requirement for the existence of an actual physical body made a condition before the mind can pass through these various orders, nor, for that matter, is there any physical locality stipulated for us to experience these stages. For, as we shall see, we can either experience them — hell, heaven and even Nirvana — here, "in this very life", or in the next plane of spiritual consciousness, depending upon our own ethical development.

That place is delightful where saints dwell, whether in the village or in the forest, in deep water or on dry land.

¹ Samyutta-nikaya, II. 212. f. Also Anguttara-nikaya, I, 170, I, 254F. etc.

² Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, IV. 5, 5.

³ Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, III. 2, 13. Also see Chandogya-Upanishad, III. 14. 1 etc.

— just as Nirvana is too.¹

*The religious life (dharma) is embedded in Nirvana, its goal is Nirvana, its perfection is Nirvana. We can make an end of pain in this life.*²

*For those who in midstream stay in great peril in the flood — for those adventuring on, aging and dying — do I proclaim the Isle, where is no-thing, where naught is grasped, this is the Isle of No-beyond. Nirvana do I call it — the utter extinction of aging and dying.*³

We can attain it in this very life. Nirvana is within ourselves.

*These wise ones, meditative, persevering, always putting forth strenuous effort attain to Nirvana, the highest freedom and happiness.*⁴

*That monk of wisdom here, devoid of desire and passion, attains to deathlessness, peace, the unchanging state of Nirvana.*⁵

*Those whose minds are well grounded in the elements of enlightenment, who without clinging to anything rejoice in freedom from attachment, whose appetites have been conquered, who are full of light, attain Nirvana in this world.*⁶

Nirvana, while it is not something that is empirically verifiable, is simply the realm of self-realization, the recognition that only the mind exists,⁷ true Self-Consciousness.

Before we proceed, let us clarify one famous discourse⁸ by Siddharta with His closest disciple, Ananda, which if not correctly understood can lead to erroneous views about the nature and existence of Vijnana (the Soul) in relation to the physical body. By Vijnana we mean *exactly* the Soul, or the Soul-Mind, or the “True Self”, as Siddharta named this entity on various occasions.

Siddharta: This truth, Ananda, that on consciousness depends the corporeal organism, is to be understood in this way:

¹For a detailed concept of Nirvana, see Chapter 3, Jamshed Fozdar, **The God of Buddha** (Casa Editrice Bahá'í Srl, Italy, 1995).

²Majjhima-nikaya, i. 304.

³Sutta-nipata, vv. 1093-94.

⁴Dhammapada, v. 23.

⁵Sutta-nipata, v. 204.

⁶Dhammapada, v. 89.

⁷Digha-nikaya, 11. 157.

⁸Samyutta-nikaya, II. 13-16.

Suppose Ananda, consciousness were not to descend into the maternal womb — would the corporeal organism consolidate in the maternal womb?

Ananda: Nay, verily, Revered Sir.

This simply means that without the phenomenon of human conception — which, unlike animal conception, involves the attachment of the rational soul (soul-mind) to the corporeal organism (the physical and chemical elements and cells) — without this conjunction, the cells would not coalesce into the bio-physical embryo and therefore the existence of a viable human being would naturally not be possible.

Siddharta: Suppose, Ananda, consciousness, after having descended into the maternal womb, were then to go again¹ — pray, would the corporeal organism be born to life in this world?

Ananda: Nay, verily, Revered Sir.

This clearly means that if the rational soul, which is joined to the act of human conception, is then separated from the biophysical embryo by whatever accident or cause, the biophysical embryo is then dead and would not emerge from its mother's womb as a living, viable organism.

Siddharta: Suppose, Ananda, consciousness were to be severed from a child, either boy or girl — pray, would the corporeal organism attain to growth, increase and development?

Ananda: Nay, verily, Revered Sir.

This is exactly the same thing as the previous case of separation or severance, except outside the womb, when the embryo has been born and tasted of life in this world. Simply put, if the biological vehicle, the body, suffers an occurrence which eliminates its vital life-function, thus severing the rational soul from the physical body, the body will no longer grow or develop, for it is dead. Notice that no such finality is implied for

¹ This case is also recounted at length in Lord Krishna's conversation with the Brahmin Somadatta whose wife had had ten still-born children. Somadatta erroneously conceiving this as his Karma's action on his children, asks Krishna, "Why should innocent babes suffer for our Karma?" "How do you know they suffer? They do not suffer," said Krishna. "It is you who suffer and transpose your feelings to them, like attributing to the earth thorns everywhere, while the thorn is in your foot." Somadatta is then shown by Krishna that the babies which died in the womb were merely transplanted into a far grander world in which they progress ad infinitum and from which they never wish to return. Once again, no reincarnation is mentioned here.

the rational soul itself except to indicate that it is simply detached and separated.

Siddharta: Accordingly, Ananda, we have in consciousness that cause — the occasion, the origin and the dependence of the corporeal organism.

I have said that on the corporeal organism depends consciousness. This truth is to be understood in this way. Suppose, Ananda, that consciousness were to gain no foothold in this corporeal organism — pray, would in the future be birth, old age and death and the coming into being of misery's host?

Ananda: Nay, verily, Revered Sir.

In other words if that factor, the rational soul, was not able to attach itself to the “about-to-be” embryo due to some failure¹ of the biological phenomenon of conception, there would naturally not be any embryo and no issue out of the womb into this life — of birth — and consequently no future development toward old age and death and no samsaras (one's acts in the gamut of life). Thus far it has all been straight forward and very rational. The soul is the entity which, if by some mysterious mechanism is not able to attach itself at the instant of conception to a viable biological phenomenon — the “about-to-be-developed” embryo — then there is no further development of the embryo, and in fact conception does not become a reality, capable of developing into the embryo. Hence this entity, the rational soul (consciousness) is no longer able to assume its role of control and direction over the corporeal organism (the embryo), and to all intent and purpose, is not able to manifest its reality in corporeal existence — as it would have done — in the form of a living, thinking being — had this process of conception, embryonic development into the foetus, and then birth and adulthood taken its normal course. This is the only manner in which the following key lines by Siddharta, concluding the discourse with Ananda, can be understood within the perspective of the whole discourse:

Siddharta: Accordingly, Ananda, here we have in the corporeal organism the reason, the means, the beginning and the phenomenon of consciousness.

¹ Here it is of interest to note that Buddhism has the same view as the other great Faiths of consciousness (rational soul or individual personality) commencing at the instant of conception.

In other words, for that mysterious mechanism which triggers the “issuing forth” of the rational soul into the corporeal realm for its onward journey into the infinity of its immortality, a corporeal organism is the first step. Just as a vessel is the first step to embarking on the ocean — when the “other shore” is reached, the vessel is left behind and the rational soul assumes other modes as befits its further progress — but more of that later.

At this juncture one may question whether Siddharta believed in such an immortal soul, and the answer is an unequivocal “Yes”. We have only to refer to the various Scriptures including the Pali Canon to see Siddharta’s clear assertion that He came to teach of the abundant life of the immortality of the soul.

The doctrine of the conquest of Self, O Siha, is not taught to destroy the souls of men, but to preserve them. As soon as he will understand that the punishment will purify his soul, he will no longer lament his fate, but rejoice at it¹.

As we can see, while Siddharta often termed the Soul as “Mind,” He also quite regularly used the word “Soul” and the very word *Buddhi* (from which is derived Buddha), when correctly translated from its real meaning in Sanskrit means “Soul,” emphasizing the fact that the Soul is not merely what enables one to know but also to will. It controls the mind and is more than cognizance, mind or intellect. However, this dialogue with Ananda, Kassapa and others concerning the “eternality” of the soul has unfortunately been misunderstood to mean its “non-immortality,”

These, Ananda, who affirm a Self, fall into the extreme of belief in its eternality; those who deny it fall into the extreme of belief in its eventual annihilation.²

and concludes by “Nirvana does not consist in mere annihilation.”³

Eternality, as is clearly understood, means neither beginning nor end. And the soul, as we have already noted from Siddharta’s previous discourse about it with Ananda, has a beginning — at conception — and is therefore clearly not eternal, i.e., did not exist prior to that occurrence — the instant of conception. This effectively denies the existence of the

¹ *Mahavagga*, VI. 31; *Ibid* (Aryaparyesana-Sutta). “I proceed to Kasi’s capital (Varanasi or modern Banares) beating the drum of immortality.”

² *Vatsagotra-Sutra*.

³ *Lankavatara-Sutta*, XVIII. 2.

individual soul prior to that instant. Additional assertions that no such consciousness of the individual exists in a prior life are clearly proclaimed by Siddharta in the following (bearing in mind that He is referring to suffering):

*Whoso says: "He who does (a deed) is he who experiences (its result)," is thereby saying that from the beginning suffering was wrought by (that being) himself — this amounts to the Eternality-view.*¹

The above excerpt simply means that there are some sufferings external to our actions and for which we are not the cause, such as those (see page 90) "originating from phlegm, from wind, from the union of bodily humours, from changes of the seasons, from stress of untoward happenings, from attacks etc." — which effectively explains — if we will only understand — the range of biological and other external factors which effect us through disease, infirmity etc. — all of which cause us distress and pain — both as developing embryos and as children or adults. So "eternality" must not be imputed to the Self (the rational soul) for, as Siddharta clearly affirms, the soul very definitely has a beginning. But, as the second part of this same discourse makes clear, the Self, our Soul — the real "I" — has no end. It is immortal: "Those who deny it (the Self) fall into the extreme of belief in its eventual annihilation." Or, as Siddharta further clarifies this to Kassapa:

*Whoso says, "One does (a deed) and another experiences (the result)," is thereby saying that when a being is smitten by suffering that it was wrought by another — this amounts to the Annihilation-view.*²

The Real I — our true Self — is immortal. It is not annihilated, and the consequences of our acts do not go like microbes and attach themselves to someone else and cause suffering to that someone else. They are ours alone to reap, for we alone have sown them.

Moreover, we know that Siddharta vehemently criticized the annihilation doctrine of Ajita Keskambali, calling his followers the "Annihilists," according to whom all objects arise out of combinations, in different proportions, of four material elements, the soul having no existence separate from them. Keskambali claimed that it (the soul) is

¹ Samyutta-nikaya, II. 19, 20.

² Samyutta-nikaya, II. 21. Also, Jamshed Fozdar, *The God of Buddha* (Casa Editrice Bahá'í Srl, Italy, 1995), pp. 63-73.

born with the body and dies with the death of the body. Siddharta regarded that theory not only as irrational, but morally perverse, since this would make human beings act totally irresponsibly, like beasts, oblivious of reward or retribution.

*Verily I say unto thee: Not in the heavens, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself away in the clefts of the mountains, wilt thou find a place where thou canst escape the fruit of thine evil actions. At the same time thou art sure to receive the blessings of thy good actions. A man who has long been travelling and who returns home in safety, the welcome of kinsfolk, friends, and acquaintances awaits. So, the fruits of his good works bid him welcome, who has walked in the path of righteousness, when he passes over the present life into the hereafter.*¹

Here Siddharta further affirms that “consciousness” — the real “I” — is fully aware of its actions during its existence in this life, since its good or bad deeds are there with it after death, and there is no way by which we can escape the consequences of our acts. Hence, a little thought should now tell us that if we are not cognizant, have no memory of our past deeds, good or evil, then either we have “escaped” them and Siddharta spoke wrongly, or, what is obviously the truth, Siddharta cannot ever have erred, as He was Omniscient, and we do not have consciousness of any past existence simply because there was none. Moreover, since the purpose of reward or retribution for our past acts is that our minds, in full awareness of this phenomenon (since only our minds can be aware), will become more purified and thus ultimately gain perfection — Nirvana, then what need for a continuity of blind stumbling by “rebirth” in the physical plane — a return to this world — without the very entity (the mind) for whom supposedly this whole rebirth mechanism, this reincarnation has been fabricated? Surely our minds — fully aware after death of their acts here as Siddharta states — can progress just as precisely in the metaphysical or spiritual realm and there experience suffering or joy, as either a spiritually atrophied thing or a spiritually perfected being — a spiritual cabbage, or an insect, or animal, or a deva (god or illuminated being). After all, it is the mind which dictates our states of happiness or misery, and no one can doubt that even

¹ Dhammapada, vv. 127, 219, 220. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, II. 13. “Just as boyhood, youth and old age are attributed to the soul through this body, even so it attains another body. The wise man does not get deluded about this.” *Ibid.*, XVI. 23.

here on earth it can, depending on our value system — our ethical standards — impel us by our acts to behave as beasts or as saints.

Siddharta clearly acknowledges this “I,” our true Self, as the most important and perhaps the only purpose of our existence on this physical plane, and when a number of Brahmin youths, searching for a woman, came to Him and enquired whether He had by any chance seen the woman who had escaped them, he replied by asking them “which is of greater importance young men, to search for the woman or for your I.”¹ However, Siddharta’s method of investigation concerning the “I” was slightly different from that of the ancient Hindu philosophers. As in the case of the Absolute, and other entities which could not possibly be related to common phenomenal existence, Siddharta derived the reality of the true Self, the “I,” by eliminating what the true Self was not — what was not “I.”

“My disciples, get rid of what is not yours. Get rid of them. If a man were to take away branches and leaves in this Jetawood, would it occur to you to say, the man is taking us away, burning us or using us for his need?”

“Certainly not Lord.”

“And why not?”

“Because, Lord it is not our self or anything belonging to our self.”

“Just in the same way my disciples, get rid of the constituents (Skandhas), the non-self.”²

The following dialogue, which took place between the monk Yamaka and Sariputta, the great disciple of Siddharta, clears the entire misunderstanding about Siddharta’s attitude on this true Self or “I” of the individual.

Yamaka had come to believe that according to Siddharta the monk who attains salvation is completely annihilated after the dissolution of his body, a view which Siddharta had so clearly condemned, but unfortunately persists even today as many scholars of Buddhism interpret Siddharta’s doctrine. When other monks could not dislodge Yamaka

¹ *Mahavagga*, I. 14. See also *Visuddhi-Magga*, Ch. I: “Was it a woman, or a man that passed this way? I cannot tell. But this I know, a set of bones is travelling upon this road.”

² *Majjhima-nikaya*, 22. Also see *Bhagavad-Gita*, II. 14, 15. “O son of Kunti (Arjuna), the contacts between the senses and their objects which give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc., are transitory and fleeting; therefore Arjuna, ignore them. The wise man to whom pain and pleasure are alike, and who is not tormented by these contacts, becomes eligible for immortality.”

from this position, they requested the venerable Sariputta to “cure” Yamaka of his heretical view. Consequently Sariputta repaired to the cell of Yamaka and put this question to him: “Is this report true, brother Yamaka, that the following wicked view has arisen in your mind: ‘Thus do I understand the doctrine taught by the blessed one, that on dissolution of the body, the monk who is delivered from all influences, is annihilated, perishes and does not exist after death?’ ”

“Even so, brother,” said Yamaka, “do I understand the doctrine.” And then followed a long discussion, at the end of which Yamaka acknowledged his error in believing that after the dissolution of the body, the liberated soul completely perishes.

Nowhere in the dialogues of Siddharta is there any implication denying the true self. While oftentimes He differentiates it (the true Self) from the ephemeral or false self comprised of the various sensations, etc., He steadfastly adheres to the immortality of the true Self or Soul, frequently referring to it and nowhere more clearly than in the oft-repeated formula *na-me-so-atta*, “That is not my Self,” in the age-old Upanishadic manner of affirming the existence of the real by denying something that is unreal. Hence, we see Siddharta exhorting His disciples concerning their intrinsic reality, imperishable and immortal:

*Rouse yourself by your Self, examine yourself by your Self. Thus guarded by your Self and attentive, you, mendicant, will live happy. For Self is the lord of self; Self is the refuge of self; therefore curb yourself as a merchant curbs a fine horse.*¹

This is identical to the admonition given by every Divine Teacher of every age — “Know Thyself” — which is the essence of the rational soul’s purpose for being and is the end of its journey to the goal of perfection. But this true Self, the non-ego, is not accessible to easy analysis. As Siddharta states “Verily, difficult to behold is the non-ego.”² We are told that even “Mara, the Deva of desire and death could not find the Vijnana of Godhika and Vakkali, after the death of those monks, though he looked for it everywhere, for they had entered

¹ *Dhammapada*, vv. 379, 380. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, III. 17. “He, however, who takes delight in the Self alone and is gratified with the Self, and is contented in the Self, has no duty.”

² *Udana* VIII. 3. Also in the *Digha-nikaya*, IV, Siddharta defines Consciousness (Vijnana), or Soul, as that entity which is invisible, boundless, all-penetrating and the ground of being for Rupa (former body), Vedana (sensation), Samjna (perception) Samskara (will). Also see *Digha-nikaya*, II, 63.2.

Nirvana.”¹ Nor should we assume from all this that the true Self, while being immortal, is also immutable² or unchanging. This is, of course, not so, since the very purpose of the true Self is to progress to greater and greater degrees of perfection, *ad infinitum*, onward to Nirvana. And that, of course, means *change*.

Hence, bearing in mind that while the Soul-mind (Vijnana), the ‘I’ (the true Self) is immortal (without end) —

*The mind takes possession of everything not only on earth, but also in heaven, and immortality is its securest treasure-trove*³ —

it had a beginning and so by definition, as Siddharta teaches, it cannot be regarded as eternal (without beginning or end). And as it is subject to change, to growth, to achieving perfection in its own sphere of the possible, neither is it immutable. As He affirms, “everything in existence is subject to alteration, to change” — everything except the Absolute.⁴

Hence, from all that we have presented on this subject of the nature and progress of the Soul-mind (Consciousness), and the now totally indefensible fallacy of reincarnation, it is hoped that the diligent student will admit that the concept of a progressive evolution of our Consciousness (Vijnana), the Soul-mind (the intrinsic, real ‘I’), in other planes of existence, fully equipped with memory of its past acts and therefore cognizant of the path it must follow to redeem itself on its journey toward complete liberation (Nirvana), is much more in keeping with Siddharta’s sayings in regards to the operation of the Law of Karma on our true Self, both here and hereafter.

*He who speaks what is not goes to hell; he also who having done a thing says ‘I do not do it.’ After death both become equal, being men with evil deeds in the next existence.*⁵

*If there be no wound on a person’s hand he might touch poison with his hand. Poison does no harm to one who has no wound. No evil (befalls) him who does no evil.*⁶

Just as Siddharta admonished the Brahmins who were looking for a

¹ *Samyutta-nikaya*, I. 122.10.

² *Dhammapada*, v. 277. “All created things are impermanent.”

³ *Buddhist Catena* (Anathapindika-Jethavana).

⁴ *Udana*, v. 81. “Where there is no ceasing-to-be, nor further coming-to-be.”

⁵ *Dhammapada*, v. 306. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, V. 22. *Ibid.*, XVIII. 38.

⁶ *Dhammapada*, v. 124. See also *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad* (Visnu Smirti, XX, 50).

“As a man puts on new clothes in this world, throwing away those which he formerly wore, even so the soul of man puts on new bodies which are in accordance with its acts in a former life.” Also *Bhagavad-Gita*, II. 22.

woman (p. 98) to seek instead the “I” within them — their intrinsic reality — so too His perspective on all aspects of this same indestructible reality, our true Self our Soul-Mind was directed only to its progress, its “comings and goings,” or “births and deaths,” i.e. the transitions from stage to stage in its own plane of existence, the Spiritual. The physical and perishable body was totally inconsequential.

Before long, alas, will this body lie in the earth, despised, bereft of consciousness, useless like a burnt faggot.¹

And “virtue” and “enlightenment” are to be the true guides of our feet on this path of immortality toward Nirvana, the guides which His disciples, who understand and act on His Teaching, will nurture and use to attain Salvation.

Who shall conquer this world and this world of Yama² (the lord of the departed) with its gods? Who shall find out the well-taught path of virtue even as a skilled person finds out the (right) flower?

The disciple will conquer this world and this world of Yama with its gods. The disciple will find out the well-taught path of virtue even as a skilled person finds out the (right) flower.

Knowing that this body is like froth, knowing that it is of the nature of a mirage, breaking the flowery shafts of Mara, he will go where the king of death will not see him.³

Hence additional repetitions or rebirths of the physical body, bereft of past consciousness, could no more serve Siddharta’s purpose for the Salvation of our real “I” (Soul-mind) than could useless burnt-out faggots light once again a blazing fire or a mirage of water quench the thirst. His reference to all such “comings and goings” and “births and deaths” concerned only our Soul-mind, our true Self, and had nothing to do with what to Him was a useless burnt-out faggot, a mirage — our physical body, and the following makes His meaning crystal clear:

Vigilance is the abode of eternal life, thoughtlessness is the abode of death. Those who are vigilant (who are given to reflection) do not die. The thoughtless are as if dead already.⁴

Nowhere in any sayings of Siddharta can physical rebirth be equated

¹ Dhammapada, v. 41.

² The legendary God of the Netherworld. Same as Mara, the personification of our ignorance and erroneous desires.

³ Dhammapada, vv. 44, 45, 46.

⁴ Dhammapada, v. 21. See also *Katha-Upanishad*, 2.6. “What lies beyond life shines not to those who are childish, or careless, or deluded by wealth. ‘This is the only world, there is no other,’ they say: and thus they go from death to death.”

with or insisted upon as the *sine qua non* of the soul's reality after its life on earth; nor can any of the Upanishads, when read with an open mind, be interpreted as supporting the fallacy of reincarnation, for whose demise we have now given sufficient proof by logic and logos.

Moreover, if the Law of Karma presupposes freedom of will on the part of the rational soul (our self), then how can blind existence, devoid of past memory, be equated with the Karmic principle of progress based on free will, equipped with both perception and memory? One would then be fettered like a bird in a cage, whose bars one has no knowledge of ever having constructed, neither able to shape one's destiny nor to know from whence and how arose one's present predicament, truly lost in a world of caprice and easy prey to superstition and fear.

However, for now, having left the sterile desert of the reincarnation fallacy, let us take stock of what remains to our mind in its eternal yearning for a meaning to the scheme of things and, above all, to its Self. Just as we have peeled away all the accretions which the limited imagination of ancient people — in their desire for immortality and for explanations of phenomena — wove around the phantom of reincarnation, and have found it to be *nothing*, so must we also divest ourselves from physical and anthropomorphic notions to explain our Self to ourselves. To "know our Self," as all the Avatars and Buddhas have taught us, continuous progress in self-purification — our real destiny — must also become our only goal until finally, in full knowledge of our Self, our only reality, we stand perfectly liberated and experience Nirvana. As Siddharta joyously beckons to all who achieve that certitude of ineffable bliss:

Let us live happily then, we who possess nothing.

Let us dwell, feeding on happiness like the shining gods.¹

And likewise, relates the Upanishad, of the person who has burnt the gross trappings of self and emerges as purified gold:

From this sacrifice of self the person, having the color of light, arises — having been purified by spiritual practice from conception to cremation.²

Hence, while both Siddharta and the Upanishad often depict that

¹ **Dhammapada**, v. 200. Also see **Dhammapada**, v. 304. This superconsciousness, however much beyond all analysis in terms of the known world, is nonetheless real and joyful and must never be confused with unconsciousness.

² **Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad**, VI. 2.14. Notice, here too, there is no mention of the vicious circle: cremation, conception and so on. Just one existence on this physical plane is indicated.

Nirvanic condition of our Self as a being of supernal light, yet it is simply an analogy, utterly inadequate for conveying any meaningful concept of that reality, like the foetus in the womb, making primitive efforts at communication with its twin, in order to gain some idea of the world that they believe awaits them outside. We know that all such efforts would be futile. The foetuses would never be able, in that utterly alien condition of the womb, to detect the purpose for any of their sensory apparatus — for sight, smell, sound, taste, even breath — the very apparatus without which they could not survive outside the womb. For the unborn foetuses are totally oblivious of the existence and use of these senses, since they are as dead in comparison with the life of our world. And never having had any idea of the fantastic existence outside — totally unaware since they had never (the fallacy of reincarnation notwithstanding) known “rebirth” before — frightened to death at their sudden expulsion from that warm little world of their foetal existence, they arrive fearful and howling into *life*. Nevertheless, once having tasted the grand and wonderful life here on earth, there is none so infantile who, whatever be one’s lot in this life, if given the choice of continued existence in the womb or life here on earth, would hesitate for a moment to reject the womb-existence. Even a blind and lame beggar would not hesitate to reject the offer of continued existence in the womb, even be it that of a queen. For here, at least, one can smell flowers, hear music, experience taste, know love — yes, *know!* That is the crux of it all. To live is to know and hence, by comparison, the womb is the darkest death.

Similarly we too, who live in the womb of this physical matrix, dread our passing on into the unknown — unknown and utterly unimaginable. Never having been there before, nor ever having had any real knowledge of it, we too, for the most part, are oblivious to the spiritual senses latent within us which must be developed to sustain our souls in the world beyond this corporeal existence — the Hereafter. However, unlike the foetus, which is bereft of any free will and unable to fend for itself but fully compensated in its normal growth and emergence to a fuller life by the perfect laws¹ of an inscrutable and

¹ These perfect laws, which operate in the bio-physical realm, are duplicated in their degree of perfection by the Law in the realm of the rational-Soul — the Teaching (Dharma) of the Tathagata. **Dhammapada**, v. 354: “The gift of the Law surpasses all gifts; the flavour of the Law surpasses all flavours, the delight in the Law surpasses all delights; the destruction of craving conquers all sorrows.” Hence, one can quite easily understand from this, that the Law of Karma is all-pervading, i.e., it operates both in the physical as well as the metaphysical realms.

omnipotent God, we, who are gifted by that self-same Providence with the power of Intellect and the gift of Will, can, in all justice, lay no such demands on that Supreme Compensator to extricate us from our indolence, our ignorance, our greed and our indifference and lead us to the fuller life of the Soul.

To enable us to meet the measure of Its mercy — the inestimable gifts of Intellect and Will bestowed on the rational Soul (our Self) — comes the Avatar, the Tathagata, with the only message (“This is the path; there is none other that leads to the purifying of insight”)¹ capable of providing for our Soul the perfect means (the Law) to develop its spiritual senses for its life and growth in the Hereafter. It is a simple path that can be trod by one and all who wish to be “led from delusion to Truth, from darkness to Light, from death to immortality.”² It is the ancient way, ever renewed by all the Divine Teachers, the love call of the Eternal for the immortal.

*Whenever he comprehends the origin and destruction of the elements of the body, he obtains joy and happiness, which is life eternal to those who know. This is the beginning here to a wise mendicant: control of the senses, contentment, restraint under the law, cultivation of friends who are noble, of pure life, and zealous (not slothful). Let him live a life of friendship. Let him be an adept in the discharge of his duties; then, his happiness being much, he will make an end of suffering as the Vassika plant sheds its withered flowers, O mendicant; so you should get rid of passion and hatred. That mendicant is said to be calmed who has a calmed body, a calmed speech and a calmed mind, who is well-established, who has rejected the baits of the world. The mendicant full of delight, calm (with faith) in the doctrine of the Buddha, will certainly reach the peaceful state, the cessation of natural existence and happiness.*³

The assurance that it conveys is of abundant life — *immortality* — and not this passing existence — a few decades of pain and sorrow — which by comparison is as death:

Verily I say unto thee: The Blessed One has not come to teach death but to teach life, and thou discernest not the nature of living and

¹ Dhammapada, v. 274.

² Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, I. 3. 28 (asato ma sad gamaya, tamaso majyotir gamaya, mrityor ma amartam gamaya).

³ Dhammapada, vv. 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 381. See also Bhagavad-Gita, II. 29.

*dying.*¹

Alas, like the foetus in the womb, familiar with its womb existence, uncomprehending and fearful of emergence into this grander life of our world — we too are apprehensive at the inevitability awaiting all of us on this road of corporeal consciousness, constantly wondering at the nature of that eternal unknown, and of our fate in it.

For most of us our own cynicism and indifference have destroyed any assurance of comfort we may have had of the life to come in the world beyond. Through thoughtlessness and profligacy we have so entwined our immortal soul in the coils of the corrupt and perishable existence of this world that, given the choice, the fear of an uncertain fate in an unknown realm would prompt most of us, like the unseeing foetus, to choose to return to this corporeal womb and take our chances on the familiar earth. Notwithstanding this foetal mentality, it should have dawned on us by now that the omnipotent All-wise, Who has brought forth this perfect creation, would never subscribe to such nonsense as physical rebirth or reincarnation nor be in want of an inconceivably grander scheme to provide for the growth of that highest reality of It's wondrous works — the Soul-mind; all of us. But to see this "heaven of certitude" and with sure feet advance toward it, we must develop spiritual sight, since, as Siddharta states,

This world is blinded, a few only can see here.

*Like birds escaped from the net, a few go to heaven.*²

Hence, for us "worldlings," "adventuring on aging and dying,"³ His is the eternal summons to heaven. And who but the Omniscient One, Tathagata Siddharta, would know the full beauty and grandeur of that heavenly consciousness and the essence of our deepest desire for that goal toward which all our acts are ultimately directed? His is that joyful call of the universal Father⁴ to all His children, young and old. And none should mistake His appeal as being only directed to those who, by virtue of approaching age and the natural decline of bodily functions and

¹ **Milindapanha.** To Anathapindika of Savathi (Capital of Kosala), during His stay at Rajagriha. See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, II. 24. "This soul ... is immortal ... is unmanifest; incomprehensible — therefore knowing this as such, you should not grieve."

² **Dhammapada**, v. 174. See also Katha-Upanishad, 2.5. "Abiding in the midst of ignorance, thinking themselves wise and learned, fools go aimlessly hither and thither, like blind led by the blind."

³ **Sutta-nipata**, v. 1093.

⁴ **Digha-nikaya**, I. 46.

consequently of bodily delights, piously prepare to offer their withered and dried form to the Highest, naively believing that penances and scriptural recitations will blot out a life of neglect in the balance of Karma's Law. Much more urgent and poignant is His call to the young to arise and grasp the deathless splendor and taste of immortal youth. For as the ancient Hindu poet wrote, true saintliness is in the domain of youth.

*He is a saint in truth,
Who is a saint in youth.
Who is not a saint,
When ebbing passions faint?*

And as Siddharta proclaims,
*The mendicant who, though young, applies himself to the doctrine
of the Buddha, he illuminates this world like the moon when freed
from a cloud.*¹

Real youth is the immortality of the soul. It is the only youth worth striving for, since everything else decays, becomes food for the worms, or ashes. The Avatars and the Buddhas are the Divine Youths Who one and all renounced the tinsel and the trappings of earthly pleasure and suffered every pain and sorrow as a sign of their abiding love for us. They alone are our true Guides on this path from which there is no turning back — neither re-entry into the womb, nor reincarnation, but onward and upward, from freedom to freedom, to eternal joy — Nirvana. However, the effort, and consequently its success (heaven) or failure (hell), will have to be ours alone. "You yourself must strive. The Blessed Ones are (only) preachers."²

So we must now proceed, having laid to rest the phantoms of misconception and error that had for long obscured the reality of our journey from this world to an ever grander existence, to demolish what at first sight would appear to be even greater phantoms — the clear assertions of past existences by the Avatars, the Tathagatas. How explain their vivid accounts of past experiences thousands of years apart? Did They not tell the Truth? Or did They simply imagine things? Impossible.

The answer is simple and one word: OMNISCIENCE. "All knowing

¹ Dhammapada, v. 382.

² Dhammapada, v. 276.

am I.”¹ While the human form of Siddharta Gautama trod the earth and promulgated His teachings somewhere in northeast India between 2558 and 2478 years ago, there would be no record of His unsurpassed achievement and indelible imprint upon the saga of mankind, but for the inexplicable phenomenon of His reality. For He was the Buddha² — fully enlightened, omniscient, a Divine Principle, a kind of archetype which manifests itself in the human realm at different periods with different individuality. And since omniscience cannot be other than Absolute Truth, hence it is this omniscience — an integral aspect of the Tathagata — which identifies Him with the Ultimate Reality, or as the Manifestation of the Absolute.

From this perspective of the various facets of the Buddha-Avatar, we can now see how, unlike mere mortals, the Buddha, by virtue of His omniscience, can know the past as well as the future —

*His cognition and vision regarding the past period of time proceeds unobstructed and freely, His cognition and vision regarding the future period of time proceeds unobstructed and freely, His cognition and vision regarding the present period of time proceeds unobstructed and freely.*³

— both in regards to the major events that shaped and will continue to shape human destiny and the minor episodes which provide for mankind the simple lessons, gleaned from their telling in the manner that humanity has through the ages been accustomed to accepting such lessons — the life and example of a supernatural being whom they already revere and the anecdotes surrounding those events. We will first deal with the minor episodes, those anecdotes in the *Jataka Tales*⁴ about Siddharta’s past existences, asserted by the Buddhist chroniclers to have been related by

¹ **Majjhima-nikaya** (Aryaparyasena Sutta). This is also what Krishna asserts. See **Bhagavad-Gita**, VII. 26. “Arjuna, I know all beings, past as well as present, nay, even those that are yet to come; but none knows me.”

² All Buddhist schools of thought subscribe to the belief that the historic manifestation of the Buddha was but an aspect of a whole series of manifestations of the Buddha-nature, which in its essential aspect must be conceived of as the Absolute and therefore divine. The same is asserted by Krishna. “For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil doers, and for establishing Dharma, am I born from age to age.” (**Bhagavad-Gita**, IV. 8.)

³ **Satasahasrika**, IX, 1449-50 (The 18 special dharmas of a Buddha.)

⁴ *Jataka* is a great collection of Buddhist birth stories. These folk stories tell about Siddharta’s meritorious deeds in His previous incarnations. The *Jataka* verses occur in the second of the three great divisions of the Pali Canon and in the Miscellaneous collection of Discourses (**Khuddaka-Nikaya**) of this division.

Siddharta Himself. While we list some of these anecdotes relating to Siddharta's past existences, the reader must constantly bear in mind that Siddharta meant these to convey certain qualities and attributes which He wished His disciples to cultivate, that in loving Him and revering Him they were much more likely to endeavour to possess such qualities than if the anecdotes simply referred to some unknown person of no great consequence, whose exploits would from the very start be suspect and therefore evoke both envy and resistance and nullify Siddharta's purpose of training His disciples. And finally, themselves led to expect such supernatural prowess from the legends already surrounding previous Avatars and past Buddhas, these disciples expected their own Divine Teacher to be similarly gifted and wonderful, and as time passed, they added and invented other such legends to further embellish the aura of superlatives that each group wove around its own leader. We shall, as we relate such events, also endeavour to give our views on the obvious lessons found in such anecdotes. So let us begin our journey to verify the purpose of Siddharta's allegorical existences.

The *Mirga Jataka* tells the story of the Bodhisattva¹ when he was born the leader of a herd of deer and saved a young merchant from drowning in the Ganges. The merchant, however, acted treacherously and informed the king of Banares of the existence of the herd of deer. The king accordingly came to the forest to hunt. With great courage, the Bodhisattva appeared at the right moment before the king and preached the Dharma to him. From this the disciple can learn that preaching the Dharma is the most perfect path, since it turns mortal danger away. Simple courage — merely appearing before the king — might not have stayed the monarch's hand from killing the deer; the preaching of the Dharma was the real cause of deliverance from harm.²

The *Vessantara Jataka* tells the story of the Bodhisattva's life as prince Vessantara in the next-to-last incarnation before he became the Buddha. As Vessantara he practiced the perfections of charity. One by one, he gave away all the things he possessed and was banished by his father for his excessive charity. While he was in exile he even gave away his wife and children (who were, however, restored to him at the intervention of Indra). The lesson behind this is that true charity consists of sacrificing without calculation. This is the true measure of unbounded

¹ An aspirant for Buddhahood. A Buddha-to-be.

² Of course — what king would not spare a talking deer!

faith in the ideal that one believes in, and when one's motives are completely pure in carrying out such resolve to the fullest, the outcome is always beneficial. In other words, one must hold to the course, no matter the stakes, and victory is ultimately assured.

It is told in the *Mahakapi Jataka*¹ that the Bodhisattva, in one of his previous births, was a leader of monkeys and lived on the banks of the Ganges. Nearby there was a mango tree, and it was the custom of the monkeys to eat the delicious fruits it bore. Learning of this, the king of Banares sent his men to guard the tree, and they accordingly surrounded it. In order to save the lives of his trapped fellow creatures, the Bodhisattva prepared a bamboo bridge, which proved to be a little short. To get over the difficulty, he tied his own body to the bridge, thus enabling the monkeys to escape in safety. The king was greatly moved at the spirit of self-sacrifice shown by the Great Monkey and addressing him thus, paid homage to him: "Having made of yourself a causeway, you helped them across to safety. What are you then to them, and what they to you, Great Monkey?"²

This anecdote again symbolizes the unbounded courage and complete sacrifice symbolic of a true parent — a Buddha. One must not forget that the example of the future Buddha as an animal in such lessons makes them even more impressive. For if animals can exhibit such beautiful attributes, then how much more is it incumbent on man to do so? This anecdote is also symbolic of the Tathagata's own oft-asserted mission, that having attained omniscience He will "help the great populace across."³ Moreover, any student of the Hindu epic of Ramayana will know that Hanuman, the great monkey, having selflessly aided the Avatar, Ram, to triumph in His battle against Ravan, the personification of evil, is assured of becoming Avatar (Buddha) in a future age. The above narrative is therefore also an indication of the close relationship between the legends and expectations of Hinduism and Buddhism. As previously stated, Siddharta, too, affirmed His kinship with Ram,⁴ and so

¹ *The Mahakapi Jataka*, 407.

² *Jataka Tales III*, 370-73, no. 407.

³ *Jataka Tales*, I. 12-14.

⁴ In the *Desaratha-Jataka*, 472 (Rama and Sita), and in the *Digha-nikaya* Part I, pp. 103-104 (Bombay Univ. ed. 1942), we can see that the Buddha clearly acknowledges His descent from Ram. Ram, Krishna and Buddha are considered by the Hindus to be the seventh, eighth and ninth Manifestations of the Supreme (Visnu) and the tenth, Kalki-Avatar is now awaited. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 21, 22. "I am Visnu..." "Among the gods, I am

did Krishna,¹ who preceded the Buddha and followed Ram in the grand succession of Avatars among the Aryans, which also must include Zoroaster, who appeared among the Iranian Aryans. Moreover, the *Govinda Jataka* states that Siddharta was also the Brahmin Govinda,² minister of a great king, and after the king's death, he distributed the kingdom evenly among the king's progeny. This is a very important Jataka for, aside from showing the lesson of faithfulness to the trust bestowed on one, it clearly affirms the Buddha's acknowledgement and relationship to Krishna since, as any Hindu knows (as well as those others who have read the Hindu epic of *Mahabharata*), Govinda is just another title or name for Krishna,³ and this anecdote is simply the story of Krishna and the Pandava princes and their kingdom.

The Bodhisattva, according to the *Chaddanta Jataka*,⁴ was once born as a royal elephant who had two wives. One day as he was shaking a tree, it happened that while the flowers fell on the head of the first wife, the dry leaves fell on the head of the second. For this reason, the latter bore a grudge for the Bodhisattva. After her death she was reborn the queen of the ruler of Banares. She feigned illness and told the king that only the possession of the six tusks of the royal elephant would cure her. The king

Indra." Also *Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 31. "... I am Ram."

The Avatars of Visnu are numerous but ten are considered the most important. They are: Matsya or Fish; Kurma or Tortoise; Varaha or Boar; Narasimha or Man-lion; Vamana or Dwarf; Parasurama; Ram (i.e. Ramachandra); Krishna; Buddha; and Kalki, yet-to-come. Of these the first five are said to have taken place in worlds other than our own; in the next four Visnu lived on earth as man; and Kalki (the Aeon Ender from "Kal" or "Kala" meaning Time or aeon), Who is yet to appear at the end of the aeon.

¹ — whose whole life is related in its salient features in the story of The Ten Slave Brethren in the *Ghata Jataka*, 454. See also *Jataka* 530 which mentions the sage Kanhadipayana. Pali for Krishna Kanaya (Sanskrit). The early Buddhists also acknowledge the divinity of Krishna, as stated by *Panini Sutra* (Patanjali's Mahabhasya) "May the power of Krishna assisted by Sankarsana (Arjuna) increase." Also *Panini IV*, 3, 98 (the affix "Vun" comes in the sense of "this is his object of veneration" after the words Vasudeva (Krishna) and Arjuna. (Panini 400 B.C.)

² While Krishna was of the Kshaitrya (princely or warrior) caste, yet one must not forget that to Siddharta, "Brahmin" meant just a moral being and did not denote any special caste (see *Dhammapada*, vv. 393, 396, 407, 408, 410, 419, etc.)

³ "Krishna, I covet not victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. Govinda (Krishna), of what use will kingdom, or luxuries, or even life be to us." *Bhagavad-Gita*, I. 32. "Govinda" and "Gopala" are names of Krishna indicating His origins as the God of flocks and herds and is clearly a spiritual connotation signifying the Divine Shepherd or Herdsman of the human race. In other words the Avatar.

⁴ *Chaddanta Jataka*, 514.

sent his huntsmen to kill the beast and secure the tusks. The Bodhisattva crouched submissively at the feet of the huntsman to allow him to saw off his tusks. When the tusks were brought to the queen of Banares she was overwhelmed with grief and died of a broken heart. This shows the astute disciple that “evil is as evil does,” and even when faced with the evils of the world, if we act according to the code of detachment and charity we will remain unharmed, while those who seek to harm will themselves reap their own deadly harvest.

Some of these legends relate to Ananda the disciple of Siddharta, who, according to these anecdotes, also existed with Him in the past and performed certain deeds.

*At that time Ananda was the king and I myself was the golden peacock.*¹

But Ananda, we are told, is totally ignorant of that past existence — has no consciousness of any such past lives whatsoever, the reason being simply that he had never existed before. And hence it should not be so difficult to understand that such statements by the Tathagata regarding Ananda’s past lives mean not any reincarnation of Ananda’s consciousness or the individual personality of Ananda himself, either physical or mental, but merely refer to the recurring principle of the Divine manifesting Itself throughout the ages and Its accompanying consequence in bringing to light the principal molds of human character, e.g., “faithfulness,” as portrayed by an Ananda (or an Arjuna² in the case of Krishna, the Hindu Avatar), and the opposite — treachery — as manifested by a Devadatta, whom we have already mentioned. The Manifestation, the Tathagata, being all-knowing, knows of this recurring theme, but His disciples do not. Precisely, as He asserts,

*Again, Sariputta, a Tathagata remembers a variety of former habitations ... Thus does he remember diverse former habitations in all their mode and detail.*³

Our premise of asserting the real meaning and purpose of these and other such anecdotes by the omniscient Teacher, the Tathagata, fully Enlightened at all times, is all the more strengthened when we read that Siddharta also claimed to have been the teacher of countless Bodhisattvas

¹ *Jataka*, II. 33-38.

² *Bhagavad-Gita*, IV. 5. “Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births, I know them all, while you do not.”

³ *Majjhima-nikaya*, I. 69-71.

in bygone ages.¹ Who but a Buddha, a Tathagata, can be a teacher of Bodhisattvas? Hence how could Siddharta, if He was himself an aspiring Bodhisattva in past existences, be the teacher of others of equal spiritual rank to Him? And if He was even then (in past existences) a Tathagata, a fully Enlightened Buddha, then how claim, as He so clearly does, that He attained Buddhahood only in His last existence, about twenty five centuries ago? Such contradictions cannot entertain a concept of actual physical births and deaths (reincarnations) of the particular individual — in this case Siddharta — but can only be understood if, as previously stated, a Divine Manifestation possessing His own separate individuality, is able to identify easily and accurately with similar Divine Manifestations of the past through His quality of omniscience, and, more importantly, to accurately foretell the time and circumstance of a future Divine Manifestation. This, too, the Buddha did, as we shall see in the following chapters.

While there are other anecdotes of past existences, such as the encounter with the hungry tigress which exemplifies total love, kindness and charity, we will narrate just one more legend about Siddharta's prior existence and list an identical legend referring to the exploits of one of the Hindu heroes — of the *Mahabharata*. This will round off what we have been saying about these anecdotes and leave the readers to draw their own conclusion.

This is the anecdote in the *Sivi Jataka*² which relates the story of the Bodhisattva's life as King Sivi, who was known for his compassion and once redeemed a pigeon by giving his own flesh. Now let us read from the *Mahabharata* concerning the Hindu hero-king³.

O mighty son of Kunti, the highly virtuous king cut off a portion of his own flesh and placed it in a balance against the pigeon. But when he found that the pigeon exceeded his flesh in weight, he once more

¹ *Saddharmapundarika*, XV. 1. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 6. "The seven great seers (Mairichi and others), the more ancient four (Samaka and others) and the fourteen Manus (progenitors of mankind), who are all devoted to Me, are born of My Will; of them all these creatures in the world are begotten."

² *Sivi Jataka*, 499.

³ *Mahabharata*, Aranyakaparva, Ch. 131, vv. 25-27. It can be clearly proved that the bulk of these stories which form the Jataka are pre-Buddhistic and merely adaptations of Hindu tales. The majority of the Jataka Tales can be dated around the fourth century B.C. or one century prior to Asoka's reign. However the Hindu tales and fables from which these were adopted are much older.

cut off another portion of his flesh and added it to the former. But when portion after portion had been repeatedly added to weigh against the pigeon, and no more flesh was left on his body, he mounted the scale himself, utterly devoid of flesh.

The readers might be interested in knowing that King Sivi did exactly the same thing to redeem a pigeon which he had rescued from a hawk. The hawk (which was a god¹ masquerading as a hawk) was intent on testing King Sivi's sincerity and had agreed to release the pigeon if Sivi gave him his own flesh, equal to the pigeon's in weight. Sivi consents, and the story is identical. From this it can be seen that either Buddhism borrowed this anecdote from the Hindus, or both the Hindus and the Buddhists borrowed it from a still more ancient source.

The following passage from *Saddharmapundarika*² will be of assistance in understanding these references to past existences and past Buddhas and clarify for our minds the Reality and Purpose of a Tathagata, which, while becoming periodically manifest to the eyes of men down the ages, is, in its essential nature coeval with Time. It is an eternal principle, an ever-recurring Spiritual Phenomenon, as we have stated, like the Sun in the physical world.

The Lord said:

As a result of my sustaining power, this world, with its gods, men and Asuras, forms the notion that recently the Lord Sakyamuni, after going forth from his home among the Sakyas, has awoken to full enlightenment, on the terrace of enlightenment, by the town of Gaya. But one should not see it thus, sons of good family. In fact it is many hundreds of thousands of myriads of Kotis of aeons ago that I have awoken to full enlightenment ... Ever since, during all that time I have demonstrated Dharma to beings in this Saha³ world system, and

¹ By "god" one must understand a test, in the form of a person or a predicament, and not some "goblins" or apparitions having been "reincarnated".

² *Saddharmapundarika* XV. 1 (268-72). See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, IX. 6. "Though unborn and immortal and also the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My own divine potency..." Also *Ibid.*, IV. 4.

³ This also refers to the Brahma Sahampati — the Brahma who was reportedly exercising overlordship of the universe in the Buddha's time. This same Brahma, in time of Kassapa's Buddhahood, was a monk called Sahaka (*Samyutta-nikaya* 48, 57, v. p. 233). Correctly understood, Brahma, according to the Upanishads, is explained as being the personification of a neuter principle exercising overlordship in the contingent world and recognized as periodic or pulsating in nature, whose duration is measured in aeons. A good analogy would be of electromagnetic pulsations, including the light rays, emanating from the Solar Orb and

also in hundreds of thousands of Nayutas of Kotis of other world systems. But when I have spoken of other Tathagatas, beginning with the Tathagata Dipankara, and of the Nirvana of these Tathagatas, then that has just been conjured up by me as an emission of the skill in means by which I demonstrate Dharma.

Moreover, the Tathagata surveys the diversity in the faculties and vigour of successive generations of beings. To each generation he announces his name, declares that he has entered Nirvana, and brings peace to beings by various discourses on Dharma. To beings who are of low disposition, whose store of merit is small, and whose depravities are many, he says in that case: "I am young in years, monks, I have left the home of my family, and but lately have I won full enlightenment." But when the Tathagata, although fully enlightened for so long, declares that he has been fully enlightened but recently, then such discourses on Dharma have been spoken for no other reason than to bring beings to maturity and to save them. All these discourses on Dharma have been taught by the Tathagata in order to discipline beings.

And whatever the Tathagata says to educate beings, and whatever the Tathagata utters — whether he appears as himself or as another, whether under his own authority or another — all these discourses on Dharma are taught as factually true by the Tathagata, and there is no false speech in them on the part of the Tathagata. For the Tathagata has seen the triple world as it really is: It is not born, it dies not; there is no decease or rebirth, no samsara or Nirvana; it is not real, or unreal, not existent, or nonexistent, not such, or otherwise, not false or not-false. Not in such a way has the Tathagata seen the triple world as the foolish common people see it. The

governing all aspects of existence within range by their various attributes, such as attraction, repulsion, heat, etc. The Solar Orb is in this case conceived of as the Supreme — the unapproachable and unknowable God — by the Upanishads. Krishna, too, acknowledges this concept as He explains it for Arjuna: "... I shall now unfold the knowledge of Nirguna Brahma along with the knowledge of Sakara Brahma (Sahaka or Saka all names of Indra, who is portrayed as the overlord Brahma), knowing which, you will be freed from the evil of worldly existence." (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IX. 1. 2), and in accord with His Own claim of being the Supreme, accepts Arjuna's homage: "O noble soul, why should they not bow to You, who are the progenitor of Brahma himself and the greatest of the great?... You are God, the Creator of beings, nay the father of Brahma himself..." (*Bhagavad-Gita*, XI. 37, 39). According to both Hindu and Buddhist legends Krishna and the Buddha are depicted as having on various occasions bested both Brahma and Indra.

Tathagata is face-to-face with the reality of dharmas;¹ he can therefore be under no delusion about them. Whatever words the Tathagata may utter with regard to them, they are true, not false, not otherwise. He utters, however, different discourses on Dharma, which differ in their objective basis, to beings who differ in their mode of life and their intentions, and who wander amidst discriminations and perceptions, in order to generate the roots of good in them. For a Tathagata performs a Tathagata's work. Fully enlightened for ever so long, the Tathagata has an endless span of life, he lasts for ever. Although the Tathagata has not entered Nirvana, he makes a show of entering Nirvana, for the sake of those who have to be educated. And even today my ancient course as a Bodhisattva is still incomplete, and my life-span is not yet ended. From today onwards still twice as many hundreds of thousands of Nayutas of Kotis of aeons must elapse before my life-span is complete. Therefore, although I do not at present enter into Nirvana, nevertheless I announce my Nirvana. For by this method I bring beings to maturity. Because if I stayed here too long and could be seen too often, beings who have performed no meritorious actions, who are without merit, a poorly lot, eager for sensuous pleasures, blind, and wrapped in the net of false views, would, in the knowledge that the Tathagata stays (here all the time), get the notion that life is a mere sport, and would not conceive the notion that the (sight of the) Tathagata is hard to obtain. In the conviction that the Tathagata is always at hand they would not exert their vigour for the purpose of escaping from the triple world, and they would not conceive of the Tathagata as hard to obtain.

Hence the Tathagata, in his skill in means, has uttered to those beings the saying that "Rarely, O monks, do Tathagatas appear in the world." Because, during many hundreds of thousands of Nayutas of Kotis of aeons, those beings may have the sight of a Tathagata, or they may not. And therefore, basing my statement on this fact, I say that "rarely, O monks, do Tathagatas appear in the world." To the extent that they understand the rarity of a Tathagata's appearance, to that extent they will wonder (at his appearance), and sorrow (at his disappearance), and when they do not see the Tathagata, they

¹ The Causal Sphere.

will long for the sight of him. The wholesome roots, which result from their turning their attention towards the Tathagata as towards an objective basis, will for a long time tend to their weal, benefit and happiness. Considering this, the Tathagata, although he does not actually enter Nirvana, announces his entering into Nirvana, for the sake of those to be educated. And that is a discourse on Dharma by the Tathagata himself. When he utters it, there is in it no false speech on the part of the Tathagata.

The capacity of the Tathagata to bring to our attention for our spiritual education these minor events, through relating anecdotes of the past, is like informing us what the weather was like on a particular day long gone, whether it was cloudy, rainy or bright, warm or cold, windy or calm.¹ And how under those various and changing circumstances should a wise disciple of the Tathagata, strive in his pursuits to tread the path of the pure Dharma. And the major events — What are those? What shall they convey? They tell of the Spiritual sun itself, when and how It arose, whether It was seen, the magnitude of Its power and efficacy upon a darkened age, the nature of Its message, the manner of Its setting, and, most important of all to our age, whether, when and where It will rise again.

Affirming His links with past Buddha-risings — as the sun speaks of its yesterdays on our world — and heralding with unerring accuracy the advent of His Successor, Siddharta fully assures us that there is no doubt of the rising of these Spiritual Suns — the Buddhas. They are Divine Manifestations, destined to appear in our midst after long intervals, for our true progress and well-being.

*In this auspicious aeon
Three leaders have there been.
Kakasandha, Konagamana
And the leader Kessapa too.
I am now the perfect Buddha;
And there will be Metteyya too*

¹ From the foregoing it is clear that for human beings, ignorance of any prior existence (good or evil) since none has any memory of such past lives, is patently purposeless for living our present lives and therefore rationally impossible under the Law of Karma. While for the Buddha-Avatars (Divine Manifestations) their inherent omniscience makes wholly superfluous and unnecessary any reason for physical reincarnation since their omniscience enables Them (the Avatars) to instantly relate to any past or future event at will.

*Before this same auspicious aeon
Runs to the end of its years.*¹

He names the three Who have already appeared before Him and clearly foretells that before the end of this same aeon (cycle)² there will be yet another — Maitrya. It is the dawning of Maitrya, as predicted in the sayings attributed to Siddharta, that forms the quest of this book. But to recognize Him, the Tathagata supreme, and divine the meaning and the glorious goal of His Message for our planet, we must seek diligently and, as we have already done in the case of Siddharta, once again clearly separate the outward symbolism which the imaginations of men so often weave around the phantoms of their own creations, from the Reality of Maitrya and the true significance of His appearance amongst humanity. We can achieve the goal of our quest only if we will discriminate between superstition and truth, blind belief and enlightened faith, the moribund institutions of present-day Buddhism (and the reasons for it), and the essence of the early Samgha, and between man-made slogans and Religion (eternal Dharma).

¹Manorathaparani, 87-90 (*Sutta-Pitaka*). See also *Anagatavamsa*, p. 34 (Pali-names of Krakacchanda, Kanakamuni, Kessava, and Maitrya). The few sources available on their historical appearance put Kessapa (or Kasyapa, also Keshava — most likely the historical Krishna) as close to 2300 B.B.E. (2850 B.C.), *Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 14. "I hold as true, all this thou sayest to me, O Kesava." *Ibid.*, III. 1. Konagamana (or Kanakamuni — possibly the historical Manu), around 8500 B.B.E. and Kakasandha (or Krakacchanda — most likely the historical Ramachandra or Ram) at approx. 5900 B.B.E. (Before Buddhist Era).

²"Kappa" (Pali for the Sanskrit: "Kalpa" or "Mahayug"). According to the Hindus and the Buddhists the aeon (Kappa or Kalpa) is divided into four parts. This subject will be taken up in detail in the next chapters.

6

BUDDHA-DHARMA

There are beings with little dust in their eyes who not hearing Dharma, are decaying; but if they are learners of Dharma they will grow.¹

The history of the human race is not a recent event of 60 or 70 centuries, but a great and very ancient river with its source stretching back into the silence of eternity. Many races and cultures have navigated and left their mark on it. To whatever degree we investigate this grand process of the emergence of the rational Soul (the Mind) on the plane of existence, however far we stretch back the curtain of time to witness ancient cultures and peoples, Sumerian or Indian, Persian or Chinese, Arab or Jew, Western or Eastern, we are confronted with the discovery of one underlying reality running through it all. That the vessel in which each and every one of these great human epics embarked on the river of existence was constructed out of the ethical framework of one or other of the great Faiths in conformity with the blueprint drawn up by the Avatars, the Buddhas, the Divine Teachers. The motive force that propelled these great epics to dare their all on this road of life was the power of that inexplicable faith found only in the treasury of Religion,² and their guiding star was the desire for the Eternal. They wished to be led to immortality.

¹ **Vinaya-pitaka**, I. 21. See also **Taittiriya-Upanishad**, I. 1. "I will speak words of truth and the words of the Divine Law (Dharma) shall be on my lips."

² **Suttampata**, v. 1146. "By Faith you shall be free and go beyond the realm of death." *Ibid.*, vv. 182, 184. "Faith is the wealth here best for man — by Faith the flood is crossed." Also see **Samyuttanikaya** (Milindapanha, 35-36).

*Having cut through samsara's stream, having extirpated the three¹
becomings,
Embarking in the ship of Dhamma, I will help (the world) with the
devas across.²*

The Dharma which Siddharta preached is the unwavering eternal Law of Creation itself, immanent in every aspect of the Cosmos and not something created by Him, much less conceived or decreed by Him.

*Whether Tathagatas have arisen or not,
Certain is this fundamental Law (Dhatu — principle),
This rule of law (dhamma tthatata), this lawful
necessity (dharmaniyamata).³*

Even a cursory study of the Dharma, as well as the fundamental teachings of all the Avatars, will show us that in reality there is but one Religion — “the Truth is one, indeed, there is no other”⁴ — and all the Divine Teachers (Buddhas) have proclaimed it, hence Their insistent claim that Their mission is to renew Religion rather than to bring a new religion. Their aim, stressed by every Avatar, is to renew the golden rule and to adapt it to an ever-expanding society. Each Divine Teacher stresses this and conveys the correct meaning and measure of the eternal verities in such a way as to conform perfectly to the needs of changing humanity. The Buddha, too, affirms this:

All conditioned factors of being are subject to suffering, all dhammas (i.e. the conditioned Sankharas) and the unconditioned dhamma (that is, Nirvana) are, “without self” (without permanent substance, annatta). This the Tathagata perceives and knows; and after He has perceived and recognized it, He teaches it, shows it, reveals it, lays it open, explains it, preaches it, comments on it and proclaims it.⁵

Siddharta's was the goal for His age — to strain away the impurities of vain imaginings and ridiculous rituals which had polluted the pure Dharma and thus, once again, offer this life-giving elixir (Dharma),

¹ See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, XIV. 20. “The Three Gunas: Sorrow, Old age and Death.”

² **Jataka** I, 12-14 (condensed).

³ **Anguttara-nikaya**, 1.3. The Hindus also held identical beliefs. Namely, that, the Dharma has no author, and even “Brahma, the four-faced one, remembers it.” Likewise, Manu, too, repeats the Law during each **Kalpa**. The law of Manu was authoritative in the **Kritayuga**. (**Kritetu Manava Dharma**,...). See also **Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad**, i. 4. 13. “There is nothing higher than Dharma.”

⁴ **Sutta-nipata**, 884. (Also see **Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad**, 1.4.14. [There is nothing beyond this Law, this Truth].)

⁵ **Anguttara-nikaya**, I. 134.

utterly purified, to the thirsty souls of men — so that their quest for the bliss of Nirvana could be completely fulfilled.

Having in his person attained the Deathless element (cause) which has no "basis," by making real the casting out of "basis," the perfect Buddha, of no outflows, teaches the griefless, stainless state.¹

And the essence of the irresistible power of the Dharma, from which once again is born that inexplicable faith in the hearts of men, is the assurance of immortality, the permanent in exchange for the passing —

If, by surrendering a pleasure of little worth one sees a larger pleasure, the wise man will give up the pleasure of little worth and look to the larger pleasure.²

— through adherence to the simple but eternal principles common to all Religion.

Happy is virtue lasting to old age: happy is faith firmly rooted; happy is the attainment of wisdom; happy is the avoidance of sins.³

Just as plainly did Siddharta warn those who would transgress against this eternal and all-powerful Law;

Know this, O man, that evil things befall the unrestrained.

Let not greed and wrong doing bring you to grief for a long time.⁴

In the teachings of every Divine Manifestation, Avatar or Buddha, the one theme that is paramount above all others and towards which all other aspects of their teachings are fashioned and directed, is that of universal salvation.⁵ This all-consuming purpose of Religion (Dharma) is of course predicated on the clear and oft-repeated assertion of the Tathagatas that all humanity is one and therefore these great Beings, one and all, have urged their disciples to undertake the task of spreading

¹ *Ittivuttaka*, p. 62. See also *Katha-Upanishad*, 2.6. "Not many hear of Him; and of those not many reach Him. Wonderful is he who can teach about Him; and wise is he who can be taught. Wonderful is he who knows Him when taught."

² *Dhammapada*, v. 290. See also *Katha-Upanishad*, I. 29; "When a mortal here on earth has felt his own immortality, could he wish for a long life of pleasure, for the lust of deceitful beauty?..

³ *Dhammapada*, v. 333.

⁴ *Dhammapada*, v. 248. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, XVI. 23. "He, who, having cast aside the injunctions of the Scriptures, acts according to his own sweet will, attains not perfection, nor the highest goal, not even happiness."

⁵ "I now desire to turn the wheel of the excellent law. For this purpose I am going to that city of Banares to give light to those enshrouded in darkness, and to open the gate of Immortality to men." *Majjhima-nikaya*, v. 26.

Dharma, this life-giving teaching of redemption, to as broad a mass of humanity as possible within the capacity of each.

I, monks, am freed from all snares, both those of devas (gods) and those of men. Walk, monks, on tour for the blessing of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the blessing, the happiness of devas (gods) and men. Let not two of you go by the same way. Monks, teach Dharma that is lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle and lovely at the ending.

Explain with the spirit and the letter of the Brahma-faring, completely fulfilled and utterly pure. There are Beings with little dust in their eyes who, not hearing Dharma, are decaying, but if they are learners of Dharma they will grow. And I, monks, will go along to Uruvela, the Camp township, in order to teach Dharma.¹

They teach us that the ultimate redemption or fall of humanity will be as a single whole, and individual achievements, separate from human destiny, will be inconsequential and fleeting indeed if not in rhythm with the "weal of the world." Or, as the poet wrote:

*I sought my God, and my God eluded me,
I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see,
I sought my brother and I found all three.*

Collective salvation of the human race, as the Divine Manifestations teach us, is the only way to ensure our own. Siddharta, too acknowledges teaching² (the Dharma) as the most important and most productive of all His powers. Otherwise, He would not have shown so dramatically the futility of cutting one's life off from the world, as the ascetics of His day were wont to do to obtain Salvation, nor would He have deprecated their achievements:

Men driven by fear go to many a refuge, to mountains, and to forests, to sacred trees, and shrines. That verily, is not a safe refuge, that is not the best refuge. After having got to that refuge a man is not delivered from all pains. But he who takes refuge in the Buddha, the Law, and the Order, he perceives, in his clear wisdom, the four

¹ Vinaya-pitaka, I. 20-21. See also Bhagavad-Gita, XVIII. 68, 69. "He who having shown the highest love to Me, shall impart this most secret teaching of Mine to My devotees, shall attain Me; there is no doubt about it. Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he; nor shall anyone be dearer to Me than he on this earth."

² Anguttara-nikaya, I. 171, 172. (Of the three powers, remembrance of births, reading the thoughts of others, and teaching [adesapatiharyam], the latter is the most considerable and most productive [abhikkankataram ca panitaram ca]).

*noble truths. That, verily, is a safe refuge, that is the best refuge: after having got to that refuge a man is delivered from all pains.*¹

The Dharma is something to be shared. The zeal with which the Buddhists of all schools carried their gospel all over Asia, and the qualities that enabled them to do so, is well exemplified by the story of Purna, one of the earliest apostles of the Dharma. He asked Siddharta's permission to go as a missionary to a barbarous country, called Sronaparanta. Siddharta tried to test his sincerity, and the following dialogue ensued:

Siddharta: The people of Sronaparanta are fierce, violent and cruel. They are given to abusing, reviling and annoying others. If they abuse, revile and annoy you with evil, harsh and false words, what would you think?

Purna: In that case I would think that the people of Sronaparanta are really good and gentle folk, as they do not strike me with their hands or with stones.

Siddharta: But if they strike you with their hands or with stones, what would you think?

Purna: In that case I should think that they are good and gentle folk, as they do not strike me with a cudgel or a weapon.

Siddharta: But if they would strike you with a cudgel or a weapon, what would you think?

Purna: In that case, I would think that they are good and gentle folk, as they do not take my life.

Siddharta: But if they kill you, Purna, what would you think?

Purna: In that case, I would still think that they are good and gentle folk, as they release me from this rotten carcass of the body without much difficulty. I know that there are monks who are ashamed of the body, and distressed and disgusted with it, and who slay themselves with weapons, take poison, hang themselves with ropes or throw themselves down from precipices.

Siddharta: Purna, you are endowed with the greatest gentleness and forbearance. You can live and stay in that country of the Sronaparantas. Go and teach them how to be free, as you yourself are free.

¹Dhammapada, vv. 188, 189, 190, 192. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, XVIII. 71. "The man who listens to it (the Dharma) full of faith and in an uncarping spirit freed from evil, even he shall gain the happy worlds of the virtuous."

Nor, as Siddharta specifically warns His disciples and non-disciples alike, was His Dharma just another path, among the many then existing for achieving salvation. It was the only way:

This is the path; there is none other that leads to the purifying of insight. You follow this (path). This will be to confuse Mara (death). Going on this path, you will end your suffering. This path was preached by me when I became aware of the removal of the thorns (in the flesh).¹

There is no path in the sky, there is no recluse outside, mankind delights in worldliness: the Buddhas are free from worldliness.²

However, before the wayfarer on the road to salvation can find this unique path (Dharma), straight as the razor's edge, he must be able to recognize his Guide, the Tathagata, the Buddha — he must understand the meaning of His Reality, and the Purpose for His appearance amidst the human race.

*I shall fill with joy all the beings whose limbs languish;
I shall extend to them succour and deliverance. I was born into the world as the king of truth for the salvation of the world.³*

All the Avatars and Tathagatas have clearly and repeatedly stressed this central purpose for their appearance among us in our times of greatest need and invited each and every one of us to participate in this greatest of all tasks — the salvation of the human race. Siddharta, too, as we have seen, made the teaching of His Dharma which, as He boldly proclaimed, was the only path towards salvation, the paramount duty of each and all who called themselves His disciples.

Subhuti, if there be one who gives away in gifts of alms a mass of the seven treasures, equal in extent to as many Mount Sumerus⁴ as there would be in three thousand galaxies of worlds, and if there be another who selects even only four lines from this Discourse upon the perfection of Transcendental Wisdom, receiving and retaining

¹Dhammapada, vv. 274, 275. See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, III. 32. "Those, however, who, finding fault with this doctrine of Mine, do not follow it, know them to be deluded in the matter of all knowledge, senseless and lost."

²Dhammapada, v. 254. See also **Dhammapada**, vv. 248 and 255.

³Digha-nikaya, I. 46. See also **Atharva-Veda**, IV. 30-5. "I create all happiness for the people, I enter prevailed in Heaven and Earth, clad in the attire of Manifestation (Avatar)."

⁴This is same as Meru, "the Olympus of Hindu mythology." It refers to the mountains now called the Himalayas. It also has the general meaning of "lofty."

*them and clearly expounding them to others, the merit of the latter will be so far greater than that of the former that no conceivable comparison can be made between them.*¹

He knew, as we can too, that only by imparting real faith to others can we also strengthen and increase our own store of it, just as one threatened by the sea of samsara can only strengthen his own refuge if he will assist his neighbours in strengthening theirs, since we are all connected to the same ground of faith, against which the surging seas of samsara are continuously battering.

While the real achievement of Siddharta consists of the rejuvenating effect His teaching exerted in purifying human society in the India of His time and extricating it from the morass of idol worship and animal slaughter into which the Hindu masses had become entangled, and which to the common man constituted the gamut of what he conceived to be Religion —

You with your heart full of compassion condemned that part of the Vedas which deals with the sacrifices ordaining the slaughter of animals. O you Kesava,² who assumed the body of the Buddha, victory to you, Hari, lord of the world.

— yet His Dharma of spiritual salvation, like those of the other great Faiths, also had its temporal fruit, which for centuries after Siddharta's passing provided a human praxis of life for those then fortunate enough to have taken shelter under its mighty tree.

The sense of universality which Siddharta imparted to the power of the eternal Dharma, as we see in this most poignant passage on that greatest of all ingredients — *love* — for creating and sustaining any human relationship, has never been surpassed in the beauty and breadth of its meaning since the time it was first enunciated by Him over twenty five centuries ago.

*Just as with her own life a mother shields from hurt her own, her only child, let all-embracing thoughts for all that live be thine — an all-embracing love for all the universe, in all its heights and depths and breadth, unstinted love, unmarred by hate within, not rousing enmity.*³

¹ *Vajra-Sattva*, XXIV (The Incomparable Merit of This Teaching).

² *Gitagovinda*, I. 9: This is a reference to Krishna (Kesava) Who, the Hindus believed, had reincarnated Himself as Buddha for again purifying Religion (Dharma).

³ *Sutta-nipata*, vv. 149-150. See also *Prasna-Upanishad*, 2.13. "As a mother her child, protect us, O Life; give us glory and give us wisdom." Also *Atharv-Veda*, 3.27. "Freedom

Little wonder then that His Teaching of salvation and love also established a mighty but humane civilization with its own temporal organs and artistic grandeur, first within His own native land and then in most of the lands of Asia, bestowing a sense of morality in life where there had been none and a wider view of humanity to those who had reached the stage of nationhood. Eventually bringing within the pale of its influence a fifth of the human race.

We are fortunate in having accounts of those temporal achievements of the Buddha's Dharma in the land of His birth, left to us in the narratives of various Chinese monks and Greek dignitaries who travelled to the courts of some of the great Indian monarchs who had espoused the Buddha's Gospel. And those records, related briefly, will serve to give us some idea of how great and dynamic was the pure Path in those times and what it has now become — obscure and unfrequented, lost and awaiting a Buddha-rising to restore it once again to its former glory.

First let us begin with Asoka,¹ foremost among the monarchs who espoused Siddharta's teachings and spread them across the length and breadth of India as well as such foreign countries as Ceylon, Greece, Egypt, Persia and Rome. This same Asoka, who had slaughtered tens of thousands in his thirst for empire, after acknowledging his allegiance to the Tathagata, became a being transformed. History shows no equal among kings or commoners to match Asoka's missionary success and moral stature, and we must constantly bear in mind that this was over two millennia ago. The influence his missions exerted is one of the greatest civilizing factors in the world's history. They were established in lands where the inhabitants were, for the most part, savage and superstitious and spiritualized them. And we can gauge the tremendous sway Siddharta's teachings held over the heart and mind of this great conqueror from the edicts which Asoka had carved in rock to announce to all his subjects the lessons of the Dharma:

Devanampriya² desires towards all beings: abstention from hurting,

from hate I bring to you concord and unanimity. Love one another as the cow her newborn calf loves." Also **Rig-Veda**, VIII. 7. "Like the enlightened ones of the past who used to acquire their share in unity, live ye all in harmony with one another, consort in loving sweetness with all, be one in thought and in knowledge. Let the mind-protecting Divine Commandment be equal to all.... I command ye all to be equal under the One Holy Command... Let your hearts be as one heart, minds of all as one mind, so that your affairs may be cooperatively well organized."

¹ Called "the Great" (274-232 B.C.).

² Delight of the Gods (One of Asoka's titles).

restraint in behaviour, and treatment equal with one's self and softness.

And this conquest is considered the principal one by Devanampriya, viz. the conquest by morality.

And this (conquest) has been won repeatedly by Devanampriya, both here and among all beyond the borders ...

This conquest, which has been won by this everywhere, a conquest (won) everywhere (and) repeatedly, causes the feeling of satisfaction.¹

And it was this same Asoka who, prior to his conversion to Buddhism, lived in the lap of grandeur unrivaled by Susa² in all its glory or the magnificence of Ecbatana, capital of Alexander the Great, then so changed his rule from destruction to construction, from death to life, that Greek chroniclers of his empire record that famines and want were almost unknown. Irrigation received special attention — the greater part of the country was under irrigation and bore two crops a year. Artificial lakes and dams were constructed wherever feasible, trade flourished, and a cosmopolitan crowd of merchants from various parts of Africa, Greece and Asia could be seen in the bazaars of Asoka's capital of Pataliputra. Goods from Southern India, the Golden Chersonese, China, Mesopotamia and the Greek cities of Asia Minor were displayed in the stalls, and like everything else in the Empire, their sale was strictly regulated and controlled. Silks, muslins, the finer sorts of cloth, cutlery and armour, brocades, embroideries and rugs, perfumes and drugs, ivory and ivorywork, jewellery and gold (seldom silver) — these were the main articles in which the merchants of his empire dealt. Accounts of this wealth were related by Persian travellers who visited his empire. The *Artha-Sastra*³ gives elaborate shipping regulations, and there was considerable coastal trade — Indian merchant vessels crossed the Indian Ocean to the mouth of the Tigris and to Aden. In their trade compacts and social relationships too, the subjects of Asoka were not lacking in excellence. Truthfulness was the predominant Indian characteristic of those times, and this is confirmed by Greek travellers: "No Indian has ever been convicted of lying." In signing contracts, witnesses and seals were considered to be superfluous, and houses were left unguarded. The women were well treated, and wives had their dowries as their private property. A husband

¹ Asoka's **Rock Edict No. XIII**, Shahbazgarhi and Girnar.

² Capital city of ancient Iran (Persia).

³ Manual of Commerce. (Artha also denotes wealth).

could be punished for cruelty, and offences against women were severely dealt with. Slavery was unknown.

After Asoka's conversion to Buddhism by Upagupta¹ of Mathura, he foreswore war and governed in the light of one law only — the Dharma or the Law of Piety laid down by Siddharta. "The reverberations of the war-drums became the reverberation of the drum of the Law"; "the only true victory is that effected by the law of Piety" — and he earnestly adjured his sons and grandsons to bear in mind, if ever they would be tempted by the lust for empire, the worthlessness of conquest by force.² "The conquest of the Law," he assured them, "is alone a conquest full of delight." As time went on, Asoka became more and more religious. He had entered the Buddhist order as a lay brother; he now became a monk and determined to use the Civil Service inaugurated by his grandfather to propagate the Law throughout his dominions.

Everywhere in my dominions my (officers) shall tour for the following instruction in morality as well as for other business.

*Meritorious is obedience to mother and father. Meritorious is liberality to friends, acquaintances and relatives and to the Brahmanas and Sramanas. Meritorious is abstention from the slaughter of living beings. Meritorious is to spend little and store little.*³

In order that the people might clearly understand what was expected of them, edicts were engraved on rocks or on pillars set up in places where they were most likely to attract the attention of the passerby. These were erected at places as far apart as Peshawar, Kathiawar, the Nepal frontier, Orissa and Mysore — "the Law, wherever pillars of stone or tables of stone exist, must be recorded, so that it may long endure." The Law, as enjoined by Asoka, was strictly practical and suited to the popular understanding. No mention is made of metaphysical subtleties. It consists of compassion, liberality, truth, purity, gentleness and saintliness of life, "hearkening to elders, reverence to the aged, and seemly treatment of Brahmins and ascetics, of the poor and wretched, yea, even servants." These virtues said Asoka's dictums will bring the only true happiness, "in this world and the next." Asoka's first thought

¹ He was a Sudra (low-caste) by birth, who entered upon monastic life when 17 years old. He was revered from Asoka's time and is reputed to have been the fifth patriarch.

² *Dhammapada*, v. 201. "Victory breeds hatred; the conquered dwells in sorrow. He who has given up (thoughts of both) victory and defeat, he is calm and lives happily."

³ Asoka's *Rock Edict*, No. III, *Girnar*.

was for the comfort and well-being of his subjects. On the main roads, shade-trees were planted, well-dug, and hospitals erected for men and animals. Education, as in most Buddhist countries, was widely disseminated by the monasteries, otherwise the edicts would have been of little avail. Jails were thrown open on the anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. Prisoners under sentence of death were given a respite in which they could lodge an appeal and were visited by pious men who would prepare their souls.¹ Governors were given wide latitude in granting pardons. One of Asoka's chief reforms was to carry into practice Siddharta's law of *ahimsa*, kindness to all living things. He gradually and progressively stopped the slaughter of animals, setting the example himself. The royal hunt was abolished, killing for the royal kitchens was cut down, animal sacrifices were forbidden, and a closed season was introduced for various beasts and birds.

One of the Emperor's chief concerns was to introduce complete religious tolerance. There were to be no wars of religion in his empire. He warned his people of the evils of schism and deprecated the habit of exalting one's own views at the expense of others. Though a convinced Buddhist, he extended his patronage of Brahmins, Jains and other sects with complete impartiality. A characteristic action was the construction of the costly caves at Barabar for the naked ascetics of the Ajivika sect founded by Gosala, the rival of Mahavira.

The growth of the essentials (of Dharma) is possible in many ways. But its root lies in restraint in regard to speech, which means that there would be no extolment of one's own sect or disparagement of other sects on inappropriate occasions and that it should be moderate in every case, even on appropriate occasions. On the contrary, other sects should be duly honoured in every way on all occasions.

If a person acts in this way, he not only promotes his own sect but also benefits other sects. But if a person acts otherwise, he not only injures his own sect but also harms other sects. Truly, if a person extols his own sect and disparages other sects with a view to glorifying his sect owing merely to his attachment to it, he injures his own sect very severely by acting in that way. Therefore restraint in regard to speech is commendable.²

¹ This would have little meaning if immortality of the soul were not acknowledged.

² Asoka's Rock Edict, No. XII, Girnar.

No one can quarrel with the enlightened expressions of that ancient and saintly monarch, or deny the universal need to make these ideas the praxis of our own life, even in this so-called enlightened age.

Asoka was anxious to make the foundation of his government the love and willing obedience of his subjects. He wished to be regarded as the father of his people. "Just as a man, having made over his child to a skillful nurse, feels confident and says to himself, 'The skillful nurse is eager to care for the happiness of my child,' even so my Governors have been created for the welfare and happiness of my country." Especially tender was the royal compassion towards the poor jungle-folk, who lay outside the pale of the Hindu community. Every effort was made to win their confidence and prevent them from being oppressed. "The root of the whole matter lies in perseverance and patience."

The Emperor set a high standard for his officers, and he practiced what he preached. He took no holidays. "At all times, when I am eating, or in the ladies' apartments, or in my private room, or in the mews, or in my conveyance, or in the pleasure-grounds, everywhere the persons appointed to give information should keep me informed about the affairs of the people ... I never feel satisfaction in my exertions and dispatch of business. Work I must, for the welfare of all the folk." One of the many activities he undertook was a pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Buddhism and the erection of pillars on the sites of Siddharta's birth, first sermon, enlightenment and parinirvana.

When King Devanampriya Priyadarsin had been anointed twenty years, he came himself and worshipped (this spot), because the Buddha Sakyamuni was born here. He both caused to be made a stone bearing a horse and a stone pillar to be set up, (in order to show) that the Blessed one was born here.

(He) made the village of Lumbini free of taxes and also recipient of the (kings's) eighth share of the produce.¹

Asoka did much beside this for the propagation of Buddhism. In one of his edicts, he gave a list of his favorite passages of the Scriptures and recommended them as being particularly suitable for study. A Buddhist Council, under the presidency of Upagupta, and under Royal Patronage was convened at Pataliputra in 240 B.C. and sat for nine months. At this Council sectarian disputes which were dividing the order were settled,

¹ Rumindei Pillar, Inscription of Asoka.

and the Canon of the Buddhist scriptures was definitely closed.¹ Asoka became a recluse in his later years and left his empire to his son. Asoka reigned for forty years (from 272 B.C. to 232 B.C.). He it was who promulgated the Dharma as the official creed of his empire. No monarch before or after has publicly announced the principles of tolerance and charity so boldly and adhered to them so rigidly.

Although a man does him injury, His Majesty holds that it must be patiently borne, as far as it possibly can be borne.

This as we know, was identical with the teaching² of Siddharta and which even now 2500 years after it was proclaimed for the first time in history, continues to be the most excellent principle of behaviour between man and his fellow beings. Through the transforming power of Siddharta's teachings, Asoka, more than other rulers great and small, was the truest symbol of the "philosopher-king."

Seven centuries later Fa Hian, the great Chinese pilgrim visiting Asoka's capital, Pataliputra,³ and his vast palace, declared them to be the work "of no mortal hands." No human agency, he was convinced, could have raised the mighty walls and gates, piled up the stones, and decorated them with such delicate carving and intricate inlaid sculpture work. The pillars of Asoka are in a class by themselves. They were created by royal workmen, and Asoka took great delight in their erection to mark the spots he wished to commemorate. They are huge tapering monoliths of hard sandstone, nearly fifty feet in height, and weighing at least fifty tons. We can gain some idea of the skill of Asoka's engineers in moving these enormous columns from their quarry at Chunar to their destinations when we read of the almost superhuman exertions required to shift two of them to Delhi and to erect them there about fifteen hundred years later. Thousands of workmen were employed, and elaborate carriages, boats and elevating apparatus had to be constructed. These pillars are burnished until the surface is almost like glass, and their high polish so deceived later travellers that they thought they were made of metal. They were surmounted with a bell-capital, an abacus and a

¹ However, while the canonical books were finally settled at the time of this third great Buddhist Council it was not until 29 B.C., during the reign of king Vattagamini in Ceylon more than four centuries after Siddharta's passing, that the Pali Canon of the Theravadins was put to writing.

² See *Dhammapada*, v. 5. "Not at any time are enmities appeased here through enmity, but they are appeased through non-enmity. This is the eternal law."

³ Modern Patna.

symbolic figure — usually a lion. The most striking of these capitals is the one found at Sarnath, with its four magnificent lions upholding a *dharma chakra* or ‘‘Wheel of the Law’’ which was first set in motion at this spot by the Tathagata. The carving on them is unsurpassed anywhere else. But it is only fair at this point, having paid just tribute to the greatness and genius of Asoka, sparked and guided by the Dharma, to state that however grand his artistic achievements and monuments were they were not original. It was to the stately civilization of their Iranian kinsmen and neighbours that the Mauryans and other Indians turned for examples. Persian¹ influence is clearly very marked in Asoka’s capital. Asoka’s grandfather Chandragupta, founder of the Mauryan dynasty and empire, visited Taxila, the capital of the Persian Satrapy, and fashioned his court after the Persians. If Asoka had a prototype of whom he was certainly aware and emulated, it was Darius — himself the scion of a race of kings.² The greatest of Darius’ predecessors was Cyrus (Kurush), the founder of the Achaemenian dynasty and empire of Iran. This Darius, three centuries before Asoka, had become a devout convert of Zoroaster,³ who appeared in Iran nearly a century before Siddharta’s time and revealed the Dharma to the pastoral Aryans of Iran in accordance with their needs. It was from Persia that Asoka borrowed his sermons in stone, and their similarity in tone to the Iranian King Darius’ supplication and homage to Ahura-Mazda, the Supreme of the Zoroastrian Faith, carved in stone at Nakshi-Rustam centuries before Asoka, is quite marked. Asoka’s columns, with their bell-capitals, show clearly their Persian origin.⁴ The concept of hewing viharas out of mountainsides came from the rock-hewn tombs of the Achaemenian kings of Iran.

And all this is only natural, since the Indo-aryans were one people ethnically, having closely related sources for their languages,⁵ myths and

¹ Persia and Iran refer to the same people. For Persian influence on the Mauryan culture see D. B. Spooner, *The Zoroastrian Period of Indian History*, J.R.A.S., 1915.

² A contemporary of Siddharta. Darius I ruled Iran from 12-36 B.E. (522-486 B.C.), known as the Great.

³ Zoroaster, 101-24 B.B.E. (Before Buddhist Era), the Founder of the national Religion of Iran from the time of the Achaemenian empire to the end of the Sassanian period. See Glossary.

⁴ Similar design used by the Achaemenian kings of Iran who built Persepolis.

⁵ In those ancient times the interchange between the Aryan people was very fluid. Hence the close identity between their gods and legends. The following tabulation will convey some idea of the closeness of Sanskrit and the ancient Iranian language, and Avestan the language of Zoroastrian Scriptures.

legends of their gods, and beliefs. The word Achaemenian itself is simply a corruption in Greek of the correct pronunciation of the name of Cyprus' father Hakhmanush¹ (Sanskrit: Sakamanushya), which, as we will recognize, also means "man of the Saka" (or Sakya clan) — to which Siddharta Himself belonged. Both the Sakas and the Hakhmanush regarded Gayumars, the first king of the Peshdadian (Sanskrit: Paradata) Dynasty, who ruled Iran for thirty years, as their First Ancestor. He in turn was succeeded by Hushang (Sanskrit: Hovoshyada), who was succeeded by Vivahvant (sanskrit: Vivasvan),² and Vivasvan begat Manu from whom was descended Ikshvaku (Ram), and Ikshvaku is the Sanskrit name of the Pali — Okkaka (Rulers of the Ancient Solar dynasty) — from whom Siddharta claimed descent.

Long ago...King Okkaka,³ wanting to divert the succession in favour of the son of his favourite queen,⁴ banished his elder children⁵...And

Hindu Sanskrit	Ancient Iranian Languages		Modern Persian
	Avestan	Old Persian	
Sindhu (Indus)	Hindu	Hindu	Hind
buddhi (perception)	Baodhas		
Asura Mehdas	Ahura Mazda	Ahuramazdah	Hurmazd
Karma (volition)	kamer		
Bhoomi (earth)	boomi	boomi	boom
Manas (mind)	manas		
Kratu (insight)	xratu		xirad
hasta (hand)	zasta	daska	dast
asva (horse)	aspa	aspa	asp
deva ("god")	daiva		

Siddharta, too, who taught in Magadha Prakrit (i.e., the vernacular of the state of Magadha), was fully conversant with Sanskrit. However, it is fairly certain that He did not speak Pali, which was formulated a century after Siddharta's time from the conglomeration of dialects in which Siddharta's Teachings were preached by the great number of His travelling monks.

¹"Hakh." meaning "strong" in the sense of rightful, and "manush" meaning "man". "Saka" in Sanskrit means the same and also "Oak-hearted" or "stout-hearted", and — again — "manushya" means "man".

²See **Bhagavad-Gita**, IV. 1. "I taught this imperishable Yoga to Vivasvan; Vivasvan told it to Manu, and Manu spoke it to Ikshvaku." This Manu mentioned here in the context of our particular Kalpa (Cosmic or Divine Age) is called Satyavrata. He is the seventh Manu. The others according to legends are, from the first Manu, Swayambhuva, Swarochisha, Uttami, Tomasa, Raivata and the sixth. Chakshusha.

³Dasa-Ratha (Mentioned in the **Ramayana** as father of Ram and His brothers, Lachman, Bharat and Satrughana).

⁴Kaikiy, the mother of Bharat.

⁵Ram and Lachman, and with Ram went His wife, Sita.

*being thus banished they took up their dwelling on the slopes of the Himalyas, on the borders of a lake where a mighty oak plantation grew. Okkaka the king burst forth in admiration: "Hearts of Oak (Sakya) are those young fellows! Right well they hold their own! That is the reason...why they are known as Sakyas. Verily, he is the progenitor of the Sakyas."*¹

Therefore, despite the common borders shared by Asoka and his predecessors, the other Mauryan emperors with their Greek contemporaries (the generals left by Alexander's² conquests in Persia, India and Asia Minor), the Greek influence was non-existent in the art and culture of the Mauryas, since the Greeks, after all, were aliens who shared neither a common faith nor a common ethnic origin or language. The link was only with Iran, the other Aryan land. And, as the Buddha foresaw only too clearly, there would be yet another link for His Dharma with Iran.

Hence not for nothing did Siddharta, three centuries before Asoka's time, emphasize this connection of Aryan peoples and prophesy the future greatness of Pataliputra,³ the city that was to be the capital of the empire of the first and greatest Buddhist monarch.

*As far, Ananda, as Aryan people resort, as far as merchants travel, this will become the chief city, Pataliputra, a centre for the interchange of all kinds of wares. But three dangers will hang over Pataliputra, that of fire, that of water and that of dissension among friends.*⁴

For Pataliputra's destiny was to serve as the only existing physical link between two spiritual Sunrises.⁵ Because in a way, Pataliputra alone, the greatest and the finest as well as the first capital of a Buddhist state, demonstrating through its architecture the debt its founders owed to Iran for inspiration, would, to those who came to see the greatest physical glory of the Dharma's achievements of a former time, serve as a subtle compass directing them to that selfsame Iran — the westernmost limit

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, Part I, pp. 103-4, Bombay Univ. ed., 1942.

² Called "the Great", (356-323 B.C.). Conquered the Persian empire in 330 B.C. and also portions of northwest India (327-325 B.C.).

³ *Sutta-nipata*, 977. While Siddharta named six other great cities [Sayatthi, Saketa, Kaushambi, Kasi (modern Banares), Rajagriha and Champa], yet Pataliputra alone is singled out for prophecy and given paramount importance.

⁴ *The Mahaparinibbana-Suttana* (The Book of the Great Decease), I. 16.

⁵ No other capitals of the Buddhist kingdoms that followed either rivalled Pataliputra or were influenced by Iran in their architecture or form. Pataliputra, the object of Siddharta's prophecy, was the only example — as if to say its uniqueness would fulfill, to the fullest extent, the prophecy concerning it.

(the easternmost point being Siddharta's own location) where "Aryan people resort" as a people, as a nation, even today as they did in Siddharta's day — for resurrecting the glory of the Dharma, in order to fulfill Siddharta's spiritual edifice and bring it to full fruition — through the advent of Maitrya.

After Asoka other monarchs, notably Kanishka, espoused the Dharma and he too, modelling himself after his great predecessor Asoka, nearly three centuries removed, called a Council to remove some of the difficulties that had arisen in the Samgha since Asoka's time. This fourth and last great Council sat for six months and was attended by 500 monks. Presided over by Vasumitra,¹ it also included the celebrated scholars Asvaghosha and Nagarjuna, who took part in its deliberations. Elaborate commentaries on the Scriptures were drawn up, and a Buddhist encyclopedia, the *Mahavibhasa*, was compiled. Eventually, as the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang informs us, "Kanishka raja ordered these discourses to be engraved on sheets of red copper. He enclosed them in a stone receptacle and having sealed them, he raised over it a stupa with the scriptures in the middle." The exact whereabouts of these copper sheets is not known.

Kanishka's empire, enriched as it was by the trade of Europe and Asia, was wealthy and prosperous to an almost unheard-of degree. He was a liberal patron of the arts; his capital at Peshawar was embellished by many magnificent buildings, in particular a lofty wooden tower, over six hundred feet in height, in which were enshrined certain relics of the Buddha. It consisted of fourteen storeys and was crowned by an iron pinnacle, surmounted with a number of copper-gilt umbrellas. Its sides were adorned with numerous images of the Buddha, and it was restored many times. It was still standing in the 6th century A.D., and foreign visitors to India regarded it as one of the wonders of the world — the tallest man-made structure at that time. The site was excavated in 1908 and in the relic-chamber was found a small copper-gilt reliquary, not quite eight inches high, with a Greek pattern. On the lid are figures of the Buddha and two Bodhisattvas — Maitrya and Avalokitesvara.² Other

¹ Vasumitra, described as a native of northern India, was converted from riotous living by Micchaka. He was a follower of the Sarvastivadah school. He was the seventh patriarch, and wrote the *Abhidharma-prakarana-pada sastra*.

² The reader should note the significance of these two Bodhisattvas — Maitrya and Avalokitesvara being mentioned together here from the earliest times and in other places, for we will meet them again, far more significantly and once again, together.

monarchs such as Chandragupta II and Harsha of the Kanauj dynasty, from the fifth to the seventh century A.D., continued to glorify the Dharma, and descriptions of their achievements in the lives of the people have come down to us by the Chinese monk Fa Hian, who was in India from A.D. 401, and the learned Hiuen Tsang, who arrived in the year A.D. 630 and stayed for fifteen years. Fa Hian states that:

the nobles and householders have founded hospitals within the city, to which the poor of all countries, the destitute, crippled and diseased may repair. They receive every kind of requisite help gratuitously. Physicians inspect their diseases and, according to their cases, order them food and drink, medicine or decoctions, everything in fact which may contribute to their ease. When cured they depart at their convenience.

He praises the justice, clemency and efficiency of the government. The inhabitants, according to him, were prosperous and contented. There was no capital punishment. Drunkenness was unknown. According to him,

all the resident priests, who are allotted cells in the viharas, have beds, mats, food and drink supplied to them; they pass their time in performing acts of mercy, in reciting the scriptures...When the priests have received their dues, the householders and Brahmins present them with all sorts of robes and other necessities; and the priests also make one another offerings. And so, ever since the Lord Buddha passed away from the earth, the rules of conduct of the priesthood have been handed down without intermission.

Hiuen Tsang's description two hundred years later, in the time of King Harsha, is equally impressive.

With respect to the ordinary people, although they are naturally light-minded, yet they are upright and honorable...They dread the retribution of another state of existence and make light of the things of the present world...in their rules of government there is remarkable rectitude, while in their behaviour there is much gentleness and sweetness.

As the administration of the government is founded on benign principles, the executive is simple...and the people are not subjected to forced labor. The crown-lands are divided into four parts. The first is for carrying out the affairs of state; the second, for paying the ministers and officers of the crown; the third, for rewarding men of genius; the fourth, for giving alms to religious communities...the

taxes on the people are light, and the services required of them are moderate. Every one keeps his worldly goods in peace, and all till the soil for their subsistence. When the public works require it, labor is exacted but paid for. The payment is in strict proportion to the work done.

Harsha too, like his other Buddhist predecessors, was a just and able ruler. He was profuse in his charities. As Hiuen Tsang relates,

In all the highways of the towns and villages throughout India he erected hospices, provided food and drink and stationed there physicians with medicines for travellers and poor persons round about, to be given without stint.

Hiuen Tsang speaks with admiration of the esteem with which learning was held in India; a number of disinterested men of wealth and position gave themselves up to lifelong study, refusing all invitations to court and honors and rewards of every kind. Most interesting of all, however, is the pilgrim's account of his visits to the famous college of Nalanda¹ (in Bihar), 12 kilometers north of Rajagir, where he spent five years. Students flocked there from all parts of the East. On arrival, the disciple was at first treated as a guest and, after examination, he was assigned his place in the routine of the monastery. Exemption from menial work was granted after he had proved his worth. Discipline was strictly in accordance with the rules of the Buddhist scriptures and breaches were severely punished.

The regular curriculum consisted of grammar, mechanics, medicine, logic and metaphysics. There was a keen rivalry between the adherents of the Greater and Lesser Vehicles.

If Bodh Gaya was the beginning, Nalanda was the continuation and intellectual nerve-centre of Buddhism. Ten thousand monks and students once lived in the vast monastic complex, and several of the teachers were known throughout the Eastern World. Many Chinese and Korean teachers and students lived here. Kumarajiva, a Nalanda scholar, spent his life translating Buddhist texts into Chinese. Universities for secular and religious studies flourished at Nalanda and other centers of learning. Medical science was widely studied, and Sanskrit medical treatises were the basis of much of the later Arabian learning which reached Europe in the Middle Ages. Dissection was practised, and students were trained in "holding the lancet, in cutting, marking and piercing with it, in extracting

¹ Built by King Sakraditya.

darts, in cleansing wounds, in causing them to dry up, the application of ointments and in the administration of emetics, purges and oily enemas." Hindu astronomers had discovered that the heavenly bodies were spherical, and shone by reflected light; they were aware of the diurnal motion of the earth on its axis and had calculated its diameter. Brahmagupta (A.D. 628) anticipated Newton by declaring that "all things fall to the earth by a law of nature, for it is the nature of the earth to attract and keep things." The Vaisesika school of physicists propounded the atomic theory. In mathematics the theorem of Pythagoras was understood, a value for "pi" was accurately found. This was Nalanda, perhaps the world's greatest seat of learning at that time and yet another brilliant jewel created by the influence of Dharma. Some decades later the raiders from the north mistook the college for a fort and burned it to the ground together with its precious treasure of manuscripts. The artistic genius of India also reached its high-water mark during this period.

An interesting sidelight on the position of women in India at that time is shown by the fact that Harsha's widowed sister sat beside him on the throne and took a leading part in the discussions. At one of the great Assemblies called by Harsha to hear Hiuen Tsang expound on the Dharma, ten thousand Buddhist monks each received one-hundred gold pieces, a pearl, a cotton garment, food, drink and perfumes. At the end of a month the accumulation of the preceding five years was exhausted. The royal treasury was empty; "except for the horses, elephants and military accoutrements, which were necessary for maintaining order and protecting the royal estate, nothing remained." The King, inspired by the anecdote from the *Vessantara Jataka* about the Benevolent Prince,¹ gave away his jewels, ornaments, and even his clothes and had to beg from his sister Rajyasri an old second-hand garment and, having put it on, he paid worship to the Buddhas of the ten regions. When Hiuen Tsang eventually decided to return to China, Harsha tried to load him with gifts, which he refused, taking with him 657 manuscripts and numerous relics. Harsha was indeed a true jewel of Buddhist achievement.

While for all intents and purposes Buddhism ceased to exist as a major religion in its native land more than a thousand years ago, yet the extent of its influence on the thought and activities of Hindu philosophy is incalculable. Hinduism has been unalterably moulded by the simple

¹ One of Siddhartha's past existences as Prince Vessantara.

doctrine of Siddharta. The great reformers in Hinduism¹ who appeared on the scene like twinkling stars around the time that Siddharta's Gospel was undergoing its twilight, all owed their prominence — whether they acknowledged it or not — to the setting sun of Buddhism. For theirs was the destiny to provide to the predominantly Hindu masses, who could not reconcile themselves to the teachings of other Spiritual Suns such as Christ and Muhammad — whose Gospels,² were by then also fragmented³ and corrupted — the hope and guidance for Salvation, however inadequate and circumscribed, while the people waited for another Avatar (Kalki), yet another Buddha-rising — Maitrya.

However, like the sun which sets in one place only to appear in another, the brilliant rays of the Dharma too had by then crossed over to other lands, other peoples, and spread their beneficial effects on all those who received the Gospel of Siddharta. As we have already noted, Asoka was the first to send missionary teams to the lands surrounding the Buddha's birthplace. He sent His own son Mahinda and daughter Sanghamitta to Ceylon. They took with them a branch of the sacred Bodhi Tree and planted it in the Capital, Anuradha-pura, in the center of the island, and it still continues to grow there after more than twenty two centuries. With Mahinda had gone many Indian artisans to Ceylon, and they were responsible for introducing the arts of stone carving and irrigation. The Sinhalese king Tissa, with all his court, was converted to the Buddha-Dharma, and the doctrine of Siddharta became the state religion of Ceylon. It was also in Ceylon that the Buddhist Canon was finally set to writing in the reign of the Sinhalese monarch Vattagamini in 29 B.C. — nearly 450 years after the passing of Siddharta.⁴ Ceylon was the exception in being opened to the Dharma this early in its history. And having received Dharma, it would in turn, in the person of the great Sinhalese scholar Buddhagosa seven centuries later, reflect the Dharma

¹ Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, Guru Nanak and others.

² Siddharta made no mention of the advents of Christ or Muhammad, as He was fully cognizant that Their great Faiths would themselves be fragmented by the time they were brought into contact with the followers of His Gospel and hence would have nothing to offer the Buddhists, for, like the Buddhists, they too, by then, would stand in need of their Promised One.

³ Muhammadanism and Christianity.

⁴ (*Mahavamsa*, XXXIII.) The orthodox Theravadins are not justified, therefore, in asserting that the Pali Canon was actually fixed — still less put to writing — at the First Council, immediately after the passing of Siddharta. The Buddhist Scriptures, including the Pali Canon, are compilations of materials by many hands and of various periods.

into Burma and spread the Gospel of Siddharta to that country also. Another three centuries would then elapse for the Dharma to cross into Thailand and Cambodia and effect the spiritualization of the peoples of those lands. To the north of them, Buddhist missionaries had already arrived in China around the fifth century A.D. The name of Gunavarman (Kashmiri prince-monk), who reached China from Ceylon, is prominently mentioned in this connection. Gunavarman established the first community of Buddhist nuns (A.D. 424) in China. Prior to leaving for China, Gunavarman had also preached Buddhism in Indonesia, where he is said to have converted the whole Javanese Court. One of the Javanese kings built the wonderful shrine of Borobudur, the grandest Buddhist monument of them all. It stands in an idyllic setting overlooking the magnificent Vedu valley, amidst green rice fields, bamboo and palm trees, and a background of distant volcanoes. The architects erected it round a conical hill, which they crowned with a central stupa, surrounded by a number of smaller ones. The sides of the hill have been enclosed in a series of seven stone terraces, leading up to the central shrine at the apex and forming a procession path. The walls of these terraces are ornamented with exquisite reliefs illustrating episodes in the lives of Siddharta, from the Jataka tales and other legends as told in the *Lalitavistara* and some other Scriptures, and are crowned with niches containing Buddha figures, gazing down upon the scene with serene and majestic dignity.

From China, Buddhism found its way to Korea and thence to Japan at the beginning of the fourteenth Century B.E. The doctrines of the Zen sect (originating from the Sanskrit word Dhyān meaning mind-concentration) are based upon the influence of Bodhidharma (A.D. 520), another great Buddhist Missionary.

Aside from China,¹ which already possessed an ancient civilization, the peoples of all those other lands had no history until their entry into the pale of the Dharma's aura and its civilizing influence on their lives. Those lands became as new lands, properly managed by their leaders and rulers for the weal of their people. They became great centers of commerce and learning, where once they were wild and savage, and

¹ However, even in China Buddhism's teachings against killing had a tremendously humanizing effect, since thousands of animals were sacrificed in those times to the Ancestor Cult. (For a detailed refutation of this fallacy; see Jamshed Fozdar, **The Fallacy of Ancestor Worship** (Bombay, 1965, Lib. of U.S. Congress, Cat. Card No. SA [66-7067]). With the large increase of Buddhists in their midst, those sacrifices were changed simply to the burning of paper (Buddhist mantras) and cracking of squibs.

developed by means of the Dharma, running through their hearts like a string through pearls, a common system of values both humane and just. All this great flowering of culture occurred over a thousand years ago, and today in our times, despite the tremendous changes that have come upon those regions through military conquests, natural disasters and the impact of other great ideologies, the signs of the heights of civilization that were reached and the humane progress that was achieved by the power of the pure Dharma are still evident from the structures of great edifices and social patterns among the populace of those lands. But the spirit which once motivated all of that has fled. The pure Dharma is gone — lost to our sight by the obstructions of greed, prejudice, deceit, self-righteousness, suspicion and cynicism which afflict the adherents of Siddharta just as seriously as they afflict the followers of Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Christ, or Muhammad — all of whom are awaiting the Return of their Promised Ones¹ as fervently as the Buddhists.

And yet, how has the eternal Dharma been lost, and why has the Truth to be repeated from time to time? Where in this hour of travail and terror is Religion? What has happened to its ancient efficacy? The answer, as the Avatars and Siddharta tell us, is “the long lapse of time.”² Because of this long lapse of time modern man is no longer dominated by ancient and obsolete dogmas, preaching to us in dead languages and claiming to address issues and conditions which have become infinitely more complex than anything the past has known. For the Dharma to once again become relevant to the needs of our world, it is clear that its message will have to be renewed to concern the entire human race, since

¹ The assumption of Divine Time (Cosmic cycles) and hence cyclic events, made it possible for the Hindus and Buddhists as well as their other aryan brethren, the Zoroastrians, to assert the advent of future Redeemers — “Raja Suryavanshi Maru” (Kalki Avatar) and “Chandravanshi Devapi” awaited by the Hindus, Maitrya and Avalokitesvara by the Buddhists; Shah Bahram Varjavand and Hoshidar Boomit by the Zoroastrians. Similar beliefs are also present in the Jewish, Christian and Muhammadan Doctrines, which all predicate their expectations on a single world-process and, like the aryan Faiths, also expect the advents of two Aeon-Enders (World Saviors) Who are to appear contemporaneously. The Jews expect the Promised Ones of Moses and Aaron; the Christians the return of Christ and Elijah; the Muhammadans await the return of Christ and the Qaim (Imam Mahdi). As we are forced by the logic of the Scriptures themselves to say that Siddharta, Krishna, Ram, Manu, and by extension, Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad are the names of one and the same “descent” (Avatar) Whose birth is eternal, it must then follow that the various names of the Two Redeemers expected contemporaneously in all the great Faiths indicate the same “Twin-Miracle” prophesied by Siddharta (page 197).

² *Sutta-nipata*, 284. Also see *Bhagavad-Gita*, IV. 2. “... By long lapse of time, however, this Dharma was lost to the world.”

humanity today requires not merely a reiteration of the Dharma's high and noble principles, but — far more urgent — its dynamic participation in providing both direction and example for overcoming the real problems which plague society in these most perilous of times. Lifting mankind from the depths of despair and anguish to the dawn of a new day of joy is the only task now worthy of the Dharma's mettle if it is to successfully meet this challenge and fan anew the dying embers of faith in the breast of a desperate and cynical humanity into a blazing fire, which will evaporate the frigidity of aloofness and hostility and forge its allegiance into an invincible host, capable of making this earth into a paradise.

But, in order to achieve the all-important goal of re-establishing the Dharma on its former pedestal of life-bestowing potency for humanity, it is first necessary to restore humanity's faith in that process of salvation unequivocally proclaimed by Siddharta and all the Avatars — the unailing Law of Progressive Revelation.

The Buddhas who have been and who shall be;

Of these am I and what they did I do...¹

And:

*All the Buddhas are exactly the same
as regards Buddha-dhammas.²*

A continuity of Religions is clearly asserted here by Siddharta, Who also affirms that these periodic Spiritual Sunrises are identical in their essence. However, while the essence of the Dharma is eternal in the realm of its own Reality, yet its appearance and operation in this phenomenal world is subject to the unvarying law of change. "Nothing in the phenomenal world is eternal."³ Not even the glory of the Dharma, which is finally obscured from humanity as we stray farther and farther away by our greed and wrong-doing. Thus, lost to the eyes of mankind, the pure Dharma awaits the advent of yet another Tathagata — Maitrya — to unearth it and, after sweeping it clean again of men's fancies and corrupting machinations, restore it to its pristine purity, its ancient glory, to serve as a shining beacon, so that humanity's storm-tossed ship, may find once more its safe haven.

That, verily, is a safe haven, that is the best haven; after having got to that haven a man is delivered from all pains.⁴

¹ *Digha-nikaya*, I, pp. 103-104.

² *Mahavastu*, I. 160.

³ *Dhammapada*, v. 255.

⁴ *Dhammapada*, v. 192.

A continuity of Religions — each joined to the other in progressive succession and thus explaining the need for renewal as well as the reason for their successive obsolescence — is an immutable spiritual law. No earnest and open-minded follower of Siddharta can any longer deny that magnificent Wats and Temples and statues of clay and precious stones are no substitute for the true Teacher. Nor can a collection of forms, outmoded rites and empty phrases provide that vital potency of the Dharma's ancient essence in order to triumph against the onslaught of a perverse age, whose coming darkness Siddharta had so clearly prophesied to Sariputta just as He foretold the dawning of the Twin Spiritual Suns, Who will rise to dispel the universal gloom that shrouds the human race:

“At the time when the Dispensation of the Perfect Buddha is falling into oblivion,... a ‘miracle’ like the Twin-miracle,¹ will teach Dharma.”² It is only too obvious that the Noble Eight-fold Path which has purified a major portion of the human race in the past, is now too overlain with the brambles of superstitious rites, narrow allegiance, hatred and greed — all products of ignorance regarding the Dharma's real aim. Only a Tathagata can now renew the eternal Dharma and, utterly purified, offer it once again to humanity as the sure path to salvation. He alone can again imbue the Dharma with its ancient potency and enlarge its scope to make it a haven of hope and motivation to one and all, regardless of color, caste or creed.

*Dharma has been taught by me without making a distinction between esoteric and exoteric. For the Tathagata has not the closed fist of a teacher in respect of mental states.*³

For as we can see, the peerless Dharma is no more in the life of

¹ Avalokitesvara and Maitrya.

² **Anagatavamsa**, Commentary on **Anguttara-nikaya** (Manorathapurani), 1.90. The Hindus also expect the “Twin Miracle”. Sometimes conceived as the “Twin born Divine Physicians” (the Two Ashwins) on the White Horse. See **Bhagavad-Gita**, XI.6. In Sanskrit and ancient Iranian both having one common Aryan heritage of language and culture “ASHA” denotes Truth, or Divine Law (Dharma), or Righteousness and Ashawan (ancient Iranian) or Ashwin (Sanskrit) means the upholder or follower of Truth or Dharma. (In Sanskrit the word for horse is “asva” and in ancient Iranian it is “aspa”).

³ **Digha-nikaya**, 11.100. See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, VII.2. “I shall unfold to you in its entirety this wisdom along with the real knowledge of manifest Divinity, having known which nothing else remains still to be known in this world.” Also the **Chandogya-Upanishad**, (IV, 4.9) tells us that “nothing whatever was omitted in what was told to Satyakama, a man who cannot prove his ancestry, but is called a Brahmin because of his truth speaking.” And from **Satapatha-Brahmana** (XII, 6.1.41) we read, that, “There is no more secrecy, and now whoever is a Comprehensor can properly be called a Brahmin.”

humanity. Only its empty form remains. Yet after all, what is the peerless Dharma, this “Door to the Eternal”¹ which must be periodically renewed, restressed and reapplied by a Tathagata? Before we answer, let us, in the manner of Siddharta when dealing with such queries, examine what the Dharma cannot be but has become, *through long lapse of time* — and Why?

When Siddharta passed from amongst men nearly 2,478 years ago there were already in existence a number of communities of His adherents in northeast India. He appointed no personal successor since He had Himself railed against such leaders within the Hinduism and Jainism of His day. We learn from the Buddhist Scriptures that only His doctrine (Dharma) was to be the guide for His followers, both way-farers (monks) and householders (the laity). And this doctrine existed only in the memory of the monks. We are told that if a Buddhist community required a certain text, they borrowed a learned monk who knew it by heart, as we borrow a book from a library. Like the Brahmins, the Buddhist monks too, for fear of contamination by less diligent elements, and most certainly because of the threat of losing their sway over the laity, were strongly opposed to committing the doctrine of Siddharta to writing, and it was not until three centuries later that this opposition was finally weakened by the impact of Asoka’s conversion to the Dharma and the influence of Royal Patronage and requirements of imperial missionary campaigns, that the Pitakas and other Scriptures were finally collated.

This aversion to written records, aside from denying us the details of the actual events of the life and teachings of Siddharta, was instrumental not only in bringing a great variety of legends and traditions into the history of events relating to Siddharta’s life and activities, but — much more devastating — through various interpretations, influenced by the values and modes of different languages and localities, it served also to alter the basic concepts in His doctrine (the Dharma) itself, particularly as Siddharta’s teachings began to reach beyond the immediate vicinity of His birth. So great was the impact of the intrusions of these different interpretations — in the absence of any written word of Siddharta’s doctrine — that even at the first Buddhist Council, which occurred only 100 days after Siddharta’s passing, the assemblage of 500 Arahats²

¹ *Vinaya-pitaka*, i. 5.

² The perfect disciple. One who has destroyed the spokes (ara) of the wheel of life (hata).

reciting the Scriptures as Ananda remembered them were contradicted by a monk named Upali,¹ who declared that the sayings of Siddharta as he remembered them were quite different, and there ensued no dispute!

Now, while Ananda's exact position on the Scriptures is not clear, and although he was chief among Siddharta's disciples, nevertheless, he could not resign himself to the concept of others concerning the Buddha's reality as distinguished from His person and, as is well known, loved the Lord as a human being.² Nor was there any way to prove that Ananda's view — that Siddharta had ascended to Brahma's heaven (Tushita) since He had originally descended from it — was heretical or incorrect, in light of Siddharta's own claim to have known the Unmanifest Brahma and Brahma-become.³

And, while Siddharta's injunction,

*Be ye such as have the Self (Atman) as your lamp, Self as only refuge, the Law as your lamp and only refuge.*⁴

if misunderstood, as is the case with a majority of Buddhists, may appear at first sight to contradict such behaviour on the part of Ananda, yet there is nothing in Siddharta's teachings that compels us to discard the view, held by Ananda, that Siddharta's Soul-mind, possessing immortality as an aspect of its very nature, was beyond any destruction of His physical being.⁵ This view is derived from the Buddha's own oft-proclaimed statements, such as:

Be ye as those who have the self as their light.

Be ye as those who have the self as their refuge.

Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as to

¹ A barber of sudra caste, who became a disciple of Sakyamuni, was one of the three sthaviras of the first Synod, and reputed as the principal compiler of the **Vinaya**, hence his title "Keeper of the laws".

² And this is not strange when we find the Buddha saying even in so early a text as the **Majjhima-nikaya**, I. 22, that, even those who have not yet entered the path "are sure of heaven if they have love and faith towards me", which is also identical to Krishna's own words to Arjuna, "Surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins; grieve not." **Bhagavad-Gita**, XVIII. 66.

³ **Digha-nikaya**, III. 84.

⁴ **Ibid.**, II. 101. "**atta-dipa viharatha attasarana ... dhamma-dipa dhammasarana.**" See also **Sutta-nipatta**, 501. "**Ye attadipa vicaranti loke akimcana sabbadhi vippanutta.**" Also **Dhammapada**, vv. 146, 232.

⁵ **The Anguttara-nikaya**, (IV. 36) states, that, "the Buddha is the redeemed soul not subject to any bonds."

*a refuge.*¹

Even a cursory comparison of the above two verses shows Siddharta using the true Self, the Soul-mind, as synonymous with the truth. And this true Self, shorn of the accretions of worldly delusions, is eternal. "Make the Self your refuge,"² Siddharta enjoins, as He Himself had done, "I have made the Self my refuge," (*katam me saranam attano*).³ And the following:

*Truth, however, is large enough to receive the yearnings and aspirations of all selves, and when the selves break like soap bubbles, their contents will be preserved and in the truth they will lead a life everlasting...*⁴

is simply another way of stating that when the bubbles of our ignorance and cravings have burst, our true Self will emerge to the vision of reality and partake of eternal life.

These various injunctions, while asserting the immortality of our true Self, also clearly admonish us to rely only on our true Self. By this manner Siddharta is trying to tell us that self-purification is to be obtained from within our Self and not through reliance on the ten-thousand deities, gods and goblins, in which the deluded masses of His day placed their faith and sought a refuge. His abhorrence for such methods is obvious as we read it in the *Lalitavistara*:

Here am I born in Jambudvipa,⁵ among people who have no prospect of intellectual redemption, crowded by tirthikas, or Revealers of the Truth, with diverse desires even at a time when their faculties are wriggling in the grasp of the crocodile of their sensuality. These

¹ *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, vv. 33, 35. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, VI. 5, 6. "One should lift oneself up by one's own efforts and should not degrade oneself; for one's own self is one's friend, and one's own self is one's enemy. One's own self is the friend of that soul by whom the lower self (viz., the mind, the senses and the body) has been conquered; on the other hand, the very self of him, who has not conquered his lower self, behaves inimically like one's own enemy."

² *Samyutta-nikaya*, III. 143. "Kareyya saranattano."

³ *Digha-nikaya*, II. 120.

⁴ *Mahavagga* (Siha's Question Concerning Annihilation). See also *Dhammapada*, vv. 160, 161, 379, 380.

⁵ Ancient name of a mythical continent (presumably India) located at the center of the earth and of triangular shape. See *Mahabharata* (Aswa-Medha, III. 24). "Nations of the Jambudvipa share it, greatest and the least." See also *Samyutta-nikaya*, i. 168.

stupid men seek to purify their persons by diverse modes of austerity¹ and penance, and preach the same to others. Some of them cannot recite their mantras properly; some lick their hands while reciting; some have no mantras at all; some wander about to rivers and springs; some adore cows, deer, horses, pigs, monkeys or elephants. Some try to become great by sitting at one place in silence with their legs bent under them. Some do penance by inhaling smoke or fire or gazing fixedly at the sun or resting on one foot or with an arm perpetually uplifted or moving about on the knees. Some pride themselves on their saluting Brahma, Indra, Rudra, Vishnu, Devi, Kumara, etc.

It was not for Siddharta to become involved with those “revealers of truth” in long and inherently futile metaphysical discussions or other such pointless pursuits. His only concern was to imbue man with the Dharma, which alone could instill in his heart the sense of compassion and oneness towards his fellow beings. This is also the essence of all the Faiths as given by the Teachings of Every Avatar.

The early Buddhists quite realized the urgent need for preserving Siddharta’s teachings uncorrupted before lapse of time should make those who had heard forget them, or remember them imperfectly. That task however, was easier said than done, with the result that a century later, at the second Council held at Vaisali (376 B.C.), there was created a more serious breach. There, a band of heretical monks, who chafed at the severe simplicity of the rules of the Order, demanded certain relaxations or indulgences. As the narrative states:

They broke up the old scriptures and made a new recension, attached new meanings to new words as if spoken by the Buddha and destroyed much of the spirit by holding to the shadow of the letter...

and, unlike the First Council, where the presence and authority of Siddharta’s earliest and greatest disciples provided the bond to withstand any serious dissension and division, the Second Council had no such protection, and the breach was not healed. Thus we can readily recognize the disadvantage of not having the written word, to guard against the obvious human failings of lapse of memory and differences of learning and background, in being able to assimilate and then recount the correct

¹Dhammapada, v. 141. “Not nakedness, not matted hair, not dirt, not fasting, not lying on the ground, not rubbing with ashes, not sitting motionless purify a man who is not free from doubt.”

concept of the original idea that a teacher wished to convey. How often we see that even the written word is no guaranty for retaining the correctness of doctrinal interpretation or conceptual truth against the hand of time. How much less effective mere human memory! For time erases human memory with far greater ease, and the meaning of Siddharta's doctrine was soon altered by His followers, unconsciously or deliberately, in an attempt to meet the challenges of an ever-evolving society.

The original Teachings of all the Avatars, Buddhas and Divine Teachers, even when recorded by their Authors, have succumbed to the ravages of human interpretation. In the absence of a system or mechanism of infallible interpretation of the Founder's original teachings — a system established by the Founder himself and accepted by his followers as infallible — divisions and differences are inevitable. As we have seen, Siddharta's Doctrine, too, did not long remain unscathed in those circumstances. For it was cleft with schisms soon after His passing, and by the close of its first century, fourteen different schools of thought on the meaning and purpose of Siddharta's Doctrine (Dharma) had already sprung up. Others soon crystallized.

Hence, the seeker who wants to determine what Siddharta's Doctrine actually was finds himself confronted with literally hundreds of works which all claim the authority of Siddharta and yet contain the most diverse and conflicting teachings and concepts. There is no way known to us to verify with certainty what Siddharta actually said. The fact is that the oldest stratum of the existing Scriptures can only be reached by uncertain inference and conjecture. The only thing possessed in common by various recent attempts to reconstruct the original Message of Siddharta is their acknowledgement that Siddharta's Doctrine was not what the Buddhists today conceive it to be. Each claimant to interpretation of Siddharta's Teaching champions a different perspective and asserts it alone to be true and complete. Some maintain that His Teaching propounded worship of His person as the path to salvation, while others identify His Doctrine with agnosticism and reduce it to a rational theory by eliminating from it everything supernatural, and yet others claim that it is totally alien to the belief in reincarnation. Transmitted for centuries only through word of mouth by the monks (bhikus) and wandering teachers (sannyasins), any quest for authenticity and verification of His precise Message and its meaning by these Buddhist spokesmen, so long removed from the time when Siddharta walked and taught on earth, is impossible of achievement and can only end in futility. This same

remoteness in time from Siddharta also renders it extremely difficult to draw any but the vaguest inferences concerning the ages of the various Scriptures of the Dharma and even these conjectures are predicated on linguistics and geographical relationships for doctrinal basis. In such circumstances one often experiences the error of dating such Scriptures with reference to one's arbitrarily arrived at notion concerning the original meaning of Siddharta's Teaching. But this method too is only partially satisfactory, since the composition of the most important works on the Dharma is known to have extended over very long periods, even centuries. Works like the *Mahavastu* and the *Lalitavistara* contain materials stretched out over eight centuries (200 B.C. to 600 A.D.). Likewise in the "*lotus of the Good Law*" or "*the Perfection of Wisdom of 8000 lines*," the last chapters are five centuries after the first!¹ These are some of the major problems confronting any attempts to derive from the Scriptures, with any degree of authority and authenticity, the primacy of one source over the other.

To the insistent questions then — whether the Pali Canon or some other part of the texts contained in the *Vinaya* and *Sutta-Pitaka* of the Sinhalese Theravadins can be accepted as representative of the oldest Buddhist tradition which approaches the actual life and time of Siddharta — or, do we have to assume that a more correct and a broader picture of Siddharta and His message can be gleaned from the Scriptures of other older schools as well as of the Mahayana? One can only state that in the light of what has already occurred to the Buddhist Scriptures, it is no longer possible to answer this question objectively. To any fair-minded scholar the value of the Pali Canon — the work of one sect, the Theravadins, besides which many other Hinayana sects existed at that time — does not rest either upon its authenticity of reporting or its originality of thought, but — notwithstanding the simplism that runs through its warp and woof — because it is the only complete body of extant Buddhist literature among the Hinayana. We should be very careful, therefore, in accepting for the Pali Canon any paramountcy among the Scriptures of the various Buddhist sects merely on its

¹ Chinese translations of the scriptures are more useful in regards to dates, since the dates are meticulously recorded and permit us to infer that such Scriptures might have been composed in India prior to that particular date. However, it is with the source material in Pali and Sanskrit that the problem of dating originates and hence cannot be alleviated by reference to the Chinese translations. The Chinese first collected the Tripitaka (i.e. the whole of the Buddhist Canon) in A.D. 581.

qualification of completeness, for how often in the process of a quest one discovers among shattered fragments and seemingly disjointed facts that germ of truth which has become obscured and contorted in the facade and form of a grand edifice.

Notwithstanding the inevitable decline and disappearance of the Dharma's relevancy within the heart of humanity, it should be already clear to all of us from its superhuman accomplishments that the Dharma is not a mere codification of existing rules, unearthed by human reason through a series of efforts arrived at through trial and error, however astute and erudite the author. It is the eternal Law.¹ Siddharta clearly portrays the origin of the Dharma as being independent² of the Buddhas, whose mission is merely to reveal the Dharma to humanity. And, as He also asserts, the mechanism of revelation of this universal law to humanity through the medium of the Buddhas is an exaltation from the Supreme.

*This dharma, which the Tathagata has fully known or demonstrated — it cannot be grasped, it cannot be talked about, it is neither a dharma, nor a non-dharma. And why? Because an Absolute exalts the Holy Persons.*³

It is a bestowal of Grace by the Unconditioned, like the sun, through its rays lighting up the moon for the eyes of the denizens of earth, to light their path in the night of spiritual darkness. But whether we accept His Teachings as infallible and perfect will, in the last resort, depend on what Siddharta means to us. Just another "wise worldling" or the Tathagata, the Divine Teacher — Buddha.

Hence, if after all we have seen of the Buddha-Dhamma we continue to see in the real Siddharta merely another wise man, who — leaving behind worldly entanglements pioneered the way of escape from the suffering involved with attachments to the ephemeral — we see not the Buddha at all but myriads of those ascetics and sramanas, since there is absolutely no way of differentiating Siddharta from those, if that is all that we believe Him to have accomplished. How, then, explain His warning to Sariputra⁴ that those who thought of Him as human and His

¹ In the *Samyutta-nikaya* we read that the Dharma is the unwavering Law of Causality (Karma) and that its recognition is the most precious jewel (ratna) of knowledge.

² *Anguttara-nikaya*, 3, 134, I, p. 286.

³ *Vajracchedika*, 176, 11a.

⁴ *Majjhima-nikaya*, I, 71-72. (pp. 61-62 of Text.)

teachings as man-made are consigned to hell, however high they may have advanced in spirit and intellect? Nor, as we have seen, was Nirvana any aim of His, Who had in His own Self embodied the highest Nirvana. If the Scriptures of any schools of Buddhist thought still continued to be interpreted by their champions in this manner, then they would be like the map of an ancient and eternal highway leading to the imperishable haven, having — alas — fallen into the hands of tree-dwelling and cave-dwelling beings who have no idea of their real meaning and purpose and who, unfortunately, look upon the map of this glorious path as only the quickest way to the treetop or to the cave's depth.

Others, who can read the map of this road and see it for what it really is and recognize the Avatars (Ram, Krishna etc.) and the Tathagatas (Kessapa, Siddharta, and the-yet-to-come Maitrya) as the great and unique Spiritual Suns, periodically lighting the way (of the eternal Dharma) — to them belong the future, for they are in tune with the ever-present need of humanity — Salvation — the only goal for which the Buddhas rise. No differences of names, whether it be Siddharta, or Kessapa or Maitrya, or Amitabha or Avalokitesvara, can detract from the importance of this fact concerning the true meaning and purpose of the Buddha-Dharma. In the following chapters we shall clarify these various names and fully explain the titles of these Buddhas, literal and allegorical, but it is the writer's hope that no one would — just because the climb is strenuous and the atmosphere to the sunlit sky is getting rarer — choose instead to descend once again to the "security" of his cave or treetop, for, as Siddharta has warned us, that is "no safe refuge."¹

By the preceding, we have described the standard by which the sincere seeker may gauge the validity and usefulness of the concepts as well as of the Scriptures of the various schools of Buddhist thought. It is not our purpose to go into the details of the ancient controversies among such schools, which continue even to this day, endlessly disputing whose the most ancient parchments.

A man is not an elder simply because his (hair) is grey, or, his age is ripe, but he is called grown old in vain. He in whom dwell truth, virtue, non-violence, restraint, control, he who is free from impurity and is wise, he is called an elder.²

Ours instead is the task to find once more the Guide, Who alone can

¹ Dhammapada, v. 188.

² Dhammapada, vv. 260, 261.

sweep away the debris and restore the essence of what once was a mighty pulsating Highway, pure and secure, leading to Salvation.

In the light of the aforesaid, we can see that no school, not the Hinayana, or the Mahayana, or Mahasangika or any other, can claim to possess either the monopoly on authenticity-of-concept or the mandate for interpretation of the phenomenon of the Buddha and the Dharma. Hence the usefulness of the Pali Canon — together with the Scriptures of the other Hinayana schools which are partly preserved in Sanskrit and partly in Chinese, as well as other Sanskrit works and chronicles and the Mahayana works — must all be recognized only to the degree that they do not deviate in their conceptual purity from the Tathagata, Siddharta, the Buddha. For as all schools of Buddhist thought agree, He is the most spiritually and ethically perfect being, and, notwithstanding the confusion created by those who would naively equate the unsupportable fables of His “miraculous” birth and other such stories with the truth of His Divine¹ Reality, there remains no doubt of His uniqueness² among the class of Buddhas, as boldly asserted by Siddharta Himself.

The proposition by some advocates of the Pali Canon, that the image of Siddharta which it projects is in general agreement with the Jain image of their own Tirthankaras, can be turned into a double-edged sword, capable of being interpreted as an attempt by a latter-day remnant of the Buddhist hierarchy to alter certain fundamental facets of their Founder’s Message to more closely resemble the doctrines of Jainism in order to bring it and its adherents into the Buddhist fold. Even a cursory examination of such propositions, equating Siddharta with the Tirthankaras, will make them untenable in the light of the following fundamental differences: The Jains regard themselves as a reformed Hindu Sect. The doctrine of Siddharta by His own statement is universal (exoteric) and unlike the philosophy of the Jains. While Jainism has only a following in India, around 3,300,000 (extrapolation from 1951 census) which is around a half-percent of India’s present population, Buddhism at least nominally can count its adherents in hundreds of millions all over the world, nearly equal in number to the total population of India, but

¹In the *Mahapadana Suttanta*, the Divinity of Siddharta is unequivocally asserted. The *Milindapanha* states that “the virtues of the Buddha are so great that the world cannot at one time support or produce more than one such being, ... the simultaneous appearance of two Buddhas at the same time would create confusion.”

²*Abhidharmakosha*, p. 172; *Milindapanha*, p. 237; *Brahmajala-Sutta*: Ashvaghosha’s *Life of Buddha*; and the *Sutta of 42 Sections*.

including among its adherents every race in Asia as well as some in the other four continents of the planet. Siddharta's "image," these proponents claim, was in general agreement with the Tirthankaras. What image? Certainly not a physical one. And, as Siddharta has stated, He was nothing if not His Dharma and could not be understood in any other way, "He who sees Me sees Dharma,"¹ and:

*Those who see me in any form or think of me in words, their way of thinking is false, they do not see me at all. The Beneficent Ones are to be seen in the Law (Dharma), theirs is the Law-body; the Buddha is rightly to be understood as being of one nature of the Law. He cannot be understood by any other means.*²

Hence we would like to know how the proponents of such claims would respond to both Siddharta's own clear deprecation (p. 145) of these Tirthankaras (or, "revealers" of the truth — thirthikas), and His total contradiction (page 89) of the teachings of Niggantha Nataputta (the Jain Tirthankara of His time) concerning Niggantha's concept of the Law of Karma — the most fundamental of principles in either of their Doctrines. And Niggantha, in his turn, was not at all averse to trying to dissuade one of his principal followers, the general, Siha,³ from approaching Siddharta to hear His Dharma,

At that time many distinguished citizens were sitting together assembled in the townhall and spoke in many ways in praise of the Buddha, of the Dharma, and of the Sangha, Siha, the general-in-chief, a disciple of the Niggantha sect, was sitting among them. And Siha thought: "Truly, the Blessed One must be the Buddha, the Holy One. I will go and visit him." Then Siha, the general, went to the place where the Niggantha chief, Nataputta, was: and having approached him, he said: "I wish, Lord, to visit the samana Gautama." Nataputta said: "Why should you, Siha, who believes in the result of actions according to their moral merit, go to visit the samana Gautama, who denies the result of actions? The samana Gautama, O Siha, denies the result of actions; he teaches the doctrine of non-action; and in this doctrine he trains his disciples." Then the desire to go and visit the Blessed One, which had arisen in Siha, the general, abated. Hearing again the praise of the Buddha,

¹ *Majjhima-nikaya*. Also *Ittivuttaka*, p. 97.

² *Vajracchedika-Sutra*, XXVI, p. 38.

³ *Mahavagga*, VI. 3.

of the Dharma, and of the Sangha, Siha asked the Niggantha chief a second time; and again Nataputta persuaded him not to go. When a third time the general heard some men of distinction extol the merits of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, the general thought: "Truly, the samana Gautama must be the Holy Buddha. What are the Niganthas to me, whether they give their consent or not? I shall go without asking their permission to visit him, the Blessed One, the Holy Buddha."

As the Chroniclers tell us, Siha became a convert to the Buddha-Dharma. Hence, the two Teachings, Buddhist and Jain, were by their very Founders considered dissimilar. We know that Jainism is clearly atheistic, but by now the reader can find no such hints from any of Siddharta's statements. Instead the reverse has been proved and therefore attempts by others to tag on the label of agnosticism to Siddharta's Doctrine either display their own ignorance of the statements of all the Divine Manifestations concerning the Absolute, or expose their own primitive anthropomorphism in regards to It, since Siddharta's are no different.

Others assert that because Siddharta was born in the area dominated by the Samkhya school of thought, He was a product of Samkhya thought, supposedly formulated by a sage of the name of Kapila, for whom Kapilavastu,¹ the city of Siddharta's birth and youth is named. The Samkhya thought postulates an explicit dualism: the eternal reality of spirit (purush) and nature (prakriti), and also speaks of a plurality of spirits. Nature is conceived of as comprising the qualities of goodness (sattva), passion (rajas) and inertia (tamas). Now while there is nothing all wrong or all right in the various man-made philosophies and doctrines that exist in the time that a Buddha rises, it is of course erroneous for us to think that the perfect Dharma which Siddharta revealed was, as He himself warns Sariputta (see pp. 61-62) against believing, some system

¹ Here, too, the various archeological authorities differ. See **A. Fuhrer, Antiquities of the Buddha's Birth Place in the Nepalese Tarai**, Vol. VI, 1896: "The name of Kapilavastu evidently signifies 'the tawny colored town', being situated on the Rohani (the modern Jamna) 'the red river'. As a curious fact it may here be mentioned that the whole surface of the soil, surrounding the present ruins of this ancient city, is of a reddish yellow colour produced by deep deposits of carbonate of iron in the upper strata. Its etymological derivation can therefore, not be the town of the Rishi (Sage) Kapila, the celebrated founder of the Samkhya philosophy, which, moreover, was Kapilasthana, the modern Hardwar on the Ganges." Moreover, the exact birth place of Siddharta is Lumbinigrāma some distance away from Kapilavastu.

“of His own devising, beaten out by reasoning and based on investigation” and thus a product of His times and surroundings. Nor is Siddharta’s Dharma to be conceived as a totally alien philosophy to any doctrine — Vedantic, Upanishadic, Samkhya or Yoga philosophy — still extant in Siddharta’s day. For these doctrines too, as we have already indicated, were predicated on Truths, now obscured and confused, which once radiated in their full glory and perfection from equally great Spiritual Suns, long ago set. There is no way of knowing what was the exact doctrine taught by that ancient sage — Kapila — after whom allegedly was named Kapilavastu, the supposed cradle of Siddharta’s formative years; nor is there any way to prove his authorship of the Samkhya doctrine, since it is well within the realm of possibility that Samkhya was a latter-day philosophy, far removed from the age of Kapila, and that the promulgators of the doctrine attributed it to him in order to gain for their philosophy the prestige of Kapila’s authority, just as there is evidence of attempts by the authors of the *Mahabharata*¹ to introduce the legend of Krishna, Who was removed by millennia from that epic, to bring together the various races of the India of that time with Krishna as the rallying point. There is, however, one passage in Krishna’s own words, cutting like a flash of lightning through the darkness of millennia past — darkness woven by Time’s inexorable march: “I am the Sage Kapila among the Siddhas,”² suggesting His former manifestations, which gives us a clue to the tremendous antiquity (well over 2300 years before Siddharta’s time) of Kapila and thus provides us with the considerable probability that certain striking dualisms propounded by the Samkhya doctrine in Siddharta’s day were the natural outcropping, born of erroneous interpretations and intentions of latter-day proponents, of what had been Kapila’s philosophy in its pristine state. For since Kapila, too, in remote antiquity, according to Krishna, was one of those Righteous Beings (Siddha) possessing the Divine Spark, there could be nothing in his doctrine which would contradict such statements by Krishna Himself as the following:

¹ The epic story of the **Mahabharata** depicts a society which was guided primarily by the principle of retribution and brings out the futility of violence. The **Mahabharata** War disorganised Hindu society and left the minds of men in ferment. This led to a quest for the abiding values of life which were explored by the Upanishads and simplified and established by Buddha.

² **Bhagavad-Gita**, X. 26. (Also see f.n. 2, page 71.) Siddharta’s own name meaning the “Righteous One” is also predicated on Siddha.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and also the ego — these constitute my Prakrit (nature), eight-fold divided. This is My lower (insentient) aspect; the other-than-this, by which the whole universe is sustained, know it as My higher (or sentient) aspect, in the form of Jiva (Purush or life principle, i.e., Spirit).

Arjuna, know that all beings have evolved from this two-fold Prakrit (aspects or nature) and that I am the source of the entire creation, and in Me again it dissolves.¹

— and nothing which would fundamentally negate Krishna's unequivocal assertion that, "There is nothing else besides Me, Arjuna,"² and, as we have already seen (pages 33, and 40), to which can be traced the inspiration for Siddharta's own clear acknowledgement of the One, the Causeless Cause — the Absolute. "There is, O monks, an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed" and "As all things originate from one Essence, so they are developing according to one Law." For Siddharta, with His own powers of penetration and omniscience, Who could trace His descent from the even more remote Okkaka (Ikshvaku or Ram, pages 109, 132) could hardly have been unaware of His own spiritual roots, coming from the same source as that of Krishna and Kapila, in the very city named after the latter and which was also His own. Hence, while attempts by "scholars" in search of "new knowledge" to fit the Buddha into the matrix of man-concocted doctrines are the normal lot of every great Faith and its Founder, most frequently in the case of Siddharta and His Dharma, yet these and future attempts in that direction are doomed when confronted by His own unequivocal assertions of His Divinity and the Divine Revelation of His peerless Dharma.

Unfortunately, however, the Reality of the Buddha-Dharma has long since ceased to play any part in our lives and has instead been substituted by meaningless practices and superstitious rites before statues of mud, stone, silver and gold produced by the hand of man mostly for commercial purposes — the very practices Siddharta emphatically forbade:

Rituals have no efficacy; prayers are vain repetitions and incantations have no saving power. But to abandon covetousness and best to become free from evil passions, and to give up all hatred and ill will, that is the right sacrifice and the true worship.³

¹ Bhagavad Gita, VII. 4, 5, 6.

² Ibid., VII. 2.

³ Milindapanha, p. 111. See also Dhammapda, vv. 19, 20.

His way was a way of living — not a way of outward appearances and empty talk — to forge us into impregnable barriers against the insidious inroads of moral decay.

However, despite the multitude of different concepts about Siddharta's Teaching, championed by the various schools of Buddhist thought, a few points of His Dharma are still nominally subscribed to by all Buddhists. Principally, they concern the fundamentals of a pure life as laid down in the Four Noble Truths¹ and the Noble Eight-Fold Path.² The Four Noble Truths are: Duhkha (sorrow), Samudaya (the cause of Sorrow), Nirodha (the removal of Sorrow) and Marga (the way leading to it). The Noble Eight-Fold Path sums up Siddharta's Doctrine on how to attain Nirvana. The first two stages deal with the correct attitude: Right View and Right Aspiration. The next three state the moral and social requirements to be met: Right Speech, Right Conduct and Right Means of Livelihood, and the last three concern the mental and spiritual disciplines necessary: Right Endeavour, Right Mindfulness, and Right Contemplation.

Despite the utter simplicity of these fundamental precepts of Siddharta's doctrine, the average person finds it easier, on the whole, to worship his gods than to practice their precepts in his everyday life. Hence the Buddha constantly reminded His followers that the Dharma is to be an act of living the life, a carrying out of one's duties towards one's fellow creatures, and not mere chanting of supplications. To enable His followers to be on guard against straying from the protection of His system, it is said that He asked them to constantly remind themselves of their Faith and their obligations by bringing to mind the three Jewels.³

To the Buddha for refuge I go.

To the Dharma for refuge I go.

To the Samgha for refuge I go.

For the second time to the Buddha for refuge I go.

For the second time to the Dharma for refuge I go.

For the second time to the Samgha for refuge I go.

¹ According to the **Mahabharata** the Hindus, too, conceived the Noble Truths as Four in number and defined them in the following manner: "TRUTH as mother, KNOWLEDGE as father, KINDNESS as wife, and MERCY as offspring."

² The Hindus conceived these as being represented by the eight godly traits symbolized in the **Bhagavad-Gita**, XI, 6 as, "the eight Vasus".

³ **Buddham saranam gachami!**
Dharmam saranam gachami!
Samgham saranam gachami!

For the third time to the Buddha for refuge I go.

For the third time to the Dharma for refuge I go.

For the third time to the Samgha for refuge I go.

In slightly altered form it is the creed for all the great Faiths. Here it simply depicts a universally accepted phenomenon in Religion — the Divine Manifestation, the Buddha — finding and proclaiming once again the eternal Dharma and entrusting it to the care of the Samgha to nurture it and tend it to grow in order to make it into a safe refuge for the humanity of that time.

Unfortunately, while empty chantings and yellow robes linger on, the spirit is no more. The Dharma is no longer able to motivate the rhythm of our hearts or the vibration of our minds. We have, most of us, totally disobeyed Him. How can we then expect to be enlightened despite this flagrant disobedience? The pure and peerless Dharma no longer lives in our acts toward our fellow beings, but exists only as some passive formula in the lifeless pages of books, or in temples of cold stone. Hardly one among ten thousand gives mind to the admonitions of Siddharta and cares to know His purpose for us. Even fewer bother to endeavour to tread the Noble Eight-fold Path.

Every Religion worth the name begins with a burst of spiritual enlightenment, like the dawn lighting up the night sky. In time it achieves its noonday brilliance and then finally its setting, and the night of the spirit follows to await yet another Avatar, a new Buddha — rising to bring forth a new awakening, new hope. The original direct contact and living belief in every Religion gives way to indirect and loose contact through intermediaries (monks, priests etc.), themselves far removed from the Source. The living faith, born of dynamic inquiry is replaced by complacency and institutionalized vested interests which guarantee salvation by ritualistic performances, such as bathing in a holy river, or making an offering at a famous temple, or worshipping a tooth or tree. Tourists travel the paths once taken by the devout pilgrims and the holy places become market places for adventurers who prey upon the unwary and superstitious. The disinclination of the masses to give up the easy life plays into the hands of those self-appointed guardians (the bhikus, sannyasins, acharyas, etc.) of man's soul, who further their own ambitions for power and pelf, and who survive and fatten only by feeding on their hapless victim — imprisoning the psyche and strangling the spiritual within man — until at last the Divine Sun appears once more to dispel the spiritual darkness and its night-creatures and permits the soul

of man to again breathe free. This is the story of man and His Religion. One without the other does not exist. And so it is for all of us, even more now as we survey our own situation, within whichever Faith we have placed our allegiance.

Having completely profaned the Dharma's precepts in every conceivable manner through our acts towards our fellow beings, we try to assuage both the Tathagata and Mara¹ by periodically offering sacrifices of some worthless trinket while all the time aware that the true sacrifice for achieving Nirvana does not consist of some material trifle or some rites to be performed only at fixed seasons but is an incessant operation every moment of our life where every function down to our very breathing is laid on the altar of purity. To recognize the magnitude of our present predicament we have only to ask ourselves — what if anything remains of that Triple Refuge (The Three Jewels) — the Buddha, the Dharma and the Samgha? Yes — and the Samgha?

¹The Personification of our Ignorance and its consequences.

THE SAMGHA

*... O mendicant, be not negligent. Let not your thought delight in sensual pleasures, ... that you may not cry out when burning. "This is suffering!"*¹

How goes it with the Samgha? What has the Samgha become today? It is, indeed, remarkable how closely interwoven the monastic community was with the life of the clans in Magadha in the first centuries of Buddhist history. The assemblage of monks composing the Samgha was a simple and natural instrument created by Siddharta in the India of that time to serve, by virtue of their special devotion, sacrifice and diligence, as the elder brothers to the lay community. The Samgha's mission was to emphasize for their own advancement of spirit and for the weal of the laity the concentrations and actions prescribed by the Dharma to attain Nirvana. Unfortunately, the five² simple commandments of the Buddha —

- 1) Abstention from taking lives on all occasions.
- 2) Abstention from taking what is not given, and covetousness.
- 3) Abstention from going wrong about sensuous pleasures.
- 4) Abstention from false speech.
- 5) Abstention from intoxicants, since they tend to cloud the mind.

— whose essential meaning was made perfectly clear by Siddharta to all, and which served to guard and retain the pristine purity of His message for the first three centuries after their inception, suffered a subtle but

¹ Dhammapada, v. 371.

² Sthananga-Sutra, p. 266. See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, XVII, (1-28).

lasting decline after Asoka's Royal Patronage. The Royal Treasury's takeover of the upkeep of the Wats and other places of worship and the maintenance of the monks, was tragically instrumental in loosening, if not entirely cutting off, the intimate contact which the laity of the villages had with their Samgha. This Royal Patronage permanently altered the nature and scope of the Samgha from a body formerly constituted of the most diligent and dedicated, to now include the thousands who joined the order without any real vocation, just because it offered, through the instrument of the Crown revenues and other Royal privileges, a fairly easy if not a downright luxurious existence. Much of the primitive simplicity as well as the pristine purity of the early monastic life was gone. The monks of the Samgha were no longer content with rags for their cloak but came to expect as their right the gifts of robes so lavishly distributed by the Royal Treasury during nearly a thousand years of intermittently accorded Royal Patronage to the Samgha, from the time of Asoka on to the reign of Harsha in India and even to this day in various Buddhist countries. Many ceased to practice their daily round of supplications for food, since regular meals cooked in their monasteries awaited them through Royal influence. Increasingly and speedily thereafter, they became captives of worldly wealth, dependent on outside support. The essential qualities of purity and renunciation were forgotten and gradually choked off by worldly accretions. The true motivating spirit of the Samgha had fled. The form remained as it does even to this day, and even this form thrives only in countries where it is supported by State Patronage.

No longer able to call forth that original fervor and intimate allegiance from the laity, and seeing its body overloaded with a preponderance of ease-seeking members, faced with the termination of Royal Protection and Patronage and the succession to power of Hindu kings unfriendly towards the Dharma, the Samgha was moved to shift the emphasis of the Dharma's thrust from the arena of personal striving for attaining Nirvana and focus it instead on the erroneous doctrines of rebirth and predestination, predicated on nebulously understood Karmic operations, open to extraneous influences and priestly interpretations. From there it was just one easy step to the body of magical nonsense which now so thoroughly pervades Buddhism. Forgotten was Siddharta's clear admonition:

I forbid you, O bikkhus, to employ any spells or supplications, for they are useless, since the Law of Karma governs all things. He who

*attempts to perform miracles has not understood the doctrine of the Tathagata.*¹

In such ways the Samgha was able to broaden the membership of the faithful without much attention to their true beliefs. And this expanded membership, in its turn, was vital for the support of the Samgha, now clogged with many who had taken the vows of monkhood to find an easy life. Such "success", if success it was, levied its own fatal price. For soon thereafter, reform movements arose within Hinduism to combat the overlain growth of superstition and magical practices in the "Samgha-Dharma" and won back many a recent convert from among the Buddhists in India. It is ironic that these reform movements which rose within Hinduism had much to inspire them by the teachings and example of Siddharta and the Samgha's own devotion and integrity during the early centuries of Buddhism, and, tragically, it was the Samgha this time, bereft of its original strength, that was no longer capable of protecting the Dharma from erosion and attack. Its eclipse from the land of its birth followed rapidly.

If there is still some venerable who doubts the reality of the Samgha's plight today, let him simply recount the Buddha's own reply to the Brahmin Bharadvaja when questioned of His usefulness to society.

Faith is the seed I sow; devotion is the rain; modesty is the ploughshaft; the mind is the tie of the yoke, mindfulness is my ploughshare and goad. Energy is my team and bullock, leading to safety, and proceeding without backsliding to the place where there is no sorrow.

And then examine how his own conduct is evaluated by the people in respect to that standard.

Time and conditions of different lands, their cultures and beliefs, worked further ravages, and one is compelled to admit that the Samgha has, alas, strayed too far from the example of Siddharta and the motivating essence of His Dharma, and consequently suffered too great a decline in its prestige and integrity to restore to itself, by any efforts of its own various fragmented and disputing factions, either singly or through some

¹ **Mahaparinibbana Sutta.** Miracles are also deprecated by the Hindu Scriptures:

"Why cool the flames, Yogi, stay the stream?

Why dost thou walk fast upward in the sky?

Why milk the bullock? Why magic dream?

Why these base feats of the juggler try?"

Also see **Bhagavad-Gita**, VI. 47.

collective action miraculously accomplished on the part of those same factions, a semblance of its former glory.

The various Buddhist sects are no longer able to provide any vision or guidance or constructive power but are only occupied in maintaining their own petty positions in an already atrophied hierarchy resting on a rapidly crumbling society from which the spirit has long since departed. They are unable to discern that the questions of our times have assumed new terms and thus cannot recognize that only if the Dharma is able to engage in alleviating the basic ills of society can it hope once again to attract the hearts and minds of an utterly disillusioned humanity.

Instead of transcending national limits, the Samgha in many, if not all, Buddhist countries has subordinated the interests of humanity to national goals and the narrow ambitions of national leaders. Equally open to historical scrutiny have been its involvements in the course of empire and conflict, similar to the acts of the clergy of the other ancient Faiths, totally against every principle of Siddharta's Teaching. Consequently it has all but lost the allegiance of the common man as well as the respect of the rulers, who see it as weak opportunistic and unprincipled.¹ Identical to the predicament of other ancient Faiths, gone is the fervor of the Dharma's apostolic age; gone too its summer heat. Decay and intrigue have swept away its very foundations; division and lassitude have eaten into its every fibre and rendered it incapable of answering the most pressing need of our times — world unity. Nothing short of Maitrya's presence can sweep away from the Dharma the morass of accretions which centuries of human greed and ignorance have created. He alone can recreate the pure concept of the Samgha and once again, through His Dharma, fashion it into the Safe Refuge for humanity.

¹ This in no way is meant to cast doubt on the sincerity and purity of some bikkhus who are still faithfully pursuing the Noble Eightfold Path or to diminish their individual attainments. The reference is to the Institution which, like the Institutions of all the other ancient Faiths has become atrophied and moribund, unable to serve any useful purpose, much less to attain its original goal.

8

BUDDHA MAITRYA-AMITABHA HAS APPEARED

*Now has the Moment come, O Blessed One,
for Thy Buddhahood; now has the time,
O Blessed One, arrived.*¹

There have been times in human history when progress stopped — resulting in a kind of eddy, a period of confusion. The last hundred years have been just such a time with the politicians and leaders of government — wandering between two epochs, one dead the other straining to be born — helpless and bankrupt before the onslaught of planetary developments and their demands. At such historical intersections the Avatar appears to lift humanity into a new consciousness.

There are those who say that conditions create persons and give rise to events. In the case of Man and his achievements such postulation may have an equal claim to validity. But our quest does not concern a merely human phenomenon. Like the sun which generates all things in its domain — completely independent of the circumstances prevailing in the solar system — the Avatar is the cause and not the creature of man's dominion and progress.

Alone and unaided — opposed and persecuted by the leaders of religion and government — the Avatar ultimately triumphs over His world and its times. The process by which He puts His stamp on history is as mysterious and inexplicable as the evidence of His achievement is irrefutable.

¹Nidana-Katha, p. 62 (Bombay Univ. Ed. 1953). See also *Anguttara-nikaya*, ii. 39 *Sutta-nipata*, 559; *Vinaya-Pitaka* i. 6, *Majjhima-nikaya*, i. 169.

No event in history has been so abundantly foretold as the long expected appearance of the Promised Redeemer for humanity's coming of age. The Scriptures of every Faith have prophesied concerning the advent of the Aeon Ender — the "Time" and "Place" of His Dawning. But no other Faith contains such details — albeit allegorical — about the Abode of Maitrya-Amitabha, His followers and His accomplishments in the time of His Advent as those contained in the texts attributed to Siddharta.

Unless those detailed descriptions concerning the various aspects of the coming new world are meant by Siddharta to serve as precise guideposts for the attainment of our goal — discovery of Maitrya-Amitabha here on earth — the whole elaborate structure would become purposeless, a waste of time on both Siddharta's part and ours. That certainly cannot be the case. And so we are now embarked on the quest for Maitrya, Whom we will surely discover if we seek Him with an open mind and a pure heart and take with us the real Siddharta as our Guide.

Of course by now we understand that we will not recognize Maitrya by the pictures that we see with our eyes, for Siddharta's pictures and images, too, are false — made from the imaginations of people hundreds of years later, people who never saw Siddharta. We too, even if we could fly back in time and place and stand before Siddharta as He walked the earth, would not understand His Reality just by looking at Him with our eyes. Otherwise the blind, who have no physical sight, could never know the Tathagata; yet we know that many blind people recognized the Tathagata, while, from among the many who saw Him with their eyes, only a few believed. Our ears, too, unless they are the organs of an open mind and a pure heart, are useless in this quest, just as the ears of those thousands of people who heard His sermons could not tell them that His Teaching was the pure Dharma. We know that while many heard Siddharta's Message of Salvation, only a few recognized its meaning and fewer still accepted it during His lifetime, as the Path to tread to attain Nirvana.¹

The real Siddharta, the Tathagata, the Buddha, was not a physical phenomenon.

¹The Brahmins, too, in Siddharta's time certainly recited the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. They recited them night and day ceaselessly — but they missed the essence of their meaning. Had they correctly understood the true purpose of those ancient scriptures they would have become followers of His Dharma.

Behold this painted image, a body full of wounds, put together, diseased, and full of many thoughts in which there is neither permanence nor stability.¹

Hence He is not recognizable to our senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste. Otherwise the crippled and the infirm would be deprived of His Dharma. He is like the Sun whose rising presence is felt and recognized by even the blind and the deaf, the crippled and the halting and by every sign in the world of nature which receives light and life from it. The Tathagata is a rare and unique Spiritual Significance and, as Siddharta tells us, He can only be recognized by the spiritual senses in each and every one of us.

Equally foolish are all these who adhere to the Tathagata through form and sound, and who in consequence imagine the coming or going of a Tathagata. For a Tathagata cannot be seen from his form-body. The Dharma-bodies are the Tathagatas.²

What is there, Vakkali, in seeing this vile body? Whosoever sees Dhamma sees me; whosoever sees me sees Dhamma. Seeing Dhamma, Vakkali, he sees me; seeing me, he sees Dhamma.³

So even if we were to accomplish the absolutely impossible and cut through time to reach the physical presence of Siddharta and see His physical form with our own eyes, we would not be greatly more qualified to gauge and comprehend the unique phenomenon of the Tathagata. Hence, with this fact always before us, and, our Guide, the true Siddharta, ever in mind, let us now take a last look at that wonderful Spiritual Sun as He was Himself departing from the ken of those who, like the grief-stricken Mallas of Kusinagara and others among His closest disciples — the Brahmin philosopher Subhadra and Ananda, Siddharta's own beloved cousin and chief disciple — gathered at His bedside to hear the last injunctions from their Teacher. Consoling the Mallas to stop grieving over that which must inevitably decompose, He addresses them:

It is indeed a fact that salvation cannot come from the mere sight of Me. It demands strenuous efforts in the practice of Dharma. But if

¹ Dhammapada, v. 147.

² Dhammadgata-Ashtasahasrika, XXXI, 512-13. Also Parajika-Suttavibbanga, 1. (That is why in the early iconography He is represented, not in human form but by such symbols as that of the "Wheel of the Law", of which He, like the other Avatars, is the immanent mover.)

³ Samyutta-nikaya, 22, 87, 13, III, p. 120. See also Mahabharata ("Where Krishna is, there is Victory; Where Dharma is, there is Krishna; Where Dharma is, there is Victory.")

someone has thoroughly understood this my Dharma, then he is released from the net of suffering, even though he never cast his eyes on Me. A man must take medicine to be cured; the mere sight of the physician is not enough. Likewise the mere sight of Me enables no one to conquer suffering; he will have to meditate for himself about the gnosis I have communicated. If selfcontrolled, a man may live away from Me as far as can be; but if he only sees my Dharma then indeed he sees Me also. But if he should neglect to strive in concentrated calm for higher things, then, though he live quite near Me, he is far away from Me. Therefore be energetic, persevere, and try to control your minds! Do good deeds, and try to win mindfulness! For life is continually shaken by many kinds of suffering, as the flame of a lamp by the wind.¹

Despite these wonderful assurances, the Mallas were heart-broken at the impending departure of their Best-Beloved from their midst and could not contain their sorrow. During the night, after the tearful Mallas had departed, Subhadra, the Brahmin philosopher of Kusinagara, came to ask some question of Siddharta. Ananda, fearing that this might lead to a longer discussion than the sick Teacher could bear, would not admit him. But Siddharta, hearing the sound of their talking and inquiring as to the intent of the discussion, told Ananda to let Subhadra come. The latter began by asking whether the six great teachers² knew all things as they said they did, or whether they knew some, or none. ‘‘This is not the time for such discussions,’’ was the answer; ‘‘listen and I will preach to you My law,’’ and Siddharta declared to him, as He had often proclaimed, that salvation could not be found in any system which ignored the virtuous life — the eight stages³ of the Path of Holiness, which begins with purity and ends in love. Subhadra accepted the Dharma by this discourse of Siddharta. Siddharta then turned to His Disciples and addressed them collectively:

Everything comes to an end, though it may last for an aeon. The hour of parting is bound to come in the end. Now I have done what I could do, both for myself and for others. To stay here would from now on be without any purpose ... Hereafter this my Dharma, O

¹ Ashvaghosha’s *Buddhacarita*, XXV, 33-4, 54-60.

² Purana Kassapa, Mikkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambalin, Pakudha Kaccayana, Nigantha Nataputta, Sanjaya Belatthaputta. (All of these, Siddharta on previous occasions had bested and discredited.)

³ *Dhammapada*, vv. 273, 274.

monks, shall abide for generations and generations among living beings.¹ Therefore, recognize the true nature of the living world, and do not be anxious; for separation cannot possibly be avoided.

— after which, He asked Ananda to approach Him and said:

Ananda, you may perhaps begin to think, 'the word is ended now, our Teacher is gone'; but you must not think so. After I am dead let the Law and the Rules of the Order, which I have taught, be a Teacher to you ...

*Why should I preserve this body of flesh, when the body of the excellent law will endure? I am resolved, having accomplished my purpose and attended to the work set me, I look for rest!*²

Then Ananda, who had retreated to the entrance of the vihara and, leaning against its doorpost, was weeping at the thought of Siddharta's imminent departure and wondering who would teach him since he was still a learner and yet to work out his salvation, was once again summoned by Siddharta to approach. Ananda came and reverentially knelt beside the couch of his beloved Lord and heard Siddharta's words:

*O! Ananda; do not let yourself be troubled, do not weep. Have I not told you that we must part from all we hold most dear and pleasant? No being soever born, or put together, can overcome the dissolution inherent in it; no such condition can exist. For a long time, Ananda, you have been very near to me by kindness in act, and word, and thoughtfulness and acts of such love as never varies and is beyond measure: You have always done well. Persevere, and you too shall be quite free from this thirst of life, this chain of ignorance.*³

Siddharta, perfectly aware of the thought in the minds of His disciples and knowing full well the devastating impact His separation would have on them, once again and for the last time impressed upon them the certainty of the ever-recurring law of Buddha-rising. And to Ananda's insistent question: "Who shall teach us when Thou art gone," answered that:

In due time, monks, there will arise in the world an Exalted One named Metteya, an arahat, fully awakened, full of wisdom and a

¹ Dhamma is the door to the eternal (Vinaya-Pitaka, i. 5).

² Digha-nikaya, II. 124-126. See also Dhammapada, v. 273: Of the paths the Eightfold is the best; of truths the Four Sayings; of Virtues, Freedom from Attachment is the best; of men They who are Possessed of Insight.

³ Ashvaghosha's Buddhacarita, XXV, 33-4, 54-60, 62-4. See also Digha-nikaya — Mahaparinnibbana-Suttanta.

perfect guide, himself having trodden the path to the very end, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as an educator, teacher of gods and men, an Exalted Buddha, just as in the present period I am now. From his own understanding and penetration of it, he will proclaim (the nature of) this universe with its gods, Maras, and gods of the Brahma worlds, gods and men, just as I proclaim them from my own understanding and penetration of it. And he will proclaim the teaching that is lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, and lovely in its consummation; he will proclaim it both in the essence of its meaning and in its outward form; the higher life will he make known in all its fullness and in all its purity, even as I do now. He will be the head of an order of many thousand monks, just as in the present period I am the head of an order of many hundreds.

Then Ananda asked: "How shall we know Him?" And Siddharta replied: "He will be known as Metteya, which means 'He whose name is Kindness'."¹ Finally, turning to the other disciples, Siddharta then praised the insight and kindness of Ananda and then uttered His last words:

*The parts and powers of man must be dissolved;
Work out your salvation with diligence!*²

This, as far as can be understood by human minds, was the Spiritual Sun which shone over humanity 2,500 years ago.

As we can easily see, even from the methods devised by our own education systems, each new teacher depends on others preceding him, and this phenomenon of ratification of one's position with regard to one's predecessor is crucial in the context of Religion (the Divine Teachers and Their Revelations). For there, since centuries separate one Avatar from another, it is even more important for the newly arisen Avatar or Buddha to substantiate His claim before the followers of His Divine Predecessor with regard to past prophecies concerning His own advent. Siddharta, too, clearly adhered to this rule of prophetic succession. As we have already seen (pp. 109-110), Siddharta has acknowledged that in His past "existences" He was Ram, and subsequent to that Krishna,

¹ **Digha-nikaya**, IV. 26. 25 (Mahaparinibbana-Suttanta). (Pali) Metteya = Maitrya (Sanskrit).

² See also Ashvaghosha's **Buddhacarita**, XXV, 62-4, 67-81. The Hindus, too, use identical expressions: "Arjuna, all beings are unmanifest before they were born, and will become unmanifest again when they are dead; they are manifest only in the intermediate stage. What occasion then for lamentation?" **Bhagavad-Gita**, II. 28. See also **Katha-Upanishad**, III. 9.

Whose various names and designations, e.g. Black Kanaya (lit. Krishnakanaya),¹ Vasudeva, Kessava, all are mentioned in the *Ghata-Jataka* of “The Ten Slave Brethren”, which also briefly describes the rest of the Krishna legend, including His town of Dwarka and the name of His brother Balaram. Oddly enough, we do not have such assertions of relationship or association from Siddharta in regards to any of the three Buddhas (Konagamana, Kakasandha and Kessapa) Who preceded Him. Likewise when describing His relationship with Ram as narrated by the *Dasaratha-Jataka*, Siddharta is again quite precise in giving the names of Ram’s parents, His wife Sita, His brother Bharata and other minute details, leading one to believe that these were the real persons of His past cognizance and were regarded by Him as the real Buddhas (Manifestations), Whom He later called by names resembling their titles (pp. 116-7) — Ramachandra by Kakasandha, Kessava by Kessapa and Manu by Konagamana.

But before all else, the true seeker on this quest for the greatest of all goals, the discovery of the Divine Manifestation — Maitrya — must clearly understand that the phenomenon of the Avatar is not and cannot be accessible to easy and careless search. Otherwise anyone with little or no interest in seeking it could chance upon it and, unaware of its import, remain indifferent to its superlative significance for the life of the human race. As Siddharta tells us (page 52), this is the rarest of all phenomena in human history: “Rarely, O monks, do Tathagatas appear in the world ...” and can only be truly recognized by those rare souls who have assiduously sought the summit of purity and, detached from all else, await expectantly for the Divine Advent.

Now just as we achieve greater accuracy in determining the time as well as the location of sunrise by investigating a series of sunrises, so, too, can we better recognize the Spiritual Sunrise of Maitrya — its location as well as the time — by investigating a number of past Spiritual

¹ Krishna implies black or dark. Moreover, the well nigh total correlation between Buddhist legends and the much earlier but similar Hindu stories becomes further evident when we read the names of the twenty-four Predecessors (Buddhas) of Siddharta compiled by the Third Buddhist Council held 240 years after Siddharta’s passing under the auspices of Asoka in his capital of Pataliputra. The name of the fifth Buddha is Raivata, exactly the same as the name of the fifth Manu (see f.n. 2, 132), acknowledged by the Hindus. It is obvious from this list of the twenty-four Buddhas given in **Buddhavamsa** (History of the Buddhas) in the last book of **Khuddaka-nikaya** (Second Pitaka) that it is simply a later imitation of Hindu compilations of their own Avatars and as we have seen also includes the names held in the highest esteem by the Brahmins themselves.

Sunrises, since all the Spiritual Suns constitute the perfect links in that infinite chain of Divine Revelation, both in Their purpose and Their dawning. No one who has come this far in our quest can examine the reality of that phenomenon which was Siddharta the Buddha and see Him only as some isolated event within the grand panorama of the succession of Spiritual Suns. His uniqueness lies in His own words that He was of the class of Avatars, the Buddhas — “the Buddhas who have been and who shall be, of these am I” and as He proclaimed, “what they did, I do.”¹ As the first step in our search let us find out if this is indeed the time foretold by Siddharta for Maitrya’s promised advent.

The ancient Hindu philosophers were the first to conceive of the cyclical phenomenon of Divine (or Cosmic) Time and to construct a detailed numerology concerning its operation in the affairs of humanity, of which the most momentous event was the recurring advent of the Avatar (Divine Manifestation) Himself. Siddharta in His turn was fully aware of His Hindu heritage, both its spiritual content and its prophetic significance, and as we have already seen He subscribed to it in His Teaching and cited it to support His own advent among the Hindus, which they conceived as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu (the Supreme) in this particular aeon (Mahayug or Kalpa or Pali: Kappa). Manu and Ram He was to them and Krishna, now returned as Buddha, and He Who will again, as Kalki Avatar (the Manifestation for the Aeon), appear for fulfilling the prophecies relating to Him and usher in the promised Satyug (millennium of Righteousness). And Siddharta, according to His anecdotes of His past cognizances as related in the *Jataka Tales*, affirms His own identity with the Avatars of Hinduism² and prophecies for His own disciples the advent of Maitrya the “Aeon Ender” of this “auspicious aeon.”³

Bearing in mind these points as well as our previous suggestion that in the interest of achieving greater accuracy for locating Maitrya we must investigate as wide a panorama of the recurrence of these Avatars, the Buddha-risings, as is within our power to accomplish, in order to examine the striking correlation already evident between Hinduism’s affirmation of its Avatars (Manu, Ram, Krishna as well as Siddharta and the yet-to-appear Kalki Avatar) and Siddharta’s mention of the three

¹ See page 53.

² **Dasaratha Jataka**, 472 (Also **Digha-nikaya**) (Part I Bombay Univ.) Also **Ghata Jataka** (454), **Jataka** 530 and **Govinda Jataka**. See also pp.109-10 and f.n.s. 1, 2, 3 on p. 110.

³ The Buddhist call this Bhadra Kalpa meaning “aryan aeon”.

Buddhas of the past (Konagamana, Kakasandha and Kessapa), Himself, and Maitrya, the future Buddha — we must determine from such investigation a precise pattern of these Buddha-risings. Such a pattern is indeed discernible in the available historical data concerning the Divine Manifestations of both these great Faiths (Hinduism and Buddhism), which, even to a superficial observer of the information already presented, conveys a picture of substantial — if not complete — intertwining between their historical and cultural backgrounds and their spiritual beliefs. This is the only rational way for us to pursue our quest to its goal. And already one very significant point has begun to emerge from Siddharta's listing of the five Buddhas Who comprise this present "auspicious aeon" and the five Avatars acknowledged by the Hindus for this same present Kalpa (aeon), namely that the Kalki Avatar ("Aeon Ender") awaited by Hinduism could be none other than Siddharta's own Promised One — Maitrya Himself. And this is especially plain to see since the prophecies of both the Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures refer to the only aeon which could possibly lend itself to acceptance by both Faiths — namely this present aeon, our own Age. Hence for the purpose of historical accuracy it must be recognized that it is to the older Hindu Faith, in which Siddharta's own appearance is so inextricably woven, that we must turn, for obtaining the full perspective of the periodic occurrence of these Spiritual Suns, and by calculating within the Hindu frame of Divine Time, subscribed to by both Hindus and Buddhists, verify the relationship between Kalki Avatar and Maitrya and ascertain if this is indeed a single occurrence and if these two names refer to the one great Divine Teacher expected by both these Faiths.

So let us now commence our investigation into the three essential aspects of our quest — the Time, the Place and the Person.

THE TIME

Hindu philosophy gives great precision to the periodicity of cosmic ages and views Divine Time as cyclical and comprising distinct periods called Yug (or age). Just as a single rotation of the earth consists of four equal periods, so also, the cycle of Divine Time called Mahayug¹ (or Great Yug), consists of four yugs, which, not all equally proportioned nevertheless bear a distinct relationship to the earth's own periods of light and darkness.

Buddhism prefers to give different names to the same concept, e.g., the yug is known as the "incalculable" (Pali: *asankheyya*) and four *asankheyyas*,² comprise one aeon or *Kappa* (Pali for the Sanskrit: *Kalpa*). Moreover, in Buddhism, just as in Hinduism³ the yug or *asankheyya* is represented by a wheel of 12 spokes⁴ signifying further division, symbolic of the revolutionary period of the earth and the equal division of that period into the four seasons known to that area of the world. The number four has great significance in the permutations and combinations of

¹ Also known as *Kalpa* (Sanskrit), or Cycle or Aeon. The Buddhists also accepted the division of the day into four parts (Ashvaghosha's *Buddhacarita*, XIV, 1-9, 47-52, 83-108).

² Theravadin sources generally speak of four *asankheyyas* (see *Jataka*, I. 2), while Mahayana literature has listed as few as 3 and as many as 33 (*Abhidharmakosha*, III. pp. 188-89 and *Mahaprajnaparamita-Shastra*).

³ *Rig-Veda*, I. 164. 115 etc. See also *Atharva-Veda*, X. 8.4.

⁴ The Hindus long before the time of Krishna believed in the year of 12 months, symbolized by the 12 sons of Aditya (the Sun). See *Bhagavad-Gita*, XI. 6. Also *Bhagavad-Gita* X. 35. "Among the twelve months of the Calendar I am Margasira (15 Nov. — 15 Dec.); among the seasons, the vernal season."

Hindu-Buddhist numerology and predictions, and seems to be solidly founded on both the fundamental divisions of the rotation and revolution of the earth and the spiritual pillars, the Four Vedas,¹ acknowledged by all the Indo-aryans, most certainly including Siddharta and His disciples. Four is also the number of the Noble Truths preached by Siddharta, which on occasion He called the Four Aryan Truths.²

The only Mahayug, or Cycle or Kappa or Kalpa of which both Hindu and Buddhist numerology has any definite knowledge in the context of historical time is the present Kappa, whose duration is reckoned to be 12,000 years³ and which in Sanskrit is called *Devanam Chaturyugam*⁴ (named — “The Age of Divine Enlightenment” also known as “The Godly Age of Awareness”) and according to these same sources, consists of the four ages (or *asankheyyas*) called *KRETA* (or *SAT*), *TRETA*, *DWAPAR* and *KALI* supposedly the present.

The legends of the other Aryan people, the Iranians, also support the prophetic vision contained in the Hindu Scriptures, and like the Hindus, the ancient Iranians⁵ recognized the four cosmic ages comprising one Kalpa or Mahayug and referred to these four yugs by the names of the metals known to them at the time. (These are gold, silver, iron and “iron alloy.”)⁶ And they also accept 12,000 years as the span of one Cosmic cycle.⁷ Also mentioned by the Iranian-aryans and disciples of Zoroaster (the other Aryan Avatar)⁸ is the tree⁹ of Divine Time having seven branches, again designated by metals: gold, silver, bronze, copper, tin,

¹ See f.n. 2, page 73. Oldest Scriptures of the Indo-aryans. Siddharta is said to be knower of the Vedas or of the Vedanta (*Samyutta*, i. 168; *Sutta-nipata*, 463). He says that ‘there are these four truths of the Brahmins which have been realized by me by my own higher knowledge and made known.’ (*Anguttara*, IV. 185, *Samyutta*, XXII, 90.)

² (*Aryasaccani*): That there is suffering (*Dukkha*), that it has a cause (*Samudaya*), that it can be suppressed (*Nirodha*), and that there is a way to accomplish this (*Marga*), the ‘Path’.

³ *Manu*, 1.69. See also *Kalki-Puran* 3.5.12. “*Dwadshabd Sahshren Devanam Chaturyugam*,” meaning 12,000 years is the four-part age of the gods.”

⁴ *Mahabharata*, III. 12.826.

⁵ *Sudkar-nask* (*Denkart*, IX. 8).

⁶ These same metals are also mentioned in *Bahman-Yast*, I. 3.

⁷ *Bundahism*, Ch. I *Ibid.*; XXX. 18.

⁸ Zoroaster pronounced Zarthostra in ancient Iranian, means ‘Immortal star or Eternal light (from “Zar” ever-living and “Ostra” or “astra” meaning star or light). This is similar to Dipankara (see pp. 57-8) one of the Buddha’s titles.

⁹ *Bahman-Yast*, II. 14.

iron and “iron alloy,”¹ corresponding to their concept of the seven-fold wisdom² mentioned in both Hinduism and Buddhism. According to those ancient Iranian and Zoroastrian traditions, the aeon which spans 12,000 years is divided into 4 periods of 3,000 years each. The first 3,000 years is the span of Creation. The second 3,000 comprise the age of Divine Rule; the third 3,000 years represent a period when human will, symbolized by ignorance and its offspring evil, conflicts with Divine Will, and the final 3,000 years represent the period of struggle in which human will reverts to the wisdom of acceding to Divine Will. We can further appreciate the close correlation between the Indo-Aryans and their Iranian brethren as we learn that not only the span of the aeon consisted of 12,000 years for all of them and that it was divided into four periods or yugs but that these time intervals had their importance and became meaningful only as they were either related to, or indicated the appearance of the Divine Manifestation.

Thus in Zoroastrianism, as in its sister Aryan Faiths of Hinduism and Buddhism, there exist clear references to the advents of other Spiritual Redeemers³ and the prophecies pertaining to their times and locations. During our aeon’s final world age of 3,000 years the Zoroastrians expect three Saviors. One approximately a thousand years after Zoroaster and the other two, Hoshidar Bomit⁴ and Shah Bahram Varjavand⁵ like

¹ This last metal, “iron alloy” (steel), mentioned in the Scriptures of the Iranian Aryans both as the metal of the last of the four ages and the metal of the last of the seven branches of the Cosmic tree has a special connotation. It is a mixture signifying unity.

² The seven Keshvars or zones into which the earth was divided, i.e. the (4) directions (East, West, North and South), two antipodal and one the center. Also known as the Seven Immortals in the **Fravardin Yast**, XXII. 82-3. The number seven has mystical significance in all the Faiths, e.g. the “seventh heaven”, etc. It is also vividly symbolized in the physical realm by the seven basic steps of crystals in nature which create all the colors of the spectrum and which when superimposed on each other in harmony, create the brightest light — white.

³ Saoshyants meaning “Benefactors” of the community.

⁴ Hoshidar: Hosh means Awareness, Enlightenment, Righteousness, or Knowledge, while “dar” means entrance-way or gate, also implying “possessor”. Hence Hoshidar means the Gate of Knowledge or the Possessor of Righteousness, or Enlightenment, i.e.: Buddha. Boom is the ancient Iranian and Sanskrit (Bhoom) name for land (earth or terrain) and the suffix “it” or “i” (pronounced “ee”) means “of”. Hence “Boomit” means “of this land” in this case Iran. Thus indicating that this Savior (Hoshidar Bomit The Gate of Righteousness or Enlightenment of Iran) is to appear in Iran.

⁵ Shah means Lord. Also used for the Supreme God in ancient Iranian and is a derivative from the Sanskrit “Asha”. “Bah” means splendor or Glory (Sanskrit: “Bha” Arabic: “Baha”) and “Ram” in all Indo-Aryan languages is also another term for the Supreme Seer.

the “Twin Miracles” expected by the Buddhists, or the two Ashwins awaited by the Hindus,— to appear contemporaneously.

But we shall deal with this “expectation” later in conjunction with its counterpart in the Hindu and Buddhist prophecies. Although by now, it should have become evident to the reader that the legends and logos¹ of all the Aryan people exhibit very great similarity, and this remarkable correlation should serve as the best instrument available to us, who are so far removed in time, for precisely determining the information from their Scriptural prophecies about the advent of the Aeon Ender — Maitrya — concerning the time of His appearance, the location and His background.

However, before we examine this Kappa, which is the only Kappa relevant to the present history of the human race, let us digress briefly for the sake of future clarity and remove from the context of this Kappa the irrelevant dates and periods and their references to mythical personages mentioned in the Buddhist Scriptures and erroneously interpreted by most schools of Buddhist thought as conditions and signs related to the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the advent of Maitrya. Let us look at the most popular example and see how ridiculous would be the task of deriving any meaningful comparison with our present Kappa and its time scale:

In the time of the first Buddha Vipassi, who made His appearance 91 Kappas ago, the length of a human life was 80,000 years, at that of the second Buddha Sikki (31 Kappas ago), it was 70,000 years and so on until the appearance of the seventh Buddha, Siddharta Gautama, when human life had been reduced to only 100 years.²

Varja (Sanskrit Varsh) means source, origin in the sense of lineage or nation or race and therefore it also denotes “all-encompassing” or universal. The variant of Varja is Vajra which in Sanskrit means impenetrable or a diamond. It is also used as “irresistible” symbolic of the cutting quality of diamond. “Vand” or Avand (Sanskrit: Wan or Van) means bringer, or carrier also used in the sense of supporter and possessor. Hence Shah Bahram Varjavand means Supreme Splendor of the Omnipotent or “the Glory of God”.

¹ The Gathas, Yasts (Avestan Verses, Sanskrit: Gita meaning “Song”) are composed in a traditional style and metre greatly resembling that of the Vedas of the Hindus. Moreover, like Varuna, who is the lord of rta (the law), Ahura is the lord of ash (the law). As Varuna is closely allied with Mitra, so is Ahura with Mitura the sun-god. These, besides many others (pp. 131-2), point to the common religion of the then undivided Indo-aryans and Iranians. And the reader will also find similar affinity between Asoka’s India and Iran.

² Digha-nikaya, II, 2-7.

Hence, while the above excerpt clearly reaffirms the Hindu-Buddhist concept of time as a limitless phenomenon we can, with no great effort, also see that the passage cannot provide coherent or rational perspective to any historical occurrence, either of time or person. For the simple reason that the span of “years” (80,000, and 70,000) as well as number of Kappas (91 and 31 respectively), clearly put any such events and phenomena totally outside our present Kappa. They occurred 91 and 31 Kappas ago! To try to equate our present calculations with such fictitious time scales of the unimaginably remote past, of whose conditions, standards of measurements of time, communications etc. we have absolutely no notion, would be to equate a rocketship with a bullock-cart or the atomic clock with the time-sense of the man of a million years ago. We have no way of knowing what our remote ancestors conceived as units of time. Whether early man calculated his time according to the earth’s daily rotation or how, without any knowledge of decimals, he could gauge units beyond 10, we simply can never know. Even if we are charitable and state that our remote ancestors calculated their time by days, which to them meant years, and hence 80,000 years could mean 80,000 days divided by 365, which comes approximately 220 years, it would still be nonsense to assume this for, as we have stated, how could they of long ago maintain that vital sense of continuity in their time-keeping, when the very concept of such numbers staggers even our imaginations, despite modern advances and accuracy and preservation of records, such as microfilms, time-capsules etc. Hence, with all due respect to the principle of cyclical time and the firm belief that the rational soul, the *homo sapiens*, has had a very long history on this planet, with great civilizations having risen and fallen thousands of centuries ago and been lost in the oblivion of time, we must nevertheless see from the aforesaid that no meaningful relationship can be derived from the figures in the above excerpt from the *Digha-nikaya*, except in the allegorical sense of describing in each Kappa a period of spring, summer, autumn and winter — e.g., the Buddha Vipasi might have appeared in the first asankheyya (or Yug) of His particular Kappa (91 aeons ago) and the Buddha Sikhi might have arisen in the second asankheyya of His particular and totally distinct Kappa, removed by a span of 60 aeons from the time of Buddha Vipasi and separated from our present aeon by 31 aeons. And even though the text in the *Digha-nikaya* lists Buddha Vipasi as the first Buddha and Buddha Sikhi as the second and Buddha Siddharta Gautama as the seventh, it should be clear that

these must never be taken as following each other consecutively, but be regarded as their order of appearance in their own non-sequential and wholly unrelated Kappas, separated from each other by tens of thousands of years. And of the actual numbers of Buddhas in the Kappas of Buddha Vipasi or Buddha Sikhi, we have absolutely no idea.¹ This is the only way to understand this oft-quoted and misunderstood excerpt which is totally useless for our purpose in determining the time of the advent of Maitrya. Otherwise, the unanswerable question — “to which Kappa did Buddha Siddharta Gautama belong?” — remains.

The Buddha Siddharta Gautama has clearly answered it (see page 116) for His own period,² which is also our Kappa (aeon) and we, if we are to be faithful to the utterances ascribed to Him, can do no less than accept them.

As the reader will readily see, our present “auspicious aeon” (Kappa or Mahayug) is to have only five Buddhas and their names are clearly listed, thus bearing out our previous statement concerning the meaningless references to the various Buddhas of remote aeons of the past.³ No mention is made of the Buddha Vipasi or of the Buddha Sikhi in the above excerpt, nor is Siddharta listed in it as the seventh Buddha, in this our present Kappa, but only as the fourth, while the fifth and last Buddha, the “Aeon Ender” is Maitrya.

As we have already noted (p. 116) Siddharta, according to the oldest Scriptures,⁴ mentions the names of the three Buddhas⁵ who appeared before Him in this our present, “auspicious aeon,” and these are given as Kakasandha, Konagamana and Kessapa. While in other Buddhist

¹ To get some idea of the futility of trying to attach to our present aeon (Kappa) these wholly unimaginable and completely unrelated epochs of time, we need only recall Siddharta’s own claim of having knowledge of His past existences for 91 aeons (**Majjhima-nikaya** [Jataka, 483]), stretching back to 38, 971 million years! Hence an average aeon (Kappa) will be 38,971 million years divided by 91 aeons or approximately 428 million years — an utterly meaningless figure except as an indication of the ability of the Indo-aryans to pile numbers upon numbers.

² See also **Bhagavad-Gita**, IX, 7: “Arjuna, at the end of every Kalpa (Brahma’s day) all beings enter My Prakriti (Nature) and at the beginning of every Kalpa, I bring them forth again.” Essentially denoting the cyclical aspect of creation at aeonian intervals of time.

³ p. 175, concerning the excerpt from **Digha-nikaya**, II, 2-7.

⁴ Sutta-pitaka (Manorathaparani, 87-90). See also **Digha-nikaya**, 14.4. II. p. 2 and **Samyutta-nikaya**, 12, 2, II, pp. 5-9.

⁵ See pp. 116-117. (also f.n. 1 p. 117)

Scriptures¹ many more Buddhas are mentioned, in some even hundreds of Buddhas, some named while others just explained as ciphers, yet as we have already explained, we cannot make any meaningful calculations of time beyond our own Kappa, our present aeon, so we can have no idea of any of those hundreds of Buddhas named or unnamed outside our present Kappa. Therefore, it would be both futile and confusing to bring into our investigation of this present aeon (Kappa) anything of the remote and purportedly much more extensive aeons, the origins and conditions of which are forever lost in the mists of Time. We can and must concern ourselves only with our own Kappa, the Devanam Chaturyug, The Age of Divine Enlightenment of the Hindus, this “auspicious aeon” mentioned by Siddharta. As stated, we do not possess historical evidence for even the three Buddhas (Kakasandha, Konagamana and Kessapa) named by Siddharta as having preceded Him in this Kappa, nor does any record of the Teachings or the adherents of even Kessapa, the last Buddha who preceded Siddharta, survive today. An utter blank also confronts our attempts to ascertain anything about His earlier predecessors, Konagamana and Kakasandha, leaving us with three choices: (1) these three Buddhas existed in infinitely remote time (which seems highly unlikely, as they are listed as being in this same Kappa of 12,000 years), (2) all records of their teachings are completely obliterated (also unlikely especially in regards to Kessapa, since other records equally old but far less significant have been preserved and are available to us), and (3) these three are indeed the three Hindu Avatars known by different names to the Buddhists, who, together with Siddharta and Maitrya (“Kalki” for the Hindus) yet-to-come, are the five Who were to comprise this aeon which the Hindus also acknowledge and recognize. This last possibility is the only viable one in the light of all the conditions noted, since the historical evidences of these three Hindu Avatars (Manu, Ram and Krishna), and their Teachings and adherents are still extant, as are the periods of their appearance through legend and logos, clearly stipulated in the various Hindu Scriptures — Scriptures which also contain prophecies concerning the appearance of Siddharta long before His actual advent. The salient facts supporting this third and only viable choice are the proper sequences of time, place and person present in the Hindu Scriptures, clearly including and acknowledging Siddharta the Buddha as the fourth

¹ Anagatavamsa, Lalitavistara, Mahavastu and Abhidharmakosha.

Avatar of this aeon within the historically verifiable chronology of their other Avatars (Manu, Ram and Krishna), versus the lack of any actual historical identity of the names (Konagamana,¹ Kakasandha² and Kessapa³) mentioned by Siddharta as His Predecessors and hence the absence of any meaningful sequence or relationship concerning Them.

Furthermore, since Buddhist legends claim that all these three predecessors of Siddharta, taught the same Teachings as Siddharta — and we know that prior to Siddharta there were none who claimed to go under the name of ‘Buddhism’ nor even under the etymological names pertaining to the titles or names of any of Siddharta’s three predecessors — we are left with the conclusion that either these three were not historical personalities and hence the attempt to include their names within the pale of what was Siddharta’s teachings, or, as we have already stated, they were in reality the three Avatars of Hinduism of remote antiquity whose teachings, while similar in their pristine purity to Siddharta’s, had by His time become corrupted and unrecognizable. Nor do we have a way to gain a clearer meaning from the names of these three Buddhas — Siddharta’s immediate predecessors concerning their historical identity, since these names can either be merely titles for historical persons — like “Buddha” or “Deepankara” — whose real names are now lost to us, or they may actually be the proper names of persons, derived from the Sanskrit and pronounced slightly differently in Pali. But here again we are given cause for identification with the series of Hindu Avatars Who preceded Siddharta within historical sequence by the name of the last Buddha Kessapa before Siddharta’s time, and Kessava,⁴ Who is Krishna, the last Avatar of Hinduism immediately

¹ Meaning “He who radiates like gold.” Certain scholars e.g., A. Fuhrer, *Archaeologic Survey of Northern India*, Vol. XXVI. 1896, have claimed to have unearthed the stupas of Konagamana, Kakasandha and Kessapa — all in and around the vicinity of Kapilavastu, Siddharta’s own birthplace. But this is sheer conjecture and these claims have been decisively refuted by others, e.g., P. C. Mukherji, *A Report on a Tour of Exploration of the antiquities in the Tarai, Nepal, The Region of Kapliavastu, 1906*. One cannot, in view of the tremendous antiquity of these legendary Buddhas, give much credence to reports by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited India in A.D. 630 (over 1,200 years after Siddharta’s time) and supposedly saw the remains of the stupas of the three Buddhas Who preceded Siddharta and was told of the locations of their birth places.

² Meaning “He who readily resolves all doubts.” Reputed to be the son of a Brahmin named Agnidatta and born in Kshemavati.

³ Meaning “The swallower of fire.” Also one of Krishna’s own titles.

⁴ *Bhagavad-Gita*: III. 1. “Krishna, if you consider knowledge superior to action why then do you urge me to this dreadful action, O Kessava?” Also see *Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 14.

preceding Siddharta, and to Whom is attributed the *Bhagavad-Gita*. When viewed in the context of Siddharta's own assertion that in His "prior existence" he was Govinda (also Krishna's title, meaning "Herdsman"), Who faithfully carried out His trust in distributing the kingdom between the five princes — obviously the Pandavas¹ of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* — it is highly probable that Kessapa and Kessava (Krishna) are one and the same. Furthermore, one of the legendary exploits attributed to the Buddha Kessapa, the draining of the Kashmir valley to save the people from a gigantic flood, is also one of the "miracles" of the Krishna legend.² Likewise the pronunciation of the name "Kessapa", which denotes "the swallower of fire", is the same as its Sanskrit counterpart "Kessava", which has the same meaning and is a title of Krishna's assumed from the legend (*Bhagavad Purana*) of His duel with Agni the fire god, who was bested by Krishna. In that context, Krishna demonstrated His prowess by swallowing all the fire that Agni could generate, leaving Agni totally exhausted and impotent.

The lament³ of Siddharta's father, King Suddhodana, which refers to the sorrows of Manu's father, Vivasvant,⁴ and Dasaratha, the father of Ram, upon the departure of their illustrious Sons to solitary exile is a

¹ The *Lalitavistara* mentions Him as resembling the Pandavas.

² The name Keresaspa (variant of the Sanskrit "Kessava" or the Pali "Kessapa") also appears quite prominently in ancient Iranian legends. He is the youthful hero who wore sidelocks (Krishna is similarly mentioned in Hindu legends) and carried a magical club. He is not considered a god but a Savior of the oppressed who, according to Iranian mythology, will appear again at the end of the age to destroy the mythical monster, Dahaka, which before it is eliminated will have destroyed a third of the human race. The Creator, according to those tales, will then resurrect Keresaspa to destroy the monster and save mankind. This legend can very well relate to Krishna Who, if His exploits in the region of Kashmir valley are to be believed, might easily have visited the adjoining territory of the Iranian-aryans and left with them this impression of Himself, now related by their legends. As we have seen (page 132), the ancient arians were not at all averse to accepting the heroes of their cousins in adjoining areas and freely incorporated their exploits into their own legends. Even the sidelocks affected by the Kessapas (Kessavas or Kessavaites), followers of Krishna (Kessava), were imitations of the legends relating to the beauty of Krishna's face, framed by jet-black sidelocks. The *Mimamsa-Bhashya* of the Hindus gives the following customary code of hair adopted by the four kinds of priesthood: "The Vasishtas have a lock of hair on the right side only, the Kessavas have one on each side; the Angirases have five locks; the Bhrgus are clean shaven. It is all a matter of custom, and not superiority or inferiority."

³ Asvaghosha's *Buddhacarita*, VIII. 75-81.

⁴ Vivasvan the 'wide gleaming' is the sun or the bright sky as He is represented in the *Avesta* of the Iranians and the *Rig-Veda* of the Hindus.

case in point, since it resembles Siddharta's own quest and clearly demonstrates the close relationship between Siddharta's family and those great Progenitors of His, as well as the full knowledge possessed by Him and His family of the trials and triumphs of their illustrious Predecessors. This and others such as Siddharta's claim of having also been Ram in one of His other prior existences, as well as having descended from Ram in what was His last appearance, makes it abundantly clear that the succession of the Avatars (Manu, Ram and Krishna) of the Hindus is the same as the three Buddhas in the only Kappa ("This auspicious aeon" or Devanam Chaturyugam) recognized and accepted by both the Hindus and the Buddhists. Moreover, most if not all the anecdotes found in the *Jataka Tales* and other early Buddhist Scriptures concerning the activities of Siddharta have their counterparts in the legends concerning the exploits of the Avatars, Ram and Krishna in the much earlier Hindu Scriptures, as well as in stories about other Hindu Deities, Brahma, Indra, Agni, Prajapati etc. But even in the Hindu Scriptures historical data of place and period is confined only to their Avatars, e.g. Manu, Ram and Krishna, with the available amount of data in the case of the last-named naturally being greater.

Hence, for the sake of greater precision, we must begin our calculation for deriving the time of Maitrya's advent by referring to the Hindu arithmetic of Cosmic Time. For it is there that the recurrence of the Eternal Return — the advent of the Avatar, including most certainly Siddharta's own appearance within historical context — has received its boldest formulation. Hindu numerology, even as far back as the Vedas,¹ amplifies and orchestrates the rhythm that governs the periodicity of Cosmic Time. It not only addresses itself to the general belief in the cyclical nature of aeons and their components (Yugs or Kappas), but also deals in considerable detail with the "joining periods" between those ages (Kalpas) which, like the "dawn" and "twilight", precede and follow each age, similar to the sunrise and sunset of our own solar orb, and serve as the transition period from one age (asankheyya) to another — the very period, as the reader can surmise, when a Buddha rises.

It is this transition which is naturally fraught with the greatest uncertainty — with foreboding as well as hope. And those who believe that it is their lot to live in the period of transition, that darkest period of

¹ Atharva-Veda, X. 8. 39-40. Also the Puranas and the Bhagavad-Gita.

the night just before the dawn feel fated to experience the longest and most intense anguish. However as is naturally the case, commensurate with such tribulations also come their measure of triumphs, and were humanity to extricate itself from the coils of its self-created torpor and trepidation and climb the mountain top in search of the “new dawn” of Maitrya, this total darkness now afflicting it would be speedily dispelled and the all-encompassing tragedy which grips the human spirit would become transformed into universal triumph, through the unification of the human race, the advent of the Promised Millennium foretold by all the Avatars — the dawn of Sat yug.¹

To the Indian psyche the concept of the four yugs (Kappas) is much more than a misty concern with causal immanence in the operation of the Cosmos. Its thrust is more urgent and its call much more intimate, for it concerns the explanation of historical events affecting the life and circumstances of the human race, its great catastrophes and equally great leaps to the summit of glory and freedom from its bonds — both part of the same cycle of existence just as light and darkness make the day. And just as in every day in that part of the world, the distribution of light and darkness across its four quarters gives nearly equal balance of time to both, in accordance with the earth’s rotation, so it was conceived by the ancients in regard to the Cosmic Day² (the Kalpa, the aeon) itself. They believed the Kalpa, as beginning, like the day with light, symbolizing all that was good and righteous (Sat), to be the very antithesis of darkness. Hence the Devanam Chaturyugam, “this auspicious aeon”, with its five Luminaries began with its own golden (Kreta)³ dawn known as Sat, with the advent of Manu,⁴ the Divine Law Bringer of the Hindus, over twelve-

¹ The “Righteous Age” or the “Golden Age”.

² The word “Day” itself derives from the Sanskrit word “dwai” meaning light or Sun and should not be confused with “deva” which denotes “god” (One of the “gods” of the Hindu and now the Buddhist pantheons).

³ **Visnu-Purana**, 6.17. The Puranas are also ancient Hindu Scriptures which are contemporary with the Vedas, but speak mainly of the activities of celestials. The eighteen Puranas are divided into three groups, each consisting of six and connected with one of the members of the Hindu Trinity. Of all the Puranas, **Visnu-Purana** is the most comprehensive. The names of the four ages which comprise our present aeon are “Sat” (Righteousness) or “Kreta” (Golden), “Treta” (Silver), “Dwapar” (Copper) and “Kali” (Black or Dark).

⁴ **Manu**, I. 7. 88-91. The word “Manu” derives from the Sanskrit “man” or “conscience” and means “possessed of conscience”, in other words, Man himself. It is synonym of “the Person”, often used in Scripture to denote the Avatar. The Manu Who, according to Hindu Scriptures, is supposed to have appeared at the commencement of our present aeon nearly 12,000 years ago is known as Manu “Satyavrata” (Righteous Law).

thousand solar years ago. The other three ages that were to follow Kreta are named "Treta" "Dwapar" and "Kali".

However, the ancient Hindu Scriptures which refer to the arithmetic of their Cosmic Time are, if not correctly interpreted, liable to appear as meaningless and self-contradictory. Hence let us take up the most popular reference to the Kappa (aeon) and its yugs (ages) as found in the ancient Scripture.¹

<i>DWADSHABD</i> <i>Twelve</i>		<i>SAHSREN</i> <i>Thousand</i>		<i>DEVANAM</i> <i>(the Aeon) of</i> <i>Gods</i>		<i>CHATURYUGAM</i> <i>Four Ages</i> <i>(Partition it)</i>
<i>CHATWARI</i> <i>Four</i>	<i>TRINI</i> <i>Three</i>	<i>DWAI</i> <i>Two</i>	<i>CHEKAM</i> <i>One</i>	<i>SAHSRA</i> <i>Thousand</i>	<i>GANITAM</i> <i>(According</i> <i>to)</i> <i>Arithmetic</i>	<i>MATAM</i> <i>(of) Mother</i> <i>or</i> <i>"Original"</i>

In gist this means that one Divine Age or aeon of Cosmic Time consists of twelve thousand (solar) years and is partitioned into four parts (ages or yugs) comprising four, three, two and one thousand (years), according to ancient arithmetic. Now it is obvious that the total of these is only 10,000 and not 12,000, and this brings us to the next verse² in the same Scripture and the "joining periods" of "dawns" and "dusks" which we mentioned earlier.

Taochhatani Chatwari Trini Dwai Chekmev Hi

Sandhyakramen Techhantu Sandhyanshop Tathaviddhi.

— which freely translated means, "there are the same joining periods,³ on both sides of the ages, whose lengths are reckoned in the same number of hundreds (of years) as the thousands (of years) for the ages. The following chart (No. 1) will convey the meaning clearly:

¹ Kalki-Puran, 3,5,12.

² Kalki-Puran, 3.5.13.

³ We will use the term "joining period" instead of the terms "dawn" and "twilight". Since the reader will recognize that as the "twilight" of one age merges into the "dawn" of a succeeding age, confusion is bound to arise with the use of the latter terms ("dawn" and "dusk").

CHART 1

DEVANAM CHATURYUGAM "THIS AUSPICIOUS AEON"

Name of Age (Kappa or Kalpa)	Joining Period (Dawn or Beginning)	Time Span of the Age	Joining Period (Twilight or End)	Total Period
KRETA YUG (Golden Age)	400	4,000	400	4,800
TRETA YUG (Silver Age)	300	3,000	300	3,600
DWAPAR YUG (Copper Age)	200	2,000	200	2,400
KALI YUG (Black or Iron Age)	100	1,000	100	1,200

The time span of "this auspicious aeon" is thus indeed 12,000 years. However, the above time spans for the aeon and its four ages have been disputed by some scholars who have equated the Sanskrit terms "dwai" (light) and "deva" (god), and this has led them to transform the span of our normal time measured by dwai (solar) years into the astronomically large numbers associated with the "deva" or "godly" year or age. Because of their misunderstanding of this vital point these scholars arrive at the immense figure of 4,320,000 solar years — derived by taking one day of the devas (gods) to equal one solar year, and hence one deva year becomes 360 solar years.¹ Therefore, the 12,000 years span, when incorrectly interpreted as "deva" (divine) years instead of dwai (solar) years, is transformed into (12,000 x 360) 4,320,000 solar years, the absurdly large and equally meaningless time span for determining the duration of the aeon and its four ages — for arriving at the date and a sense of the conditions for the fulfillment of the prophecies heralding the appearance of the Kalki Avatar!

Now aside from the fact that no rational person, least of all the Enlightened Ones (the Avatars and Buddhas), would expect puny man to track such astronomically large spans of time and be able to recollect to the slightest degree any episode that might have occurred millions of years in the past or foretell one which is expected to happen millions of

¹ The ancient Hindu philosophers had not yet determined the exact length of the solar year and hence used the figure of 360 days instead of 365 1/4 which we now know it to be. They were, however, well aware of the time period of both the solar and lunar months and used a lunisolar calendar.

years in the future, the sheer impossibility of verifying any occurrences within these immense time spans makes the process of prophecy by these Divine Manifestations totally meaningless to its only purpose for being — that of alerting and preparing man to expect, discover and accept the Avatar, the Buddha-rising. The Hindu Scriptures, when correctly read, do not lend themselves to interpretations favouring the use of these astronomically large time spans, since such fantastic figures are useless for deriving any rational concept of Progressive Revelation, the main aim of the Authors of those very Scriptures.¹ Likewise, some of the statements concerning the description of Kappas, attributed to Siddharta by later Buddhist writers, are themselves manifestly fantastic. Let us take one such example and see if Siddharta could indeed have spoken it.

Suppose there is a solid rock, sixteen miles high, sixteen miles broad and sixteen miles long and it is gently touched by a fine cloth once in a hundred years; the time taken to wear away the rock is nothing when compared to the ages that constitute a Kappa.

The Buddhist scholar can easily recognize the above metaphor as describing an infinity of time which, in its mention of the only quantities (16x16x16 and 100) used for conveying a sense of eternity, is identical to other metaphors in Hindu Scriptures. The number sixteen is a favorite among the ancient Hindus and Buddhists for conveying a sense of the superlative.² And in this category of the fantastic also belong such other statements (see p. 113) from the *Saddharmarpundarika Sutra* attributed to Siddharta about the time span of hundreds of thousands of Kotis³ (world cycles) ago, when He first received Enlightenment. Nor can these

¹ The year talked about is the solar year, to wit. "That the fire-altar also is the year — the nights are its enclosing stones, and there are three-hundred and sixty of these, because there are three hundred and sixty nights in the year; and the days are its tending bricks, there are three hundred and sixty of these, for there are three hundred and sixty days in the year." *Satapatha-Brahmana*, X. 5.4.10. The same is affirmed by the *Rig-Veda*, I. 16.3.10 which states that 360 days comprise the solar year. Also *Ibid.*, 16.4.46. See also *Surya-Sidhan*, 13.1; *Aitareya-Brahmana*, VII. 7.2. and *Satapatha-Brahmana*, X. 4.3.1.

² To wit, *Mahabharata* (Santiparva. 6503). "Whatever delight of satisfaction there is on earth, whatever is the great delight in heaven, they are not worth the sixteenth part of the joy which springs from the destruction of desires (Nirvana or Moksha or Jivanmukhti)." Likewise Siddharta's own statement to the Brahmin Kutadanta. "All good works whatever are not worth the sixteenth part of Love which sets free the heart. Love which sets free the heart comprises them."

³ Koti has no definite number but is explained by various integers ranging from 100,000 to 100,000,000.

fantastic spans of time be equated with even the other (see pp.175-76) fantastic although much more conservative figure — a mere 38,971,000,000 years — used for referring to the time of the Buddha Vipasi! It is therefore incredible that Siddharta, Whose whole Message was the very essence of Divine economy, could have, even in passing, involved Himself with such fantasy, entirely devoid of any meaning and purpose.

We can gain some idea of the fantastic concoctions of time and space used by both the ancient Hindus and the early Buddhists to befuddle their minds and ours, when trying to relate their concepts about the supernatural and Its cosmic time frame, as we discover some of the totally ridiculous units of measure on which they based such fantasies. For example the “Krosa”, which is the “basic” measure of distance or of length upon which the absurdity of the other measures is built, is reckoned as *the distance at which can be heard the bellowing of an ox or the beat of a drum!* Of course, we can, without the slightest effort, rattle off many variables: the temperature of the air, the intervening shrubbery, the conductivity of the earth, the state of the ox’s throat, also the state of his emotions (anger, sex urge, fear, full stomach or empty). the condition of the drum skin, the hearing ability of the listener etc., etc. which would all radically alter the length of the Krosa and this, when extended many times over to compose other units, would render meaningless any standardization of such measurements. Little wonder that a Koti (see f.n. 3, p. 185) varies anywhere from 100,000 to 100,000,000! In this same category also belong the fantastic figures, 80,000 years etc. (see p. 175 Ref. *Digha-nikaya*) concerning the length of time people lived 91 Kappas ago, as well as the innocuous nonsense from that same source which states that Maitrya will appear when the age of man is greater than 10 years and less than 80,000 years, which can mean any time at all, including the present time when the average age is 60 years.¹ Not with such absurdities can we relate the verifiable utterances of Siddharta.

As we shall see in the following pages, it was with other, more rationally relevant dates and numbers of years that Siddharta concerned Himself. Hence we must, if we are still keen on discovering the

¹Once more the Hindu Scriptures provide us with both precision and rationality to these figures, for we can see from *Visnu-Purana*, 4.24 that the average age of man’s life in the Kali yug will be 75 years. As the reader will agree, this figure can be easily accepted and expected.

meaningful, stop these flights of fancy, fold our overworked wings of imagination and settle down on earth to confront the meaningful in relation to our own “auspicious aeon”, and from it unravel the secret of Maitrya’s advent which, as Siddharta has promised, is to certainly occur before this very aeon “runs to the end of its years”.

Let us therefore return to our own “auspicious aeon”, the present time, the Devanam Chaturyugam, and probe the time-structure and other details of its component parts, the four ages: Kreta, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. In this investigation too as in everything else that we seek there are two sides, two schools of thought concerning the sequence listed by the ancient Hindu arithmetic for relating the actual number of years to the four ages of our aeon. We shall call these two schools of thought the “literalists” and the “interpretists”. The former accept the sequence (see p. 184) of 4000, 3000, 2000 and 1000 years for Kreta yug, Treta yug, Dwapar yug and Kali yug exactly as listed in the Hindu Scriptures, while the “interpretists” maintain that this reverse sequence, purposely listed as such in the Scriptures in order to invite incisive investigation by all those who truly seek its real meaning, has indeed to be returned to its natural order (1000, 2000, 3000 and 4000 years), if it is to convey a sense of correlation and meaning in the context of what is already historically known of the Avatars Manu, Ram, Krishna and Siddharta Himself. Hence, in fairness to both, let us take up the claim of the “literalists” first and see if their position makes sense in the light of what we know. The “literalists” state that Kreta (Sat) yug, Treta yug and Dwapar yug lasted 4,800, 3,600 and 2,400 years respectively, taking into account also their respective joining periods. And we see that according to the “literalists” Kali yug is to be only 1,200 years long. Hence let us construct a chart for easy comprehension of the “literalist” point of view:

CHART 2

Name of Age	Total Span of Years with their Joining Periods
Sat or Kreta yug	4,800
Treta yug	3,600
Dwapar yug	2,400
Kali yug	1,200
Total Span of this present Aeon:	12,000 years

Now let us examine what is known, historically and according to the Scriptures, concerning the past in terms of time and the appearance of the Divine Manifestations.

We have already seen that according to Scripture (*Manu* I. 7. fn. 4 p. 182), Manu (Satyavrata) appeared in the Sat (or Kreta yug). Furthermore, in most of the Sanskrit Scriptures¹ it is stated that Krishna² appeared on earth in the last joining period of Dwapar yug and that immediately upon His passing Dwapar yug ended and Kali yug began. These same Hindu Scriptures³ foretell the advent of Buddha Siddharta from Maghada in the middle of Kali yug. Now, in the light of what is known historically, if the “literalists” are correct, then the total length of Kali Yug (1,200 years) with its two joining periods, is simply far too short to contain the appearance of Siddharta and His time as verified by history. We know that Siddharta lived around 2,500 years ago (563-483 B.C.). Now if the total time span of Kali yug according to the “literalists” is only 1,200 years, and even if we assume that we of the present are still in Kali yug and that Siddharta came at the very onset of Kali yug and not at its mid-period as predicted by the Scripture, then by the simple arithmetic of deducting 1,200 years (Kali yug) from our present time 1995 we find that Kali Yug must have commenced in 795 A.D. and that Siddharta must have lived at that considerably later time. This, as historical evidence clearly shows, is not the case. Nor can this view of the “literalists” be correct with regards to Krishna’s time, since if according to the Scriptures Kali yug commenced immediately upon the passing of Krishna, then He too, according to the calculations of the “literalists”, must have lived on earth around 700 A.D., which is manifest nonsense. And while it is only by cross-reference of related events that we can derive Krishna’s historical period, there is no doubt that His antiquity is considerable. Krishna belonged to the ancient Vrsni or Satvata branch of the family of Yadu, whose home was perhaps in the vicinity of Mathura, a town with which Krishna’s name has been connected in history and tradition. Krishna — and we think it is the same person — is also mentioned in the oldest of

¹ Kalki-Puran, Shree-Mad-Bhagvad, Markandeya-Purana.

² Krishna is derived from krs meaning “to scrape”. In other words. He scrapes or draws away all sins and other ills from His devotees.

³ Iskand-Purana.

the Vedas¹ which states that an asura² called Krishna waited on the banks of the river Amsumati with an army of 10,000 to fight Indra. This could well be a symbolic portrayal of the events of those ancient times, since we know that Krishna opposed the sacerdotalism of the Vedic religion, and was thus considered by the Vedic writers as an ‘asura’ and an opponent of Indra, one of the chief gods of the Vedic pantheon. Krishna’s opposition to the Vedic Cult is quite often shown by passages relating to His contests with Indra, who, when vanquished, humbled himself before Krishna as narrated by the *Harivamsa* (4004 ff), ‘I am Indra of the devas but Thou hast gained Indra’s power over the cows. As Govinda (Herdsman) the people will ever praise Thee.’ It is also quite possible that the writers of the *Rig-Veda*, while opposing Krishna’s teachings against the sacerdotal order, nevertheless incorporated some of His teachings, as He is called Krishna Angirasa in the *Kausitaki-Brahmana* (XXX. 9). Moreover, the seventy-fourth hymn of the eighth mandala in the *Rig-Veda* especially bears the authorship of Krishna.³ According to Yamunacarya in his *Agama-pramyā* His Teaching is to worship God in purity of spirit. His followers were therefore called Bhagavatas (God-worshippers) or Satvatas (Truth-worshippers). The *Chandogya-Upanishad* (III.17.18.6), also mentions Krishna and His mother Devaki as well as His childhood mentor Ghora Angirasa.⁴ Hence, while Krishna is mentioned in both the Veda and the Upanishad, and since neither of these describe the *Mahabharata* or any such epic, the inference is inescapable that the incorporation of Krishna’s teachings by rishi Vyas, the compiler of the *Bhagavada-Gita*, as the sixth book of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* and in it Krishna’s acknowledgement of the Vedas and the Vedic gods, is obviously a much later attempt to use the legend and teachings of Krishna as the rallying point for the various peoples of those times. There is no doubt however that the essential doctrine of faith in the Supreme and demonstration of that faith by one’s acts of righteousness which Krishna is made to enunciate by His discourse with Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, clearly bears the unmistakable stamp of Krishna’s Teaching, as ascertained through comparison with other sources. From

¹ *Rig-Veda*, vii 96. 13-15.

² Varuna and other pre-Vedic gods who were divested of their pre-eminent positions by the Vedic aryan and relegated by them to the rank of demons (asuras, meaning the ‘dark ones’).

³ *Rig-Veda*, viii, 74.

⁴ *Rig-Veda*, iii. 17. See also *Kausitaki-Brahmana*, XXX. 9. Painini, IV. I. 96.

the time of the earliest Veda down to the Upanishad period Krishna has been regarded as a Vedic thinker. Also the designation of “dark” or “black” is commonly used for Krishna (even in the *Jataka Tales*), thus implying that He was of the dark-hued pre-aryan pastoral people and this further hints at His great antiquity, which is also confirmed by the Puranas. These and other just as obvious contradictions clearly prove that the “literalists” are wrong in their view of the *time sequence* of these four ages. The opposite, of course, is then true. The *time sequence* for these four ages (Kreta, Treta, Dwapar and Kali) has to be reversed and accepted as stated by the following correct order.

CHART 3

Name of Age	Total Span of Years with their Joining Periods
Sat or Kreta yug	1,200
Treta yug	2,400
Dwapar yug	3,600
Kali yug	4,800
Total Span of this present Aeon:	12,000 years

Hence the age of Krishna is quite different when viewed in the correct sequence of the durations of these four ages, which tells us that He lived on earth around 4,820 years ago, since the Scriptures locate Him just at the very end of the Dwapar yug. Nor is there any contradiction evident from the above chart with the date (around 2478 years ago) of Siddharta’s own passing from earth. Two important facts support this conclusion. The prophecy, long before Siddharta’s time, which shows Visnu, whose ninth (fourth in this Kalpa) Avatar according to the Hindus is Siddharta, delineating on His five¹ Avatars for this “auspicious aeon”.

¹ These names of Visnu’s five Avatars are really interpretations of the attributes conceived by the ancients for the future Avatars of Visnu in this “auspicious aeon”. Siddharta too claims to have become Buddha nine ages ago although He and Maitrya supposedly started off together. Just another verification in Buddhist myths about the same sequence of the Avatars recognized by the Hindus.

“I am Manu I am Surya,¹ I am the learned sage, Kaksivan,² I have adorned the sage Kutsa,³ the son of Anjuni. I am the wise Usana,⁴ look at Me.”⁵ And more importantly, Siddharta’s date itself which is now squarely in the mid-period of Kali yug (our present age), which is where the Scriptures place Him. As we see from this the Avatars of Visnu were also to have been only five for our aeon (the other four were prior to this aeon and supposed to have occurred in other world systems!) just as the five Buddhas for this “auspicious aeon” listed by Siddharta. This naturally further confirms our premise that the two lists, despite differences of names, of the five Avatars and the five Buddhas to appear in the one and the same aeon, refer to the same five Persons. Consider also the following prophecy concerning Siddharta from the Hindu Scripture (*Iskand-Puran*). “In Magadha Desh from the house of Anjuni, Visnu will appear as the Buddha Who will propagate Dharma.”

From all this we can see that Kali Yug has the longest duration of all the four ages and occupies fully forty percent of the total span of our full aeon. This is only natural, since the ancient Hindus predicated their concept of the Cosmic Day (the aeon) upon the rotation of the earth itself — its duration of light and darkness — which resembles the model of the Cosmic Day almost perfectly. The duration of darkness is nearly the same length as that of light, just as is the length of Kali yug in comparison with the rest of the aeon. The correctness of our assertion concerning the durations of the four ages needs no further proof. However, the question may have arisen to some that if there are four seasons in the year, four quarters of the day, four yugs in the Kalpa, “this auspicious aeon”, then why do the Hindus talk of five Avatars? Why does Siddharta, too, list the names of five Buddhas including Maitrya, for this “auspicious aeon”? The answer, according to the Hindu Scripture, is because of the long duration of Kali yug (nearly 5,000 years), separating the time of Krishna from the advent of Kalki therefore, at its mid-point Buddha Siddharta was destined to appear to find once more the lost Dharma and proclaim it again to rejuvenate mankind in His day.

¹ Ram, Whose descent is from Ikshvaku, the ancient Solar (Surya) dynasty.

² Krishna (Known also as the Sage of the Yadavas).

³ Siddharta (Sakyamuni meaning the Sakya sage).

⁴ Usana. From Usa meaning “dawn”. Symbolic of the Developer of the Dawn. Another title of Kalki the Aeon Ender—Maitrya.

⁵ *Rig-Veda*, IV. 26.

As we will see Siddharta too confirms both the 5,000 year span of Kali yug and the halving of that period. And since Siddharta's prophecies and their meaning about the time and the place of their fulfillment, for discovering the Person of Maitrya, is the first condition for achieving our goal, let us now, keeping in mind the background of the concepts held by the ancient Hindus and Buddhists concerning time, ages and aeons which were also subscribed to by Siddharta, take up the study of the most celebrated and complete passage attributed to Siddharta with regards to prophecy concerning the future, the passage dealing with the advent of Maitrya — the stages which Siddharta's own Teachings will undergo before needing Maitrya's rejuvenating potency and the conditions and durations of such changes. We refer to Siddharta's conversation with Sariputta¹ narrated in the *Anagatavamsa* of the Theravadin Buddhists, and we ask the reader to bear with us if two or three verses previously quoted are repeated here.

This famous narrative begins with Sariputta's question:

*The Hero that shall follow you,
The Buddha — of what sort will he be?
I want to hear of him in full.
Let the Visioned One describe him.*

To which Siddharta replies:

*I will tell you, Sariputta,
Listen to my speech.
In this auspicious aeon
Three leaders have there been:
Kakasandha, Konagamana
And the leader Kessapa too.
I am now the perfect Buddha;
And there will be Metteyya too
Before this same auspicious aeon
Runs to the end of its years.
The perfect Buddha, Metteyya
By name, supreme of men.*

Siddharta then describes at length the legendary exploits and attainments of Maitrya (Metteyya) in His previous existences and then entertains Sariputta's further questions concerning the time and conditions relating to Maitrya's appearance.

¹ In the Banyan Monastery on the bank of the river Rohani near Kapilavastu.

Sariputta: How will it occur?

Siddharta: After my passing there must first occur the five disappearances.¹

Sariputta: What five?

Siddharta: The disappearance of Attainment² (in the Religion), the disappearance of proper Conduct³ the disappearance of Learning,⁴ the disappearance of the outward Form, the disappearance of the Relics. There will be these five disappearances.

Here attainment means that for a thousand years only after the Lord's complete Nirvana will monks be able to practise analytical insights. As time goes on and on, these disciples of mine are non-returners and once-returners and stream-winners. There will be no disappearance of attainment for these. But with the extinction of the last stream-winner's life, attainment will have disappeared. This, Sariputta, is the disappearance of attainment.

The disappearance of proper conduct means that being unable to practise jnana, insight, the Ways and the fruits, they will guard no more the four entire purities of moral habits.⁵ As time goes on and

¹ Also related in **Anguttara-nikaya**, i. 87. The Hindu Scriptures on which much of this discourse is based also mention this process of decay, especially concerning Kali yug, the last of the four ages of our aeon. As rishi Vyas, the compiler of the **Bhagavad-Gita**, writes in **Shrimad-Bhagavad**: "In Kali yug, people will go against the Vedas and will forget to worship God, Whom even Brahma is always worshipping." "In the coming years, Kali yug, the Age of Strife, will become stronger and religion, truth, chastity, mercy, pity, longevity, power and remembrance will all lessen every day." See also **Manu**. "In Kreta Yug, penance was resorted to for attaining salvation in Treta Yug knowledge! in Dwapar Yug, oblation and sacrifice; in Kali Yug only gifts." (**Tapa: param Kritayug, Tretayam jnamamuchyate, Dwapare yajnamevahurdanamekam Kalau Yuge.**)

² **Milindapanha**, 133-134, 162-164. Attainment (Adhigama), is explained as the four Ways, the four fruits, the four analytical insights, the three knowledges, the six super-knowledges. See also **Manorathapurani**.

³ **Sammahavinodam**, 431-432 gives three "disappearances": (1) Pariyatti, meaning the three Pitakas, (2) Pativedha, meaning the penetration of truth (Insight), (3) Patipatti, meaning practice or Patipada (the Course). See also **Papancasudam**, IV. 115 and **Milindapanha**, 133-134.

⁴ According to **Sammahavinodam**, 432, Religion stands firm (lasts) while learning remains.

⁵ These four purities refer to the morality that consists of (1) Restraint or Control in regard to the Patimokkha (rules of conduct for monks and nuns); (2) Restraint or Control of the sense-organs; (3) Purity of livelihood; (4) Morality in regard to the four requisites (robe-material, almsfood, lodgings and medicines for the sick).

on they will only guard the four offences entailing defeat.¹

This period of a thousand years after Siddharta's passing was indeed one of great activity in the Dharma. Within this period the Dharma was codified, and many treatises and commentaries on its fundamental precepts were composed. After that period, as prophesied by Siddharta, decline set in and the Samgha was content to hold the line against the Hindu reformers and defend past gains.

It is only natural that Siddharta, Who constantly dwelt on the impermanence of all things in the world, recognized the inevitability of decay within His own Teaching. As He indicated, the pure Dharma, too, must decay and deteriorate in the lives of men and its essence will be finally lost until Maitrya appears to reveal it once again in its full potency. While certain disagreement has arisen among scholars concerning the duration of the Law and of the "five disappearances" mentioned by Siddharta, we will, after we have seen Siddharta's full description of the "five disappearances" in response to Sariputta's question, take up these differences and, reconciling them, learn that there is no contradiction — for the Tathagatas do not confuse.

Hence, let us read on.

Siddharta: While there are even a hundred or a thousand monks who guard and bear in mind the four offences entailing defeat, there will be no disappearance of proper conduct. With the breaking of moral habit by the last monk or on the extinction of his life, proper conduct will have disappeared.²

This, Sariputta, is the disappearance of proper conduct. The disappearance of learning means that as long as there stand firm the texts with the commentaries

¹ These offences (parajika) which are four for monks and eight for nuns constitute the first and most important class of offences. For monks they are offences of chastity, stealing, murder and lying as regards their own mental and spiritual prowesses. The penalty for any of these offences is expulsion from the Samgha with no possibility of reinstatement.

² Again, see how well this is matched by the Hindu Scripture *Shrimad Bhagavad*, just by substituting "monk" for people. "People will forget love and become enemies over a small amount of money. They will try to do harm even to their own near and dear ones over money. People will forsake even their parents and children for the sake of enjoying property and for their earthly desires. Merchants will be dishonest in their business. People will favour earning their living by dishonest means in spite of there being no trouble in their lives. In Kali yug, money will become the sole test of birth, conduct and good qualities of a man. Money will be the test of justice, for justice will be bought and sold."

pertaining to the word of the Buddha in the three Pitakas, for so long there will be no disappearance of learning. As time goes on and on there will be base-born kings, not Dhamma-men; their ministers and so on will not be Dhamma-men, and consequently the inhabitants of the kingdom and so on will not be Dhamma-men. Because they are not Dhamma-men it will not rain properly. Therefore the crops will not flourish, and in consequence the donors of requisites to the community of monks will not be able to give them the requisites. Not receiving the requisites the monks will not receive pupils. As time goes on and on learning will decay. In this decay the Great Patthana itself will decay first. In this decay also (there will be) Yamaka, Kathavutthu, Puggalapannatti, Dhatukatha, Vibhanga and Dhammasangani. When the Abhidhamma-pitaka decays the Suttanta-pitaka will decay. When the Suttantas decay the Anguttara will decay first. When it decays the Samyutta-nikaya, the Majjhima-nikaya, the Digha-nikaya and the Khuddaka-nikaya will decay. They will simply remember the Jataka together with the Vinaya-pitaka. But only the conscientious (monks) will remember the Vinaya-pitaka. As time goes on and on, being unable to remember even the Jataka, the Vessantara-Jataka will decay first. When that decays the Apannaka-Jataka will decay. When the Jatakas decay they will remember only the Vinaya-pitaka. As time goes on and on the Vinaya-pitaka will decay. While a four-line stanza still continues to exist among men, there will not be a disappearance of learning. When a king who has faith has had a purse containing a thousand (coins) placed in a golden casket on an elephant's back, and has had the drum (of proclamation) sounded in the city up to the second or third time to the effect that: 'Whoever knows a stanza uttered by the Buddhas, let him take these thousand coins together with the royal elephant, but yet finding no one knowing a four-line stanza, the purse containing the thousand (coins) must be taken back into the palace again — then

will be the disappearance of learning.

This, Sariputta, is the disappearance of learning.

However, the reader should recognize from the above-named list of the various texts that the compilers of this earliest of passages relating to the conditions and time of the advent of Maitrya have listed many names of texts which were not known as such by Siddharta but were gradually compiled and collated into their final form centuries later. The gist of the above excerpt is simple: namely, that the adherence to and practice of the Tathagata's Teaching will decay and diminish and finally disappear — if it has not to a very great degree already done so today! And the following passage incisively illustrates the present condition of the Samgha as foreseen twenty-five centuries ago by Siddharta's penetrating mind.

Siddharta: As time goes on and on each of the last monks, carrying his robe, bowl and toothpick like Jain recluses, having taken a bottlegourd and turned it into a bowl for almsfood, will wander about with it in his forearms or hands or hanging from a piece of string. As time goes on and on, thinking: 'What's the good of this yellow robe?' and cutting off a small piece of one and sticking it on his nose or ear or in his hair, he will wander about supporting wife and children by agriculture, trade and the like. Then he will give a gift to the Southern community for those of bad moral habit. I say that he will then acquire an incalculable fruit of the gift. As time goes on and on, thinking: 'What's the good of this to us?', having thrown away the piece of yellow robe, he will harry beasts and birds in the forest. As this time the outward form will have disappeared. This, Sariputta, is called the disappearance of the outward form.¹

¹Continuous deterioration in all facets of human existence: biological, social, intellectual, and spiritual is often stressed in the Hindu Scriptures for Kaliyug. See how very similar is the Hindu prophecy from *Shrimad-Bhagavad* with its Buddhist counterpart above. "Low people will accept charity by putting on the dress of a Sadhu. Irreligious pundits will preach from high positions." Also *Visnu-Purana*, VI. 3. "Kreta is four-legged Truthfulness, Kindness, Devotion and Charity. Treta is three-legged without Truthfulness. Two-legged Dwapar has only Devotion and Charity and in Kaliyug there is no more Truthfulness, Kindness or Devotion." See also, *Vayu-Purana*, I.8.

He also explains the reason for the “disappearing” and how it could be stayed:

There is no disappearing of the true Dhamma until a counterfeit dhamma arises in the world. Once a counterfeit dhamma arises then there is a disappearing of the true Dhamma. It is when foolish persons arise here that they make this true Dhamma to disappear. But five things conduce to its maintenance, clarity and non-disappearance — that monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen live with reverence and deference for the Teacher, for Dhamma, for the Order, for the training and for concentration.¹

But all that is no more. Out of reach now. Gone. Even the “outward form” is no more when one considers that those who took the vows of monkhood in Siddharta’s day made the vocation their life-long calling, while today it is for most only a symbolic gesture (to get in good with the civic authorities or please their parents) for three or six or nine months and then back to the life of the householder. Those others who continue to don the yellow robe, also for the most part pursue the worldly pleasures and taste of the fruits forbidden by Siddharta, careless of the retribution foretold by Him for such monkish hypocrites:

Many men who are clad in yellow robes are ill-behaved and unrestrained. Such evil doers by their evil deeds go to hell.²

And He also tells us *what* the end will be for His Dharma and *when*.
Siddharta: Then, when the Dispensation of the Perfect Buddha is 5000 years old, the relics, not receiving reverence and honor, will go to places where they can receive them. As time goes on and on there will not be reverence and honor for them in every place. At the time when the Dispensation is falling into (oblivion), all the relics, coming from every place: from the abode of serpents and the deva-world and the Brahma-world, having gathered together in the space round the great Bo-tree, having made a Buddha-image, and having performed a ‘miracle’ like the Twin-miracle, will teach Dhamma.

¹Samyutta-nikaya, II. 224. Similarly from *Shrimad Bhagavad*: “The number of thieves will vastly increase in the country; even the Vedas will be polluted by wicked people through mixing them with spurious material. The Brahmins will occupy themselves in filling their bellies and enjoying their lust.”

²Dhammapada, v. 307.

No human being will be found at that place. All the devas of the ten thousand world system, gathered together, will hear Dhamma and many thousands of them will attain to Dhamma. And these will cry aloud, saying: 'Behold, devatas, a week from today our One of the Ten Powers will attain complete Nirvana.' They will weep, saying: 'Henceforth there will be darkness for us.' Then the relics, producing the condition of heat, will burn up that image leaving no remainder. This, Sariputta, is called the disappearance of the relics.¹

Now before we deal with the question of time referred to in the first sentence of the above passage and the "Twin-miracle" heralding the Dharma's resurgence, let us just briefly explain the meaning of "relics" mentioned in this rather abstruse passage. To paraphrase: If we are to be faithful to Siddharta's abhorrence of the fetishes and charms affected by the Hindus of His day and, unfortunately, now by His own followers, then we must recognize that by "relics" is meant the Scriptures alone and not some trinkets or trivia so widely sold nowadays in the various wats to the superstitious and the gullible. We see this assertion confirmed by the following:

And again, O Subhuti, that part of the world in which this Scripture will be proclaimed, will have to be honored by the whole world of gods, men and evil spirits, will have to be worshipped, and will become like a Kaitya (a sacred relic or sepulchre).²

Only by correctly understanding Siddharta's meaning concerning His use of the word relic (Kaitya) to mean the Scriptures of His Teaching (Dharma), can this passage be interpreted; otherwise Siddharta would be shown to have been in error, for while the knowledge and practice of His Dharma have indeed disappeared from the lives of his followers, the fetishes, charms and so-called Buddha-images have definitely proliferated among His followers and, as Siddharta clearly foresaw, substituted the true Dharma in their hearts with a counterfeit dharma. This is the case wherever we turn today. We see no more the true Dharma of the living Patthana or the Pitakas and their Nikayas, but only their dead and empty forms which, through the corruption of commerce, now enable the

¹ Anagatavamsa.

² Vajracchedika, VIII. 15.

cynical and the shrewd to thrive on the superstitious and the gullible by means of their counterfeit dharmas of chicanery and charms, the very things forbidden us by Siddharta. So we see that in accordance with Siddharta's prophecy, when the true relics — His Teachings — ceased their influence as a dynamic and spiritualizing force in the lives of the people of His native land, they went to other lands such as Ceylon, Burma, China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to work the weal of those peoples and be revered and honored by them as the true standards of human behaviour. But none can now seriously deny that His prophecy that "in every place" there would no longer be any true reverence or honor accorded to His Dharma through pure and stainless deeds,¹ has been completely fulfilled. Of course Siddharta was not referring to the hypocrisy of lip-service and outward appearances which today is universally evident, not only in His Faith, but in every great Faith, be it Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity or Muhammadanism. The picture is the same tragic one of total decay and disarray that meets us when we turn our eyes towards what was once the glorious and peerless Dharma, but is no more. And yet surely it is not 5000 years? No, it is just exactly half that time. And this too Siddharta foresaw only too well — *the halving of the time of the Dharma's duration*. So let us read on and see what the Tathagata has to say as He prophesies to Ananda about the duration of His dispensation:

*If, Ananda, women had not retired from the household life to the houseless one, under the doctrine and discipline announced by the Tathagata, Dharma Ananda would long endure; a thousand years would the good Dharma abide. But since, Ananda, women have now retired from the household life to the houseless one, under the doctrine and discipline announced by the Tathagata, not long Ananda, will Dharma endure; but five hundred years, Ananda, will the Dharma abide.*²

¹ Vasubandhu, writing more than 1,500 years ago, already mentions the signs of decay in the Dharma. "The Dharma of the Sage is at its last breath; this is an age in which the vices are powerful; those who want to be delivered must be diligent." Interestingly there is no hint in this passage of any expectation for any imminent advent of Maitrya. Vasubandhu knew from his own calculations, stated by him in the latter part of that same treatise (Abhidharmakosha), that the time was not then but still far in the future, at the end of the fifth 500 year period — now.

² **Vinaya-pitaka**, II. 253 ff. (Said in the Kutagara hall at Vaisali in the sixth year of the Tathagata's Enlightenment.)

It should be noted at this point that neither in this passage where, as He states, the pristine purity of His Dharma will endure for only 500 years, nor in the other instance (p. 193), in the passage from the *Anagatavamsa* where the period of purity of "Attainment" i.e. "analytical insights" is given as 1000 years, does Siddharta state that the advent of Maitrya (of Whom He makes mention in that same passage as the Aeon Ender) will then occur either at the close of 500 years or 1000 years. Thus, clearly indicating that the full process of "the five disappearances" must first run itself out and only then at its end 2500 years (5x500) later would Maitrya appear. Which, as we have seen, is now. The reader will also note that there is no mention whatever, in either of these two passages — both ancient Pali works, the latter being part of the Pali Canon itself — of any of those astronomically large numbers used sometimes for conveying a nebulous sense of the immensity of time and incorrectly repeated by latter writers to mask from the reader their inability to visualize with any precision the Dharma's immediate future. Only historically reasonable increments of time (500 to 5000 years) are mentioned here. For the Dharma (Religion) is a historical process — the only historical reality in the context of man — and hence its surging and ebbing, its dawning and setting has to be within the context of history if it is to remain meaningful to man. And, as Siddharta tells us in these passages, so it is.

The Hindus, as we saw on pp. 190-1, asserted from the background of their Scriptures that Kali yug (the fourth and last age), the age of darkness stretching nearly 5000 years (precisely 4800 years),¹ was much too long for humanity to have been deprived of Divine Guidance. Thus the appearance of the Buddha (Siddharta) at the precise mid-point of the Kali yug and their acceptance of Him. Siddharta was fully cognizant of this concept in the Scriptures of the Hindus, to whom He was the ninth Avatar of Visnu, and hence His permitting women to enter the Samgha (He could just as easily have refused and none would have questioned His wisdom) and then announcing that by this, the duration of His own Dharma's Dispensation was cut in half, was simply His way of affirming His own Dispensation as being part and parcel of the framework of successive Divine Dispensations among the Indo-aryans and the sequence

¹ Additional confirmation of the correctness of our assertion that the time spans of the four ages as given by Chart No. 3 on page 190 is correct.

of their Avatars within the span of this same aeon. He thereby harmonized His own place and that of His Dispensation in the only relevant historical process which could demonstrate the meaningful operation of the principle of Progressive Divine Revelation proclaimed and championed by every Avatar, and most insistently by Siddharta Himself.

Therefore, Siddharta makes no mention in this passage (p. 199) from the *Vinaya-pitaka*, which is more ancient than the *Anagatavamsa*, (pp.192-8), of 5000 years — which as we have now seen is simply the duration of Kali yug — or of 4000 years or 3000, or even 2000 years. He only states that His Dharma, which was to have “endured a thousand years”, will now, because of His permission for women to enter the Samgha, “endure for only five hundred years”¹ — just half the time. Half also of 5000-2500 years! And that time has come and passed. So, too, have occurred all the conditions which were to affect the Dharma. All but one. Hence, where is Maitrya?

The question, of course, must first be *when* Maitrya? And we will now answer it in two parts — the Circumstances (conditions) and the Date. First, the Circumstances:

From the passage in the *Anagatavamsa* in the preceding pages we have examined the single-most complete reference which can be attributed with any certainty to Siddharta Himself, describing the circumstances and conditions which were prophesied for the course of the Dharma, its dawn and dusk and the final setting of its true significance in the lives of its avowed adherents. From the descriptions given in the Scripture none who now examine the condition of the world can have any doubt that the “five disappearances” have already occurred. However, contrary to the fears expressed by Vasubandhu more than 1500 years ago, while the disappearance of Attainment and of Conduct and Learning might

¹Based on these two passages, especially the passage from *Vinaya-pitaka*, halving the thousand years to 500 years, latter Buddhist chroniclers, chief among them Vasubandhu in his *Abhidharmakosha*, have predicated their calculations for the time of Maitrya’s advent along the following general lines (from *Abhidharmakosha*, 4.12c. III. p.41.): “The monks and stream-attainers (followers) will be strong in their union with Dharma for 500 years after the Blessed One’s Parinirvana. In the second 500 years they will be strong in meditation; in the third period of 500 years they will be strong in erudition. In the fourth 500 year period they will only be occupied with gift-giving.” (From f.n. 1, p. 196), we can see that this gift-giving stage is also called the fourth stage in the decay of the Age as conceived by the Hindu Scriptures (*Manu*). “The final or the fifth period of 500 years will see only fighting and reproving among the monks and the followers. The pure Dharma will then become invisible (disappear).”

have occurred around his time or shortly thereafter, the disappearance of Form and Relics did not, since some sort of discipline survived within the established Order (Samgha), which distinguished it from others. And by this same token — notwithstanding the degree of the votary's sincerity or fervour — the regular reading of the Pitakas etc. and adherence to their form if not spirit, continued on through rote and ritual in all the Buddhist kingdoms and nations¹ until the first half of the last century, when the onslaught of the West totally disrupted the culture of all the ancient Buddhist lands such as Sikkim, Tibet, Bhutan, Burma, Ceylon, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Annam, as well as those of China, Japan and Korea. With this cultural disruption vanished the traditional mode of life and mores, and the youth, upon whom would have had to depend the continuation of the traditional culture and religion, deserted these for the pursuit of the new learning from the west — the knowledge of civics and technology — considered by those peoples newly beguiled by it as essential for their survival in a swiftly integrating planet. Hence the complete eclipse, the oblivion of the Dharma's true integrity, of its form and "relics" (Scriptures), has now occurred according to the stages described by Siddharta and corresponding to the five periods, each of five hundred years, allotted to this process by other Buddhist Scriptures² based on the only rational correlation possible between the remarks attributed to Siddharta in the *Anagatavamsa* and the *Vinaya-pitaka*. The reality of the Dharma has become invisible.

However, what affected the Dharma also changed humanity at large, and this too Siddharta accurately envisioned and prophesied. We have this from His discourse (related by the *Mahasupina*³ *Jataka*) with King Prasenadi of Kosala,⁴ who had, in the course of a single night, sixteen⁵ separate dreams, and after being disappointed with the interpretations of their meanings by the court Brahmins, was finally persuaded by his

¹ The Dharma had already disappeared in India nearly a thousand years ago through a combination of its own decay, Hindu Reformation and ultimately the onslaught of Muhammadanism.

² *Abhidharmakosha*, 4, 12c. III. p. 41.

³ "Maha" meaning great and "Supina" is dream. This is called the *Jataka* (Tales) of the Great Dreams. The reader would do well to read all these dreams in the *Mahasupina Jataka*.

⁴ Also see *Rajovada-Jataka*, 151. (Husband of Queen Malika.)

⁵ The reader might have already noted the recurrent use of sixteen in all these contexts, whether it be to signify the superiority of one thing over another, or to indicate the greatness of a dimension or to signify an integer etc.

queen to consult the Sage. As this discourse is the narrative from old Scripture and its authenticity is indicated by the simplicity of concept concerning the meanings of the dreams of King Prasenadi, it would be advantageous to relate some of the most cogent of these sixteen dreams, especially since this Jataka is the oldest and most complete reference to the interpretation of dreams which can be attributed to Siddharta with any degree of certainty, and because every one of these dreams is a prophecy concerning events destined to occur in the latter days when the Dharma of Siddharta will have run its course.

And so to the Dreams!

The King: I pray you, who are the chiefest personage in the world of men and gods, you into whose ken comes all possible knowledge of things past and present and to be — I pray you tell me what will come of my dreams, Lord.

Siddharta: True it is, sire, that there is none other save me, who can tell what your dreams signify or what will come of them. I will tell you. Only first of all relate to me your dreams as they appeared to you.

The King: How was it, sire, that I had the following one of my dreams? Methought four black bulls, like collyrium in hue, came from the four cardinal directions to the royal courtyard with avowed intent to fight; and people flocked together to see the bullfight, 'til a great crowd had gathered. But the bulls only made a show of fighting, roared and bellowed, and finally went off without fighting at all. This was my first dream. What will come of it?

Siddharta: Sire, that dream shall have no issue in your days or in mine. But hereafter, when kings shall be niggardly and unrighteous, and when folk shall be unrighteous, in days when the world is perverted, when good is waning and evil waxing apace — in those days of the world's backsliding there shall fall no rain from the heavens, the feet of the storm shall be lamed, the crops shall wither, and famine shall be on the land. Then shall the clouds gather as if for rain from the four quarters of the heavens; there shall be haste first to carry indoors the rice and crops that the women have spread in the sun to dry, for fear the harvest should get wet; and then

with spade and basket in hand the men shall go forth to bank up the dykes. As though in sign of coming rain the thunder shall bellow, the lightning shall flash from the clouds — but even as the bulls in your dream, that fought not, so the clouds shall flee away without raining. This is what shall come of this dream. But no harm shall come therefrom to you; for it was with regard to the future that you dreamed this dream. What the Brahmins told you was said only to get themselves a livelihood.

No one who is aware of the natural disasters which now, with ever-increasing frequency beset every land, can doubt that the conditions related by this dream are applicable to our time much more than to any former age. The total disregard by our modern technology (impossible for the past — even a hundred years ago — in the absence of such technology) for the planet's delicately balanced ecological system and the vast increase in the planet's population (an increase of 300 per cent within the last 60 years), while constituting the principal factors responsible for upsetting the planet's equilibrium and denuding its finite resources, are nevertheless not the true reasons. The real cause is none other than the spiritual malaise afflicting the only agent — Man — capable of perpetrating the havoc which he has wrought upon the planet by every means at his disposal, not the least being his criminal use of poisonous defoliants and other chemical horrors.

Man, detached from his spiritual well-springs and grown completely cynical of any permanent ends worth striving for, has now become the creature of the moment, totally out of tune with the harmony of his social surroundings and natural environment, occupied only with satisfying his voracious appetites. In utter disregard of his debt to the past or the future, he has become a menace to the rest of the creation, fated to share this planet with him, and most immediately to his fellowman and himself.

No historical records, from the time of Siddharta to the beginning of our present century, give any indication of any droughts, famines, weather abnormalities, mass starvation or massive ecological damage in any manner comparable to what we are now experiencing on the surface of the whole planet, where even those lands traditionally regarded as the granaries and breadbaskets now stand depleted.

King and commoner in varying measure, by their acts of selfishness and evil, are all encompassed by the conditions depicted by Siddharta

which were destined to prevail at the time of His Dharma's waning. And no one who seeks to fit Siddharta's prophecy to some time gone by can possibly succeed, however assiduous his search. There is just no parallel in past ages for the problems now afflicting us and the even more horrendous possibilities that threaten. The instruments and movements capable of wreaking the havoc we see around us, as well as the technology by which the effects of such havoc could be conveyed to the entire planet, simply did not exist prior to our time. These factors only came into existence within this present century — the time foretold by Siddharta (and, as we shall see, also by the other Aryan Avatars and all the Divine Manifestations) — when these conditions would occur.

When Siddharta had interpreted the meaning of this first dream, He asked The King to relate his second dream.

The King: Sire, my second dream was after this manner: Methought little tiny trees and shrubs burst through the soil, and when they had grown scarce a span or two high, they flowered and bore fruit! This was my second dream; what shall come of it?

Siddharta: This dream shall have its fulfillment in days when the world has fallen into decay and when men are short-lived. In times to come, the passions shall be strong; quite young girls shall go to live with men, it shall be with them after the manner of women, and they shall conceive and bear children. The flowers typify their issue and the fruit their offspring. But you, sire, have nothing to fear therefrom. Tell me your third dream, O great king.

Here again it is important to point out that the conditions foreseen by this second dream could never have been possible of fulfillment on a planetary scale and especially never in Siddharta's native land prior to our time, simply because the means to make this possible with complete ease and abandon only came into existence within this century.

The state of our present "free society", oblivious to any restraints, having totally forsaken any moral code whatever, with the help of such new inventions as birth-control pills, prophylactics, and preventives and cures for all venereal diseases, unknown to our science even sixty years ago, has now completely fulfilled, on a planetary scale, the conditions foreseen for our age with such unerring accuracy by Siddharta.

The King: Methought, Sire, I saw cows sucking the milk of calves

which they had borne that selfsame day. This was my third dream. What shall come of it?

Siddharta: This dream too shall have its fulfillment only in days to come, when respect shall cease to be paid to age. For in the future, men, showing no reverence for parents-in-law, shall themselves administer the family estate, and, if such be their good pleasure, shall bestow food and clothing on the old folks, but shall withhold their gifts, if it be not their pleasure to give. Then shall the old folks, destitute and dependent, exist by favour of their own children, like big cows suckled by calves a day old. But you have nothing to fear therefrom. Tell me your fourth dream.

While old-folks homes have been a social disease of the “civilized” West — never strongly imbued with traditions of respect for its elders and gratitude toward its parents, yet for the last hundred years the East too, long the champion of traditional respect for one’s elders and gratitude to one’s parents, has, due to the inroads of Western technology and mores as well as the newly devised theories of state-supremacy and national socialism, which have permeated most of its large nations and enveloped within their structures the majority of mankind, alas, also abandoned its traditional values and now presents us with the same sorry picture — unimaginable even to our great-grandparents — of the supremacy and dominance of youth over its sires; a dominance made possible by the technological discoveries of the last one hundred years, which in turn gave birth to the industrial revolution and its revolutionary political philosophies. No past ages could have fulfilled this prophecy, since the conditions for its fulfillment only came into existence within the last century.

The King: Methought, Sire, I saw men unyoking a team of draught-oxen, sturdy and strong, and setting young steers to draw the load; and the steers, proving unequal to the task laid on them, refused and stood stock-still, so that wains moved not on their way. This was my fourth dream. What shall come of it?

Siddharta: Here again the dream shall not have its fulfillment until the future, in the days of unrighteous kings. For in days to come, unrighteous and niggardly kings shall show no honor to wise lords skilled in precedent, fertile in

expedient, and able to get through business, nor shall appoint to the courts of law and justice aged councillors of wisdom and of learning in the law. Nay, they shall honor the very young and foolish, and appoint such to preside in the courts. And these latter, ignorant alike of statecraft and of practical knowledge, shall not be able to bear the burden of their honors or to govern, but because of their incompetence shall throw off the yoke of office. Whereon the aged and wise lords, albeit right able to cope with all difficulties, shall keep in mind how they were passed over, and shall decline to aid, saying: "It is no business of ours; we are outsiders; let the boys of the inner circle see to it." Hence they shall stand aloof, and ruin shall assail those kings on every land. It shall be even, as when the yoke was laid on the young steers, who were not strong enough for the burden, and not upon the team of sturdy and strong draught-oxen, who alone were able to do the work. Howbeit, you have nothing to fear therefrom. Tell me your fifth dream.

While this prophecy can be said to have been fulfilled wherever unrighteous kings or leaders have shunted aside wise and well-trying advisers and bestowed their trust instead on lackeys who substitute their lack of wisdom and experience with servile fawning on the chief to boost his ego, yet never has this phenomenon become more universally exhibited as by the recent exposures in Western politics, resulting in the humbling of those of its mightiest, who placed their trust in the very type of persons described by Siddharta — usurpers of the sources of wise advice and the positions of tried-and-true counsellors, incessantly flattering and fawning on their chiefs.

The King: Methought, Sire, I saw a horse with a mouth on either side, to which fodder was given on both sides, and it ate with both its mouths. This was my fifth dream. What shall come of it?

Siddharta: This dream too shall have its fulfillment only in the future, in the days of unrighteous and foolish kings, who shall appoint unrighteous and covetous men to be judges. These base ones, fools, despising the good, shall take bribes from both sides as they sit in the seat of judgment, and shall be filled with this two-fold

corruption, even as the horse that ate fodder with two mouths at once. Howbeit you have nothing to fear therefrom. Tell me your...

This prophecy is a very graphic portrayal of a phenomenon which of late has become universal. The people in every kind of occupation, whether engaged in government, private business or industry, one and all have thrown ethics and caution to the wind and with only rare exceptions are brazenly engaged in eating from a "mouth on either side". That is, in addition to their regular emoluments such as wages, etc., they indulge in bribes and kickbacks, slyly manouvered through such arrangements as overtime work, fake lists of non-existent soldiers or workers, and unauthorized use of service facilities such as vehicles, office space, etc.

The King: A man was weaving rope, Sire, and as he wove, he threw it down at his feet. Under his bench lay a hungry she-jackal, which kept eating the rope as he wove, but without the man knowing it. This is what I saw. This was my seventh dream. What shall come of it?

Siddharta: This dream too shall not have its fulfillment 'til the future. For in days to come, women shall lust after men and strong drink and finery and gadding abroad and after the joys of this world. In their wickedness and profligacy these women shall drink strong drink with their paramours; they shall flaunt in garlands and perfumes and unguents; and heedless of even the most pressing of their household duties, they shall keep watching for their paramours, even at crevices high up in the outer wall; aye, they shall pound up the very seed-corn that should be sown on the morrow so as to provide good cheer — in all these ways shall they plunder the store won by the hard work of their husbands in field and byre, devouring the poor men's substance even as the hungry jackal under the bench ate up the rope of the ropemaker as he wove it. Howbeit, you have nothing to fear therefrom. Tell me your eighth dream.

— a very graphic description of the immoderate use of the essential principle of "equality of opportunity for men and women", so important for our age and yet so totally abused by those organizations who, not having grasped its spiritual import and thus equate it with the chimera of absolute equality of the sexes, are militantly engaged in proving the

impossible with its consequences of deformed sexual, marital and most certainly those social relationships which affect the most vital ingredient of all for building a mature civilization — their own children. While a cursory look at this passage, unlike the conditions described in the second dream of King Prasenadi, can be valid for many ages and many societies within their own particular parameters, yet upon a closer examination of its various criticisms, such as “gadding abroad”, taking “strong drink with their paramours”, “heedless of even the most pressing of their household duties” and “plunder the store won by the hard work of their husbands”, we see that these are not able to fit any past societies. Nor can they be imputed to conditions in a brothel, since inmates of a brothel are themselves employed in seeking gain, rather than daring to fritter away or “plunder the store won by the hard work of their husbands” (assuming that they have husbands). And such phrases as “heedless of even the most pressing of their household duties” obviously means no wayward prostitute or single woman but the keeper of the home itself, the wife, the mother — until just recently regarded by society the world over as the paragon of virtue and the symbol of chastity, but now no more. No, this dream too, with unerring accuracy, describes the well-nigh universal symptoms of a profligate and adulterous age — ours.

We will here take up two dreams of King Prasenadi, the eighth and ninth, simultaneously, as they complement each other in providing a full description of another of the evils now afflicting mankind.

The King: Methought, Sire, I saw at a palace gate a big pitcher which was full to the brim and stood amid a number of empty ones. And from the four cardinal points, and from the four intermediate points as well, there kept coming a constant stream of people of all the four castes, carrying water in pipkins and pouring it into the full pitcher. And the water overflowed and ran away. But none the less they still kept on pouring more and more water into the overflowing vessel, without a single man giving so much as a glance at the empty pitchers. This was my eighth dream. What shall come of it?

Siddharta: This dream too shall not have its fulfillment until the future. For in days to come the world shall decay, the kingdom shall grow weak, its kings shall grow poor and

niggardly; the foremost among them shall have no more than 100,000 pieces of money in his treasury. Then shall these kings in their need set the whole of the country-folk to work for them — for the kings' sake shall the toiling folk, leaving their own work, sow grain and pulse, and keep watch and reap and thresh and garner; for the kings' sake shall they plant sugar canes, make and drive sugar-mills, and boil down the molasses; for the kings' sake shall they lay out flower-gardens and orchards, and gather in the fruits. And as they gather in all the divers kinds of produce they shall fill the royal garners to over-flowing, not giving so much as a glance at their own empty barns at home. Thus it shall be like filling up the full pitcher, heedless of the quite empty ones. Howbeit, you have nothing to fear therefrom. Tell me your ninth dream.

The King: Methought, Sire, I saw a deep pool with shelving banks all round and overgrown with the five kinds of lotuses. From every side two-footed creatures and four-footed creatures flocked thither to drink of its waters. The depths in the middle were muddy, but the water was clear and sparkling at the margin where the various creatures went down into the pool. This was my ninth dream. What shall come of it?

Siddharta: This dream too shall not have its fulfillment till the future. For in days to come kings shall grow unrighteous; they shall rule after their own will and pleasure, and shall not execute judgment according to righteousness. These kings shall hunger after riches and wax fat on bribes; they shall not show mercy, love and compassion toward their people, but be fierce and cruel, amassing wealth by crushing their subjects like sugar canes in a mill and by taxing them even to the uttermost farthing. Unable to pay the oppressive tax, the people shall fly from village and town and the like, and take refuge upon the borders of the realm; the heart of the land shall be a wilderness, while the borders shall teem with people — even as the water was muddy in the middle of the pool and clear at the margin. Howbeit, you have

nothing to fear therefrom. Tell me your...

The above two dreams exactly describe the apt phrase "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer!" For many there are inordinate taxes. Power blocs, vested interests, corrupt lobbyists, and sheer brigandage masquerading as government and keeper of the peoples' interests have well-nigh denuded the salt of the land of any viable means for livelihood and self-respect, and by such means have exiled the people from their traditional sources of justice and guidance and pushed them farther and farther away into uninhabitable areas, there to eke out a miserable livelihood. (Siddharta's interpretation of the ninth dream is an apt description of urban blight.) Wolves fatten on the ill-gotten gains from these iniquities in measure without end. Moreover they continue to erect even stronger fences and tighten their grip on their hapless victims by instilling in them the fear of alien intrusions and menace so as to justify the inexhaustible need for new and more costly armaments and greater and greater sacrifice, all in the name of security and preservation — whether in the field of government or religion, business or class — of the unscrupulous leaders and their insatiable greed. Such "leaders" never seek, much less work for, a lowering of barriers, a demolition of the fences both physical and psychological which separate their own particular type of victims from others. But when the flood-tide of pent-up fury of long victimized humanity will, soon, as it must, demolish forever these deadly barriers which have for so long prevented the oneness of mankind then priest and politician, the rich and the mighty, will one and all find themselves buried in the common grave of their own making, despised by the mass of mankind who, liberated from their age-old shackles of fear and prejudice, will have eventually set their feet firmly on the road of the rediscovered Dharma, pure and perfectly suited to lead the human race — unshackled from its bonds of nationalism, racism, "classism", sectarianism and last but not least materialism — to a new era of universal joy and well-being. And so we go on to another of these fascinating dreams —

The King: Methought, Sire, I saw sour buttermilk bartered for precious sandalwood, worth 100,000 pieces of money. this was my eleventh dream. What shall come of it?

Siddharta: This dream too shall not have its fulfillment till the future — in the days when my doctrine is waning. For in days to come many greedy and shameless Brethren shall arise who for their belly's sake shall preach the

very words in which I inveighed against greed! Because they have deserted by reason of their belly and have taken their stand on the side of the heretics, they shall fail to make their preaching lead up to Nirvana. Nay, their only thought as they preach shall be by fine words and sweet voices to induce men to give them costly raiment and the like, and to be minded to give such gifts. Others again seated in the highways, at the street corners, at the doors of king's palaces, and so forth, shall stoop to preach for money, yea for mere coined kahapanas, half-kahapanas, padas, or maskas! And as they thus barter away for food or raiment or for kahapanas and half-kahapanas my doctrine, the worth whereof is Nirvana, they shall be even as those who bartered away for sour buttermilk precious sandalwood worth 100,000 pieces. Howbeit, you have nothing to fear therefrom. Tell me your...

This hardly needs comment except to say that we have, in our hypocritical chantings of various Scriptures and mantras, far exceeded even the conditions portrayed by the above dream by reciting religious verses and sprinkling holy water on the most horrendous weapons of destruction, the very antithesis of life and love for which these Scriptures were intended by their Authors, the Divine Manifestations.

These dreams, especially when taken in their entirety, delineate the details of the symptoms that now afflict a travailing age. An age in which every cherished principle and institution, every aspect of knowledge and its fruits, every agency and endeavor have now been undermined and perverted, to serve as instruments of the deadly struggle whose preliminary skirmishes are already well advanced. That final struggle, born of the sickness of the human spirit now devoid of its revivifying elixir of the pure Dharma, is destined to erase every vestige of this universal disease, however massive the bloodletting, and inevitably restore the ethical balance which alone can permit a fruitful survival of the human race.

Now, by stretching one's imagination and researching history one can apply two or three of these prophetic dreams and their interpretations to other peoples and other times; yet when taken as a whole, in the context of the single night during which they appeared to King Prasenadi and according to their sequence, one cannot escape the conclusion that the only age upon which all these sixteen dreams converge is ours —

these times, which by means of the discoveries of science during the last one hundred and fifty years, discoveries unknown prior to that time, have completely fulfilled each and every one of King Prasenadi's dreams. Nor can the argument be made that while Siddharta's prophecies regarding these dreams are now fulfilled, given more time in this deteriorating age they would become even more so, and thus would bestow on that nebulous future a greater claim to being the correct time. Such assertions would be fallacious for two reasons: First, claims cannot be based on conjecture about an uncertain future, which while certainly being different, may not necessarily be worse. Second — and this is fundamental — the prophecies indicate the disappearance of the Dharma, the death of the moral and spiritual values in human society, and the emergence of their antithesis — the negative forces of decay and corruption so vividly depicted by these sixteen dreams. They forecast the change from life to death and from day to night, and hence their fulfillment can only be reckoned at the point of change and is neither meaningful nor capable of being reckoned beyond that point, just as it is meaningless to say that one is more dead than dead or that it is more night than night. These latter aspects of death, such as putrefaction and decay after death has occurred, are not new conditions. Only death as compared with life is a new condition or a basic change, just as night is from day, both conditions being negations caused by the absence of the positive reality of life or, in the case of night, of light. Hence the cogent point that demands the attention of our disbelieving age is the clear fulfillment of the prophecies implicit in the dreams of King Prasenadi and the unmistakable conditions which now exist as the "five disappearances" foretold by Siddharta which were to effect His Dharma's eclipse. The fulfillment of these conditions for humanity as well as the Dharma was impossible at any time in the past because the technical means for the existence of total profligacy and corruption on a planetary scale were simply not available prior to the last century, just as the lifting of the threat, in our time, of social diseases and the abolishing of the stigma connected with it. And we who find our place in this period of our age's decline, now approaching its end, must see a special significance in this historical process which opens for each of us, two paths — the one of withdrawal from its operation, or of engagement in the process of regeneration that must inevitably follow, by making ourselves into dynamic instruments for hastening its fulfillment.

The reader will also note the correlation between our assertion that

the final disappearance of the pure Dharma, prophesied by Siddharta in His delineation of the “five disappearances”, and the point in time towards which all the conditions and allusions of King Prasenadis’s sixteen dreams as interpreted by Siddharta, converge and find their complete fulfillment, is our own age — these last one-hundred years, and this correlation is extended to include the prophetic utterances of Zoroaster, the other Aryan Avatar, Who appeared in Iran a hundred years prior to Siddharta’s time, in His discourse with His son-in-law Jamasp, as recorded in the *Jamaspi*.¹ Upon Jamasp’s query to Zoroaster as to when He would return for the final triumph of “Light” against “Darkness” in the time of the ultimate dissolution of the aeon, Zoroaster responds thus: “O Jamasp, when lamps shall be lit without candles by merely touching the walls,² when carriages shall be driven without horses and when men shall fly like the birds, then know, O Jamasp, that the time has arrived”!³ So once again, from yet another independent source, the period is pinpointed in time, in this final age — Kali yug — of the 12,000 year span of this “auspicious aeon” for the manifestation of the Avatar,

¹ **Jamaspi**. “The Vision of Zoroaster.” **Jamaspi**, while one of the most ancient Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts, was not written down in its final form until shortly after the fall of the Sassanian empire of Iran. However, even that late date was over 1300 years ago and makes it impossible for any but the most cynical to deny the fantastic accuracy of these prophecies and consequently their tremendous significance for the purpose of our quest.

² What better description of electric lighting and its modern switches?

³ The reader will note the similarity of style with that of Sariputta’s own queries to Siddharta concerning Maitrya’s advent. Nor can these remarkable prophecies be regarded as a unique set of imaginative coincidences, for identical signs are to be found in the great Semitic line of Divine Revelations of which we list only a few:

Helicopters: “Behold he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind.” **JEREMIAH: IV. 13.**

Airplanes: “Thou has caused men to ride over our heads.” **PSALMS: LXXVI. 12.**

“Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it.” **JOB: XXX. 22.**

Threshing Machine or steam Shovel: “Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff.” **ISAIAH: 41.15.**

Telegraph: “Canst thou send lightnings that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are?” **JOB: 38.35.**

Submarines: “And maketh man as fishes of the sea.” **HABAKKUK: I. 14.**

Automobile traffic and super-highways: “... the chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broadways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.” **NAHUM: 2. 4.**

DANIEL: 12. 4. “The time of the end; many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased.”

the Buddha-rising. And it is clearly the latter half of the last century, when every one of the three conditions, including that of flight dramatically occurred for the first time in the long period — nearly 2,700 years — since Zoroaster uttered His prophecy.

Now, through an examination of the prophecy of Siddharta regarding the conditions at the time of the “disappearance” of the Dharma and the arithmetic of the historical dates related to these prophecies, we can conclude that the long-promised and long-awaited advent of Maitrya has definitely occurred. And that quite recently. However, in fairness to Buddhism, it must be stated that its Scriptures contain nothing else of import concerning precise information on dates, for this all-important Advent, that could be attributed with any certainty to Siddharta. However, if one recalls our past contention and regards Siddharta in the context of His claim of being an Avatar among the Hindu Avatars, then it is clear that greater precision for the actual date of the advent of Maitrya is unnecessary and would perhaps be counter-productive, since it would confuse those Buddhists who cannot reconcile themselves to accepting Siddharta as one of the great Divine Teachers in the line of Manu, Ram and Krishna but instead regard Him as an anomaly in the context of the Avatars of the Indo-aryans. Such persons, having no basis for comparison and correlation of the time sequence already provided by the Hindu Scriptures, would indeed be lost in trying to interpret any prophecies concerning the dates, and their calculation would only veer towards the fantastic and absurd numbers we have already laid to rest. We can only leave such persons to their own devices and return to the Hindu arithmetic which refers to the present aeon, to be climaxed with the advent of their Promised One, Kalki, Who, as we have already seen, could be none other than Maitrya.

Going back to the Scriptural assertion — that Krishna lived in the last joining period of Dwapar yug and that after His passing, Kali yug, the age of darkness, commenced immediately, and that as Kali yug was destined to last a long time, nearly 4,800 years (with its two joining periods), that Siddharta appeared at its mid-point — the question which we must now resolve is when exactly did Kali yug begin and end, if it has already concluded. From the *Puranas* we see that in accordance with astronomy, Kali yug will terminate and the Kreta (or Sat) yug of the new aeon will commence when the Moon, Sun and the planet Jupiter appear in one straight line in the constellation of the Crab (Cancer) or Kirk, according to Hindu nomenclature.

*Yada Chanrashch Surayashch Tatha Tishayovrahaaspati (When again the Moon, Sun and also the planet Jupiter) Ek Rashayo Sameshayante Tada Bhawati Tat Kretam.*¹ (In one straight path together come — that starts auspicious Kreta.)

According to well-nigh unanimous agreement of Hindu scholasticism, the collimation of these three heavenly bodies occurred at the exact time of 17 Ghares 53 Pals on Amawashya (a date, which is at the middle of the month) of the Shrawan month in the year 2000 of the Vikram Era.² This date, of the completion of Kali yug with its joining periods, when translated into Buddhist calendar, is Buddhist Era (B.E.) 2486, and its exact western reckoning is 1 August 1943 at 12 noon. Hence, the date of Krishna's passing must be B.E. 2486 (or A.D. 1943) less the full span (4800 years) of Kali yug which is 2314 years before Siddharta's Enlightenment (or B.C. 2857) and the start of the last joining period of Kali yug is easily determined through our previous reference (p. 187) from *Kalki-Puran* (3.5.13) by simply deducting 400 years from B.E. 2486 or A.D. 1943 and we obtain B.E. 2086 (or A.D. 1543), or Vikram Era 1600. And again, in accordance with Scriptural tradition and prophecy, just as Ram is known to have appeared in the joining period of Treta yug and Krishna in the joining period of Dwapar yug, so the Scriptures herald the advent of Kalki (Maitrya) in the joining period of Kali yug and, as we have already seen, between the years B.E. 2086 and B.E. 2486 (or A.D. 1543 and A.D. 1943).

By referring to Siddharta's own statement (p. 197) from *Anagatavamsa*, giving the span for His Dharma's total eclipse as 5000 years, and then His having halved this period of 5000 years to 2500 years by His permission [(p. 199) in *Vinaya-pitaka*] for women to enter the Samgha, we now see the perfect correlation between that and the end of Kali yug and thus also the end of this "auspicious aeon" in which, according to Siddharta's explicit prophecy, Maitrya had to appear. The

¹ *Bhagavad-Puran.*

² Vikramaditya was the legendary king whose coronation in 487 B.E. (or 56 B.C.) inaugurated the Vikram Era of the Hindus. This date, observed as the New Year among the Hindus, is known as "Divali" which is a corrupt form of the word "Deepavali" (cluster of lights). It is highly probable that this celebration is a very ancient one marking the date of the coronation of Ram upon His return from exile, and Vikramaditya selected this day as the most auspicious for his own coronation and the inauguration of his own era. Hence the correlation between the much more ancient Hindu prophecies and the present historic period by means of the use of this same important date serving as a link.

Hindu Scriptures too, confirm this in regards to the advent of the Kalki Avatar (Visnu's tenth and final Manifestation):

Mlechhanivahanidhane kalayasi karavalam
Dhumaketumiva kimapi karalam
Kesava dhrita Kalkisareera
*Jaya Jagadeesa Hare...*¹

— and state that at the end² of Kali yug, when irreligion and vice have proliferated, Dharma has disappeared and people have sunk like beasts to the lowest vices, wickedness and debauchery and eagerly destroy each other (note how identical it is to Siddharta's own description of the "five disappearances") — Visnu will appear as Kalki on a white horse blazing like a meteor and wielding a flaming sword, cut down millions of the wicked, just as a farmer mercilessly mows down weeds to prepare the ground for new crops. No one will be spared regardless of rank, creed or sex, and salvation will depend only on Faith, Virtue, Charity and Love.

It is on this basis and these dates that we must predicate our efforts to pinpoint the time of Maitrya, Who, as now evident from these computations, has definitely appeared. Hence from the *Kalki-Puran* we read that when Krishna passed from this life He immediately embarked on a spiritual trance, meditating fixedly on the Absolute, and, as the Scripture continues, "only broke this meditation and fasting after a period of 12 years and 12 months" —

Evam Vritate Dvadshaude Dvadashyam Parnadine
Snatu Kamah Samudreham Bandhubhi Sahito Gatah.

— and that upon its termination He, Krishna (Visnu's eighth Avatar), "in company with His brothers and clansmen came to bathe in the ocean", which symbolically means the period of the disappearance of the Avatar, the Divine Manifestation, and His reappearance as Kalki (Maitrya), together with His brothers, relatives and apostles, to enter once more the ocean of humanity. This particular prophecy is very important even in the figurative sense, as we shall see in the episode relating to Maitrya's birth. Let us now return to the computation of this period of 12 years and 12 months in the above-mentioned Scripture which is the period separating the time of Krishna's passing from His advent as Kalki the Aeon-Ender.

¹ Gita-Govinda.

² Similarly does Siddharta confirm this time period (p. 192) in the *Anagatavamsa*: "And there will be Metteya too, before this same auspicious aeon runs to the end of its years."

In this reference the Scripture, as will be noted, separates the basis of reckoning for the “years” (*twelve solar years*) from that of computing the “months” (*twelve months*), which obviously must be lunar¹ rather than solar months, otherwise the Scripture would merely have referred to thirteen years in all. This, the Scripture has not done, and the reason is obviously the *lunisolar calendar* used by the ancient Hindus.

It is clear that this Scripture, which concerns Krishna’s commencement of His meditation immediately upon His passing from this life into the astral plane and the duration of this Divine trance, upon the conclusion of which He would appear amidst humanity as Kalki (Visnu’s tenth Avatar), is about a Divine occurrence in the plane of cosmic time. Otherwise the brief span of twelve years and twelve months is too absurdly short to make sense in the light of the principle of “the recurrence of Divine Manifestations” — Buddha-risings — and contradicts the very basis explicitly stated in both Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures concerning the appearance of the Avatars or Buddhas *after long lapses of time*. We must therefore return to the scale of cosmic or Divine Time of the devas (gods) as already shown on page 184 for arriving thus at the precise translation of these figures into solar time.

12 (deva) years x 360 equals	4320 years
12 (deva) months x 29.5 (days in a lunar month)	354 years
	4674 years

Now, from the Scriptures (see pp. 215-16) we have seen that Kali yug commenced immediately upon the passing of Krishna from this life and that its duration (full span including the joining periods) was 4800 years. Moreover these 4800 years came to the end of their duration in the year 2000 (see p. 216) of the Vikram Era, which corresponds to B.E. 2486 (A.D. 1943, 1st August). Again, from the above (*Kalki-Puran*), we see that the exact number of years that Krishna remained in the astral plane, engrossed in deep meditation before reappearing as Visnu’s tenth Avatar, Kalki, is 4674 years. Hence, Kalki Avatar must have had to appear (4800-4674) 126 years prior to the end of Kali yug’s duration, i.e.

¹ A lunar month is the average time between successive new or full moons, equal to 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes, while the solar month is one twelfth of a tropical year, totaling 30 days 10 hours 29 minutes 3.8 seconds.

in the last joining period of Kali yug, before the actual commencement of the Kreta or Sat yug of the “new aeon”. This, as we can see is indeed confirmed by the pattern described in the Scriptures, placing the appearance of the Avatars always in the last joining period of the passing age (yug). We know too that Kali yug ended in B.E. 2486 (A.D. 1943, August 1). Hence in order to determine the exact year of the appearance or return or birth of Kalki — Maitrya — we must simply subtract from B.E. 2486 the 126 years, and this brings us to B.E. 2360 (A.D. 1943-126) or A.D. 1817.

We will take up one more prophecy for ascertaining the exact date of Kalki’s birth from the Hindu Scriptures¹ to see if the date B.E. 2360 (A.D. 1817) is verifiable. This is also from *Kalki-Puran* and it reads thus:

*Kalap-Gram Ma Sadhya Vidmi Satpasi Iswhitam
Tatha-Avataaram Vijyay Vyasat Satyavati Sutat
Pratixya Kalam Laxabdam Kali Prapt Stawantikam.*²

Freely translated, this address by Maru³ the yogi to the legendary Kalki in the astral plane engaged in His meditation on the Absolute, goes as follows:

*In Kalap village where I was in meditation I learned of Your
Manifestation from victorious Vyas,⁴ son of Satyavati,
And upon completion of one hundred thousand years of Kali yug’s
waiting period, I have encountered You.*

We know (p. 184) that the joining or waiting period of Kali yug consists of 400 years at its beginning and a similar span at its end. As the prophecy concerns the advent of Kalki Avatar, Who is to appear for ushering in Kreta or Sat yug of the new aeon — just as Krishna had appeared at the end joining period of Dwapar yug immediately before the commencement of Kali yug — then the joining period of Kali yug which is pertinent to the prophecy is the *last joining period of 400 years*, i.e. the period between B.E. 2086 (A.D. 1543) and B.E. 2486 (A.D. 1943) when Kali yug ended on 1 August). Now, by converting the 100,000 solar days into solar years (100,000 divided by 365) we get the exact point in this

¹ These extracts in Sanskrit on pp. 216-23 from the Hindu Scriptures are from Prakash Narayan Mishra’s book *Kalki, Avatar Ki Khoj* (The Quest for Kalki Avatar) Jawahar Electric Press, Agra-3, India, 1972.

² *Kalki-Puran* 3.5.

³ Supposed to be the twenty-first descendent of Ram (Ikshvaku of the solar-race).

⁴ The legendary compiler of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the Scripture which embodies the Teaching of Krishna.

end joining period of Kali yug when Kalki would appear, and this is 274 years, which, when added to B.E. 2086, again totals B.E. 2360 (A.D. 1817). And if we use the shorter period of 360 days for the solar year we get the date B.E. 2363 (A.D. 1820), also another close date which bears noting.

By referring to the “five disappearances” (pp. 193-98), foretold by Siddharta as the successive stages that would afflict His Dharma through five consecutive periods of 500 years each, we can now see the correlation with the date of Maitrya’s (or Kalki’s) birth, which occurs in the last part of the last “disappearance”, thereby again confirming the stand taken by the Scriptures of the Hindus — that Avatars and Buddhas rise in the decaying aspect (both as related to conditions and time) of the Divine or cosmic ages, and by so doing usher in the succeeding age. The dreams of King Prasenadi which we have already recounted clearly bear out our contention concerning the plight of mankind in our present time and demonstrate the remarkable similarity between the present state of the Dharma and what we now see of the human condition at large.

Now, just as the significant dates about Siddharta’s own life have come down to us through legend and logos, likewise we should probe further to determine from the Scriptures additional dates and conditions relating to Maitrya (or Kalki). Again we must return to the Hindu Scriptures to search for additional prophecy to complement the one (B.E. 2360 or A.D. 1817) which has already come to light.

From the *Kalki-Puran* we refer to the following line: “*Shuklapaxasya Dwadashyam Madhwe Masi Madhav,*”¹ which, freely translated, states that “upon passing twelve days of a fortnight in Madhav month, Madhav appears.” Now if we separate the 4000-year span of Kali yug from its two joining periods of 400 years each and represent these two joining periods as two equal halves (15 days) of a month, then the 12 days²

¹ Madhav is a name of the Supreme (Visnu).

² Only cosmic or Divine time is meant by such short periods — which otherwise are too absurdly brief and hence contradict Scriptural references to long intervals of time for the recurrence of the Divine Manifestations — to convey any meaningful concept regarding this prophecy. Moreover, bearing in mind Siddharta’s own appearance at the mid-period of Kali yug, it should be obvious that by transposing these periods of Kali yug (4000) and its two joining periods of 400 years each, and halving these amounts, identical numerical results will be achieved by predicating our calculations on Buddhist calendar instead of the Vikram Era. The reason for using the Vikram Era as the basis is to avoid redundancy, since we are using prophecies from Hindu Scriptures for obtaining precision — especially as Buddhist prophecies only describe general time periods in increments of 500 years, just as the prophecies of the

mentioned by the Scripture as the period after which Madhav (Visnu's Kalki Avatar-Maitrya) manifests Himself ($400 \times 12 / 15$) equals 320 years. And this number when added to B.E. 2086 (A.D. 1543), (the date of commencement for the end joining period), totals B.E. 2406 (A.D. 1863). This date also stands out in the Scripture in the form of a cryptic reference in another passage which lists the kinds and quantities of creatures presented by King Kal (Time) to Kalki Avatar:

	100,000 Elephants
	10,000 Horses
	6,000 Chariots
	600 Maid Servants
	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>
Totalling	116,600

Since the gifts are from Time (Kal) then the above integers, when taken in the order of their largest time units (seconds, minutes, hours, *days*, years), clearly show these quantities as denoting the number of days, and to make them meaningful in the context of our calculations we must transform these 116,600 days into solar years by dividing this figure by 365. This gives us 319 years and 165 days (5-1/2 months) and to it again must be added the ending date of Kali yug before the commencement of the last joining period i.e.: B.E. 2086. Thus once more $2086 + 319.452$ comes to B.E. 2405 and 5 months — the same date B.E. 2406 (A.D. 1863) obtained from the previous prophecy.

Hence this (B.E. 2406 or A.D. 1863) is the second significant and later date which has come to light from the Hindu Scriptures, the first being B.E. 2360 (A.D. 1817).

Lastly, let us take two more quotations from the *Kalki-Puran* regarding dates. Consider the following verse:

*Sumatyam Vishnuyasha Garbh Madhat Vaishnavam
Grih Naxatra Rashyadi Seviti Shree Padambujam.*

— the first line of which, freely translated, means:

The essence of Visnu (the Supreme) manifested Itself as a foetus (in the womb of the world).

Zoroastrians, in dealing with the time of the Advent of their Redeemers while being remarkably precise in their description (page 214) of the conditions which would prevail the Advent, nevertheless mention only large spans of a thousand years to indicate its time.

and the second line of which gives the period in days of His symbolic gestation:

<i>Grih</i>	<i>Naxatra</i>	<i>Rashi</i>	<i>Adi</i>	<i>Pada-Ambu-Jam.</i>
9	27	12	add	2 - 000 - 0

which means $92,712+20,000=112,712$ days or approximately 308 years and 10 months. Added to B.E. 2086 (A.D. 1543) this totals B.E. 2394 and 10 months (A.D. 1851 and 10 months). This then is yet another date in close proximity to the other two which we have found in the Hindu Scripture, the significance of which we must investigate.

And finally, let us consider the prophecy of the blind saint Surdas,¹ also implied by the *Kalki-Puran*, which reads as follows:

Ek Sahas Nansau Se Upar Eso Yog Pare
Sahas Barash Tak Satyug Bite Dharma Ki Bel Bare
Swarna Phool Prithvi Par Phool Puni Jag Dasha Fireh
Surdas Yeh Hari Ki Lila Tare Nahi Tare.

Freely translated, this means: "A momentous event will occur in Samwat (Vikram Era) One Thousand Nine Hundred and over, which is destined to usher in the *thousand years of Sat yug* (Golden Age)² and the showering of the divine flowers on the world by the manifest glory of the irresistible Lord (Hari)."³

Now we have already seen (p. 216) that Vikram Era began in B.E. 487 (B.C. 56), and by taking the date of Vikram "1900 plus" (which means between 1900 and 1901) and adding it to B.E. 487 we arrive at the year B.E. 2387 (A.D. 1844).

Thus we have the precise dates B.E. 2360 (A.D. 1817), B.E. 2387 (A.D. 1844), B.E. 2394 (approx. A.D. 1852) and B.E. 2406 (A.D. 1863), which have now come to light from the *Kalki-Puran*, and these are in close proximity to each other, like the years of a person's life, and clearly hint at the events of a single lifetime! Something or Someone appeared during those years, and the Scriptures clearly assert that this was Kalki — Maitrya!

It must now be clear that this is indeed the time to look for Him, for He has surely appeared! But Where? And Who?

¹ Surdas a legendary blind saint who dwelt in Mathura; a great devotee of Krishna.

² This span (1000 years) for Sat yug and not 4000 years as the "literalists" (see Chart No. 2, page 187) conceive it, is further confirmation of the correctness of our Chart No. 3 on page 190.

³ One of Visnu's titles.

The last age (asankheyya) or Kali yug of the Bhadra-Kalpa¹ or the “auspicious aeon” in which, according to Siddharta and the Hindu Scriptures as well as the prophecies attributed to Zoroaster, Kalki, or Shah-Bahram Varjavand, *Maitrya* was to appear, commenced 2314 years before the Buddhist Era (B.C. 2857) and ended in B.E. 2486 (A.D. 1943 1 August). Hence, to ascertain whether the Promised One awaited by these three great Faiths of the Aryan people is indeed the One for all three, let us construct the chart from what we know of those Divine Teachers, Who during the span of this “auspicious aeon” exerted a dynamically unifying and progressive influence² on the Aryans of India and Iran (See Chart 4, p. 224).

If, as is asserted by every one of these three Faiths as well as by all other great Religions, the Promised One expected by them is to come to banish darkness, usher in light, and erect the unshakeable edifice of

¹“Bhadra” is another connotation for “aryan” (noble) and also denotes “the people”. Hence Bhadra-Kalpa means the “aryan aeon” or the “cycle of humanity”. Also means “fortunate age”.

²We must strictly adhere to this definition of the word “influence”. where we are dealing with Religion, since the other “influences” of certain Faiths, long past their unifying and progressive aspect, under whose cloak conquerors and plunderers have concealed their negative goals, are both contrary to the original purpose of these same Faiths and have served no lasting good.

By reference to page 138 and f.n. 2, the reader can understand that the reason Siddharta, while fully cognizant of the yet-to-occur advents of Christ (Who appeared 500 years later) and Muhammad (Who appeared 1100 years later), did not prophesy concerning Them, was simply because both Christianity and Muhammadanism, when they appeared on the horizon of a decaying Dharma nearly 1300 years after Siddharta’s passing, would themselves — having by then lost their pristine purity and been rent with divisions — also stand in need of rejuvenation and would not have anything to contribute to the Dharma’s improvement. Such was not the case concerning Muhammadanism’s dynamic and rejuvenating impact on the then greatly decadent Zoroastrianism, since Muhammadanism, when it entered the pale of Zoroastrianism (within ten years after the passing of Muhammad),* was still in its state of pristine purity and was of tremendous benefit to a decadent Iranian Empire and the whole area of the Levant, which soon came under its sway. Hence Zoroaster clearly foretold Its appearance to His followers a thousand years earlier, prophesying that Hoshidar Mah would appear a thousand years later and this period, when taken with its two joining periods of 100 years each, gives the exact time (1200 years after Zoroaster’s passing) when Muhammadanism entered Iran. Hence, because of this fact, we have included in this list of the Avatars among the Aryans the name of Muhammad, Who derived from the great Semitic line of Divine Manifestations, to which also belong Moses and Christ.

* (Muhammad, A.D. 570-632. [But the Muhammadan calendar begins from Muhammad’s journey from Mecca to Medina. This journey is called “Al Hegira” and occurred in B.E. 1127]. It is now A.H. [Muhammadan year] 1412 [B.E. 2539 or A.D. 1996].

CHART 4

BHADRA-KALPA Ended in B.E. 2486 (A.D. 1943)

RELIGION OF THE ARYANS	Kreta-yug B.B.E. 9514 - B.B.E. 8314	Treta yug B.B.E. 8313 - B.B.E. 5914	Dwapar yug B.B.E. 5913 - B.B.E. 2314	Kali yug B.B.E. 2313 - B.E. 2486	New Kreta yug Commenced B.E. 2485
HINDUISM	MANU** (around B.B.E. 8500)	RAM** (around B.B.E. 5900)	KRISHNA B.B.E. 2313	SIDDHARTA B.E. 1	KALKI ***
IRANIAN MONOTHEISM	MOHABAD*	HOSHANG (around B.B.E. 1500)	ZOROASTER B.B.E. 100	MUHAMMAD B.E. 1127	SHAH- BAHRAM ***
BUDDHISM	KONAGA- MANA*	KAKA- SANDHA*	KESSAPA*	SIDDHARTA B.E. 1	MAITRYA ***

B.B.E. means Before Buddhist Era. While B.E. means Buddhist Era and A.D. is Christian Era.

* The dates for these names cannot be derived at all. Especially for the names of the three Buddhas who preceded Siddharta, since even their names have no great significance (see f.n. 1, page 117 for additional comments on these).

** The dates for these names can only be broadly estimated from Scripture.

*** While we have already ascertained that Kalki has appeared, yet at this stage we must put off including the various dates B.E. 2360, B.E. 2363, B.E. 2387, B.E. 2394, B.E. 2406 which have come to light about His appearance. Likewise from the Scriptures we have also determined that Maitrya and Shah-Bahram Varjavand are the same as Kalki and therefore Their Advents too have occurred.

world unity, then it is only too clear that the Promised One awaited by each Faith in the last aspect of this last age (Kali yug) of this aeon, the only one of which any one has any historical evidence, must be the same Person for all the Faiths. Anything but that — even two *separate* Redeemers¹ with separate doctrines and goals in this now greatly shrunken world of ours — would lead to the exact opposite of the Golden Age of love, justice and unity anticipated in the Scriptures of all the great Faiths. There no longer remains any room now for anything besides the complete unification of the human race.²

But all the great Faiths do indeed prophesy the contemporaneous advents of Two Redeemers, and this may appear to refute the following Scriptural assertion that:

The virtues of the Buddha are so great that the world³ cannot at one time support or produce more than one such being. The simultaneous appearance of two Buddhas may lead to confusion.⁴

The same principle is also upheld by the Scriptures of all the other great Faiths, since it is obvious that a simultaneous occurrence of two Avatars or Buddhas would negate the Divine Law of orderly progress and instead create disharmony and hence nullify the very purpose of Buddha-rising. And yet we are the first to acknowledge that the Scriptures

¹It is obvious that our tiny planet whose citizenry, in one form or another, now possesses the instruments of total annihilation of all life on it, can no longer afford the luxury of the simplest choice between two separate and therefore mutually conflicting ideologies, whether political, economic or ethical. Since, as we are already witnessing, that can only lead ultimately towards mutual annihilation.

²This by no means should be taken to mean a bland uniformity but a varicolored, dynamically integrated human society, rich in the contribution of all its multitudes to the whole. A unity in diversity, predicated upon the fundamental ethic of equal justice for all and dedicated towards the conquest of all that obstructs the full development of every individual in becoming the perfect member of a universal humanity.

³Here "the world" obviously means the world known by the inhabitants of the various lands, which as we know was just a very small part of the total planet as known to us today, and in most instances simply meant a few hundred miles in every direction from the immediate location. However, even this fact did not in any way transgress the law of one Buddha-rising at a time, i.e., no two Buddhas can be living in any part of the world at the same time. Hence even in the case of Zoroaster (B.B.E. 101-24 [B.C. 635-558]. See Glossary p. 462), and Siddharta (B.C. 563-483), while Siddharta's early childhood (He was only five when Zoroaster passed away) did overlap with Zoroaster's last years, one must remember that it was not until twenty-four years after the passing of Zoroaster that Siddharta attained Enlightenment — became Buddha, thus clearly upholding this law of one and only one Buddha at one time in the world.

⁴*Milindapanha*, p. 237. *Brahmajala-Sutta*. Also Ashvaghosha's *Buddhacarita*.

of these very same Faiths are clear about the contemporaneous (not simultaneous) advents of two Redeemers from the same location — symbolic of “twins” from the same “womb”.

As we have seen, the Hindus expect Kalki (Raja Suryavanshi Maru)¹ and Chandravanshi Devapi and the Zoroastrians await Shah-Bahram Varjavand and Hoshidar Bomit to appear together at the end of the last of their four periods of 3,000 years each which is to conclude the aeon, also of 12,000 years duration by Zoroastrian accounting. Moreover, Zoroaster clearly states that the last quarter of 3,000 years included His own appearance and those of the three Who were to follow Him, Hoshidar Mah (Muhammad), approximately a thousand years after His own appearance, and this, as we have seen, (from f.n. 2, p. 223), correctly occurred, as well as Shah-Bahram Varjavand and Hoshidar Bomit, at the end of the same 3000-year last quarter of our aeon. From the easily verifiable dates, according to history, of the appearances of Zoroaster (2631 years ago) and Muhammad (1426 years ago) and the total of 300 years which comprises the joining period, the reader can see that the total is within the 3000-year period given by Zoroaster, the consummation of which coincides with the termination date B.E. 2486 (A.D. 1943) of the Kali yug.

Hence it is not by error or chance that Siddharta too, in this oldest of passages² relating to the stages of His Dharma’s decline and final disappearance, which also mentions the advent of Maitrya before the aeon ends and the Dharma has disappeared as a spiritual factor in the life of mankind, should — and here we come to it —

At the time when the Dispensation is falling into (oblivion), all the relics, coming from every place: from the abode of serpents³ and the deva-world and the Brahma-world, having gathered together in the

¹ Also known by the Buddhist legends as Suryavamsa, a legendary king of Potala and ancestor of the Sakya clan. Again indicating the closest relationship between the Hindu and Buddhist legends and expectations.

² Page 197, (Anagatavamsa).

³ These names such as “abode of serpents” etc. are simply symbolic names for the surrounding regions used in the India of those times and are not some vague mythical astral regions. For instance, “the abode of serpents” was well known to be that region of north-east India bordering Burma which even now is known as “naga” (serpent) land. This designation was later extended to include Cambodia whose inhabitants from legend, claim to have sprung from the union of an Indian prince with a “naga” princess. Likewise “deva-world” was the name given to the northwest region of India bordering parts of Afghanistan and, by extension, Iran, where lived the legendary deva-worshippers prior to Zoroaster’s time. “Brahma world” means the northern Himalayan region (Tibet and, by extension, China).

space round the great Bo-tree, having made a Buddha-image, and having performed a "miracle" like the Twin-miracle, will teach Dhamma.

— associate the Dharma's resurgence with the advent of the Twin-miracle. The sense is clear: the Dharma will then be taught not by a single "miracle" (Avatar), nor by two *separate* "miracles" [the key word in our previous assertion (pp. 225-6)] since the Scriptural law negating the possibility of the simultaneous appearances of two separate Buddhas is "separate", but by the "Twin-miracle", not distinguishable or separate in principle or purpose but totally complementary — in perfect harmony. But, and the question may here be asked, what need at all for such a "Twin" appearance? Why would not one "miracle" — a single Buddha — suffice? Why not indeed? And yet, as we have pointed out, not only Siddharta but the Scriptures of all the other Divine Avatars too, point to the advent of the "Twin-miracle", the contemporaneous appearance of Two Avatars for consummating the final aspect of the aeon and ushering in the Golden Age. So how can we resolve this dilemma? Easily. It is precisely to avoid the possibility of confusion created by a multitude of false claims of Buddhahood advanced by unscrupulous or deluded proponents (as we have already seen from the history of Buddhism as well as of the other Faiths) and at the same time to arouse our curiosity at this seeming denial of the very principle of Buddha-rising¹ — and thereby invite our fullest attention — that this most vital condition for the recognition of the True Source of Divine Guidance for the world of our time was inserted by Siddharta in this cryptic passage.

Some ancient Buddhist scholars also recognized this fact and acknowledged in their worship and practice the closest relationship between Maitrya and Avalokitesvara and Their Advents.

In all the great Faiths, the prophecy concerning the Twin Manifestation, the "Twin-miracle", the final Advent of this "auspicious aeon", is, as we have seen, climactic. Regardless of whatever might occur in their own separate developments or however the Scriptures of other Faiths influenced them and vice versa, the adherents of each of these Faiths were alerted by this common prophecy to await the Power which would appear to establish the Oneness of humanity. None could then doubt that the ending phase of the last age — Kali yug — which all

¹ A single Buddha at one time for one world-system.

were to experience, would also mark the “Twin-Advent” of the Promised Ones for opening a new epoch in human history — the establishment of Sat yug, the Millennium of Righteousness.

Hence, this prophecy concerning that climactic “Twin-Advent” was mainly responsible for the rejection by the Hindu majority, of Siddharta’s claim of being the Promised One, destined to appear at the mid-point of Kali yug’s long duration and reform the Dharma. Likewise its implication to the Zoroastrians in their Scriptures also led them to reject Muhammad Who came to fulfil a similar function for them. Also by the Jews, of Christ and the Christians, of Muhammad’s similar claims. Without recognizing other prophecies in their own Scriptures which foretold the coming of Divine Guides at the mid-points of their respective time periods in this last long age of darkness, all the adherents of these various Faiths waited only for the appearance of the Twin Manifestations.

It should now be clear from the prophecies of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism that this greatest of all expectations¹ — the Day of days, the Time of the end, the advent of Sat yug — towards which one and all focused their attention, has just recently occurred. By calculation from the Scriptures and the remarkable correlation among their prophetic utterances, we have pinpointed certain pertinent dates, B.E. 2360 (A.D. 1817), B.E. 2363 (A.D. 1820), B.E. 2387 (A.D. 1844), B.E. 2394 (A.D. 1852), B.E. 2406 (A.D. 1863), which now demand further attention. They are too closely grouped to be explained away as meaningless numbers or coincidences, and they unmistakably indicate the record of events in the life of a single Person, or, as is clearly possible, of the Twin-Phenomenon. Hence the foreordained Time was the last century, and now we must seek the location — *the Place* which, while fulfilling the conditions enumerated from the Scriptures, can give indisputable meaning to these dates which have already come to light.

¹ These expectations in the Spiritual realm have also exerted their influence in the temporal, and this is attested to by such interpretation as “Around 2500 years the Dharma will shine forth in glory and be a beacon to the whole world, and Lanka (Ceylon) itself will be prosperous and joyful...” [Vijayarvardhana] **Dharma-Vijaya**. Of course the meaning of such statements has been misunderstood and Ceylon has not become prosperous. In Burma too it could be reported that the year B.E. 2500 (A.D. 1957) would mark a great Revival of Buddhism and there was considerable belief that the “Golden Age” for which all men long, would dawn with that. The Thais formed a new political party in that year and called it Sri Ariya Metrai Party, after the Buddha Maitrya, Whom they momentarily expected!

10

THE PLACE

The history of Religion shows us a curious phenomenon — whilst its impact is world-encompassing, its origin, its dawning or rising, is indeed very localized. With the six continents of the world to choose from, these most important of all phenomena — the Buddha-risings have occurred in a limited area, much as the sun itself, with only slight seasonal shifting — is quite fixed as regards its direction of rising and setting. Likewise the Spiritual Suns, the Divine Manifestations, whether called Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Siddharta, Jesus or Muhammad have, One and All, appeared only in Asia and only from a very restricted part of Asia. If we look at the map of that continent, we see that with Siddharta's birthplace, Kapilavastu, as the easternmost point, to the Sinai in the Arabian peninsula, where Moses arose, as the westernmost, the dawning points of the Divine Manifestations form a relatively straight, short and narrow path — indicative of great concentration. The exact mid-point is in Iran, that westernmost Aryan land and the focus, as we shall see, of the prophecies of all the Scriptures.

The further a prophecy is removed from the event predicted and the greater its accuracy in foretelling the time, the details, and the matters ancillary to the event itself, the more marvelous it is to our intellect and the more deserving it becomes of our efforts to utilize it for our purpose. By this standard we cannot but admit of the marvelous accuracy of time and circumstances demonstrated by the prophetic utterances found in the Scriptures of the Hindus, the Zoroastrians and the Buddhists of thousands

of years ago.¹ As we have seen, these prophecies not only lead us to the momentous event by clearly complementing each other through their parallel and juxtaposed signs but also emphatically rule out and demolish all false claims. Hence, if we are to be faithful to the directions given in these prophecies for locating the place from which the Twin-miracle, the Aeon-Ender, Maitrya, and His Spiritual Complement have appeared, as is the case according to the dates given for Their Advents, then we must from the outset reject and eliminate from consideration any spurious claims of Buddhahood. Such unscrupulous and deluded claimants, hailing from various locations and different times, in total contradiction of the Scriptural prophecies, offer only plagiarisms of the Divine Teachings Themselves or their own primitive, restricted and often ominous nonsense.

We have noted that while Buddhist Scriptures list only general dates, which confirm and complement the more precise calculations contained in the earlier Hindu Scriptures — dates which include Siddharta's own life and mission — nevertheless the accurate descriptions by Siddharta of the conditions that were to prevail in the world at large as His Dharma slipped into obscurity, leave no doubt that the purpose for precision regarding the signs of our times was to effect a partnership with the Hindu Scriptures, which so accurately pinpointed the *times* that these *signs* we are now witnessing would occur. Together they provide a precise pointer from the very distant past to the only possible panacea for the present — Maitrya. These Hindu-Buddhist prophecies, in turn, are further complemented by those of the Zoroastrian Scriptures.

Hence, let us see now what these prophecies assert regarding the Place from which arose the Twin Manifestations. We will take up these prophecies in order of their antiquity, with the Hindu Scriptures first, bearing in mind the simple fact of interpretations of Scriptural prophecies — that as all these Divine Teachers are the Messengers or “mediums” for the Supreme, and their Scriptures are the manifestations of His Sovereign Will for humanity in various parts of the world and at different

¹ It must be just as forthrightly stated that a similar degree of accuracy concerning the marvellous measure of details regarding the time, place and the Person of the Promised Redeemers can also be found in the Scriptures of the Jews, Christians and the Muhammadans. However, for the purpose of our quest they cannot be recorded in the same measure as the Indo-aryan prophecies of the Hindu-Buddhistic background and, to a lesser extent, of Zoroastrianism.

times in history, they must all be in full harmony. And so they are. From the Puranas of Hinduism we find references to the appearance of Kalki (Maitrya) or Raja Suryavanshi Maru, which, while directed toward a location external to India, is still within the dominions of those original Aryan peoples. The *Kalki-Puran* states that Kalki will appear from "Purshottam" (land). Now while "Purshottam" in Sanskrit simply means (pursh = Male or Human, ottam = highest), i.e. (the land of) the highest humans (or of the "bravest"), or the highest land where the brave (Aryans) reside, which to those Aryan chroniclers naturally meant the land of the Aryans themselves, yet upon closer inspection additional information comes to light which brings into view a more precise location from among the Aryan lands — Persia. For Purshottam is simply the Sanskrit for the old Persian "Parsatham" or the "base" of the Parsa (Persians), and by this same token it is also the highest habitable land (since most of Persia is a 5000-foot-high plateau) among all the original dominions of the Indo-Iranian Aryans where Aryan culture and civilization has continued to the present. Other sections of the *Kalki-Puran* indicate Iran by naming it Bhadrpith ("Bhadra" being a connotation for "Aryan" and "pith" means "stem" or "root"), or calling it Hari-Sadan, another name for Iran in Puranic lore, and pointing to it as the location for Kalki's appearance.

Zoroastrian Scriptures are more specific concerning the location, and aside from the very title of the second Redeemer, Hoshidar Bomit, Who was to appear concurrently with Shah-Bahram Varjavand, the Aeon-Ender, which clearly means the Enlightener "of the native land" (Bomit), in this case Iran, i.e. from Iran, they also specifically name the mountain, Demavand,¹ on whose base rests Teheran, the capital of Iran, as the location for the conflict between good and evil when Hoshidar Bomit appears. These and other indications in the Zoroastrian Scriptures are the basis on which the Zoroastrians form their conviction that the Twin Redeemers Who are to usher in the new Golden Age must appear once more from their own native land, Iran, for theirs are the only Scriptures which assert that the Advent will occur in their very land, while the Scriptures of all other Divine Faiths make no such assertion

¹ This mountain is where 'Dahaka' the mythical monster of men's passions remains chained up and the heroic Savior Keresaspa (f.n. 2, p. 180) will appear to best this monster once again.

and by implication and suggestion, allude to Iran (Persia)¹ as the Place for the Advent of the Twin Manifestations.

¹ Muhammad also alludes to a land other than His own (Arabia) and yet in close proximity to it. "And listen on the Day when the Crier shall cry from a near place. The Day when they shall fear the cry in truth: this is the Day of the coming forth." **The Koran**, Chapter of Al-Qaaf vv. 41, 42. Likewise in the Judaic-Christian Scriptures too, Iran is clearly indicated by name as the location for the advent of the Aeon Ender. "And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam (the dictionary describes this as the Assyrian name for Iran which was then in Daniel's time a part of the Assyrian Empire); and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of U-lai." **Daniel**, VIII. 2, and "And I will set by throne in Elam, and I will destroy from thence the kings and the princes, saith the Lord." **Jeremiah**, Ch. 49. v. 38.

11

AMITABHA

At this stage we must take some time to clarify the name and concept of Amitabha, which we shall encounter often from now on and which we shall use either jointly with Maitrya or separately.

While all schools of Buddhist thought acknowledge and use the name Maitrya (which means “He whose name is ‘Kindness’”) since He is the only Bodhisattva¹ mentioned in the Pali Canon and the literature of the Theravadins, the name of Buddha Amitabha can only be found in Mahayana Scriptures. Yet it is also obvious from a comparative examination of the prophecies relating to the advent of Maitrya and Amitabha, in the Pali Texts which refer to Maitrya, and in the Mahayanist literature which speaks of both Maitrya and Amitabha, that the signs and times for their occurrence are identical. We have already shown this (pp. 193-216) by examining the Scriptures of both schools concerning the “five disappearances” of the Dharma and, more to the point, we find that in the Mahayanist Scriptures there is no way to separate these two names from the actual conditions described for Their Manifestation.

¹ While the aim of the Theravada Buddhist is to become an “arahat”, i.e. to achieve enlightenment by one’s own efforts and for one’s self, in the minds of various other disciples, this concept was considered too self-centered and contrary to Siddharta’s goal of salvation for all and His own life-long endeavours to assist others in attaining it. The ideal then which more closely resembles Siddharta’s own example is the one of “Bodhisattva”, meaning the perfected being who foregoes His own entry into Nirvana and continues His struggle to assist others here on earth to achieve salvation. This concept was later adopted by the Mahayanists as their true ideal in life. It is also identical to Siddharta’s own assertion as delineated (pp. 113-16) at great length by Him in **Saddharmapundarika**.

However, not knowing how to resolve this problem of two names for the “one occurrence”, early in Mahayanist literature Amitabha was made into a purely spiritual phenomenon, to be experienced only in a spiritual plane, and by this process the Mahayanists were able to isolate the references regarding time and dates from the phenomenon of Amitabha and settle upon Maitrya as the actual physical Buddha Who would manifest Himself on earth in accordance with the prophecies — in their Scriptures and the Pali Texts. This, as we shall see, was not a satisfactory solution in the light of their own texts concerning the explicit details of places and conditions which obviously referred only to the physical particulars concerning Amitabha’s domain.

Without wasting further time on such problems and contradictions, we must forthrightly state that they are simply created by a fundamental misunderstanding of the meaning of Amitabha. Amitabha¹ is not the proper name of any person. It is simply a Sanskrit word (Amit — Eternal, Infinite, Absolute; Abha — Glory, or Splendor) signifying a title meaning, literally, the “Glory of God” or “Infinite Glory” or “Eternal Splendor”. Just as the title Buddha, Tathagata, or Deepankara is used for Siddharta, so is the name Amitabha used, according to its relationship in the context of the prophecies concerning it and the conditions describing Amitabha’s domain, to denote the Buddha Who was expected — “Maitrya”.

It is important to relate that Siddharta states not only that His Successor’s given name will mean “Kindness”, but further extols this attribute above all others:

Gifts are great, the founding of viharas is meritorious, meditations and religious exercises pacify the heart, comprehension of the truth leads to Nirvana, but greater than all is loving kindness. As the light of the moon is sixteen times stronger than the light of all the stars, so loving kindness is sixteen times more efficacious in liberating the heart than all other religious accomplishments taken together.

This state of heart is the best in the world. Let a man remain steadfast in it while he is awake, whether he is standing, walking, sitting, or lying down.²

This pre-eminent position of kindness as the highest goal for the

¹ He is also known as “Amitayus”, meaning the “Immortal One” (Ayuh means life-span). He was also known as “Dharmakara” (Doer of Righteousness or Practitioner of Religion) during His state of Bodhisattva.

² The Mahavagga (Vinaya-Pitaka).

heart, gives it a twofold meaning. First, the superlative significance of His Successor, Maitrya, the One Whose name will imply “Kindness”, and second, the emphasis on our responsibility to involve ourselves in the task of saving humanity. This task can succeed only through “Kindness — Maitrya — as regards both the means and the end.

But Maitrya, too, is simply a connotation and cannot really be the proper name of the Aeon-Ender, the Buddha-Who-was-to-be, since Maitrya has no meaning other than that which Siddharta gives it — “He Whose name is Kindness”. From it the reader must clearly recognize the obvious, that “Maitrya” does not mean “Kindness”. Hence the proper given name of the Tathagata, the Buddha, Who, as we have ascertained must have already appeared, will not be “Maitrya” but a name denoting “Kindness” in the language of His own native land.

Some scholars have concluded, from the nearly total absence¹ of any mention of Amitabha’s name in the older Indian records, that the derivation as well as the idea for the name Amitabha is from sources outside Indian Buddhism of the earliest period and its sources lie in the peripheral western regions, where the Iranian aryan and their Zoroastrian Doctrine held sway. Now while every concept, including that of the reality of Siddharta, underwent change and development through the constant intermixing of peoples and their ideologies, especially, as we have seen, among the aryan peoples (Indians and Iranians) themselves, yet, the above contention, that Amitabha is a later concept of Iranian origin, overlooks two important points: the failure on the part of these scholars to recognize that the name is really a title or designation for Maitrya, and the qualities ascribed to the name (Amitabha), and the conditions describing Amitabha’s domain. The name is obviously pure Indo-aryan and, despite the close relationship already noted between the

¹ In India, while a few portrayals of Amitabha have been found dating from at least as far back as the Third Council around B.E. 250, there is no description of any domain related to Him. This does not necessarily negate the veracity of the description of His domain in later Buddhist Scriptures which could easily have been derived from Siddharta’s prophecies concerning the future pre-eminence of Pataliputra and the earlier Hindu Scriptures describing the conditions of the future Sat Yuga (Golden Age) which was to be ushered in by the Aeon-Ender. And so they were. For several of the expressions in Sanskrit of the **Larger** and **Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha** as well as the **Amitayur-Dhyana Sutras** are word for word the same as the phrases in the “Book of the Great King of Glory” (**The Maha-Sudassana** [meaning The Great One with the Glorious Expression] Suttanta) in the **Digha-Nikaya** itself. As well as in **The Maha-Sudassana Jataka** No. 95. Hence, as we have stated before, there is no way to differentiate the ancient sources of most Buddhist Scriptures Hinayana or Mahayana.

roots of the languages of these two aryan people, the name "Amitabha" does not lend itself readily to derivation from the ancient Iranian languages, but is easily understood from its literal Sanskrit meaning.

While there are many "permutations and combinations" of the name Amitabha with those of Maitrya and Avalokitesvara, the most logical concept, which more closely than others conforms to what has already been brought to light, is that Amitabha is the "Dhyani"¹ Buddha Who rules over the Western prospect or Pure Land (Sukhavati)² and that His earthly emanation (Manushya³ Buddha) is Maitrya Who in turn is ever accessible *through* (signifying a "gate" or a "herald") the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

According to legend, Amitabha was supposed to have been a king in His past life, aeons ago, Who left His throne to become a wanderer, and he attained to Bodhisattvahood under the guidance of the Buddha, that is, the human Buddha then manifest; and he made a series of great vows, both to become a Buddha for the sake of saving all living things, and to create a haven where the saintly persons would enjoy an age-long state of happiness, wisdom and purity.

Because of these anomalies, which confront scholars who consider Amitabha and His domain — anomalies which would all be obviated by simply recognizing that the name "Amitabha" ("Eternal Splendor" or "Glory of the Eternal or God") designates the title of the Buddha "Maitrya" Who was to have appeared — some scholars seek to explain Amitabha by nebulous concepts such as "Dharmakara"⁴ which, while correctly symbolizing Him as "absolute truth", a term (Dharmakara) which already appears in the Pali Canon, yet conveys no meaning to the name Amitabha or description of his domain.

¹ Dhyani is from the Sanskrit "Dhyan" meaning "mind" or "mental". Hence the transcendental counterpart of the physical aspect of the phenomenon of Buddhahood. To Him is also addressed the most famous of Buddhist invocations: "Homage to the Buddha Amitabha!" **Om Namo Amitabhaya Buddhaya** in Sanskrit, Om O-mi-to-fo in Chinese, Namo Amida Butsu in Japanese.

² Land of Bliss or Land of Highest Happiness.

³ Manushya meaning "human". Hence the physical Buddha, e.g. Siddharta was a manushya Buddha.

⁴ Dharmakara is also equated with Bodhi, and on occasion with Nirvana, Sunyata and Tathata ("Thusness"). It is described as representing two aspects, the static void and the active aspect manifested in the Buddha leading humanity towards salvation. Dharmakara also implies Righteous Doer.

Then, O Ananda, that Bhikshu Dharmakara, taking the perfections of all the excellences and good qualities of those Buddha countries ... and concentrating them all on one Buddha country ... And afterwards, for the space of five kalpas,¹ he thus concentrated the perfection of all the excellences and good qualities of the Buddha countries, such as had never been known before.²

After this, the blessed Ananda thus spoke to the Bhagavat: “O Bhagavat, has that Bhikshu Dharmakara, the noble-minded Bodhisattva, after having obtained the highest perfect knowledge, passed away, having entered Nirvana, or has he not yet been enlightened, or is he now living and enlightened, and does he dwell now, remain, support himself, and teach the Law?”

The Bhagavat said: “Not indeed, O Ananda, has that Tathagata passed away, nor has he not yet come, but the Tathagata, the holy, after having obtained the highest perfect knowledge, dwells now, remains, supports himself, and teaches the Law, in the western quarter, in the Buddha country, distant from this world by a hundred thousand niyutas of Kotis of Buddha countries, in the world which is called Sukhavati, being called Amitabha, the Tathagata, holy and fully enlightened. He is surrounded by innumerable Bodhisattvas, and worshipped by endless Sravakas, and in possession of the endless perfection of his Buddha country.³

The reader must recognize from Siddharta’s reply that while Siddharta, in His omniscience, sees both past and future as one, the “western quarter” indicates a physical direction on a physical plane and, as we shall see from other excerpts from this same dialogue in the section on Abode (pp. 244-46), Ananda is being asked by Siddharta to record all these details and descriptions of Amitabha — His domain and achievements — so that beings in the future when reading of Amitabha and His domain Sukhavati (The Happy Land) will be able to locate it when Siddharta’s Teachings have become obscured by time. As we read on, Siddharta extols the superiority of Amitabha and the glory of His

¹This signifies the Fifth Buddha–Maitrya — Whose Advent according to Siddharta (the Fourth Buddha) would occur in this same Aeon (see pp. 116, 193). Since Dharmakara is also associated with the fifth kalpa when he emerges as Amitabha, it is once again obvious that Maitrya and Amitabha are identical.

²The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, v. 6.

³The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, v. 11.

domain, Sukhavati. But we must not lose sight of His intent amidst the symbolism and allegory of His language.

And his light is immeasurable, so that it is not easy to know the limit of its measure ... but indeed, O Ananda to put it briefly, a hundred thousand niyutas of Kotis of Buddha countries, equal to the sands of the river Ganga, are always lighted up in the eastern quarter, by the light of that Bhagavat Amitabha ... excepting the Buddhas, the Bhagavats, who through the practice of their former prayers, have lighted up the world by their own light, which is a fathom in length, or by their light which is one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty yoganas in length, or a hundred or thousand yoganas in length. ... There is not, O Ananda, any case of likeness, by which the extent of the light of that Tathagata Amitabha could be understood. Hence, O Ananda, for that reason that Tathagata is called Amitabha (possessed of infinite light), and he is called Amitaprabha (possessed of infinite splendour)...

And in this manner, O Ananda, the Tathagata¹ might speak for a whole kalpa on the work of the Tathagata Amitabha, beginning with his light, and yet he would not be able to reach the end of the virtues of that light of that Tathagata neither would there be any failure of the self-confidence in the Tathagata himself. And why? Because, O Ananda, both these things are immeasurable, innumerable, inconceivable, and endless, viz, first, the greatness of the excellence of the light of that Tathagata Amitabha, the Bhagavat, and secondly, the unsurpassed light of the knowledge possessed by the Tathagata (by myself).

And, O Ananda, the assembly of the hearers of that Tathagata Amitabha is immeasurable, so that it is not easy to learn its measure, so as to be able to say, there are so many hearers, so many periods, called immeasurable, innumerable, countless, incomparable, inconceivable.²

¹ Siddharta is referring to Himself here and His meaning is that while the light of Amitabha is infinite and that He, Siddharta, cannot completely describe it, yet this does not detract from Siddharta's own power, which is also infinite.

² Siddharta's statement here concerning the number of Amitabha's "hearers" far exceeding His own is similar to His statement (see p. 168) concerning the number of Maitrya's disciples being at least ten times more than His own. In different terms He is talking about the same Person — Maitrya-Amitabha — Whose advent Siddharta prophesies as occurring before the end of the Aeon.

*Therefore the mass of hearers of the Bhagavat is endless and boundless, and receives the name of "immeasurable and innumerable."*¹

The following passage is also of interest because of Siddharta's acknowledgement of the connection with the prophecies of the Hindu Faith in which He was born and with the expectations of which He was completely familiar.

And, O Ananda, the length of the life of that Bhagavat Amitabha, the Tathagata, is immeasurable, so that it is not easy to know its length, so as to be able to say (that it comprises) so many hundreds of kalpas ... so many hundred thousands of niyutas of Kotis of kalpas. Therefore, O Ananda, the limit of the measure of the life of that Bhagavat is immeasurable indeed. Therefore that Tathagata is called Amitayus.

And as, O Ananda, the rule of making known the reckoning of kalpas exists here in this world, ten kalpas have passed now since Bhagavat Amitayus, the Tathagata, arose and awoke to the highest perfect knowledge.

For, as we have seen, the Hindus too await their Aeon Ender, but unlike the Buddhists, who expect Maitrya, the Fifth Buddha, they await Kalki, the tenth Avatar of Visnu.² Equally interesting from these excerpts is Siddharta's own claim of having become Tathagata — Buddha — nine kalpas ago (one kalpa *after* Amitabha's Buddhahood).³ This clearly indicates that Amitabha was well known to Siddharta as One of superlative achievements and greatness among the many Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and One Whose name — with the exception of Maitrya's — He, Siddharta, extols to the limits of His capacity. The implication of this is that within the context of Siddharta's assertions concerning a succession of Buddhas (Progressive Divine Revelations), the main purpose of His Mission was to accomplish "the Task" set Him, i.e. to prepare humanity for the final Advent — the Twin Miracle — for establishing the Oneness of Mankind.⁴ From what we have read and passages to follow, this seems

¹ **The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, vv. 12-13.

² Page 190, f.n.1. This also explains the seeming contradiction between the "ten kalpas" stated in the above verse and the "five kalpas" stated in verse 6. (p. 237).

³ As Siddharta has often stated that the name of His immediate Predecessor was Kessapa, hence His assertion of having attained to Buddhahood nine kalpas ago (one Kalpa after Amitabha) denotes spiritual sequence and implies Amitabha's pre-eminence.

⁴ **Mahaparinibbana Suttanta**: "I am resolved, having accomplished my purpose and attended to the task set me, I look for rest."

to be Siddharta's relationship to Amitabha (Maitrya) Whom we now seek.

The following excerpt gives us an idea of Maitrya-Amitabha's domain.

*And, O Ananda, the world called Sukhavati belonging to that Bhagavat Amitabha is prosperous, rich, good to live in, fertile, lovely, and filled with many gods and men. Then, O Ananda, in that world there are neither hells, nor the brute creation, nor the realm of departed spirits, nor bodies of Asuras, nor untimely births. And there do not appear in this world such gems as are known in the world Sukhavati.*¹

The intent here is to prepare the reader to sift through symbolism and reach reality, instead of being confused by trying to equate each term with actual physical phenomena. Yet the reader should not go to the extreme of becoming cynical about the flowery and superlative language used by Siddharta and despair of comprehending it in the quest for our goal. When reading these excerpts — or better still the complete Suttas relating to Amitabha and His Happy Land — the assiduous student should tread the “middle path” between these two extremes and remember that Siddharta, by dwelling at such length on this subject for us in this “Time of the Advent”, must have had a great purpose. If we keep an open mind we do not find contradictions in His sayings, even in the above passage concerning Sukjavati being “filled with many gods and men.” This is a statement of a condition of faith. Those who possess it to a greater degree are “gods”, the others “men”. Witness Amitabha's own explanation as stated by Siddharta:

O Bhagavat, if in that Buddha country of mine the beings who are born there should not all be of one colour, viz. a golden colour,² then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.

*O Bhagavat, if in that Buddha country of mine there should be perceived any difference between gods and men, except when people count and tell, saying: “These are gods and men, but only in ordinary and imperfect parlance,” then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.*³

¹ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, v. 15.

² As Siddharta states “By Fire is the Golden brick tested” and hence “Golden colour” is simply symbolic of the purity of faith of all those who have found Amitabha and His Sukhavati.

³ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, vv. 3, 4.

We must not be confused by the picturesque descriptions which we will encounter on the road to Maitrya-Amitabha's point of rising — *made of lapis lazuli, forming a level plain, forming a checkerboard of eight compartments with gold threads, set off with jewel trees.*¹

For, as Siddharta replies to His disciple (who asks, "I understand that the story of the Western Paradise is not literally true"), "*Thy description of paradise,*" the Buddha continued,

"is beautiful; yet it is insufficient and does little justice to the glory of the pure land. The worldly can speak of it in a worldly way only; they use worldly similes and worldly words. But the pure land in which the pure live is more beautiful than thou canst say or imagine."

And yet it must be on earth — west of where Siddharta stood. However, it (the Western Paradise) was not to be for those of Siddharta's time — as we shall see from His statements in the chapters that follow — but for this age. For us.

¹ Ratnamegha: "Vimalkirti's comments on Sukhavati."

AVALOKITESVARA

From the foregoing clarification of the meaning of these two names, Maitrya and Amitabha, which signify One and the same Person, the reader should not conclude that by Them is meant the “Twin” phenomenon foretold by Siddharta. While Maitrya-Amitabha is certainly one part of this Twin phenomenon, the other, Whom we may now have recognized, is Avalokitesvara,¹ Whose name is the only one associated with Maitrya (Amitabha), and Who, in legend and logos, is called upon from among the myriad names to be the Dispenser of Salvation.

¹ Means “He Who gazes down with Mercy.” The word Avalokitesvara is a compound of the word **isvara** (Lord, Sovereign), and of **avalokita**, which means he who gazes down with kindness (compassion or mercy), on a suffering humanity. The **Karandavyuha**, as early as 400 “years” after Siddharta’s passing, is occupied with the praise of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Even the earliest disciples of Siddharta accepted Brahma, Visnu and Narayana (Krishna) in their own names. While the Brahmins acknowledged Siddharta as the ninth Avatar of Visnu, the Buddhists returned the compliment by identifying Visnu with Bodhisattva Padmapani (which name simply means “water lotus” or “lotus in the water”) called Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva whose resolve it was to not attain Nirvana until every person had been redeemed. This is significant enough, since Visnu is the “reincarnating” principle or “essence” of the Supreme which manifests Itself from age to age in the form of the Divine Teachers. And through that reasoning did the Buddhists from the earliest times also await the advent of Avalokitesvara, to occur with that of the One foretold by Siddharta—Maitrya. Moreover, because of Him being regarded as the epitome of “Mercy”, which has a feminine connotation, Avalokitesvara is honored by some Buddhists (in China and other parts of north-east Asia) as the goddess Kwanyin. It is a contraction of Kwan-shai-yin, a phrase implying “a being who hears or perceives the cries of men.” In Japan He is known as Fugen. He is variously known as Sadaksarilokesvara, Simhanada, Lokanatha, Khasarpana.

*He has reached perfection
in wonder-working power,
He is trained in abundant
cognition and skill in means.
Everywhere in all the ten directions
in the world,
In all the Buddha-fields,
he can be seen.*

*As he who has reached perfection in all virtues,
Who looks on all beings with pity and friendliness,
Who is virtue itself, a great ocean of virtues,
As such Avalokitesvara is worthy of adoration.
He who is now so compassionate to the world,
He will a Buddha be in future ages,
Humbly I bow to Avalokitesvara
Who destroys all sorrow, fear and suffering.¹*

Nor is His name a recent entry in Buddhist Chronicles. For, as we have seen (p. 134 f.n. 2), even as far back as 2000 years ago, King Kanishka as well as the Buddhist scholars of those times, conceived that the closest relationship existed between Maitrya and Avalokitesvara.

¹ *Saddharmapundarika*, XXV, vv. 18, 26-27.

THE ABODE OF BUDDHA MAITRYA-AMITABHA

The Buddhist Scriptures, like the Scriptures of the Hindu and other Faiths, point to the location of Maitrya's appearance by clearly indicating the region as well as the spiritual conditions one must possess to fully understand the signs elaborated in Siddharta's prophecies about the sought-for haven of Maitrya-Amitabha. First, the spiritual qualities one must possess to be able to unravel the mysteries of this most vital abode. Siddharta lists these in His discourse with Vaidehi¹ and Ananda. On Vaidehi's question of how she could find the domain of the Buddha Maitrya-Amitabha, she is told by Siddharta to first achieve the three spiritual qualifications necessary for discovering this longed-for goal of every pious disciple of Siddharta:

Thou shouldst apply thy mind entirely to close meditation upon those who have already perfected the pure actions necessary for that Buddha country.

I now proceed to fully expound them for thee in many parables, and thereby afford all ordinary persons of the future who wish to cultivate these pure actions an opportunity of being born in the Land of Highest Happiness (Sukhavati) in the western quarter. Those who wish to be born in that country of Buddha have to cultivate a threefold goodness. Firstly, they should act filially towards their parents and support them; serve and respect their teachers and

¹The mother of King Ajatasatru and consort of his father King Bimbisara of Rajagriha whom Ajatasatru had killed.

elders; be of compassionate mind, abstain from doing any injury, and cultivate the ten virtuous actions. Secondly, they should take and observe the vow of seeking refuge with the Three Jewels, fulfil all moral precepts, and not lower their dignity or neglect any ceremonial observance. Thirdly, they should give their whole mind to the attainment of the Bodhi, deeply believe in karma, study and recite the Dharma, and persuade and encourage others who pursue the same course.

These three groups, as enumerated, are called the pure actions (leading to the Buddha country). O Vaidehi! dost thou not understand now? These three classes of actions are the efficient cause of the pure actions taught by all the Buddhas of the past, present and future.¹

Hence, while delineating the means for achieving the spiritual insight² necessary for discovering the abode of Maitrya-Amitabha, Siddharta reiterates the principle of the oneness of all the Divine Manifestations and the unity underlying all Their Dharmas (Teachings) and thus points the way for the underlying purpose behind all Those Great Beings and Their appearance amidst mankind — the Oneness of Humanity through the Advent of Maitrya-Amitabha, whose point of rising forms the reason for Siddharta's discourse with Vaidehi and Ananda. Since this discourse provides considerable information, both as to the means necessary for embarking on the quest for discovering the exact Place of Advent of the Twin-miracle, as well as the description of the location, it is important to quote from it extensively in order to gain as clear a picture as possible of the location:

Listen carefully, listen carefully! Ponder carefully on what you hear! I, Tathagata, now declare the pure actions needful (for that Buddha country) for the sake of all beings hereafter, that are subject to the misery (inflicted) by the enemy, i.e. passion. Well done, O Vaidehi! Appropriate questions are those which thou hast asked! O Ananda, do thou remember these words of me, of Buddha, and

¹ *Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra*, I. 7, pp. 167-168.

² In the light of the qualities enumerated above by Siddharta which were required for recognizing the Place of dawning of the Twin-miracle, it should not be too difficult to recognize that "pure egolessness," and not blind belief, is meant by the faith that one must possess to distinguish between the mirage of fanciful conjectures and the reality of the actual physical location.

repeat them openly to many assemblies. I, Tathagata, now teach Vaidehi and also all beings hereafter in order that they may meditate on the World of Highest Happiness (Sukhavati) in the western quarter.

The repetition of the word “hereafter” is significant, especially since it is mentioned twice in the same paragraph. For by it Siddharta is obviously emphasizing the future. Hence the description of the pure land of Maitrya-Amitabha when viewed in the context of the other factors which we have already examined such as “the five disappearances” all of which now beset Siddharta’s Dharma, King Prasenadi’s sixteen dreams, the prophecies in the Hindu and Zoroastrian Scriptures, which all converge on our age, unmistakably suggest the existence of an actual physical realm in our world. This conforms clearly to the various signs related to that location as described by Siddharta and what He stated would be the conditions prevailing within such a domain — in our own time. As will soon be apparent, this reference to “western quarter” is not an allegorical one and very definitely means the actual geographical west, as seen from the area (region of Bihar, east India) of Siddharta’s location. And yet by the conditions imposed on the location of that place, as already noted from both Hindu and Buddhist prophecies, it had still to be within the region of the Aryan lands.

In other words, while west of Kapilavastu, yet not beyond the confines of Iran.

It is by the power of Buddha only that one can see that pure land (of Buddha) as clearly as one sees the image of one’s face reflected in the mirror held up before one.

When one sees the state of happiness of that country in its highest excellence, one greatly rejoices in one’s heart and immediately attains a spirit of resignation, prepared to endure whatever consequences may yet arise. Thou art but an ordinary person, Vaidehi, the quality of thy mind is feeble and inferior.

Thou hast not as yet obtained the divine eye and canst not perceive what is at a distance. All the Buddhas, Tathagatas have various means at their disposal and can therefore afford thee an opportunity of seeing (that Buddha country).

Siddharta states that it can be seen as one sees a physical object. And by the second paragraph “When one sees the state of happiness of that country in its *highest excellence*” clearly implies that it is not a perfected domain but in the process of evolving into its total perfection, “highest

excellence.” Hence again indicating a physical location which is naturally characterized by growth and evolution towards its full potential. Confirming our assertion that Siddharta’s description of Maitrya-Amitabha’s location pertains to an actual physical abode on earth destined to evolve to its full glory in the fullness of time and that even Vaidehi — while being enabled by Siddharta’s power to glimpse a vision of it (the “western paradise”) — is fully aware of its significance only for the future, when she inquires of Siddharta as to how those who would live in that time — our age — can seek and recognize it.

O World-Honoured One, people such as I, can now see that land by the power of Buddha, but how shall all those beings who are to come after Buddha’s Nirvana, and who, as being depraved and devoid of good qualities, will be harassed by the five worldly sufferings¹ — how shall they see the World of Highest Happiness of the Buddha Amitayus?

And Siddharta replies:

Thou and all other beings besides ought to make it their only aim, with concentrated thought, to get a perception of the western² quarter.

He leaves no doubt of its physical or geographical perspective — Western — in the above statement, and there is nothing otherworldly or nebulous about His direction.

However, knowing full well that the quest was to be for the Person and not the Place — not some piece of earth however beautiful or pleasurable — Siddharta uncannily foresaw a change of venue in the movement of Maitrya-Amitabha’s Presence, and through His discourse with Ananda and Vaidehi unerringly directed His followers of the destined age (our times) to the vision they must seek and see.

You will ask how that perception is to be formed. I will explain it now. All beings, if not blind from birth, are uniformly possessed of sight and they all see the setting sun. Thou shouldst sit down properly, looking in the western direction, and prepare thy thought

¹ (1) Birth, (2) old age, (3) sickness, (4) death, (5) parting.

² Even in the Hindu Scriptures e.g., **Visnu-Purana**, Varuna the city of the “western quarter” is called the “Mokhya”, the chief, or “Sukha”, the happy, or “Nimlokani”, the city of sunset. Also regarded as the city of hope, expectation or salvation. On the other hand, Jesus Christ directs His followers to look to the East for the Promised Redeemer: “For as the light cometh out of the East and shineth even unto the West — so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matthew 24:27). Iran (Persia) alone qualifies as the location for Maitrya for it is the only Aryan land east of where Christ was and west of Siddharta’s location!

*for a close meditation on the sun.*¹

Nowhere else has Siddharta given importance to the sun or its direction of rising or setting (it is worth noting that by the above He has also effectively eliminated the easterly direction of the “rising sun” from any pre-eminence and by this same token obviated any claims of Buddhahood by proponents hailing from “east” of Kapilavastu) and instead so vividly described the symbol of the setting sun in the west —
cause thy mind to be firmly fixed (on it) so as to have an unwavering perception by the exclusive application (of thy thought), and gaze upon it (more particularly) when it is about to set and looks like a suspended drum.

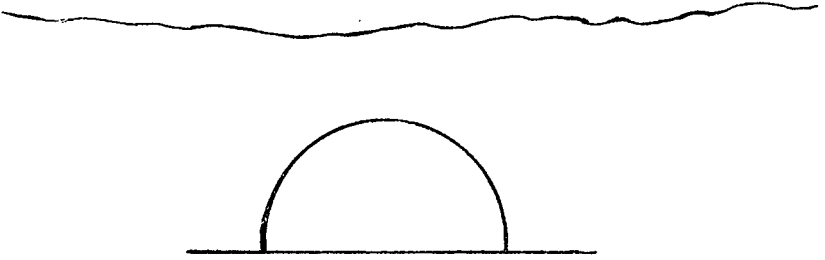


Figure 1

But as we see, it is not just a general description of a sunset, its details too clearly put for all but the careless not to recognize that Siddharta’s thrust is towards indicating a very specific place. The vision He impresses on our minds is of the glowing gold half-disc of the setting sun looking “like a suspended drum.”

And there is more:

After thou hast thus seen the sun, let (that image) remain clear and fixed, whether thine eyes be shut or open — such is the perception of the sun, which is the First Meditation.

His instructions are clear. Whatever else is to follow in the rest of the picture we are to retain in our mind’s eye the image of the golden disc of the setting sun in the shape of a suspended inverted drum as pictured in Figure 1.

¹ *Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra*, II. 9, p. 169 (Meditation on Buddha Amitayus).

Next thou shouldst form the perception of water; gaze on the water clear and pure, and let this (image) also remain clear and fixed (afterwards); never allow thy thought to be scattered and lost.

It was at least a thousand years after Siddharta when architects and engineers constructed the first dome structures, hence the description of the inverted drum hanging like the glowing setting sun is the closest

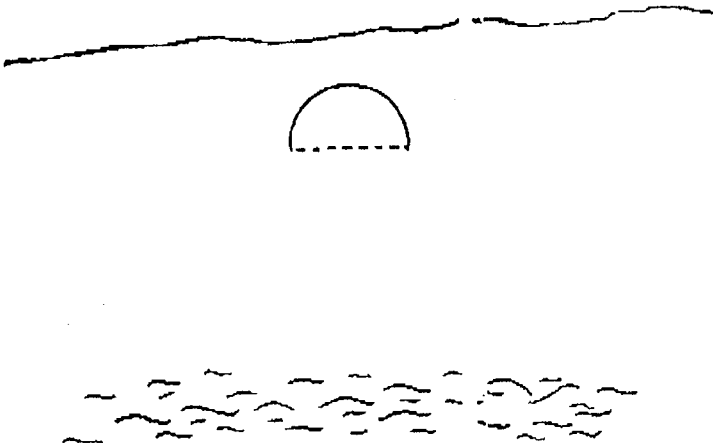


Figure 2

image that Siddharta could depict of a gold-domed structure or building, so long before people knew or conceived of domes. As Siddharta continues to fill in the picture we follow:

When thou hast thus seen the water thou shouldst form the perception of ice. As thou seest the ice shining and transparent, thou shouldst imagine the appearance of lapis lazuli.

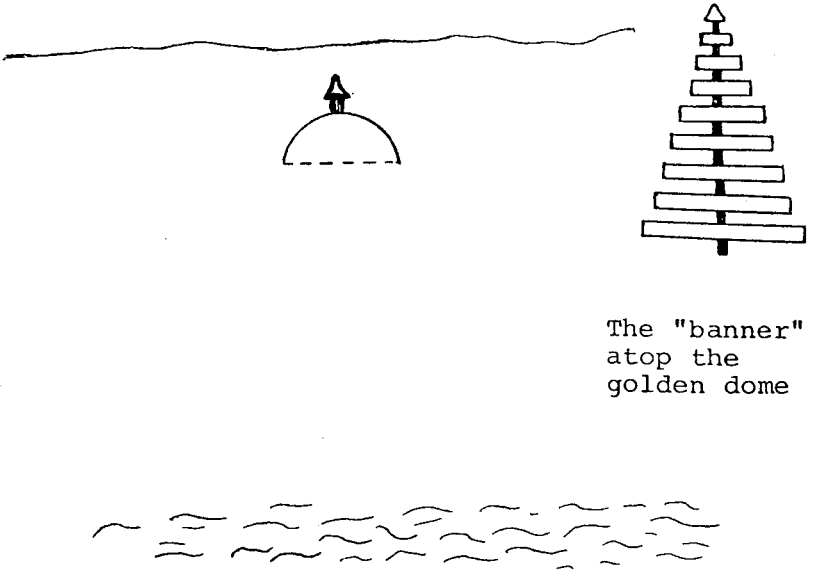
After that has been done, thou wilt see the ground consisting of lapis lazuli, transparent and shining both within and without.

As we will note, Siddharta tells us to “imagine the appearance of lapis lazuli” and this means the ground is not actually made of lapis lazuli but has the blue-green and gold flaked color of lapis lazuli. This color itself, of lapis lazuli, is quite variable and hence what is indicated here is a plot of land which varies in color according to seasons.

Beneath this ground of lapis lazuli there will be seen a golden

banner¹ with the seven² jewels, diamonds and the rest, supporting the ground.

It extends to the eight points of the compass, and thus the eight corners (of the ground) are perfectly filled up.



The "banner"
atop the
golden dome

Figure 3

¹ This is the literal translation of this passage, clearly giving a perspective showing a golden banner or standard over (or beyond) which is land (lapis lazuli-like color). The banner of course signifies the top-most point.

² *Sapta ratna*. The seven treasures or precious things of which there are varying descriptions, e.g., *Suvarna*, gold; *rupya*, silver; *vendurya*, lapis lazuli; *sphalika*, crystal; *musaragalva*, agate; *rohitamukhta*, rubies or red pearls; *asmagarbha*, cornelian. The grove of jewel trees or trees of the seven precious things — a part of the "Pure land or Paradise". The Zoroastrians too (p. 173) have this concept of the seven-branched tree. Also symbolic of the seven "ways" or seven riches; faith, zeal, moral restraint, shame, obedient hearing of the Law, abnegation and wisdom rising from meditation.

While the eight points of the compass are mentioned, the compass has no “corners” and this passage now clearly indicates a cubic structure symbolized by “the eight corners (of the ground).”

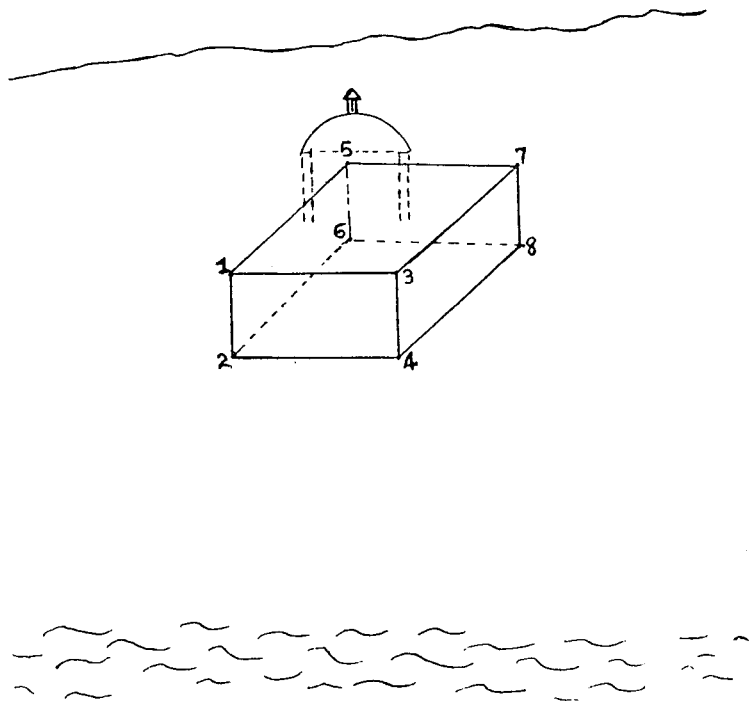


Figure 4

Over the surface of that ground of lapis lazuli there are stretched golden ropes intertwined crosswise; divisions are made by means of (strings of) seven jewels with every part clear and distinct.

And as He asks:

Do you see, O Agita, the perfection of the array of ornaments and good qualities in that Buddha country; and above in the sky (palaces) with charming parks, charming gardens, ... lotus lakes,

scattered with many precious Padmas, Utpalas, Kumudas, and Pundarikas; and below, from the earth to the surface of the sky, covered with flowers, ornamented with wreaths of flowers, shining on the rows of many precious columns, frequented by flocks of all kinds of birds created by the Tathagata?

The Bodhisattva Agita said: I see, O Bhagavat.

The Bhagavat said: Do you see again, O Agita, those flocks of immortal birds, making the whole Buddha country resound with the voice of Buddha, so that those Bodhisattvas are never without meditating on Buddha?

*Agita said: I see, O Bhagavat.*¹

While the photographs² speak for themselves, there are indeed beautiful replicas of various birds situated in the gardens of these Holy Shrines, especially those of the peacock, symbolic of immortality, and the eagle, indicative of dominion and power. The living representatives of these species as well as many others also frequent those gardens.

The Scripture also hints at the elevation of the location when it states, "the celestial city 'Alakananda' which is hard of ascent for human beings."³ Even among the Theravadins, the Domain of Maitrya had from the earliest times become increasingly popular because of prophecies which held that upon His Advent the earth would be in a particularly fruitful and exuberant state.⁴ It would be bigger than it was in Siddharta's day;⁵ fertile golden sand would cover its surface;⁶ the

¹ **The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, 40.

² At this point the reader should just study the photos of the Holy Shrine being described here by Siddharta. See also Figure 6 on p. 271. Its nature and precise location will be revealed in the chapters to follow.

³ **Mahavastu**, 32.2. "Alakananda" means the "Delight of God", "Nanda" being one of the title of the Supreme; also known as "the wealthiest city in the celestial realm". The elevation on a hill is indicated by "hard of ascent" and not simply "hard of entry" as if it were on a plain and spiritual conditions for entry were intended rather than actual physical exertions.

⁴ It is important to note that the whole earth is what is talked about in this prophecy and not just a small area. From that perspective, this prophecy concerns our time with its scientific capabilities — Green Revolution, weather control, modern irrigation etc., which have certainly worked wonders.

⁵ Both figuratively and literally this prophecy is now fulfilled since the whole earth is now known as against the small areas in Siddharta's day and secondly, due to land-reclamation as well as diminishing of the ocean levels, more of the earth's surface has become exposed and inhabitable.

⁶ An apt description of modern fertilizer.

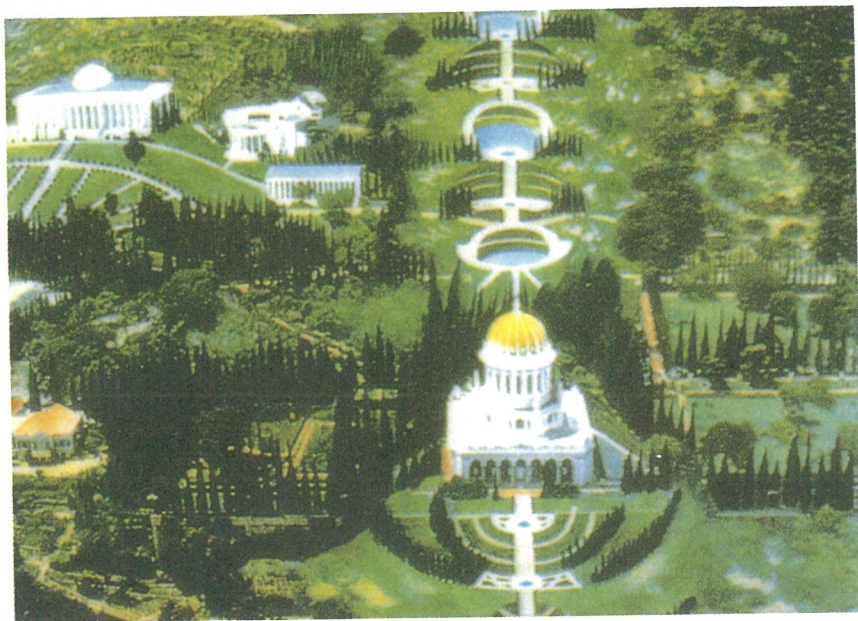


Figure 5

population would be very dense, and the fields would yield sevenfold.¹ While these pertain to the planet generally and not to a particular location, the place is also delineated by much sensory imagery — it is bright, made up of the colors of lapis lazuli; it is lovely, calming and beautiful to behold, adorned with jewel trees that are fastened in a checker board marked off with golden threads, covered with flowers etc.; that the beings there will be skillful in reconciling quarrels, ever benefitting others when speaking; they will never be envious or angry, but ever maintain right principles.

Each jewel has rays of five hundred colours which look like flowers or like the moon and stars. Lodged high up in the open sky these rays form a tower of rays, whose storeys and galleries are ten millions in number and built of a hundred jewels. Both sides of the tower have each a hundred millions of flowery banners furnished and decked with numberless musical instruments. Eight kinds of cool breezes proceed from the brilliant rays. When those musical instruments are played, they emit the sounds “suffering”, “non-existence”, “impermanence”, and “non-self”; — such is the perception of the land, which is the Second Meditation.

Next, you should perceive the water (of that country). The perception of the water is as follows:

In the Land of Highest Happiness there are waters in eight lakes; the water in every lake consists of seven jewels which are soft and yielding. Deriving its source from the king of jewels that fulfills every wish, the water is divided into fourteen streams; every stream has the colour of seven jewels; its channel is built of gold, the bed of which consists of the sand of variegated diamonds.²

When this perception has been formed, thou shouldst meditate on its (constituents) one by one and make (the images) as clear as possible, so that they may never be scattered and lost, whether thine eyes be shut or open. Except only during the time of thy sleep, thou shouldst always keep this in thy mind. One who has reached this (stage of) perception is said to have dimly seen the Land of Highest Happiness (Sukhavati).³

Now these “flowery” descriptions are quite apt in extolling the

¹ This too is quite obvious and particularly descriptive of the present planetary situation.

² *Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra*, 11.13.

³ *Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra*, 11.12.

beauty and grandeur of the structure and its surroundings. "Lodged high up in the open sky" implies a location on a hill or a plateau, and "both sides of the tower have ... flowery banners furnished ... with ... musical instruments", indicates a structure or tower and modern public address systems tastefully located in flower-decked arbors and throughout. Finally, the image is completed as being on the shores of a body of water, either a lake or river or sea.

Siddharta continues His discourse on the location of Maitrya-Amitabha and tells Ananda and Vaidehi that —

When the perception of the land (of that Buddha country) has been gained, you should next meditate on the jewel-trees (of that country). In meditating on the jewel-trees, you should take each by itself and form a perception of the seven rows of trees; every tree is eight hundred yojanas high, and all the jewel-trees have flowers and leaves consisting of seven jewels all perfect.

In another Buddhist Scripture,¹ Siddharta in His conversation with Sariputra describes the above passage thus:

And again, O Sariputra, that world Sukhavati is adorned with seven terraces, with seven rows of palm trees, and with strings of bracelets. It is enclosed on every side, beautiful, brilliant with the four gems, gold, silver, beryl and crystal. With such arrays of excellences peculiar to a Buddha country is that Buddha country adorned.

Although some of the terminology in the above excerpts can be related to the actual physical characteristics that must be demonstrated by the abode of Maitrya-Amitabha, we should now recognize from the

¹ The **Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha**, 3. While authorities may differ on the exact dating of the **Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha** and the **Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra**, there is no doubt that the most recent date for it cannot be later than 800 B.E. (Buddhist Era). The two **Sukhavati-Vyuhas** the Larger and the Smaller and the **Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra** cannot be more accurately dated than the dates attributed to their translators ranging from Sanghavarman an Indian student of the Tripitaka who visited China around 680 B.E. and translated the **Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha** and Kumarajiva 920 B.E. who came to China and while there translated the **Smaller Sukhavati Vyuha** and finally Kalayasas who also travelled from India to China in 952 B.E. and was the translator of the **Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra**. This leaves no doubt that these texts are indeed ancient and the prophecies relating to the Pure Land Sukhavati are not concoctions of some recent authors, especially since the discovery of the Sanskrit Manuscripts of these three Sutras in the last century which attests both to the authenticity of the dated Chinese translations as well as to their accuracy. The **Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha** is supposed to have been preached by Siddharta on the Gridhrakuta hill near Rajagriha, while the **Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha** in the Jetagrove near Sravasti. (Note also p. 235 f.n. 1.)

last sentence “With such arrays of excellences peculiar to a Buddha country is that Buddha country adorned”, that spiritual rather than actual physical objects are implied by the symbolism of the objects and items mentioned, e.g. terraces, palm-trees (tall), jewels etc. For the Buddha was neither impressed with nor did he emphasize material riches and grandeur. His concern was only with the spiritual and the spiritual significance of things.

Siddharta stresses that His listeners (Ananda, Vaidehi, Sariputra and others), must never let this mind-picture of that Promised Land be erased from their minds — so that they in turn would teach about its advent and keep alive the clues necessary for its discovery at the appointed time in the future by the “great mass of the people” of that time, which is now:

*Thou shouldst remember, O Ananda, the Buddha words of mine, and repeat this law for attaining to the perception of the land (of the Buddha country) for the sake of the great mass of the people hereafter who may wish to be delivered from their sufferings.*¹

Siddharta further assures them of the tremendous merit attached to the task of remembering and recounting the attributes and clues concerning this “pure land”:

*If any one meditates on the land (of that Buddha country), his sins (which bind him to births and deaths during eighty millions of kalpas shall be extirpated; after the abandonment of his (present) body, he will assuredly be born in the pure land in the following life. The practice of this kind of meditation is called the “right meditation”. If it be of another kind it is called “heretical meditation”.*²

A physical location is indisputably indicated by all these many details concerning Sukhavati — the Realm of Amitabha — to which Siddharta, by the above discourse, directs His disciples to meditate on its many facets and its location in the west. The curious fact is that among all the innumerable Buddhas named in the Scriptures, Amitabha’s Realm is the only one on which Siddharta has expatiated, and whose import He has stressed in such detail to His disciples and — through those disciples — communicated the paramount importance of Sukhavati’s real import for the generations to follow: especially those who “in the last time, in the last moment in the last five hundred years, at the time of the collapse

¹ Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra, II. 12, p. 172.

² Amitayur-Dhyama-Sutra, II. 12, p. 172.

of the good doctrine” (Siddharta’s Dharma) would need to seek and rediscover the path to Salvation. And this is as it should be. For the attainment of that “pure land” by “the great mass of the people *hereafter* who may wish to be delivered from their suffering”, signifies nothing less than the full recognition of the Twin Miracle, Maitrya-Amitabha and Avalokitesvara, Whose mission — according to Siddharta Himself — would be to rediscover, proclaim and re-establish the pure Dharma.

Nowhere in the annals of Religious Prophecy is found such a wealth of detail concerning the “Place” as well as the people who will inhabit that Promised Land — Sukhavati — as is contained in the three Buddhist Scriptures (the *Larger* and *Smaller Sukhavati* and the *Amitayur-Dhyana Sutas*). These Sutas are replete with the descriptions of each and every facet of the Western Paradise of the great Tathagata Amitabha. If all those prophecies were to be quoted it would entail the doubling of the size of this book. Hence only the most cogent prophecies have been listed and, brushing aside their flowery and allegorical facade, we have exposed their intrinsic meanings and their astounding correlation and import to our own times. One would do well to read these three Sutas and see the numerous other prophecies which, without much interpretation, all pertain to our age.

There are additional aspects of this prophecy on “Sukhavati” which deal with other conditions besides that of “Place” and which we shall take up later, since their meaning can only be understood in the context of the Teachings (Dharma) proclaimed by the Twin-miracle.

With Siddharta’s injunctions concerning the image of Sukhavati’s description and location ever in mind we must now, within the parameters of Time and Place as delineated by the Scriptures, discover the Persons Who, by their background and accomplishments completely fulfill the three conditions which have always been required of any claimant to the station of Avatar.

1. *Prophecy.* The fulfillment of prophecies of the Founders of past Divine dispensations concerning the Time, Place and Person of their Promised One.

2. *Program.* The originality and viability of the Teachings and the means to make these Teachings into the perfect instrument for the upliftment and happiness of humanity as a whole and not merely some of its classes or races.

3. *Practice.* The “acid test” itself of the viability of the Program’s

power to remake man into an ethically advanced being, his conscience harmonized with his purpose and for our own Age, nothing short of the establishment of the Oneness of Humanity raised upon the twin pillars of Love and Justice applicable in equal measure to each and every member of the human race.

14

THE PERSONS THE BAB AND BAHĀ'U'LLĀH THE TWIN -MIRACLE

*... Difficult is the hearing of the true law,
difficult is the rise of Buddhahood.¹*

In the face of issues that have shattered the traditional bonds of faith and family and demolished our age-old allegiance to loyalty and virtue, the creative impulse of Siddharta's Teachings, like the gospels of other ancient Divine Teachers, is no longer able to penetrate the psyche of humanity with the answers to the meaning and purpose of existence in a vastly more complicated and rapidly changing world. No new inroad or victory has been achieved by Siddharta's Dharma in the last 1,000 years.

The times cry out for the advent of Maitrya, to once more proclaim the Dharma and create through it a new order in a world dominated by modern science and technology. A great deal of adaptation to the new order is needed, requiring a fundamental change in the exposition of the Dharma.

Thus far all that we have presented is merely the prologue for guiding us on the sure path to the discovery and acceptance of the "Twin-miracle" — the Twin Manifestations — Whose Advent, by all the logic and logos of the preceding pages, has surely occurred.

It has been conclusively shown that the "Time" is now. The

¹ Dhammapada, v. 182.

‘Place’ too, as prophesied in all the great Faiths, has been clearly pinpointed. It is a thin line comprising a series of points commencing from west of the Indo-Iranian frontier and stretching directly west to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea — a relative pinpoint on the vastness of the earth’s total surface — and by the same token indicative of Maitrya-Amitabha’s movements as He trod the earth on His predestined course. A course — in full conformity with Siddharta’s prophecy — always ‘west’ of Siddharta’s own origin and influence.

We have now offered sufficient evidence regarding the Time and the Place of this greatest Spiritual Advent to identify the Two Persons — the Twin-miracle — Who alone among any other claimants, past or present, fulfill the conditions delineated by the Scriptures of all the Divine Messengers. They are His Holiness HUSAYN ALI NU’RI titled ‘Baha’u’llah’ meaning ‘the Glory of God’¹ and His Holiness ALI MUHAMMAD ‘the Bab’ meaning ‘the Gate’. Both These Personages were born in Iran (Persia). Baha’u’llah, like Siddharta was born of an ancient and royal family,² His father being the Minister of State at the court of the Iranian King Muhammad Shah of the Qajar Dynasty. The date of Husayn’s birth was 12 November 1817 (B.E. 2360), i.e. one of the years pinpointed by Prophecy. The place: Teheran,³ capital of Iran. Upon His birth His father Mirza Buzurg Nuri dreamt that His first born son, on Whom he had bestowed the name Husayn (whose meaning implies ‘Kindness’),⁴ was swimming in the ocean, and to each strand of the hair of His head clung a fish. Puzzled by the meaning of his dream he, like Siddharta’s father Suddhodana, invited the court soothsayer to unravel the dream and was told that Husayn’s destiny was unique. The soothsayer interpreted the ocean as the ocean of humanity and the fishes as the great and small of the world, who would cling to Husayn for

¹ Baha meaning Glory or Splendor, literally the same as Bha or Abha in Sanskrit and Allah meaning God. (Also see p. 234 for further explanation.)

² On His father’s side Husayn was descended from the last Sassanian monarch Yezdigird Shahriar, who ruled the Iranian aryan before the Muhammadanic conquest of that land. And Husayn’s mother was descended from Katurah, the third of the three wives of Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people.

³ In perfect conformity with Scriptural Prophecy (pp. 230-32 and f.ns. pp. 231-32). But a condition on which He, Husayn, could not have exercised any possible physical influence.

⁴ Fulfilling Siddharta’s prophecy on the meaning of His name — ‘and He shall be called Metteya which means (He Whose name is Kindness)’ — and again a fact on which Husayn as a newborn babe could not have exercised any say at all. (See pages 234-5, for the significance of this name.) Also see Glossary for ‘Husayn’.

guidance and salvation.¹ Mirza Buzurg passed away early in Husayn's youth, and the monarch of Iran offered to Him His father's post of Minister of State. But, like Siddharta, Husayn declined, and the King's Prime Minister,² notwithstanding the fact that in time to come he would become the chief instrument for persecuting Husayn and exiling Him from His native land, desisted from pressuring Husayn to accept the trappings of temporal power and pelf offered by the monarch — and Husayn's by right of succession — and was recorded as saying, "Husayn's was a far greater destiny which time would unfold."

Like the India of Siddharta's time, where Hinduism stood in dire need of His purifying Message, so too was the other aryan land — Iran in the last century. Forgotten was its ancient glory and aryan culture, founded upon the Gospel of Zoroaster, which had already become thoroughly corrupted and fragmented by the thirteenth century of the Buddhist Era, when it was finally overthrown and superseded by the invigorating new Message from God, as proclaimed by His Holiness Muhammad, Whose Message of Justice and Equality infused new life and vigor in all the lands of the middle east and bestowed on the ancient kingdom of Iran a new Spiritual springtime. But the passage of centuries worked its ravages on Muhammadanism too and by Husayn's day its early purity and apostolic fervor were covered over by decay and division and presented an abject picture of lassitude and corruption in every fibre of its ethical structure and body politic. And even at the tender age of nineteen years Husayn, Who had just declined temporal grandeur and grade, offered to Him on His father's passing, was fully cognizant of the dying order around Him and, shirking off its coils, busied Himself with administering to the needs of the poor and lowly. Like Siddharta, He too sought for the guidance which would lift the human spirit to a new height of nobility — the fulfillment of the prophecies contained in the Muhammadan Scriptures, the appearance of the "Twin-miracle" for re-establishing the pure Dharma.

Husayn had not long to wait. Before He was 27 years of age Husayn heard that in His own land of Iran a young merchant in the city of Shiraz,

¹ This dream of Husayn's father exactly fulfilled the Hindu prophecy of Visnu's return (See p. 217).

² Haji Mirza Aqasi. The vile and scheming chief minister of the Qajar Monarch Muhammad Shah, who upon the Shah's demise was hounded out of office and committed suicide.

a Siyyid (meaning the direct descendent of His Holiness Muhammad the Prophet) named Ali Muhammad, who assumed the title of the Bab (i.e., ‘the Gate’), had arisen to proclaim the imminent advent of ‘the Lord of the Age’, Who would usher in a new and universal spiritual era of Whom He, the Bab, claimed to be ‘the Herald’ or ‘Gate’. The Bab was born in Shiraz (the major city of Southeast Iran) on 20 October 1819 (B.E. 2362) to a family which traced its lineage directly to Muhammad, the Divine Manifestation Who appeared among the Arabs over 1,400 years ago. According to the ancient calendar of Iran, the Bab’s birthday is on the *first* day of the month of Muharram, and Baha’u’llah’s birthday on the *second* day. Hence, these two birthdays are celebrated in Iran — where the day is reckoned from sunset to sunset — as one great ‘twin-festival’, so clearly symbolic of Siddharta’s prophecy that a ‘miracle’ such as the ‘Twin-miracle’ shall teach the Dharma in the time of the Aeon’s end. The ‘Time’ of Their emergence on to the stage of history — Their birth in the physical world — is precisely as the birth of Twins! The ‘Place’, from which They would emerge into the human realm is the same single country indicated by the prophetic utterances of Siddharta and the other great Divine Teachers — Iran — the same ‘womb’ from which ‘twins’, if they are to meet the definition of ‘twin’, would have had to emerge.

The picture prophetically revealed millennia ago by the Scriptures of all the Divine Faiths, concerning the Advent of the Twin Manifestations has now emerged and taken shape. Husayn, Baha’u’llah, could be none other than Siddharta’s Maitrya, ‘Amitabha’, and Ali Muhammad, the Bab, is Avalokitesvara¹ — the Bodhisattva Padmapani — the ‘other Twin’.

As has always been the case the advent of a Redeemer, with His message of spiritual regeneration is met with unceasing opposition by the exploiters of corruption and ignorance, the priests and ‘leaders’ of Religion who see their power and pelf threatened by the new dawn of the Spiritual Sun. To resist His call with Its Message of life, these false

¹ Avalokitesvara, according to Scripture (**Karandavyuha**) is co-equal with Amitabha, or is symbolized by an emanation of Amitabha, precisely the relation, as we shall see, the Bab had to Baha’u’llah. According to this same Scripture Avalokitesvara covers the period between the disappearance of Siddharta and the advent of Maitrya. Hence once again foretelling of the closest relationship that would exist between Avalokitesvara and Maitrya-Amitabha.

guardians of the people's souls go to every length, even to the point of marshalling the civil authorities and instigating the mobs to kill the Divine Teacher Himself, thinking thereby — careless of the lesson of history — to stay the passing of corruption and error, in which these night creatures have become accustomed to wallow.

Just as Siddharta was ridiculed and persecuted by the Brahmins of His day, so was the youthful Bab, Who was only 24 years of age on 23 May 1844 (B.E. 2387)¹ when He arose to proclaim His Message of the advent of a new Spiritual Springtime and announce His Mission of sweeping away the withered debris of a former age. And, like Siddharta, He was immediately set upon by the combined fury of the Muhammadan clergy² and the civil authorities and rulers, whom the clergy manipulated by its bestowal of indulgences for their lustful appetites and its ability to create and direct fanatical mobs from among the mindless masses.

The Bab first proclaimed His Message to eighteen persons. One of these was a woman titled Qurratu'l-Ayn (“Solace of the Eyes”) a famous poetess of incomparable brilliance and beauty in her native land of Iran. The eighteen,³ one and all, through intuition and prayer, singly and unknown to their fellow disciples attained to the recognition of the

¹ The exact year that was to witness (see page 222) the fulfillment of the Scriptural Prophecy relating to this tremendous event inaugurating the dawn of a new Day. The Bab made His momentous declaration to a young and erudite champion of Muhammadan scholarship named Mulla Husayn-i-Bushrui (Bushruiyih is a town in the province of Khurasan in Iran), who, together with others of his class of theological excellence had for some years upon the death of their renowned teacher Siyyid Kazim, sought to discover the Promised One Whose Advent was awaited by the followers of all the faiths including the Muhammadans. The events leading to the fulfillment of Mulla Husayn's quest which culminated for him in the Bab's stirring declaration are all accurately recorded (pp. 52-65) in Nabil's soul-stirring narrative, *The Dawn-Breakers* (Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill. 1932) translated perfectly from Persian into English by the late Shoghi Effendi the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith.

² “And persons greedily attached to enjoyments will preach the law to laymen and be honoured as if they possessed the six transcendent qualities.” *Saddharmapundarika* Sutra.

³ Significantly, for the land of Siddharta's birth and symbolic of the close relationship enjoyed by these two aryan peoples in the time of Siddharta, one of these first eighteen disciples of the Bab was Siyyid-i-Hindi a prince of a Muhammadan principality in Rajasthan, who, having dreamt of the Bab betook himself to Chihriq, the mountain fortress, where the Bab was being held prisoner and attained His presence and was counted among those first eighteen disciples. The Bab instructed Siyyid-i-Hindi to return to his native land (India) and announce the glad tidings of the new Dawn. Some fifty-three years ago the author then a teenager saw one of those Babis of India declare himself a believer in Baha'u'llah under the tutelage of the author's parents who were then stationed in Bundi Kota, Rajasthan.

newly arisen Spiritual Sun, the youthful Bab. The two most eminent were Mulla Husayn the first to Whom the Bab proclaimed His Mission and Mulla Muhammad-Aliy-i-Barfurushi, entitled “Quddus” — the last — the eighteenth, whose spiritual sight and pure heart enabled him to attain the foremost rank in that select company of the eighteen who from then on would become immortalized as “The Letters of the Living” and each and every one of Whom — shortly thereafter — testified to their faith in the Bab by their very lives, which were mercilessly snuffed out by the torture mongers and the deadly might of the clergy and rulers of Muhammadan Iran.

Poignantly reminiscent of Siddharta’s own exhortation to His first disciples¹ is the Bab’s address as recorded in His own handwritten Epistle to His first followers — those unique and immortalized “Letters” of the Living” — as He sent them on to infuse life into a venal and deadened society.

O My beloved friends! You are the bearers of the name of God in this Day. You have been chosen as the repositories of His mystery. It behoves each one of you to manifest the attributes of God, and to exemplify by your deeds and words the signs of His righteousness, His power and glory. The very members of your body must bear witness to the loftiness of your purpose, the integrity of your life, the reality of your faith, and the exalted character of your devotion. For verily I say; this is the Day spoken of by God in His Book ... O My Letters! Verily I say, immensely exalted is this Day above the days of the Apostles of old. Nay, immeasurable is the difference! You are the witnesses of the Dawn of the promised Day of God. You are the partakers of the mystic chalice of His Revelation ... Purge your hearts of worldly desires, and let angelic virtues be your adorning. Strive that by your deeds you may bear witness to the truth of these words of God, and beware lest, by ‘turning back’, He may ‘change

¹ “Beloved mendicants, I am free from the five great passions which, like an immense net, encompass men; you too, owing to the instructions you have received from me, enjoy the same glorious privilege. There is now incumbent on us a great duty, that of labouring effectually on behalf of men, and procuring to them the invaluable blessing of the deliverance. To the end of securing more effectually the success of such an undertaking, let us part with each other and proceed in various and opposite directions, so that not two of us should follow up the same way. Go ye now, and preach the most excellent Law, expounding every point thereof. ... Let everything respecting it be ... brought to broad daylight ...” (**Bigandet**, 122. **Buddhism**, p. 55, T.W. Rhys Davids).

you for another people', who 'shall not be your like', and who shall take from you the Kingdom of God. The days when idle worship was deemed sufficient are ended. The time is come when naught but the purest motive, supported by deeds of stainless purity, can ascend to the throne of the Most High and be acceptable unto Him ... You are the first Letters that have been generated from the Primal Point,¹ the first Springs that have welled out from the Source of this Revelation. Beseech the Lord your God to grant that no earthly entanglements, no worldly affections, no ephemeral pursuits, may tarnish the purity, or embitter the sweetness, of that grace which flows through you. I am preparing you for the advent of a mighty Day. Exert your utmost endeavour that, in the world to come, I, who am now instructing you, may, before the mercy-seat of God, rejoice in your deeds and glory in your achievements. The secret of the Day that is to come is now concealed. It can neither be divulged nor estimated. The newly born babe of that Day excels the wisest and most venerable men of this time, and the lowliest and most unlearned of that period shall surpass in understanding the most erudite and accomplished divines of this age. Scatter throughout the length and breadth of this land, and, with steadfast feet and sanctified hearts, prepare the way for His coming. Heed not your weaknesses and frailty; fix your gaze upon the invincible power of the Lord, your God, the Almighty.

Like Siddharta, Who had sent each of His disciples on a separate mission, the Bab also gave to each of His Letters of the Living a special mission in their own native provinces and urged them to proclaim that the Gate to the Lord of the Age — the Aeon Ender — was now opened.

The Bab Himself was arrested. And after an examination of His claim to being the Herald of the about-to-occur Advent of the Aeon Ender, the Lord of the New Age, He was tortured and remanded to prison. But even in imprisonment the irresistible call of His Message swept Iran. And the people of Iran rose in their multitude to seal their allegiance by their acts. By the tens of thousands the Babis went to their martyrdom, rather than renounce their faith in their newly arisen Redeemer from the corrupt and corrupting world, the newly discovered "Gate" to immortality. It is of this multitude of heroic souls and their two pre-

¹ One of the titles of the Bab.

eminent leaders (Quddus and Mulla Husayn) who pledged their fealty to their Lord (the Bab) and sealed it with their blood, that we have this remarkable prophecy in the *Saddharmapundarika*¹ and which we quote at some length:

Thereafter the Bodhisattva Bhaishagyaraga and the Bodhisattva Mahapratibbhana, with a retinue of twenty hundred thousand Bodhisattvas, spoke before the face of the Lord the following words: Let the Lord be at ease in this respect; we will after the extinction of the Tathagata expound this Paryaya (Message of Salvation) to all creatures, though we are aware, O Lord, that at that period there shall be malign beings, having few roots of goodness, conceited, fond of gain and honour, rooted in unholiness, difficult to tame, deprived of good will, and full of unwillingness. Nevertheless, O Lord, we will at that period read, keep, preach, write, honour, respect, venerate, worship this Sutra; with sacrifice of body and life, O Lord, we will divulge this Sutra. Let the Lord be at ease.

We will after the complete extinction of the Lord, go in all directions in order that creatures shall write, keep, meditate, divulge this Dharmaparyaya, by no other's power but the Lord's. And the Lord, staying in another world, shall protect, defend, and guard us.

Then the Bodhisattvas unanimously in a chorus addressed the Lord with the following stanzas:

Be at ease, O Lord. After thy complete extinction, in the horrible last period of the world, we will proclaim this sublime Sutra.

We will suffer, patiently endure, O Lord, the injuries, threats, blows and threats with sticks at the hands of foolish men.

At that dreadful last epoch men will be malign, crooked, wicked, dull, conceited, fancying to have come to the limit when they have not.

We do not care but to live in the wilderness and wear a patched cloth; we lead a frugal life; so will they speak to the ignorant.

Cruel-minded and wicked men, only occupied with household cares, will enter our retreat² in the forest and become our calumniators ...

We will endure all that out of reverence for the great Seers.

¹ Also see *Saddharmapundarika*, XXIV, vv. 17-27. "Devotion to Avalokitesvara".

² Reference to the historical massacre of the followers of the Bab at Fort Tabarsi in which Mulla Husayn and many of the chief Babis were killed. See Nabil's Narrative — **The Dawn Breakers**.

And those fools who will not listen to us, shall (sooner or later) become enlightened, and therefore will we forbear to the last.

As we read on it should be obvious to us that this remarkable discourse, which is also prophecy, refers to the time (“the last period”) of the Advent of the Twin-miracle (the Bab and Bahá'u'llah) and is talking about Their disciples, the new “true Buddhists”, and not those who simply go under the name of Buddhism, since no such massacres and martyrdoms of Buddhists have been recorded either in this century or in the last. The line in the above excerpt “We will endure all that out of reverence for the great Seers (the Bab and Bahá'u'llah), indicating faith in many Divine Teachers — the hallmark of the followers of the Twin-miracle — and concerning which (reverence for many Buddhas) we shall see additional explicit prophecies by Siddharta in chapter seventeen on “The New True Buddhists”, makes it even more certain that the text is describing the sufferings which the Babis so heroically accepted in the last century, as a testimony of their faith in the Bab.

In that dreadful, most terrible period of frightful general revolution will many fiendish monks¹ stand up as our revilers.

Out of respect for the Chief of the world² we will bear it, however difficult it be; girded with the girdle of forbearance will I proclaim this Sutra.

I do not care for my body or life, O Lord, but as keepers of thine entrusted deposit we care for enlightenment.

The Lord himself knows that in the last period there are (to be) wicked monks who do not understand mysterious speech.

One will have to bear frowning looks, repeated disavowal (or concealment), expulsion from the monasteries, many and manifold abuses.

Yet mindful of the command of the Lord of the world we will in the last period undauntedly proclaim this Sutra in the midst of the congregation.

We will visit towns and villages everywhere, and transmit to those who care for it thine entrusted deposit, O Lord.

O Chief of the world, we will deliver thy message; be at ease then, tranquil and quiet, great Seer.

¹ Separating monks and the clergy from the true believers.

² Precisely the title (see p. 262) of the Aeon-Ender for Whom the Bab claimed to be the Herald.

*Light of the world, thou knowest the disposition of all who have flocked hither from every direction, (and thou knowest that) we speak a word of truth.*¹

Finally, not satisfied with the massive blood-letting of more than twenty thousand innocents, the authorities and the clergy conspired to end the mass movement of the poor and lowly to the banner of the Bab by executing the Bab Himself. Here too, they met with singular defeat in their attempt to falsify the Bab's claim. As in all Divine Scriptures, the Holy Books of the Muhammadans are replete with prophecies concerning the Advent of the Twin Miracle, the Two Divine Manifestations which were to come at the end of the Aeon. The first was to appear in the year 1260 of the Muhammadan era (which corresponds to B.E. 2387² or A.D. 1844) and of Him it was prophesied that He would die at the hands of Muhammadans. The second Divine Teacher prophesied in the Muhammadan Scriptures and to Whom the Bab Himself referred as "The Essence of Being", was to be the Aeon Ender Himself — the Lord of the Age — the Kalki Avatar of the Hindus, Maitrya-Amitabha.

The first, the Bab, had already appeared, creating a fresh new wind which toppled the most entrenched citadels of the old order of deceit and debauchery masquerading as religion. This new power, to which the populace rallied in ever-increasing numbers, threatened to sweep away the sanctuaries of bigotry and blind belief and relegate their exponents, the corrupt clerics and their nefarious partners, the Qajar court, into the trashcan of history. In their final act of deceit, and thinking thereby to snuff out the flame of the Bab's new Faith and prove Him an imposter, the authorities decided, through trumped-up charges of sedition against Him and without trial, to execute Him in the northern border town of Tabriz, where He was held in captivity. The second part of this plot involved an attempt to show His claim of being the Divine Teacher to be false. To do so, they hit upon a dramatic ruse to demonstrate that a remarkable prophecy in the Muhammadan Scriptures — that the future Avatar, One of the Twin Manifestations Who would appear from the lineage of His Holiness Muhammad, would be martyred by His own people, i.e. the Muhammadans — was not fulfilled by the Bab. They decided to execute the Bab and Muhammad Ali, a young disciple of His,

¹ See also the Sutra of the "Ancient Devotion of Bhaishagyara".

² See p. 263 and f.n. 1. Also p. 222 concerning this prophetic date.

by the military regiment of Armenian Christians stationed in the Tabriz Military Barracks.¹

Hence, on 9 July 1850, only six years after the Bab had first heralded the new Day of Righteousness and Justice for Iran and the whole world, He — this essence of purity and love — was rudely interrupted in the midst of dictating His last missive to His followers, and despite His declaration to His jailers that no force on earth could interrupt His Mission until it was completed, He was simply dragged away to the barracks' square and there, together with His young disciple, Muhammad Ali, was suspended from the wall with Muhammad Ali's face covering the Bab's breast. As the Bab was being tied for execution, the commander of the Armenian Christian regiment ordered to execute Him, a man named Sam Khan, approached Him and stated that he and his men were Christians and had no animosity towards Him and begged to be freed from the obligation to shed the Bab's blood. The Bab replied: "Carry out your instructions and if your intention be sincere the Almighty is surely able to relieve you of your perplexity." The soldiers took aim and Sam Khan, in the presence of thousands of the residents of Tabriz and at least three officials of foreign consulates,² gave the command to fire. As the smoke from 750 muskets cleared, an astonishing sight met the dumbfounded onlookers. Young Muhammad Ali was standing below the wall from which he had been suspended. The ropes that had bound him to the Bab were torn to pieces, and the Bab Himself was nowhere to be seen.

We would do well here to quote from the report of the British consul in Tabriz, Sir Justin Sheil, who was a Christian, to Lord Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary.

The founder of this sect has been executed at Tabriz — He was killed by a volley of musketry, and his death was on the point of giving his religion a lustre which would have largely increased its proselytes. When the smoke and dust cleared away after the volley, Bab was not to be seen, and the populace proclaimed that he had ascended to the

¹ Due to the constant threat of revolt against the corrupt Qajar Government it was common practice to employ large numbers of Armenian Christians — who hated the local Muhammadan population, which had perpetrated many a massacre upon the Armenians — as security forces in the Iranian army.

² Those of Britain, France and Russia. Since Tabriz was a border town on the frontier of Russia, the great powers maintained consulates, especially as listening posts.

*skies — The balls had broken the ropes by which he was bound, but he was dragged from the recess where after some search, he was discovered, and shot. His death according to the belief of his disciples will make no difference, as Bab must always exist.*¹

As Sheil intimates, the populace became indeed hysterical. While some authorities desperately held up the shattered ropes as proof of the effectiveness of the bullets and thus in some strange manner attempted to dispel the impact of this supernatural occurrence, others mounted a frantic search for the Bab. They eventually located Him in the same cell in which they had so rudely interrupted Him during the dictation to His amanuensis only a short while before. This time they waited for the Bab to complete His testimonial and upon the Bab's signal that He had finished His work, in a humbler manner they accompanied Him to the site of His thwarted execution, only to be confronted with another debacle. For Sam Khan, upon seeing the Bab, recognized the import of what he and his regiment had become involved in and suspecting that they were to be further implicated in the heinous act against Providence, proclaimed to the assembled crowd that he would have nothing more to do with the execution even if he and his men were to be shot for this disobedience. He then marched the entire regiment out of the barracks square.

Beset on the one hand by this clear mutiny of its only military contingent and on the other by the captivating spell of the Bab and His young disciple on the awe-struck multitude, whose emotions could well have taken a turn which, if not quickly subdued, might have swept the evil perpetrators themselves to their doom and resulted in the supremacy of the Bab, the authorities were left with no alternative but to order the local Muhammadan regiment into the square to carry out the execution. And, having once again secured and suspended the Bab and His faithful young disciple, they waited for the Bab to complete His final proclamation to the assemblage:²

Had you believed in Me, O wayward generation, every one of you would have followed the example of this youth, who stood in rank above most of you, and willingly would have sacrificed himself in

¹ British Foreign Office Document No. 60/153/88 dated 22 July 1850 in the archives of the Foreign Office. Also see, H.M. Balyuzi, *The Bab* (Oxford, George Ronald, 1973), pp. 217-19.

² *The Dawn Breakers* (Nabil's Narrative), p. 514.

My path. The day will come when you will have recognized me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you.

This time the volleys took effect thus, fulfilling the ancient prophecy that, “My own people (the Muhammadans) shall slay the Promised One”, as the fingers that pulled the triggers belonged to the hastily assembled Muhammadan regiment. Not satisfied with seeing their plot to disprove their own Holy prophecy dramatically thwarted by the hand of Divine Destiny, the Bab’s murderers attempted to challenge yet another saying from the Muhammadan Scriptures which states that no beast of prey can devour or touch the body of the Avatar — the Manifestation.¹ Thus, they put the nearly mingled bodies of the Bab and His young disciple Muhammad Ali on the edge of the city moat to be eaten by the wolves and big cats that roamed that area. The prophecy was fulfilled, the Scripture could not be contravened. The bodies were later spirited away by the Babis, and after forty years of being hidden from place to place the casket containing the remains of the Bab and His

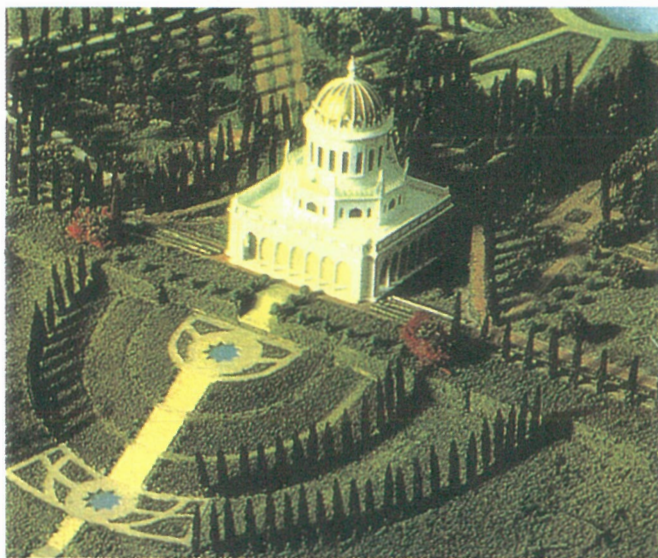


Fig. 6

The Shrine of His Holiness the Bab (Avalokitesvara), on Mount Carmel, Haifa

¹ For a fuller account of this immortal event the reader can do no better than refer to the *Dawn Breakers* by Nabil (pp. 512-19).

young disciple was finally brought to Palestine — then under Turkish rule — and laid to rest in a simple but solidly constructed tomb on Mount Carmel in the port city of Haifa,¹ over which fifty years later a lovely golden-domed Shrine was erected. And this, as we can now see, is what twenty-five centuries ago was so vividly and in such detail — in three separate Suttas — portrayed by Siddharta to His disciples so that His words through them would be carried to generation upon generation and provide to those of the present age, enmeshed in the final dissolution of the Aeon, the unwavering “beacon” to that long awaited and clearly foretold “haven” of Salvation — Maitrya-Amitabha’s Domain — the rapidly developing paradisiacal world order destined to fulfill in the fulness of time every facet of its physical and spiritual structure so painstakingly described by Siddharta.

The Bab was martyred at noon, and as the volley of fatal shots were discharged a gale of tremendous power arose to obscure the noonday sun till nightfall. Of the perpetrators and instruments of that heinous crime fate took a dreadful toll. Of the 750 soldiers who fired the death volley one-third were killed by an earthquake within two years. Shortly thereafter the rest — nearly 500 — themselves stood accused of mutiny and were executed by the firing squad. The chief officials who plotted the Bab’s execution and those who ordered it saw their fortunes reversed and their power snatched from their grasp. Within two years after their perpetration of this foul deed they too were put to death.

The Bab had proclaimed that a new spiritual era was at hand, and He promised that within 19 years “He Whom God would make manifest” would begin to teach and bring to men the basic laws and principles for a “new age”. One of the Twin-miracle — Avalokitesvara — had thus met His end. Maitrya-Amitabha — Baha’u’llah — Himself, was not long in appearing.

While the Bab had unerringly instructed His followers to await the year Nine (after His own Declaration on 23 May 1844)² with the greatest anticipation, He knew only too well that His own martyrdom would occur before that time would arrive, and this too was as it should be since it upheld the ancient law³ of Divine Revelation that *only one Avatar can*

¹ Now in the modern State of Israel.

² By reference to page 222, we can see that this is the fulfillment of yet another prophetic date from the Scripture.

³ *Milindapanha*.

appear at one time in one world system. Hence Baha'u'llah, although older than the Bab by two years and Himself a devoted follower of the Bab, nevertheless did not receive that inexplicable call, that exaltation from the Absolute, concerning His Divine Mission until He lay languishing in Teheran's most notorious prison. This was the Siyyih Chal, appropriately called the "Black Pit", where the worst kind of human vermin were incarcerated. It was a place where the most rudimentary requirements of sanitation were unknown. Baha'u'llah Himself describes His confinement and torment in that loathsome pit in the following terms:

*We were consigned for four months to a place foul beyond comparison. As to the dungeon in which this Wronged One and others similarly wronged were confined, a dark and narrow pit were preferable. Upon Our arrival We were first conducted along a pitch-black corridor, from whence We descended three steep flights of stairs to the place of confinement assigned to Us. The dungeon was wrapped in thick darkness, and Our fellow-prisoners numbered nearly a hundred and fifty souls: thieves, assassins and highwaymen. Though crowded, it had no other outlet than the passage by which We entered. No pen can depict that place, not any tongue describe its loathsome smell. Most of these men had neither clothes nor bedding to lie on. God alone knoweth what befell Us in that most foul-smelling and gloomy place!*¹

Coupled with these degradations, Baha'u'llah, Whose only crime was having championed the Bab's call to a corrupt people to awake and prepare to witness the appearance of the soon-to-dawn Spiritual Sun, was further afflicted by the torturers, who strapped on His neck, wrists and ankles the infamous "Black Horses" — heavy iron chains so called because of their excessive weight — which forced the wearer to bend down in a permanent crouch. In one of His Tablets, Baha'u'llah relates about those dreadful chains.

Shouldst thou at sometime happen to visit the dungeon of His Majesty the Shah, ask the director and chief jailer to show thee those two chains, one of which is known as Qara-Guhar, and the other as Salasil. I swear by the Day-star of Justice that for four months this

¹ *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, (pp. 20-21), Baha'u'llah, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, 1953. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* is the last Tablet from Baha'u'llah's perfect Pen. It was addressed to a Muhammadan priest of the city of Isfahan, Iran whose greed and nefarious deeds caused the death of many Baha'is.

*Wronged One was tormented and chained by one or the other of them.*¹

Baha'u'llah, absolutely innocent of any crime except His devotion to the Teachings of the Bab, was destined to experience that unique and totally mysterious Divine Call in the very midst of His agonies and tortures in that horrible prison of Teheran. Like Siddharta before Him, Who while the night was falling experienced that Divine Sunburst which revealed to Him His Mission, so too in the darkness of that dismal place, Baha'u'llah saw the Supernal Sun shining from His own Self. He was Buddha, the Promised One of the Bab awaited by all the Faiths — Maitrya-Amitabha. Baha'u'llah Himself tells us of that memorable event of His Enlightenment.

*During the days I lay in the prison of Tihran, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear ... One night, in a dream, these exalted words were heard on every side: "Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy Pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Ere long will God raise up the treasures of the earth — men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him."*²

The nine years after the Bab's Declaration had indeed elapsed, but the time for a public proclamation would have to wait for the passing of another ten years. Then, mankind would know of the Divine Fire that had been kindled by the hand of the Almighty in that darkest spot in the midmost heart of the land of the aryaans, where was to rise the Aeon-ender.

His oppressors, unable to break Baha'u'llah's will and utterly unsuccessful in their attempt to dissuade Him from renouncing His allegiance to the Bab's Cause or ministering to the needs of the Babis who lay shocked and dejected at their Lord's martyrdom, finally conspired

¹ Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 77.

² Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 21-22.

with the Ottoman (Turkish) power to exile Baha'u'llah and His family from their native land. For He was, even then, too renowned for His integrity and respected by the populace of Teheran and the foreign dignitaries resident in the capital, to be simply done away with as a common criminal without besmirching, even in the eyes of those unscrupulous "powers-that-be", their own reputation and that of their nation.¹ Of those clerics and so-called divines of Muhammadanism, Baha'u'llah in His most weighty book has this to say:

Among these "veils of glory" are the divines and doctors living in the days of the Manifestation of God, Who, because of their want of discernment and their love and eagerness for leadership, have failed to submit to the Cause of God, nay have even refused to incline their ears unto the Divine Melody ... "They have thrust their fingers into their ears." And the people also, utterly ignoring God and taking them for their masters, have placed themselves unreservedly under the authority of these pompous and hypocritical leaders, for they have no sight, no hearing, no heart of their own to distinguish truth from falsehood.

Notwithstanding the divinely-inspired admonitions of all the Prophets, the Saints, and Chosen Ones of God, enjoining the people to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears, they have disdainfully rejected their counsels and have blindly followed, and will continue to follow, the leaders of their Faith. Should a poor and obscure person, destitute of the attire of the men of learning, address them saying: "Follow ye, O people! the Messengers of God", they would, greatly surprised at such a statement, reply: "What! Meanest thou that all these divines, all these exponents of learning, with all their authority, their pomp and pageantry, have erred, and failed to distinguish truth from falsehood? Dost thou, and people like thyself, pretend to have comprehended that which they have not understood?"

But this has always been the lot of every Avatar, as Baha'u'llah continues:

Not one Prophet of God was made manifest Who did not fall a victim to the relentless hate, to the denunciation, denial, and execration of the clerics of His day! Woe unto them for the iniquities their hands

¹ The exile of Baha'u'llah and His family from their native land was, while reminiscent of the exile of Ram, Sita and Laxman, much more severe, for they would never return to Iran but end their lives as prisoners in exile.

*have formerly wrought! Woe unto them for that which they are now doing! What veils of glory more grievous than these embodiments of error.*¹

And adds in another place:

*The source and origin of tyranny have been the divines. Through the sentences pronounced by these haughty and wayward souls the rulers of the earth have wrought that which ye have heard ... The reins of the heedless masses have been, and are, in the hands of the exponents of idle fancies and vain imaginings. These decree what they please. God, verily, is clear of them, and We, too, are clear of them, as are such as have testified unto that which the Pen of the Most High hath spoken in this glorious station.*²

Thus began the destined journey of the Universal Monarch under the orders and direction of those who feared the Dawn of a New Day as night creatures fear the sun, unaware of the power of Providence to use even such unwitting creatures attempting to hold back the Spiritual Sunrise, as instruments of Its Sovereign Will.

The Bab's warning to His disciples to be alert and diligent at the approach of the period bounded by the years *Nine* and *Nineteen* — dated from His own momentous Proclamation of the Dawn of a New day — soon to appear over the horizon of human affairs, aroused many an adventurer to lay claim to the Station of the Lord of the Age, little knowing that the mantle of that Supreme Station, for which the Bab had used the title Baha'u'llah ("The Glory of God") had by inexplicable fate — through an exaltation from the Absolute — already come to rest upon the shoulders of Husayn Ali to Whom the Bab had despatched His own signet ring and pen as a mark of symbolic succession of Divine Station, just before the Bab was executed. And concerning Whom, He wrote:

*Of all the tributes I have paid to him Who is to come after Me, the greatest is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor can any reference to Him in My Book The Bayan, do justice to His Cause.*³

¹ **The Kitab-i-Iqan** or **The Book of Certitude** written by Baha'u'llah in response to questions sent to Him by an uncle of the Bab (pp. 105-6).

² **The Promised Day Is Come** (pp. 82-3), Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette Illinois, USA, 1961. See also pp. 159-162 on **The Samgha**. The reader is also referred to the unrivalled work **God Passes By** by Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA, 1944, for the detailed and definitive history of the Baha'i Faith.

³ "**The Bayan**" is the name of the Mother Book of the Bab's Revelation and contains certain laws for the Babis to follow. It is written by the Bab in Persian.

In another Epistle, the Bab, even though the only Avatar at the time, but knowing that His purpose was to prepare mankind to recognize Baha'u'llah, states the reason for being of all the Divine Teachers, and in anticipation of the Aeon-Ender's advent, He addresses Baha'u'llah, in the manner of a pupil to a teacher or a son to a father.

*Out of utter nothingness, O great and omnipotent Master, Thou hast through the celestial potency of Thy might, brought me forth and raised me up to proclaim this Revelation. I have made none other but Thee my trust; I have clung to no will but Thy will ... O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee; I have accepted curses for Thy sake, and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love ... And when the appointed hour hath struck, do Thou, by the leave of God, the All-Wise, reveal from the heights of the Most Lofty and Mystic Mount a faint, an infinitesimal glimmer of Thy impenetrable Mystery, that they who have recognized ... may faint away ... as they catch a lightning glimpse of the fierce and crimson Light that envelops Thy Revelation.'*¹

The following excerpt from Siddharta's own narration shows how closely the sense of the two passages and the relationship of the two Central Figures in each are entwined.

And the lord Amitayu makes a smile of thirty-six niyutas of kotis of rays, which rays having issued from the circle of his mouth light up the thousand kotis of Buddha countries.

*And all these rays having returned there again settle on the head of the lord; gods and men produce (perceive) the delight, because they have seen there this light of him.*²

This passage refers to the supernal light with which the Bab, too, associates Baha'u'llah. The smile is symbolic of joy and the certitude that Destiny, through Amitayu (Baha'u'llah), was now working out the salvation of the human race, the final deliverance foretold in all the Scriptures. And Avalokitesvara, Who is none other than the Bab, proclaims in similar terms His supplication to Amitayu (or Amitabha, i.e. Baha'u'llah) to clarify — to come forth and teach — the glad tidings so that all beings may rejoice.

¹ *The Qayyumu'l Asma'*, The Bab. Excerpts translated by Shoghi Effendi in *The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah*, p. 5. Shoghi Effendi, 1939, Baha'i Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Ill., USA.

² *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, vv. 11, 12.

There rises the Buddha-son, glorious, he indeed the mighty Avalokitesvara, and says: "What is the reason there, O Bhagavat, what is the cause, that thou smilest, O lord of the world?

*Explain this, for thou knowest the sense, and art full of kind compassion, the deliverer of many living beings. All beings will be filled with joyful thoughts, when they have thus heard this excellent and delightful speech."*¹

The "sonship" of Avalokitesvara is symbolic and not literal, as Siddharta has explained on previous occasions.² But the very brilliance of the Spiritual Sun invites the most incessant attacks from those who flourish in the dark and dank corridors of hate and envy and Baha'u'llah too became the prime target for the night creatures.

Tragically, one of those adventurers turned out to be none other than Baha'u'llah's own half-brother, Mirza Yahya, entitled Subhi-i-Azal (meaning the 'Morning of Eternity'), who became the arch villain — the "Devadatta" — of the Dispensation of Maitrya-Amitabha.³

After their father's passing, Baha'u'llah had been as a true and loving father to his younger brothers and sisters, including Mirza Yahya, but instead of receiving gratitude from His half-brother, Baha'u'llah was made the target of every heinous act and calumny directed by Mirza Yahya for appeasing his ambition to become the leader of the pitiful remnant of the Bab's adherents. Like Devadatta before him, Mirza Yahya thought that Buddhahood is a creation of one's own devising, hammered out by trial and error or gained by imitation. Arriving surreptitiously in Baghdad, capital city of the adjoining country, Iraq, where Baha'u'llah and His family were then quartered, Mirza Yahya immediately began plotting to discredit Baha'u'llah in the eyes of family and friends. Rather than be a party to strife and division, Baha'u'llah decided to withdraw alone to the nearby mountains of Kurdistan, and just as Siddharta had taken Himself in the dead of night to the forests — away from the contentious masses and their self-proclaimed leaders — so did Baha'u'llah, Whose family awoke one morning to find Him gone.

¹ *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, vv. 13, 14.

² See *Digha-nikaya*, III. 84. "He, Vasettha, whose faith in the Tathagata is settled, rooted ... he may say: 'I am the Lord's own son, born of his mouth, born of Dhamma, formed by Dhamma, heir to Dhamma'."

³ The reader will recall (pp. 65-66) our statement that we will confront Devadatta's example of treachery and revolt in the life of Maitrya and this was fulfilled by Mirza Yahya's treachery against Baha'u'llah.

Bahá'u'llah's purpose in withdrawing from His family was to let them decide whether he was indeed indispensable to rejuvenating the spiritual life of the Babis and leading them to the "safe haven".

Just as Siddharta had shown Himself to be a yogi among yogis, His fame resounding over that area like "the peal of a great bell hung in the sky", so too Bahá'u'llah, in the fastness of the Sulaymaniyyih mountains of Kurdistan, became known as the Darvish¹ Muhammad, His reputation for sagacity and learning spreading even to the heart of Baghdad. And when the Babis and His own family — mired even deeper in their internecine quarrels — heard of the Sage of Sulaymaniyyih they tarried no longer, knowing full well that He could be none other than Bahá'u'llah, and promptly sent a deputation to locate and urge Him to return to lead them. Bahá'u'llah realized that He must respond to their vital need to become a united and dynamic community again and hence He returned on 19 March 1856, welcomed by the Babis, by now chastened by the ordeal of deprivation from His unerring leadership. Despite this severe crisis just passed, Mirza Yahya continued his machinations against Bahá'u'llah, but to no avail. The Babis had seen him for what he was and ignored him. Nevertheless, Bahá'u'llah continued to protect His errant half-brother against the threats of others. But like Devadatta, Mirza Yahya was a creature of darkness and could not be enlightened by the Truth.

Under Bahá'u'llah's Divine guidance the Babis once again made the noble teachings and injunctions of their departed Lord a part of their daily lives. Despite the restrictions placed by the authorities on Bahá'u'llah and His family and friends, the populace of Baghdad also began to flock to hear Bahá'u'llah and espouse the Bab's Cause. Through Him the Teachings of the Bab assumed fuller meaning and a far wider allegiance. The leaderless Babis in Iran, hearing of Bahá'u'llah's fame, hastened to Baghdad to enter the new and dynamic spiritual Order emerging from His Presence and Precepts. Seeker and savant, all who were graced by the opportunity to enter the Presence of Bahá'u'llah found their perplexities resolved by Him. As in Siddharta's case, Bahá'u'llah's fame resounded from the lips of high and low. Once again the envy and hatred of those night creatures who fear the sun focused on Bahá'u'llah and His family and followers.

¹ Sage or holy man.

The Muhammadan priesthood of Baghdad, with the exception of Shaykhi-i-Ansari, the most prominent of them, conspired to rid themselves and their city of Baha'u'llah. To this end, they deputed one of their colleagues to approach Him with a demand for "convincing" proofs. Though aware of their insincerity, Baha'u'llah condescended to proffer any proof that the clergy could demand of Him, with the condition that once having witnessed the proof they must henceforth pledge to accept His authority. This offer by Baha'u'llah threw His ill-wishers into consternation. Their purpose from the outset was never to discover the Truth but to conceal It. This trickery of the clerics extracted an immediate price from them. Their own noted emissary, whom they had dispatched to observe Baha'u'llah's proofs realized the knavish behaviour of his colleagues in the face of Baha'u'llah's forthrightness and turned upon them and proclaimed the truth of their duplicity to all who would listen.

The tumult created among these religious leaders by the fame of Baha'u'llah now impelled them to repeat the machinations of their Iranian counterparts, who had succeeded in exiling Baha'u'llah from His native land. Conspiring with the Iranian Consul in Baghdad they obliged the Ottoman Sultan who governed Baghdad to order Baha'u'llah and His followers to Constantinople, the seat of the Ottoman (Turkish) empire. To outward appearances, the enemies of Baha'u'llah had triumphed and while they exulted, those who had cast their lot with Baha'u'llah were inconsolable at the impending separation from their Beloved. Unknown to either side, Destiny was inexorably working toward its fulfillment through the instrumentality of friend and foe alike. The Person was being drawn to the Place, not through His own volition but as a prisoner of those who wished to annihilate Him. The Time had arrived.

In preparation for His departure for Constantinople, Baha'u'llah was permitted to take His family and followers and camp in a garden named by Him Ridvan (meaning Paradise) located on the banks of the Tigris river on the outskirts of Baghdad.¹ Grief-stricken, His followers thronged around Him, lamenting the separation from One Whom they had come to regard as the embodiment of the qualities of the Bab Himself. The moment foretold by the Scriptures of all the Divine

¹The **Maitreyavyakarana** (The Maitrya Prediction Prophecy) 1:5-12 states that Maitrya too will proclaim His enlightenment on the banks of the river Nairanjara. The name Nairanjara is a symbolic connotation rather than an actual location. The original name of the Garden of Ridvan was Najibbiyah Garden.

Dispensations had arrived and, perfectly serene and majestic in the midst of the despair of His disciples, Baha'u'llah announced His true identity, concealed for nearly ten years since His Revelation in the dungeon of Siyyih Chal in Teheran. He proclaimed that He was none other than the Promised One, the One for Whom the Bab had accepted martyrdom, the Aeon-Ender, the Shah Bahram Varjavand, Kalki, Maitrya-Amitabha Himself!

The date of that Proclamation, immortalized for aeons to follow, was the evening of the twenty-first day of April.¹ The year was the promised year B.E. 2406 (A.D. 1863), revealed ages ago by Scripture (pp. 220-21) and conforming to the Bab's own prophecy that, "within 19 years He Whom God would make manifest would begin to teach and bring to men the basic laws and principles for a new age." The Universal Sunburst had broken through the "Gate" of the dawn and transformed the gloom that enveloped His friends, family and followers into boundless joy. Only the words of Baha'u'llah Himself can adequately depict that mighty Announcement:

The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new. Speak, and hold not thy peace. The day star of blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the kingdom of the name of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the name of thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm thyself with the power of this Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry...

Canst thou discover any one but Me, O Pen, in this Day? What hath become of the creation and the manifestations thereof? What of the names and their kingdom? Whither are gone all created things, whether seen or unseen? What of the hidden secrets of the universe and its revelations? Lo, the entire creation hath passed away! Nothing remaineth except My Face, the Ever-Abiding, the Resplendent, the All-Glorious.

This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendours

¹ He (Maitrya) shall announce His Enlightenment (Buddhahood) under the tree of Science ("Knowledge", also called the "tree of Iron") in the month of Baisakha (15 April — 15 May): *Maitreyavyakarana* (Maitrya Prediction Prophecy), I. 3.

of the Light that shineth from the face of Thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have, then, called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days.

This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: "Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne." The realm of glory exclaimeth: "Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His Name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future..."

Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He Who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Ridvan and entered it. Guide, then, the people unto the garden of delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise...

Look not upon the creatures of God except with the eye of kindness and of mercy, for Our loving providence hath pervaded all created things, and Our grace encompassed the earth and the heavens. This is the Day whereon the true servants of God partake of the life-giving waters of reunion, the Day whereon those that are nigh unto Him are able to drink of the soft-flowing river of immortality, and they who believe in His unity the wine of His Presence, through their recognition of Him Who is the Highest and Last End of all, in Whom the Tongue of Majesty and Glory voiceth the call: "The Kingdom is Mine. I, Myself, am, of Mine own right, its Ruler..."

Rejoice with exceeding gladness, O people of Baha, as ye call to remembrance the Day of supreme felicity, the Day whereon the Tongue of the Ancient of Days hath spoken, as He departed from His House, proceeding to the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of His name, the All-Merciful.¹

The period of twelve days following Baha'u'llah's Great Announcement on 21 April were passed in an atmosphere of celestial delight, a heavenly feast, as the outpourings of Divine Grace enveloped Baha'u'llah and those who declared their allegiance to His Mission. This

¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, XIV (pp. 27-35), 4th Printing Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA.

period (21 April - 2 May), named thereafter as the Feast of Ridvan (Feast of Paradise), would be regarded by future ages as the King of Festivals.

Leaving Baghdad on 3 May 1863, Baha'u'llah and His followers, after three months, arrived in Istanbul. Ignoring suggestions by the sycophants attending the Turkish court at Istanbul that it would be easier for Baha'u'llah in His predicament to request to see the Sultan and entreat the monarch's grace, He serenely awaited the next move by His oppressors. It was not long in coming. Afraid of Baha'u'llah's growing fame even in the heart of the sacerdotal hierarchy of Muhammadanism, the Caliphate, the Sultan banished Him even further to Adrianople, twelve days' journey to the west from Constantinople. Baha'u'llah and His followers arrived there in the dead of winter, ill-equipped to meet the rigors of climate and confinement.

It was in Adrianople, in constant danger from powerful foes, that Baha'u'llah publicly announced His Revelation. Those who had once accepted the Bab now flocked to swear fealty to Baha'u'llah's mighty standard, and from thenceforth they were known as Baha'is.

The external forces which plotted to batter down the newly erected fortress of God's Grace, the emerging haven for planetary salvation, gave far less sorrow to Baha'u'llah than the resumption of the "Devadatta principle", the renewed machinations of Mirza Yahya. This time, like his archetype, Devadatta, Siddharta's cousin, the half-brother decided to assassinate the only One Who loved and protected him. His first attempt on Baha'u'llah's life was by the exact same agent used by Devadatta against Siddharta thousands of years before — poison.¹ And while no earthly power can terminate the life of the Divine Messenger until His appointed hour, Baha'u'llah's writing hand was markedly affected by the deadly potion, and His health was never the same again. Foiled in this attempt, the modern Devadatta resorted to another method more direct and more fraught with the danger of detection. He tried without success to incite one of the Babis to murder Baha'u'llah in the public bath.

The "Devadatta principle" was playing itself out, and Mirza Yahya — sometimes secretly, sometimes openly — continued his schemes to sow dissension and obstruct the steadily ascending power of the Divine Sun — all to no avail. And, like Devadatta, Mirza Yahya finally fell victim to his own machinations when the Turkish authorities issued an order separating him and his sympathizers from Baha'u'llah and banning

¹ See page 66.

him to Famagusta, the chief town of the island of Cyprus, where Mirza Yahya lived out the rest of his life throwing dust at the Spiritual Sun Whose love and forbearance had nurtured and protected him for so long. While this removal of Mirza Yahya to Cyprus resulted in Baha'u'llah being rid of him, it also provided the excuse for His oppressors to exercise a perverse kind of justice and inflict on Him the final blow which, unbeknownst to His enemies, Providence had, since millennia past, decreed as the last step of ascendancy by the King of Glory to His Promised Land, the Western Paradise — Sukhavati. Without any prior hint of what they had in store for Baha'u'llah and His family and the Baha'is, the powers of church and state, of Shah and Sultan, now decided upon the final banishment — to Akka, Palestine — of the Sun Who had become too bright to snuff out. Yet Akka was the very place, had the plotters only recalled the sayings of their own Prophet Muhammad, thirteen centuries earlier, which had been the object of their highest praise. It was the same sort of praise which Siddharta expressed for Sukhavati, the Domain of Maitrya-Amitabha, that was later proclaimed for Akka by yet another Avatar, another Manifestation of God — Muhammad. As Baha'u'llah Himself relates the sources and the text of these remarkable intimations by Muhammad the Prophet of God, regarding the pre-eminence of Akka above all other cities or locales, we can do no better than quote Him:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. The following hath been recorded concerning the merits of Akka, and of the sea, and of Aynu'l-Baqar (The Spring of the Cow) which is in Akka:

Abdu'l-Aziz, son of Abdu'-Salam, hath related unto us that the Prophet — may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him — hath said: "Akka is a city in Syria to which God hath shown His special mercy."

Ibn-i-Mas'ud — may God be pleased with him — hath stated: "The Prophet — may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him — hath said: 'Of all shores the best is the shore of Askelon, and Akka is, verily, better than Askelon... Verily, he that entereth therein, longing for it and eager to visit it, God will forgive his sins, both of the past and of the future. And he that departeth from it, other than as a pilgrim, God will not bless his departure. In it is a spring called the Spring of the Cow. Whoso drinketh a draught therefrom God will fill his heart with light...'"

I announce unto you a city, on the shores of the sea, white, whose

*whiteness is pleasing unto God — exalted be He! It is called Akka.
...A month in Akka is better than a thousand years elsewhere...
Blessed the man that hath visited Akka, and blessed he that hath
visited the visitor of Akka.*

*...And whoso saith in Akka: 'I beg forgiveness of God,' God will
forgive all his trespasses.*

*Verily, the Apostle of God — may the blessings of God, exalted be
He, and His salutations be upon Him — hath spoken the truth.¹*

But Akka had also known the ravages of man and nature through the passage of centuries, and by Baha'u'llah's day it had become one vast prison city — the embodiment of putrescence and death. Well aware of its degradation in which He would soon be confined, Baha'u'llah, in His "Tablet of the Kings" (Lawh-i-Sultan) wrote that: "According to what they say, it is the most desolate of the cities of the world, the most unsightly of them in appearance, the most detestable in climate, and the foulest in water. It is as though it were the metropolis of the owl."² So foul was its air that it was said that any bird flying over Akka would fall dead, and its water was equally pestilential.

Despite the order from the seat of the Sultanate for Baha'u'llah's banishment to Akka, the Governor of Adrianople, knowing of the deep love and reverence which Baha'u'llah had generated, refused to be the bearer of the sad tidings of further hardships. The judgement of the Ottoman court was conveyed to Baha'u'llah by another official. The followers of Baha'u'llah were stripped of their meager possessions and herded together for the journey to Akka. The populace thronged around their Beloved Sage and tearfully kissed the hem of His robe in token of their abiding esteem for the changes He had wrought in them. The journey to Akka for Baha'u'llah and his companions took nineteen days; and that heroic band, deprived from the start of their necessary possessions, experienced the sickness and suffering that a sea journey under these abominable conditions then entailed. They reached Akka on 31 August 1868.

¹ *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, (pp. 178-81), Baha'u'llah, Baha'i Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Illinois, 1941. How perfectly identical is the statements of both these Avatars — Siddharta and Muhammad — concerning the supreme greatness of the Promised Land — Sukhavati — Akka: "If anyone meditates on the land (of that Buddha country), his sins (which bind him to births and deaths during eighty millions of kalpas shall be extirpated;" (Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra, 11).

² *God Passes By*, p. 186, Shoghi Effendi.

To Akka were sent the dregs of humanity from the farthest corners of the Ottoman empire. The worst criminals and social vermin came to Akka as prisoners — there to die. To it was also sent Baha'u'llah — the world's greatest Prisoner. And Akka was to see another Day. The Day that would change its putrescence into the essence of purity, would wipe away its abasement and cloak it with the mantle of the Glory of God Himself. Destiny had been fulfilled. The King, unrecognizable to most eyes, had reached His throne — His Kingdom. If this throne presented a spectacle of abject abasement, He would raise it to supreme glory, from which would radiate His Dharma. Baha'u'llah's confinement in that "most great prison", as Baha'u'llah called it, was multiplied by His sensitive nature. He was forced to witness the humiliation and suffering of that little band of seventy equally innocent people — His family and followers — who had joyously chosen to accompany Him. Their first night in Akka passed without food or water for the prisoners. Soon disease took its toll of their frail bodies — and then death. But nothing could detract from that joy and certitude which each of the inmates possessed through their proximity to their Lord. None of them would have imagined exchanging it for any other treasure.

Gradually the Baha'is from Iran, Iraq and Egypt, learning of their Beloved's whereabouts, travelled to His presence only to find that prison walls made any reunion impossible. Yet, even a wave of His hand from His cell window across the broad moat was sufficient reward to His true lovers. They trudged back to their homes in far away lands, carrying in their hearts a rekindled flame of resolve to offer their all in the path of their Lord. Their faith was soon tested. Many would fall victims at the hands of murdering fanatics in the towns they passed, as well as in their home towns. This was stark testimonial to the unchanging law that the Wheel of Dharma is greased with the blood of martyrs. And Baha'u'llah too was asked His share. His younger son, named Mirza Mihdi — 'The Purest Branch', fell through a skylight while taking a few breaths of fresh air from the roof of that loathsome prison and was fatally injured. No words can describe Baha'u'llah's pain at the tragedy of His twenty-two year old son, who had known no life except prison, and now lay dying.¹

¹ So reminiscent of Lord Krishna's own sorrow upon His son's death as recounted by the **Ghata-Jakata**, 454:

"My son is born, let him not die! Nor man nor deity
 Can have that boon; then wherefore pray for what can never be?
 Nor mystic charm, nor magic roots, nor herbs, nor money spent,
 Can bring to life again that ghost whom, Kanha (Krishna) you lament."

The King's son was the secret essence of His Progenitor, for, in his dying gasps, Mirza Mihdi urged Bahā'u'llah to accept his life as 'a ransom for those who were prevented from attaining the presence of their Beloved'. Even his last thoughts were for the true lovers of Bahā'u'llah — that they may consort with their Lord untrammelled by prison walls. Grief-stricken at his tragedy, Bahā'u'llah assented to this supplication and within four-months the rigors of strict confinement were eased and He and His remaining disciples were removed from prison and lodged in a small house nearby within the walls of Akka. The year was B.E. 2413 (October 1870).

The picture below of the fort of Akka and "The Most Great Prison" within its center gives the reader a useful perspective of the locale. The rightmost window is that of Bahā'u'llah's cell, from which He would wave to His followers across the moat.



Figure 7

"The Most Great Prison", Akka, on the Shores of the Mediterranean

But inside or outside the prison walls, the vile proponents of harm and hatred for the Spiritual Sun missed no opportunity to instigate the ignorant and the fanatical among the towns-people to imitate their loathsome behaviour and join their nefarious schemes to discredit and destroy the God-man in their midst. Their attempts, as those of Sultan and Shah, were to meet with utter defeat. As Siddharta had preached and practiced — “Not by evil can one conquer evil but by good one can conquer evil” — so too Baha’u’llah provided the sublime example of radiant acquiescence to His followers. At last His detractors, the clergy and officials, could no longer ignore His irresistible power for the good, His infallible wisdom and peerless majesty of manner and mind. While to all outward appearance He was their prisoner, they — His wardens — had become His willing captives, now solicitous to His pleasure and obedient to His desire. The conditions were reversed. Truth had triumphed and the Standard of the Divine King was now hoisted in the citadels of the hearts of those who only a short time before would have gladly destroyed every vestige of the Glory of God.

The consequences of the acts directed against Baha’u’llah had already demonstrated a peculiar, almost supernatural, Authority, and while it was mysterious in its operation, it left no doubt of its outcome. It was almost as if there had been, as in the lives of every other Avatar, a “testing period”, after which the Manifestation became the perfect conduit for all Power. Thus it was for Baha’u’llah, always the object of adoration for His followers and now the sought-after oracle of infallible wisdom, even by those who had been His most tenacious detractors. The Mufti¹ of Akka, once His most inveterate calumniator, now pledged fealty to Baha’u’llah, and Ahmad Beg Tawfiq, Akka’s governor, begged permission to render Him some personal service. He was told by Baha’u’llah to repair the city’s water supply for the benefit of Akka’s people.

But something even more astounding had occurred since the world’s greatest Prisoner first set foot on the dismal shore of Akka. A marked change in the atmosphere and rainfall occurred from the very year of Baha’u’llah’s arrival. The rainfall of Akka for the last two thousand years, as verified by the British Geographical Society from the record of the earth’s strata and plant growth, annually averaged only five centimeters

¹ The Muhammadan high-priest of a city.

— until the decade of 1860. In the following decade (Baha'u'llah having arrived in Akka in 1868) the average rainfall doubled. It doubled again in 1880 and stands today at seventy-six centimeters — a tenfold increase within a single century, commencing directly after Baha'u'llah's arrival! This, of course, had a direct bearing on the air of Akka. Its pestilential character was washed away, wind direction was dramatically altered and today Akka, of all the cities of that region, enjoys an invigorating climate and, with a rapidly growing population making it into a city of substantial size, it has become the location of one of the largest health clinics of Israel.

The time had now arrived for the kings and governors of men to awaken to the knowledge of the appearance of the King of kings. Hence, even though a prisoner, marked for oblivion by the most powerful monarchs of the Muhammadan world, Baha'u'llah now, from inside His prison, turned His gaze on those who had set themselves above justice and become deaf to its call among the poor and downtrodden.

The Shah of Iran was the first monarch guilty of subjecting the Divine King to torture and exile and even had the youth Aga Buzurg (titled "Badi" meaning "the Wonderful"), the messenger who carried Baha'u'llah's Tablet, horribly battered to death. To him now came the verdict which would have paled any wiser man. But the Divine admonitions to restore justice and righteousness in the affairs of his kingdom were lost on that vain and debauched monarch. While the whole Tablet to Nasirid-Din-Shah can be read in *The Epistle To The Son of the Wolf*, of particular interest is a section of this Tablet where Baha'u'llah dwells upon His own condition both before and after the Divine intimation of His Mission:

O King! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow. The learning current amongst men I studied not; their schools I entered not. Ask of the city wherein I dwelt, that thou mayest be well assured that I am not of them who speak falsely. This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of Thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised, have stirred. Can it be still when the tempestuous winds are blowing? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names and Attributes!

*They move it as they list.*¹

As we have seen, Siddharta also covered this facet in his prophecy about His successor, Maitrya:

*From His own understanding and penetration of it, He will proclaim (the nature of) this universe with its gods, Maras, and gods of the Brahma worlds, gods and men, just as I proclaim them from My own understanding and penetration of it.*²

The correct translation of the term “own understanding” in Pali is one who is “independent of any teachers” or “wholly removed from (or through) someone else’s understanding.” Baha’u’llah, like Siddharta, neither attended school nor received instructions from any tutors. Royal Iran of the last century was not too different from royal India of Siddharta’s day. The children of noblemen busied themselves with polo and other pleasures and left it to scribes and clergy to handle all that went under the name of the three Rs. Even now in those countries literacy is the possession of a comparative few.

Siddharta, we may recall, was most insistent on the right perspective from which His Meaning must be viewed.³ As He warns Sariputta, the lowest hell awaits those — no matter what their achievement and learning — who impute to Him and His Dharma a station merely human:

Whoever, Sariputta, knowing that it is so of me, seeing that it is so, should speak thus: “There are no states of further-men,... in the recluse Gotama; the recluse Gotama teaches Dhamma on his own devising beaten out by reasoning ... If he does not retract that speech, ... he is verily consigned to Niraya Hell ... Even, if it were a monk ... who should here and now arrive at gnosis, I (still) say that ... if he does not retract that speech and that thought, ... he is verily consigned to Niraya Hell,...

Baha’u’llah too confirms His own independence from any worldly knowledge — “The learning current amongst men I studied not; their schools I entered not” — and attests to His own “exaltation from the Absolute.” Like Siddharta, Who affirms His own omniscience, “I am unique in the world, utterly enlightened with unsurpassed enlightenment.”⁴

¹ *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 11-12, Baha’u’llah, Baha’i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA, 1953.

² *Digha-nikaya*, IV. 26, 25.

³ pp. 61-2 of text.

⁴ See text p. 63. (*Vinaya-pitaka*, III. 3-6)

Bahā'u'llāh also attests to His all-knowledge, "O King! I was but a man like others, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been." How perfectly the meaning of this unique and mysterious phenomenon the Avatar — through "an exaltation from the Absolute" — tallies with Siddharta's own words to the Brahmin Dona: "Just so, Brahmin, although born in the world, grown up in the world, having overcome the world, I abide unsoiled by the world. Take it that I am Buddha, Brahmin."¹

But an unregenerate humanity, especially its vain and corrupt governors, went their vagrant ways, heedless of the "karmic" consequences — Divine Retribution — despite clear warnings by the Divine Assayer. To the most powerful monarchs and leaders of humanity of the last century came the fate-laden Epistles from the King of kings. Epistles that were both admonition and prophecy. To the other arch-criminal, Sultan Abdul-Aziz of Turkey, who commanded His exile and imprisonment, Bahā'u'llāh foretold the demolition of his empire and the anguish of the populace:

*The course of things shall be altered, and conditions shall wax so grievous, that the very sands on the desolate hills will moan, and the trees on the mountains will weep, and the blood will flow out of all things. Then wilt thou behold the people in sore distress.*²

Ignoring Bahā'u'llāh's dire prediction and continuing to shut out justice and liberty from his rule, Abdul-Aziz, within two years of receiving Bahā'u'llāh's Epistle, was deposed by a palace revolt and committed suicide rather than face the taste of his own tortures. One has only to look at the maps of the Ottoman empire of the last century — which had thrived as a mighty European power for six centuries — as compared with present day Turkey, to see the remarkable degree of shrinkage the word "altered" implied in Bahā'u'llāh's Epistle to the Ottoman Sultan. Today, the very word "Ottoman" had disappeared from the affairs of Turkey. From the remainder of that text, there is more in store and it is far from pleasant.

To the arch egotist among the European monarchs — Napoleon III — from whom Bahā'u'llāh's first Epistle had met only derision and the scornful remark, "If this man (Bahā'u'llāh) is God, I am two gods" —

¹ See text pp. 60-1. Also *Anguttara-nikaya*, 11. 37-39.

² *The Promised Day Is Come*, p. 62, Shoghi Effendi, Bahā'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA, 1961.

Baha'u'llah in 1869, sent a second Tablet warning him that his kingdom would be taken away from him. In less than a year of receiving Baha'u'llah's second Tablet, Napoleon III was crushed by the Prussians at the battle of Sedan and fled in ignominy to England where, disease-ridden, he died in 1873. The French agent in Akka who translated Baha'u'llah's Tablet to Napoleon III, seeing the swift doom which it carried for the egotistical Emperor, declared his own allegiance to the Divine Station of Baha'u'llah!¹ In His second Tablet to Napoleon III Baha'u'llah also commands the end of the old religious order — the Christian Church — which held indisputable sway over France:

O King of Paris! Tell the priests to ring the bells no longer. By God, the True One! The Most Mighty Bell hath appeared in the form of Him Who is the Most Great Name, and the fingers of the will of thy Lord, the Most Exalted, the Most High, toll it out in the heaven of Immortality, in His Name, the All-Glorious.

Only a century had elapsed since that Tablet and France, for long a Christian land, now sees that eighty percent of its population no longer adheres to Christianity, involving themselves instead in the materialistic ideologies directly opposed to the cherished dogma and institutions of the Christian Church.

To the supreme pontiff of Christendom, Pope Pius IX, came the most poignant Epistle of all from the newly arisen Redeemer (Baha'u'llah), offering to Pius — if he was sincere — the immortality of the spirit, which he claimed to be seeking.

O Pope! Rend the veils asunder. He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained ... He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token or proof ... Leave thou the world behind thee, and turn towards thy Lord, through Whom the whole earth hath been illumined ... Dwellest thou in palaces whilst He Who is the King of Revelation liveth in the most desolate of abodes? ... Arise in the name of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, amidst the peoples of the earth, and seize thou the Cup of Life with the hands of confidence, and first drink thou therefrom,

¹ Baha'u'llah, p. 44, *Hand of The Cause*, H. M. Balyuzi, George Ronald, London, 1963.

and proffer it then to such as turn towards it amongst the peoples of all faiths...

Call thou to remembrance Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus), Who, when He came, the most learned of His age pronounced judgment against Him in His own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman believed in Him. ... Consider those who opposed the Son (Jesus), when He came unto them with sovereignty and power. How many the Pharisees who were waiting to behold Him, and were lamenting over their separation from Him! And yet, when the fragrance of His coming was wafted over them, and His beauty was unveiled, they turned aside from Him and disputed with Him ... None save a very few, who were destitute of any power amongst men, turned towards His face. And yet, today, every man endowed with power and invested with sovereignty prideth himself on His Name! In like manner, consider how numerous, in these days, are the monks who, in My Name, have secluded themselves in their churches, and who, when the appointed time was fulfilled, and We unveiled Our beauty, knew Us not, though they call upon Me at eventide and at dawn... The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous! ... This is the day whereon the Rock (Peter) crieth out and shouteth, and celebrateth the praise of its Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High, saying: "Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! ..." My body longeth for the cross, and Mine head waiteth the thrust of the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful, that the world may be purged from its transgressions...¹

Pius IX was no ordinary Pope. When the Epistle of Baha'u'llah reached him he, the 294th Pope of a line stretching back to Peter — the first Apostle of His Holiness Christ — had held spiritual as well as temporal sway longer than any Pope in history.² Baha'u'llah's Tablet reached Pius IX in 1866. His sincerity was weighed in the "infallible balance" and the scales were against him. Within a year thereafter King

¹ *Baha'i Revelation*, pp. 29-31, Baha'i Publishing Trust, London, 1955.

² From 1846 to 1878. The total number of Popes and "anti-Popes" (i.e. Popes who were later declassified), is 302 to the present date.

Victor Emmanuel — himself a Roman Catholic — invaded Rome and forcibly incorporated the 1,116 year-old papal dominions into the new Kingdom of Italy. Refusing the pension offered him by the Italian government, Pius IX settled down to live in the basilica of St Peter's as the 'Prisoner of the Vatican'. He had failed to heed the call of the Most Great Prisoner, addressed to him only a year earlier. Pius IX lived out his remaining years in ignominy and died in 1878, embittered by his failures. There was a final sign of his degradation in the eyes of the people of Rome — virtually all members of the Roman Catholic church. When Pius' coffin was being carried to a final resting place at San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura three years after his death, anti-clerical Romans threw mud at the coffin and the mourners and unsuccessfully tried to seize the remains and dump them in the Tiber river. Like the fanaticism and corruption permeating the Muhammadan clergy and the division and lassitude afflicting the Samgha, by the time Baha'u'llah dispatched His fateful Epistle to Pius IX, Christendom too, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Protestant, displayed a picture of hypocrisy and venality which completely pervaded it. Coupled with this sad picture was an air of universal expectation of the Advent of Jesus Christ — His Second Coming as the 'Glory of God' — the very title by which Baha'u'llah appeared.¹ As with the so-called leaders and divines of other Faiths, the Pope and priests of Christendom displayed their utter indifference and, on occasion, their hostility to the Lord of the Age. They had missed their opportunity to become the standard bearers for the establishment of 'the Kingdom of God on earth' — the very goal for which they had prayed the Christ-taught prayer for nearly 2000 years² — and they had no excuse. From the date of that momentous Tablet to Pius IX the fortunes — not only of the supreme pontiff but of the other sects and segments of Christian churches — took a precipitous dive and reached rock bottom in universal disenchantment with their systems and creeds. As with the Samgha, the spirit had long since fled the Church. However, it is not our purpose to delve into the problems plaguing the churches of Christianity.

¹ The Scriptures of the Judaeo-Christian Faiths like those of the Holy Books of the other Faiths are also replete with prophecies concerning the Advent of the Bab and Baha'u'llah and clearly indicate the dates B.E. 2387 (or A.D. 1844), B.E. 2406 (1863 A.D.), and point to the locations: Iran, Akka and Haifa as the foci for the Advent of the 'Twin-miracle'.

² The Lord's Prayer, "...Thy Will be done, Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven..."

The symptoms are universally evident in the institutions of all the ancient Faiths. Those who bested Pius IX and Napoleon III did not themselves go unnoticed and for most their pride and ambition did not permit them to emerge unscathed from the ordeal of Baha'u'llah's admonitions. To the German Emperor, William I, who had defeated Napoleon III, Baha'u'llah observed the transitory nature of worldly glory and warned that even though William's capital city, Berlin, was then in manifest glory, He saw disaster enveloping it over and over again:

Do thou remember the one whose power transcended thy power and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed? Take warning, and be not of them that are fast asleep. He it was who cast the Tablet of God behind him, when We made known unto him what the hosts of tyranny had caused Us to suffer. Wherefore, disgrace assailed him from all sides, and he went down to dust in great loss. Think deeply, O King, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men. The All-Merciful brought them down from their palaces to their graves. Be warned, be of them who reflect. O banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory.¹

This Tablet by Baha'u'llah was addressed to William I in 1870. William I and his ilk were too puffed with pride to heed the call of a helpless prisoner from a remote corner of the world. Yet Berlin was "covered with gore" in 1918 and had "another turn" in 1945, from which she ceased to be a single city much less the capital of a single nation for well nigh fifty years thereafter!

To the emerging new world of the western hemisphere, still not in the class with the European Nations, His Message, addressed to the "Rulers of the Republics of the West", conveys His Love and portends good for them:

O Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein! Harken to the strains of the Dove, on the branch of eternity, singing

¹ *The Promised Day Is Come*, pp. 36-37. Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA, 1941.

the melody: "There is no God but Me, the Everlasting, the Forgiver, the Generous." Adorn the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and the fear of God, and its head with the crown of remembrance of your Lord ... The Promised One has appeared in this exalted station, whereat all creation, both seen and unseen, smiled and rejoiced ... Bind with the hands of justice the broken, and crush the oppressor with the rod of the commandments of your Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.¹

To Great Britain, which had pleased Him by having banned slavery, renounced authoritarian rule and exchanged it for a benign reign in cooperation with a truly parliamentary system, Baha'u'llah addressed an all-encompassing Tablet which delineated His conceptions of good government and praised those who made effort to adhere to them. This memorable Tablet is addressed to the only woman among the mighty rulers, Victoria, Queen of the largest and mightiest empire in history. No historical figure before or since ruled such a vast area and such a large mass of its peoples. She had a reign of 64 years and it met with approval in the sight of the King of kings as we read in His Tablet:

O Queen in London! Incline thine ear unto the voice of thy Lord, the Lord of all mankind, calling from the Divine Lote-Tree: Verily, no God is there but Me, the Almighty, the All-Wise! Cast away all that is on earth, and attire the head of thy kingdom with the crown of the remembrance of thy Lord, the All-Glorious. He, in truth, hath come unto the world in His most great glory, and all that hath been mentioned in the Gospel hath been fulfilled...

Lay aside thy desire, and set then thy heart towards thy Lord, the Ancient of Days. We make mention of thee for the sake of God, and desire that thy name may be exalted through thy remembrance of God, the Creator of earth and heaven. He, verily, is witness unto that which I say. We have been informed that thou hast forbidden the trading in slaves, both men and women. This, verily, is what God hath enjoined in this wondrous Revelation. God hath, truly, destined a reward for thee, because of this...

We have also heard that thou hast entrusted the reins of counsel into

¹ *Kitab-i-Aqdas* (The Most Holy Book), Baha'u'llah, Translation by Shoghi Effendi in *The Promised Day is Come*, p.37. Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA, 1941. *Kitab-i-Aqdas* is the Mother Book of the Dispensation of Baha'u'llah and consists largely of His Laws for the individual and society in the frame work of His World Order.

the hands of the representatives of the people. Thou, indeed, hast done well, for thereby the foundations of the edifice of thine affairs will be strengthened, and the hearts of all that are beneath thy shadow, whether high or low, will be tranquilized. It behoveth them, however, to be trustworthy among His servants, and to regard themselves as the representatives of all that dwell on earth ... Blessed is he that entereth the assembly for the sake of God, and judgeth between men and with pure justice. He, indeed, is of the blissful.

O ye the elected representatives of the people in every land! Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof, if ye be of them that scan heedfully. Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted, through various causes, with grave disorders and maladies. Not for one day did it gain ease, nay, its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of ignorant physicians, who gave full rein to their personal desires, and have erred grievously. And if, at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before. Thus informeth you the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

We behold it, in this day, at the mercy of rulers so drunk with pride that they cannot discern clearly their own best advantage, much less recognize a Revelation so bewildering and challenging as this. And whenever any one of them hath striven to improve its condition, his motive hath been his own gain, whether confessedly so or not; and the unworthiness of this motive hath limited his power to heal or cure.

But even for that enlightened Queen upon whom He showered His praise and who, upon receiving it, made the banal comment that: "If this is of God, it will endure; if not, it can do no harm," Baha'u'llah's Epistle had a portentous side — the old order was to disappear; power was divested from kings and priests, the empires of men were to give way to the Empire of Man. Nations had to combine into a single country — the Earth — and as He boldly proclaimed to Victoria, His Mission was to make of humanity a single family.

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can

in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error. Each time that Most Mighty Instrument hath come, and that Light shone forth from the Ancient Dayspring, He was withheld by ignorant physicians who, even as clouds, interposed themselves between Him and the world.¹

And unknown and unbelievable to Queen Victoria [whose great grandson Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII), while visiting India in 1932, would, even at that late date, be heard to remark that Britain would be ruling India for at least fifty more years] the forces generated by Baha'u'llah had already set in motion the New World Order and change was accelerating. Within fifteen years of Edward's "informed remark" the sun, which for two hundred years had never set on the British Empire, began setting on it every 12 hours. The very name "Empire" ceased to be used and has been exchanged for "Commonwealth". Britain became only one among equals and beyond the British Commonwealth — on the world scale — "Great" Britain was reduced to a second-rate power in the face of two newly risen behemoths — super powers — in the west and the east.

The direction is clear, the goal — World Unity — does not allow any viable alternative to the Oneness of humanity. While we of the last half of this century — which is so fraught with universal dangers as well as with unimaginable possibilities for good — have little doubt of our present capacity for total annihilation, this was not so obvious to those a century ago who received the Epistles of the Divine Assayer, and they ignored the warnings. They refused the "safe Haven" of life proffered by the Divine Guide and instead chose destruction and death — theirs and their kingdoms'. This, despite a final warning from Baha'u'llah which through them He addressed also the generality of mankind and its institutions and machinery of government,

Thus We unfold to your eyes that which profiteth you, if ye but perceive. Your people are your treasures. Beware lest your rule violate the commandments of God, and ye deliver your wards to the hands of the robber. By them ye rule, by their means ye subsist, by their aid ye conquer. Yet, how disdainfully ye look upon them! How

¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CXX, pp. 254-5. Translated by Shoghi Effendi, 1939. Baha'i Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Ill., USA.

*strange, how very strange.*¹

How often do we see, even in this enlightened century, freedom of expression and justice stifled by autocrats and vested interests cloaked in the guise of “national security”. This convenient “cover all”, together with its counterpart — patriotism, long the haven of every scoundrel, have continued to frustrate the fulfillment of the next natural step in the social evolution of mankind — world unity. For our leaders and us Baha’u’llah conveys both advice —

*O kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God’s, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it... Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed lest pride deter you from recognizing the Source of Revelation, lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of heaven.*²

Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this, the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.

O rulers of the earth! Be reconciled amongst yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your

¹**The Promised Day Is Come**, p. 26. Shoghi Effendi, Baha’i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA, 1961. How very similar these and other admonitions of Baha’u’llah, to Siddharta’s own censure of the Koliyan and Sakya princes who had gathered to war on the battlefield without even knowing the reason for the conflict and were stopped from fighting by Siddharta’s timely intervention. “Regard thy people as men do an only son. Do not oppress them, do not destroy them; keep in due check every member of thy body, forsake unrighteous doctrine and walk in the straight path. Exalt not thyself by trampling down others, but comfort and befriend the suffering.” **Buddhacarita**, vv. 1522-1530.

²**Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah**, CV, pp. 210. Baha’i Publishing Trust, London, 1969. “Neither ponder on kingly dignity, nor listen to the smooth words of flatterers ... Exhibit true superiority by virtuous conduct and the exercise of reason; meditate deeply on the vanity of earthly things, and understand the fickleness of life ... Elevate the mind, and seek sincere faith with firm purpose; transgress not the rules of kingly conduct, and let your happiness depend, not upon external things, but upon your own mind. Thus you will lay up a good name for distant ages and will secure the favour of the Tathagata.” ... The king listened with reverence and remembered all the words of the Buddha in his heart. **Buddhacarita**, vv. 1611-1671.

territories and dominions. Beware lest ye disregard the counsel of the All-Knowing, the Faithful.

Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your people find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.¹

— and a final prophecy to bring us to our senses.

O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity is following you, and that grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not the deeds ye have committed have been blotted from My sight. By My beauty! All your doings hath My Pen graven with open characters upon tablets of Chrysolite.²

For lesser men it would have been enough at that early date — 1870 — to have merely surmised that weapons of warfare would become so powerful as to confront humanity with the possibility of total annihilation, and having said so be regarded as savants or seers. Not so with Baha'u'llah. Long before the words radium³ or radioactivity were coined by their discoverers and longer still before the uranium atom was split in 1937 to become the element for producing the first atom bomb — then officially called a “gadget”⁴ — and exploded in 1945, Baha'u'llah, with unerring accuracy and perfect insight, saw the precise nature of its power, discerned its true import for war and peace, and revealed it in no uncertain terms in one of His Tablets in 1870.⁵

A strange and wonderful instrument exists in the earth; but it is concealed from minds and souls. It is an instrument which has the power to change the atmosphere of the whole earth, and its infection causes destruction. Praise be to God! A wonderful thing is perceived: the lightning (electricity) and similar forces are subdued by a conductor, and act by His command.

¹The Promised Day Is Come, p. 26. Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA, 1961.

²Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CIV, pp. 209-10, Baha'i Publishing Trust, London, 1969. Also Part II verse 63 of The Hidden Words, Baha'u'llah.

³Discovered with its companion Polonium by the Curies in 1898.

⁴Meaning also “instrument” the very word used for it by Baha'u'llah nearly a century earlier!

⁵Tablet of the Words of Paradise, p. 14, Baha'u'llah, 1870, Akka. Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Translated by Ali Kuli Khan, published by the Baha'i Publishing Society, Chicago, Ill., USA, 1906.

That “strange and wonderful instrument” has now been “unearthed” through the workings of man’s mind and already haunts the human psyche with the spectre of its death-dealing “infection” and “destruction” even from the very limited taste we have had of its application. The “unforeseen calamity” — no longer unimaginable — is fast catching up with us.

Who among the savants of Baha’u’llah’s time — or even as late as the mid-twentieth century — imagined that more scientific progress through greater industrialization and pushbutton living would be anything but beneficial to humanity? Baha’u’llah, in one of His earlier (1867) tablets, emphasizing, like Siddharta before Him, the Golden Mean, the “middle way”, in all matters conducive to the welfare of the world, warns of the excesses of what passes under the name of “civilization” — technological growth, which even at that time He clearly foresaw.

Whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence. Consider for instance such things as liberty, civilization and the like. However much men of understanding may favorably regard them, they will, if carried to excess, exercise a pernicious influence upon men...¹

Whoso cleaveth to justice, can, under no circumstances, transgress the limits of moderation. He discerneth the truth in all things, through the guidance of Him Who is the All-Seeing. The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing. If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation. Meditate on this, O people, and be not of them that wander distraught in the wilderness of error. The day is approaching when its flame will devour the cities, when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: “The Kingdom is God’s, the Almighty, the All-Praised!” All other things are subject to this same principle of moderation. Render thanks unto thy Lord Who hath remembered thee in this wondrous Tablet. All-Praise be to God, the Lord of the glorious throne.²

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah, CX, p. 216.

² Ibid., CLXIII, pp. 342-3.

We who live a century removed from Baha'u'llah's warning concerning the excesses of our "more of everything" materialism can both accept and understand it. We see a world plagued by environmental poisoning and the possibility of destruction of the earth's ozone layer — which would write *Finis* to all life by removing this vital protection and subjecting the earth's surface to bombardment by deadly radiation. Our materialism has now given us a frightening dose of its pernicious effects, but those of His day could neither believe nor comprehend His warning.

As He warns, there is no other "safe haven", no place to hide.

There is no place of refuge for you, no asylum to which ye can flee, no one to defend or to protect you in this Day from the fury of the wrath of God and from His vehement power, unless and until ye seek the shadow of His Revelation. This, indeed, is His Revelation which hath been manifested unto you in the person of this Youth. Glorified, then, be God for so effulgent, so precious, so wondrous a vision.

Detach yourself from all else but Me, and turn your faces towards My face, for better is this for you than the things ye possess. The Tongue of God testifieth to the truth of My words, through Mine own Word that speaketh the truth, and embraceth and comprehendeth all things.¹

And assures us that we cannot stay Destiny's stroke on a humanity heedless of His Message for its salvation.

We have a fixed time for you, O peoples. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!²

The odds against all of Baha'u'llah's admonitions and warnings to the greatest array of rulers and leaders ever addressed by a single person — a seemingly helpless and destitute prisoner — becoming realized are too fantastic to be contained in the realm of the possible. The inexorable manner and the certainty with which each one of these warnings were enacted upon the recipients clearly lift these Epistles from the category of mere prophecy, however astounding their accuracy, and place them in the domain of Will — all-powerful and irresistible — capable of bending creatures and conditions to Its unswerving Purpose.

¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CXXI, p. 257.

² *Ibid.*, CVIII, p. 214, Baha'i Publishing Trust, London, 1969.

The Message of The Divine Teacher is not merely a cure for the expiring body of humanity in His time. Rather, His Teachings offer the *only way* to rescue mankind from its deathly torpor, an affliction before which all man-conceived theories and philosophies stand utterly helpless. This has always been the clear testimony of history. And — like Siddharta — Baha'u'llah too attested to this truth and proclaimed it from His prison cell:¹

The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.

We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore-tried and disillusioned. They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the Divine and infallible Physician. Witness how they have entangled all men, themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover the cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the remedy. They have conceived the straight to be crooked, and have imagined their friend an enemy.

Incline your ears to the sweet melody of this Prisoner. Arise, and lift up your voices, that haply they that are fast asleep may be awakened. Say: O ye who are as dead! The Hand of Divine bounty proffereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and drink your fill. Whoso hath been re-born in this Day, shall never die; whose remaineth dead, shall never live.²

¹ By reference to page 166 of the text (also f.n. 2) we read of the question (about other doctrines and other teachers) that Subhadra the Brahmin philosopher of Kusinagara put to Siddharta as the Tathagata was dying, and the Exalted One declared: "In whatsoever doctrine and discipline, Subhadra, the Aryan Eightfold Path is not found, there is not found any man of true sainthood, either of the first, the second, the third, or the fourth degree. But in that Doctrine and Discipline in which is found the Aryan Eightfold Path, there are men of true sainthood, of all the four degrees. Void are the systems of other teachers — void of true saints. But in this one, Subhadra, may the Brethren live the Perfect Life, that the world be not bereft of Arahats." (*Buddhacarita* XXV, 624. Also *Dhammapada*, vv. 273, 274).

² *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CVI, p. 213.

While the benefits of His Presence showered every blessing on Akka, yet He, the Cause of all good, remained confined within walls of stone. While His power had made Akka — until recently a scrub-infested desert town — into a garden, for nine long years His own eyes never gazed on any verdure. Finally, the Government of Akka could no longer ignore the reproach in the eyes of its own populace for the continued confinement of One Who had become to them a true Godman, and the town's Governor intimated to Baha'u'llah that He was free to leave the city and reside in the country. For 'Abdu'l-Baha, to Whom Baha'u'llah had prophesied during His incarceration that the prison "doors shall be opened, My tent shall be pitched on Mount Carmel,¹ and the utmost joy shall be realized", the sign was clear: the countryside around Akka and across the bay from Akka, Carmel, the holy mountain to the four great



Figure 8

The Mansion at Bahji, near Akka

¹ Mount Carmel situated on the curve of the Bay of Akka at a distance of twenty five kilometers from Akka in a southwesterly direction.

Faiths, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Muhammadanism, would soon bear the footprints of the Divine King.¹ Consequently, 'Abdu'l-Baha rented a suitable mansion known as Mazraih, situated in the country some six kilometers north of Akka, to which Baha'u'llah repaired after His long confinement in the prison city. Baha'u'llah lived in Mazraih for two years and then moved to a neighbouring mansion called Bahji (meaning "Delight") whose owner had just completed it and then taken flight from Akka for fear of an outbreak of plague. 'Abdu'l-Baha was therefore able to rent it, and afterwards purchased it. Baha'u'llah and His family lived in Bahji for eleven years. The photos show the mansion and its surroundings.

Siddharta described the plain of Akka by a remarkable process of elimination of all the mountain ranges with which the people of His day were familiar, while at the same time indicating that it is a plain "like the palm of the hand".

"And again, O Ananda, there are no black mountains anywhere in that Buddha country, nor anywhere jewel mountains, nor anywhere Sumerus, kings of mountains, nor anywhere Kakravadas, great Kakravadas, kings of mountains. And that Buddha country is level on every side, lovely, like the palm of the hand, with districts full of jewels and treasures of every kind."

After this, the blessed Ananda spoke thus to the Bhagavat: "But in that case, O Bhagavat, where do the gods consisting of the companies of the four Maharajas who dwell on the side of the Sumeru, and where do the Trayastrimsa gods who dwell on the top of the Sumeru, find their place?"

Ananda's confusion concerning the location is understandable since he knew the description was about a physical spot and yet did not describe any known to them in India (Jambudvīpa) — even those mountains familiar to all as the abodes of gods. Siddharta tried to clarify further for Ananda:

Bhagavat said: "What do you think, O Ananda, where do these other beings find their place, who in this world dwell above the king of mountains, Sumeru, namely, the Yamadevas, Tushitas, Nirmanaratis, Paranirmitavasavartins, Brahmakayikas,

¹ **The Patika-Vagga** (Cakkavattisihanada-Sutta) referring to Maitrya relates about the Universal King who will appear to restore righteousness (Dharma). Just like the ancient Hebrew Scripture states: "Out of Prison He cometh to reign" (Ecclesiastics: 4:14).



Figure 9

Aerial Views of Bahji and the plain of Akka

“And that Buddha country is level on every side, lovely, like the palm of the hand.”

Brahmapurohitas, Mahabrahmans, as far as the Akanishthas?"

Ananda replied: "O Bhagavat, the result of works and the outcome of works are inconceivable" (i.e. I do not understand it).

*Bhagavat said: "Here, you see, the result of works and the outcome of works are inconceivable. But to the blessed Buddhas the position of Buddhas is not inconceivable, while to thee the holy and miraculous power of virtuous beings, whose stock of merit has become ripened, seems inconceivable."*¹

Ananda in his turn is faithful to Siddharta's previous behest:

*"Thou shouldst remember, O Ananda, the Buddha words of mine, and repeat this law for attaining to the perception of the land (of that Buddha country) for the sake of the great mass of the people hereafter who may wish to be delivered from their sufferings."*²

Again, from these excerpts we see that the description of the Promised Land, Maitrya-Amitabha's Abode — is of a physical location but something which will come to light in the future and which Ananda was told to clearly remember and record for those "in the last moment of the last epoch" who seek salvation. Ananda in turn confirms that transmission of Sukhavati's full description to posterity was the object of all his questioning:

*Ananda said: "I had no doubt on this, no difference of opinion, or hesitation; on the contrary, I ask only the Tathagata about this matter in order to destroy the doubts, the differences of opinion, and the hesitations of future beings."*³

And the Bhagavat (Siddharta) confirms Ananda's purpose: "All right, Ananda, this is what you ought to do."⁴

Bahā'u'llah was now — after years of confinement and restrictions — while still nominally a prisoner of the Ottoman Sultan, given the freedom of the countryside. He visited the cities of Akka and Haifa a number of times and on occasion He, in the company of 'Abdu'l-Baha, climbed Mount Carmel and pitched His tent there as He had foretold He would even when He was in the Most Great Prison. During one of those occasions on Mount Carmel He pointed out the exact spot that He desired 'Abdu'l-Baha to construct a mausoleum on for enshrining the casket

¹ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, I. 17.

² Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra, 11.

³ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, I. 17.

⁴ Ibid.

containing the bodies of the Bab and His young disciple Muhammad Ali, which even then, through the tactful and brave efforts of the Baha'is, was slowly making its way to its final resting place on the spot indicated by Baha'u'llah in the heart of God's Holiest Mountain. Nineteen years would elapse from that date in 1890 before 'Abdu'l-Baha would be able to fulfill His Father's instruction.

It was at Bahji in April 1890 that Baha'u'llah granted an audience to the noted English orientalist and Persian scholar Edward Granville Browne of Cambridge University. As far as is known Browne was not and never became a Baha'i, but the description of his meeting with Baha'u'llah, his impression of that memorable episode and Baha'u'llah's utterance on that occasion were carefully recorded by him for posterity. He was the only Westerner¹ to have had an audience with Baha'u'llah, which he describes as follows:

I found myself in a large apartment, along the upper end of which ran a low divan, while on the side opposite to the door were placed two or three chairs. Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner, where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called taj² by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!

A mild, dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: "Praise be to God that thou hast attained! ... Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile ... We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations: yet they deem us a stirrer-up of strife

¹ Nothing is recorded of other audiences with Baha'u'llah by other Europeans.

² Meaning literally "crown".

and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment ... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled — what harm is there in this? ... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come ... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold? ... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind...'

Such, so far as I can recall them, were the words which, besides many others, I heard from Beha. Let those who read them consider well with themselves whether such doctrines merit death and bonds, and whether the world is more likely to gain or lose by their diffusion.¹

Equally touching are other passages of Baha'u'llah addressing a wayward humanity and its leaders, in the manner of a loving Father.

How long will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society? The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divideth and afflicteth the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appeareth to be lamentably defective. I beseech God, exalted be His glory, that He may graciously awaken the peoples of the earth, may grant that the end of their conduct may be profitable unto them, and aid them to accomplish that which beseemeth their station.²

And He adds:

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you.

¹ *A Traveler's Narrative*, pp. xxxix-xi, Edward Granville Browne, Cambridge University Press, 1891.

² *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CX, pp. 216-7.

Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth, and its inhabitants become the citizens of one city, and the occupants of one and the same throne. This wronged One hath, ever since the early days of His life, cherished none other desire but this, and will continue to entertain no wish except this wish.

There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book¹ hath sent down and revealed unto you. To this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur² from His Habitation of glory³.

The establishment of unity and harmony between men has always been the purpose for being of all the Avatars — since unity is the key that will unlock all of humanity's latent energy and develop mankind to its fullest potential — and Baha'u'llah constantly reemphasizes this central theme:

O Children of Men! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Hear ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit

¹ The Mother Book or *The Kitab-i-Aqdas* (The Most Holy Book). It deals with the laws of Baha'u'llah's Dispensation.

² The Tongue of Grandeur is one of the titles of God.

³ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CXI, pp. 217-18.

*of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.*¹

Just as Siddharta proclaimed to the Hindus of His day the utter futility of seeking to establish direct contact with the Absolute and taught instead the necessity of approaching It through the only road open to man — the Avatar and His Teachings² — Baha'u'llah, too, emphasizes that the Absolute — God — is indeed unknowable to our finite minds.

O Salman! All that the sages and mystics have said or written have never exceeded, nor can they ever hope to exceed, the limitations to which man's finite mind hath been strictly subjected. To whatever heights the mind of the most exalted of men may soar, however great the depths which the detached and understanding heart can penetrate, such mind and heart can never transcend that which is the creature of their own conceptions and the product of their own thoughts. The meditations of the profoundest thinker, the devotions of the holiest of saints, the highest expressions of praise from either human pen or tongue, are but a reflection of that which hath been created within themselves, through the revelation of the Lord, their God. Whoever pondereth this truth in his heart will readily admit that there are certain limits which no human being can possibly transgress. Every attempt which, from the beginning that hath no beginning, hath been made to visualize and know God is limited by the exigencies of His own creation — a creation which He, through the operation of His own Will and for the purposes of none other but His own Self, hath called into being. Immeasurably exalted is He above the strivings of human mind to grasp His Essence, or of human tongue to describe His mystery. No tie of direct intercourse can ever bind Him to the things He hath created, nor can the most abstruse and most remote allusions of His creatures do justice to His being. Through His world-pervading Will He hath brought into being all created things.

¹ **The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah**, Part I, v. 68. Translated by Shoghi Effendi, 1932, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA. [Note: How very similar this is to Siddharta's own advice (pp. 120-21 of the text) to the humanity of His day.]

² "So blest is an age in which Buddhas arise,
So blest is the truth's proclamation.
So blest is the Sangha, concordant and wise,
So blest a devout congregation!
"And if by all the truth were known,
More seeds of kindness would be sown,
And richer crops of good deeds grown."

The Mahavagga, 1.22. vv. 15-18. "Sakka's Exultation".

He is and hath ever been veiled in the ancient eternity of His own exalted and indivisible Essence, and will everlastingly continue to remain concealed in His inaccessible majesty and glory. All that is in heaven and all that is in the earth have come to exist at His bidding, and by His Will all have stepped out of utter nothingness into the realm of being.¹ How can, therefore, the creature which the Word of God hath fashioned comprehend the nature of Him Who is the Ancient of Days?²

For two more years the Pen of Baha'u'llah poured forth innumerable Works, Tablets and Treatises dealing with every facet of human need, ethical and social. The greatest among His books is the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* (The Most Holy Book) which deals with the Laws of His World Order. Laws dealing with both individual conduct as well as for the weal of society; concerning both the passing present and the ages to follow. Not the least of which deals with the establishment of a Divinely created administrative institution which in its final aspect — dealing with the safeguard and direction of the worldwide community of His followers — is vouchsafed His direct guidance.

Baha'u'llah, through the incontrovertible medium of His Will and Testament, appointed His eldest son 'Abdu'l-Baha to succeed Him and commanded His followers to look to 'Abdu'l-Baha³ for guidance and protection after His own passing. Writing in His works entitled *Kitab-i-Ahd* ("The Book of Covenant") and *Sury-i-Ghush* (Tablet of the Branch), Baha'u'llah leaves no doubt of 'Abdu'l-Baha's successorship as the Shepherd and Guide of His embryonic World Order.

"When the ocean of My Presence hath ebbed and the Book of My revelation is ended, turn your faces towards Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root." The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you Our potent Will, and I

¹"Who sees Conditioned Genesis sees Dhamma; who sees Dhamma sees Conditioned Genesis." *Majjhima-nikaya*, 1, 190-1.

²*Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CXLVIII, pp. 317-8.

³No attempt is made in this thesis to detail the life and achievements of 'Abdu'l-Baha, on whom many excellent books such as *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi, 1944, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA and *'Abdu'l-Baha*, by H. M. Balyuzi, 1971, George Ronald, London, already exist. The purpose here is to correlate the prophecies of Siddharta relating to 'Abdu'l-Baha.

*am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful.*¹

It is 'Abdu'l-Baha who forms the third central figure of Baha'u'llah's Dispensation and whose achievements and titles, Mahasthamaprapta, Master, etc. — as we shall see — are the object of many of Siddharta's sayings and prophecies. Having accomplished His task, Baha'u'llah departed from this mortal realm in His seventy-fifth year. Just as Siddharta had summoned His disciples to His death bed for His last sermon, so also, six days before His ascension, Baha'u'llah summoned to His presence the entire community of believers in Akka for their last audience with Him and lovingly addressed the weeping crowd:

I am well pleased with you all, you have rendered many services, and been very assiduous in your labors. Ye have come here every morning and every evening. May God assist you to remain united. May He aid you to exalt the Cause of the Lord of being.

The ascension of Baha'u'llah took place in the early hours of 29 May 1892 (B.E. 2435). His Body was interred in one of the houses adjacent to the Mansion of Bahji where Baha'u'llah had spent His last years. He is the perfect object of the verse addressed to the Tathagata.

You overcame the revilers by patience, the malicious by blessing, by truth the slanderers, by kindness the injurious.

*The manifold natures of men depraved from time without beginning, were converted instantly by you, their evil destinies being annulled. That the harsh became gentle, the niggard bountiful, the cruel tender-hearted — this was the result of your skill in expedients.*²

For He is the Tathagata-Maitrya. The news of His passing spread to the farthest reaches of the Ottoman empire, and His fame now evoked written tributes from the savants and leaders of the Muhammadan world. These testimonials in praise of Baha'u'llah were addressed to 'Abdu'l-Baha who was recognized even by the non-Baha'is as Baha'u'llah's chosen Successor.

Since the imprisonment of Baha'u'llah in the pit (Siyyih Chal) in Teheran, when 'Abdu'l-Baha was only a child of eight, He shared the privations and sufferings of His Lord and was Baha'u'llah's closest companion until His Father's passing. He was imprisoned for nearly 50

¹ *Kitab-i-Ahd*, Baha'u'llah. See also *World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 134, Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, 1955.

² *Satapancasatkanama-Buddha-Stotra* of Matrçeta, vv. 114-15, 119-20, 122-24.

years, yet when the fortunes of His persecutors took a fall¹ and his captivity was at last definitely terminated in B.E. 2451 (A.D. 1908), 'Abdu'l-Baha, notwithstanding His advanced age and frail health due to years of deprivation, decided to respond to the invitations of many in Europe and America who had espoused the Baha'i Faith and urged the Master² to lend His own matchless wisdom and personality to their efforts to extend the Cause of Baha'u'llah to the newly opened horizons.

¹ The Ottoman Government was defunct.

² One of the titles bestowed by Baha'u'llah on 'Abdu'l-Baha ("The Servant of Baha"). 'Abdu'l-Baha was born in that very hour that the Bab declared Himself (on 23 May 1844) and was also the first one as a child of nine, Who recognized Baha'u'llah's Divine station at the time of His Father's incarceration in the vile prison (Siyyih Chal) in Teheran. See also **The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, v. 43: "The name of Master should be given to a teacher who desires to conduct quickly innumerable beings to the state of never returning from the highest perfect knowledge, namely, in order that they may see the Buddha country of that blessed Amitabha, the Tathagata, and to acquire the excellent perfection of the array of good qualities peculiar to his own Buddha country."

'ABDU'L-BAHA: MAHASTHAMAPRAPTA

Through 'Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'u'llah has made a covenant with mankind. It was he who had been made the Center of Baha'u'llah's Covenant and was extolled in his Father's Tablets.

O Thou Who are the apple of Mine eye! My glory, the ocean of My loving-kindness, the sun of My bounty, the heaven of My mercy rest upon Thee. We pray God to illumine the world through Thy knowledge and wisdom, to ordain for Thee that which will gladden Thine heart and impart consolation to Thine eyes... We have made Thee a shelter for all mankind, a shield unto all who are in heaven and on earth, a stronghold for whosoever hath believed in God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. God grant that through Thee He may protect them, may enrich and sustain them, that He may inspire Thee with that which shall be a wellspring of wealth unto all created things, an ocean of bounty unto all men, and the dayspring of mercy unto all peoples.¹

'Abdu'l-Baha was given his Father's Trust. He had shared from his very childhood the trials and tribulations of his Beloved Father and at the age of nine was among the first to recognize in Baha'u'llah the embodiment of Avatar.

Siddharta's prophecies not only foretell the appearance of 'Abdu'l-Baha but mention him as being born with the Bab (Avalokitesvara) — signifying a symbolic birth, since 'Abdu'l-Baha was indeed born at the

¹The World Order of Baha'u'llah, pp. 135-6. Shoghi Effendi, 1950.

very hour and day (23 May 1844) that the Bab proclaimed His Mission to Mulla Husayn.

And again, O Ananda, in that Buddha country those who are Sravakas are possessed of the light of a fathom, and those who are Bodhisattvas are possessed of the light of a hundred thousand kotis of yoganas; barring always the two Bodhisattvas, by whose light that world is everywhere shining with eternal splendour.

Then the Blessed Ananda said this to the Bhagavat: 'What are the names, O Bhagavat, of those two noble-minded Bodhisattvas?'

*The Bhagavat said: 'One of them, O Ananda, is the noble-minded Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, and the second is Mahasthamaprapta by name. And, O Ananda, these two were born there, having left this Buddha country here.'*¹

*And, O Ananda, those Bodhisattvas who have been born in that Buddha country are all endowed with the thirty-two marks of a great man, possessed of perfect members, skilled in meditation and wisdom, clever in all kinds of wisdom, having sharp organs, having well restrained organs, having organs of sense capable of thorough knowledge, not mean, possessed of five kinds of strength, of patience under censure, and of endless and boundless good qualities.*²

None other than 'Abdu'l-Baha, whose title of the Greatest Branch was bestowed on him by Baha'u'llah Himself, is indicated here as second after the Bab (Avalokitesvara) in Baha'u'llah's Dispensation — Sukhavati — for that is what "Mahasthamaprapta" (the Mighty or Great Branch or Limb) means.³

After hastening the work on the basic structure of the sepulcher for the Bab and His follower (Muhammad Ali), a task deputed to him by Baha'u'llah which had proceeded slowly, 'Abdu'l-Baha undertook two journeys to the west, the first one to Europe in 1911 and the next to the North American continent followed by a second visit to Europe on his way back to Akka. During these visits 'Abdu'l-Baha, who had never been to school and spent most of his life in strict confinement, was

¹ Bodhiruki translates: 'O Ananda, these two Bodhisattvas went to be born in that country from the world Saha, when they had exhausted the measure of their life (here).'

² *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, I. 34, 35.

³ Also meaning Great Strength or Strong Limb. He is also known as Manju-sri "the personification of Wisdom." *Mahasthamaprapta* is always mentioned with Avalokitesvara (the Bab) in the *Sukhavati-Vyuha* Sutras, while Manju-sri is mentioned with Avalokitesvara in the *Suddharmapundarika*, "the Lotus of the good Law."

invited to speak from the platforms of universities and churches to audiences of scholars and laymen, and his wisdom and knowledge captivated them all.¹ Yet however great his achievements and knowledge — which tower over everything that follows him in the history of the Baha’i Faith — by word and deed ‘Abdu’l-Baha made it clear that he was merely ‘Abdu’l-Baha, (“The Servant of Baha”), the title he had chosen for himself. As he emphatically declares,

This is my firm, my unshakable conviction, the essence of my unconcealed and explicit belief — a conviction and belief which the denizens of the Abha Kingdom² fully share: The Blessed Beauty³ is the Sun of Truth, and His light the light of truth. The Bab is likewise the Sun of Truth, and His light the light of truth... My station is the station of servitude — a servitude which is complete, pure and real, firmly established, enduring, obvious, explicitly revealed and subject to no interpretation whatever... I am the Interpreter of the Word of God, such is my interpretation.

— and he clarifies this further in his own comments on Baha’u’llah’s ‘Tablet of the Branch’:

I affirm, that the true meaning, the real significance, the innermost secret of these verses, of these very words, is my own servitude to the sacred Threshold of the Abha Beauty,⁴ my complete self-effacement, my utter nothingness before Him. This is my resplendent crown, my most precious adorning. On this I pride myself in the kingdom of earth and heaven. Therein I glory among the company of the well-favored!

Yet, while not himself a Divine Manifestation, ‘Abdu’l-Baha is a unique phenomenon in the annals of Religion, since his station of the perfect exemplar for the followers of Baha’u’llah is to demonstrate to one and all, even in this cynical age, that it is possible to tread the mystical way with practical feet. This unique phenomenon of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, standing below the Twin Manifestations must not be regarded as a chance occurrence in the Dispensation of Baha’u’llah, since the

¹ For an appreciation of these historic journeys see **God Passes By**, Ch. XIX, Shoghi Effendi.

² Abha Kingdom means Glorious Kingdom, a name for the heavenly realm.

³ “The Blessed Beauty” is one of the titles of Baha’u’llah.

⁴ “The Abha Beauty” means “The Glorious Beauty” and is another of Baha’u’llah’s titles.

prophecies of all Divine Faiths foretell the appearance of 'Abdu'l-Baha and constitute the clearest proof of his being acknowledged — according to Shoghi Effendi — as one of the Three Central Figures of Baha'u'llah's Dispensation.

An attempt I strongly feel should now be made to clarify our minds regarding the station occupied by 'Abdu'l-Baha and the significance of His position in this holy Dispensation. It would be indeed difficult for us, who stand so close to such a tremendous figure and are drawn by the mysterious power of so magnetic a personality, to obtain a clear and exact understanding of the role and character of One Who, not only in the Dispensation of Baha'u'llah but in the entire field of religious history, fulfills a unique function. Though moving in a sphere of His own and holding a rank radically different from that of the Author and the Forerunner of the Baha'i Revelation, He, by virtue of the station ordained for Him through the Covenant of Baha'u'llah, forms together with them what may be termed the Three Central Figures of a Faith that stands unapproached in the world's spiritual history ... That 'Abdu'l-Baha is not a Manifestation of God, that, though the successor of His Father, He does not occupy a cognate station, that no one else except the Bab and Baha'u'llah can ever lay claim to such a station before the expiration of a full thousand years — are verities which lie embedded in the specific utterances of both the Founder of our Faith and the Interpreter of His teachings.¹

And Siddharta too stresses the close relationship between these Three Central Figures as well as Their exact order of precedence in the Baha'i Faith.

Know that he who remembers that Buddha² is the white lotus (pundarika) among men, it is he whom the Bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta consider an excellent friend. He will, sitting in the Bodhi-mandala,³ be born in the abode of the Buddhas.⁴

¹ *The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah*, p. 42, Shoghi Effendi, 1934, Baha'i Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Ill., USA.

² Amitayus or Amitabha (Baha'u'llah).

³ Circle of Wisdom or Dharma i.e., religion. In various other Buddhist Scriptures it is also translated as the "terrace of enlightenment" (Bodhimandavara in *Saddharmapundarika*, VII 7) and as a "hall" (Bodhimandapa *Buddhacarita*, XIV. 90).

⁴ *Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra*, Part IV, v. 32.

One has only to refer (pp. 277 and 317) to the complete self-effacement by both the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha and Their glorification of Baha'u'llah and His disciples to see that the following verse refers to no one else but Baha'u'llah, the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha:

But by the efficacy of the ancient prayer of that Tathagata, those who think of and remember him shall certainly be able to accomplish their aim.

Even the mere perceiving of the image of that Buddha brings to one immeasurable blessings. How much more, then, will the meditating upon all the complete bodily signs of that Buddha! Buddha Amitayus has supernatural power; since everything is at his disposal, he freely transforms himself in the regions of the ten quarters... The body he manifests is always pure gold in colour; his halo — (bright with) transformed Buddhas — and his jewel lotus-flowers are as mentioned before. The bodies of the two¹Bodhisattvas are the same always.

And again:

All beings can recognize either of the two Bodhisattvas by simply glancing at the marks of their heads. These two Bodhisattvas assist Amitayus in his work of universal salvation; such is the meditation that forms a joint perception of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, and it is the Thirteenth Meditation.²

Furthermore the sentence, from the previous excerpt, "He will be sitting in the Bodhi-mandala," and will be "born in the abode of the Buddhas,"³ becomes quite clear if one remembers that Sukhavati, which is now forming in the region of Akka and Haifa, the resting place of Baha'u'llah, the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha, is also the Holy Land of ancient times, known literally as the Land of the Prophets — "abode of the Buddhas". In the shrine of the Bab, "the Bodhi-mandala" — variously translated as the symbolic circle of wisdom, the "terrace of enlightenment",

¹ This "two" is also literally true in a sense, since both the Bab (Avalokitesvara) and 'Abdu'l-Baha (Mahasthamaprapta) are buried in the same Mausoleum which Baha'u'llah commanded 'Abdu'l-Baha to construct for the Bab on the slopes of Mount Carmel. Hence Their physical bodies are under the same canopy.

² *Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra*, Part II, v. 21. Scriptures of other Religions foretell the advent of this spiritual triumvirate, e.g., the Jewish Prophet **Zechariah** (IV 13) "Knowest thou not what these be? and I said 'No my Lord' and then said He, 'these are the **Two Anointed Ones** that stand by the Lord of the whole earth'."

³ Page 318 (also f.n. 4).

and the ‘hall of wisdom’ — has, a literal counterpart. It is that which the Baha’is, after climbing the seven-tiered terrace up the slopes of Mount Carmel, enter to pay their loving homage to These Two — the Bab and ‘Abdu’l-Baha, whose mortal remains rest there.

Despite Siddharta repeatedly stressing to His disciples the importance of grouping together the Three Central Figures — Baha’u’llah, the Bab and ‘Abdu’l-Baha — yet He too, just as Baha’u’llah and ‘Abdu’l-Baha have done, indicates the primacy of Avalokitesvara (the Bab) over Mahasthamaprapta (‘Abdu’l-Baha).

When you have seen the seated figure, your mental vision will become clear, and you will be able to see clearly and distinctly the adornment of that Buddha country, the jewelled ground etc... When you have passed through this experience, you should further form (a perception of) another great lotus flower which is on the left side of Buddha, and is exactly equal in every way to the above-mentioned lotus-flower of Buddha. Still further, you should form (a perception of) another lotus-flower which is on the right side of Buddha. Perceive that an image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is sitting on the left-hand flowery throne, shooting forth golden rays exactly like those of Buddha. Perceive then that an image of Bodhisattva Mahasthama is sitting on the right-hand flowery throne.¹

For, the basis of Divine Power — here symbolized by the lotus flower — of Avalokitesvara is, as Siddharta states, ‘‘exactly equal in every way’’ to the ‘‘basis’’ of the Buddha Amitayus (Baha’u’llah). This is also what Baha’u’llah Himself affirms in the *Suratu’l-Haykal*: ‘‘He Who now voiceth the Word of God (i.e. Baha’u’llah Himself), is none other except the Primal Point (i.e. the Bab), Who hath once again been made manifest.’’ And in another Tablet Baha’u’llah characterizes the Manifestation of the Bab as ‘‘My own previous Manifestation.’’ Again, from Siddharta’s afore-mentioned statement,¹ the emanations from Avalokitesvara are ‘‘exactly like those of’’ Amitayus, and that is how it should be for the Twin-Manifestations — The Twin-Miracle, Whose advent Siddharta so accurately described. On the other hand, for Mahasthamaprapta (‘Abdu’l-Baha) seated on the next lotus flower, no equality is accorded with the other Two, neither as regards basis ‘‘the

¹ Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra, Part II, v. 17.

² Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra, Part II, v. 17.

exactly equal lotus flower” since ‘Abdu’l-Baha is not a Divine Manifestation — and Avatar — nor as regards “emanations” since here too ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s power and knowledge are *reflections* of Baha’u’llah’s omnipotence and omniscience.¹ Between Amitayus and Avalokitesvara, Siddharta indicates only minor differences which the Bab too acknowledges in His own relationship to Baha’u’llah.

When you have seen Buddha Amitayus distinctly, you should then further meditate upon Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara,... All the other signs of his body and the minor marks of excellence are perfect, and not at all different from those of Buddha, except the signs of having the turban² on his head and the top of his head invisible, which two signs of him are inferior to those of the World-Honoured One; — such is the perception of the real form and body of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, and it is the Tenth Meditation. Whosoever wishes to meditate on Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara must do so in the way I have explained. Those who practice this meditation will not suffer any calamity; they will utterly remove the obstacle that is raised by Karma, and will expiate the sins which would involve them in births and deaths for numberless kalpas. Even the hearing of the name of this Bodhisattva will enable one to obtain immeasurable happiness. How much more, then, will the diligent contemplation of him! Whosoever will meditate on Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara should first meditate on the turban of his head, and then on his heavenly crown.³ Next you should meditate on Bodhisattva Mahasthama, whose bodily signs, height, and size are equal to those of Avalokitesvara... If one but sees the ray that issues from a single root of the hair of this Bodhisattva, he will at the same time see the pure and excellent rays of all the innumerable Buddhas of the ten quarters. For this reason this Bodhisattva is named the Unlimited Light; it is with this light of wisdom that he shines over all beings and causes them to be removed from the three paths of existence (Hells, Pretas, and the brute creation), and to obtain the highest power. For the same reason this Bodhisattva is called the Bodhisattva of Great Strength (Mahasthama). The turban on his head is like a padma —

¹ Which Baha’u’llah, the Bab, Siddharta and other Avatars possess as an intrinsic aspect of Their own Divine reality.

² “Turban” (ushnishasiraskata).

³ “heavenly crown” signifies spiritual aura.

*(lotus) flower; on the top of the turban there is a jewel-pitcher, which is filled with various brilliant rays fully manifesting the state of Buddha. All his other bodily signs are quite equal to those of Avalokitesvara... Such is the perception of the form and body of Bodhisattva Mahasthama, and it is the Eleventh Meditation.*¹

Notwithstanding a difference of spiritual station between 'Abdu'l-Baha and the other Two Who form this remarkable spiritual "triumvirate", yet Siddharta describes a great physical similarity between 'Abdu'l-Baha and the Bab. While those possessed of insight could indeed see the spiritual aura of These Two, They also wore physical turbans, as was the universal custom among the Indians and the Iranians. The great historian Nabil in his narrative *The Dawn-Breakers* describes the special green turban of the Bab (Avalokitesvara) on two occasions:

*On that very day, a few hours before sunset, whilst walking outside the gate of the city, his eyes fell suddenly upon a Youth of radiant countenance, who wore a green turban and who advancing towards him, greeted him with a smile of loving welcome.*²

The other was on the occasion of the Bab's first interrogation by Husayn Khan-i-Iravani, the governor of the province of the Bab's native town (Shiraz). Husayn Khan had ordered the Bab to be brought to his presence and, treating Him most insolently, publicly rebuked and abused Him.

"Do you realise," he angrily protested, "what a great mischief you have kindled? Are you aware what a disgrace you have become to the holy Faith of Islam³ and to the august person of our sovereign? Are you not the man who claims to be the author of a new revelation which annuls the sacred precepts of the Qur'an?" The Bab calmly replied: "If any bad man come unto you with news, clear up the matter at once, lest through ignorance ye harm others, and be speedily constrained to repent of what ye have done.""⁴ These words inflamed the wrath of Husayn Khan. "What!" he exclaimed. "Dare you ascribe to us evil, ignorance, and folly?" Turning to his

¹ *Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra*, Part II, v. 19.

² The green turban meant that the wearer is a descendent of the prophet Muhammad. *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 52, Nabil. Translated by Shoghi Effendi, 1932. Baha'i Publishing Committee, New York.

³ Muhammadanism.

⁴ This is a verse from the *Qur'an* (49:6) the Sacred Book of Muhammadanism.

attendant, he bade him strike the Bab in the face. So violent was the blow, that the Bab’s turban fell to the ground. Shaykh Abu-Turab, the Imam-Jum’ih of Shiraz, who was present at the meeting and who strongly disapproved of the conduct of Hysayn Khan, ordered that the Bab’s turban be replaced upon His head, and invited Him to be seated by his side. Turning to the governor, the Imam-Jum’ih explained to him the circumstances connected with the revelation of the verse of the Qur’an which the Bab had quoted, and sought by this means to calm his fury. “This verse which this youth has quoted,” he told him, “has made a profound impression upon me. The wise course, I feel, is to enquire into this matter with great care, and to judge him according to the precepts of the holy Book.” Husayn Khan readily consented...’’¹

These excerpts about the Bab’s turban are quoted because there are no photographs existing of Him. But, of Siddharta’s description (page 321) of ‘Abdu’l-Baha (Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta) in the same passage of the same Sutra, we have parallels of it in the statements of many writers, scholars and leaders who were privileged to meet ‘Abdu’l-Baha. One such we quote below:

Having once looked upon ‘Abdu’l-Baha, his personality is indelibly impressed upon the mind: the majestic venerable figure clad in the flowing aba, (cloak), his head crowned with a turban white as his head and hair; the piercing deep set eyes whose glances shake the heart; the smile that pours its sweetness over all...

Even in the twilight of his life ‘Abdu’l-Baha took the liveliest interest in world affairs. When General Allenby swept up the coast from Egypt he went for counsel first to ‘Abdu’l-Baha. When Zionists arrived in their Promised Land they sought ‘Abdu’l-Baha for advice. For Palestine, he had the brightest hopes... He taught the equality of man and woman, saying: “The world of humanity has two wings, man and woman. If one wing is weak, then the bird cannot fly.”’²

Siddharta stresses to His listeners the vital importance of remembering

¹ **The Dawn-Breakers**, pp. 150-1. Nabil. Interestingly Siddharta makes no mention of any turban for Baha’u’llah — Amitabha — but only a crown. From page 308 we see that E.G. Browne also describes Baha’u’llah’s headress as ‘taj’. (crown).

² **“The World”**, British Newspaper quoted by **The New York World** of December, 1921.

His discourses relating to Sukhavati and its Three Central Figures.

Listen carefully! listen carefully! Think over what you have heard! I, Buddha, am about to explain in detail the law of delivering one's self from trouble and torment. Commit this to your memory in order to explain it in detail before a great assembly.

Finally, as the many details of the spiritual triumvirate are fully revealed by Siddharta to His listeners, Vaidehi and Ananda — always with the urging to commit them to memory so as to explain the same to the great masses in the future — their minds become so attuned to the description of Those Three Holy Ones of Sukhavati that Their vision appears to Siddharta's listeners.

While Buddha was uttering these words, Buddha Amitayus stood in the midst of the sky with Bodhisattvas Mahasthama and Avalokitesvara, attending on his right and left respectively. There was such a bright and dazzling radiance that no one could see clearly; the brilliance was a hundred thousand times greater than that of gold (Jambunada). Thereupon Vaidehi saw Buddha Amitayus and approached the World-Honoured One, and worshipped him, touching his feet; and spoke to him as follows: "O Exalted One! I am now able, by the power of Buddha, to see Buddha Amitayus together with the two Bodhisattvas. But how shall all the beings of the future meditate on Buddha Amitayus and two Bodhisattvas?"¹

Vaidehi's question of twenty-five centuries ago is now being answered by this book. However, the answer could not have been given until the actual events — the Persons — so vividly described by Siddharta, had finally become evident in the physical realm. They, as we can now recognize without doubt, have indeed become manifest.

Through the efforts of 'Abdu'l-Baha — his travels to the west and his treatises on the World Order of his Divine Father — the Faith of Baha'u'llah greatly extended its influence. However, none was more cognizant than 'Abdu'l-Baha that the Baha'i Faith would need further development before it could realize its destiny under the legislative body envisioned by Baha'u'llah, and, fully aware that those developments would not occur in his lifetime, 'Abdu'l-Baha provided the Baha'i world community with yet another unique personality for guidance and protection. Like Baha'u'llah, Who prior to His passing delegated His

¹ Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra, Part II, v. 15.



Abdu'l-Baha in Chicago, 1912



Abdu'l-Baha in Adirnih (Adrianople) 1867



TA-SHIH-CHIH P'USA

TA-SHIH-CHIH P'USA is one of the two principal attendants of Amitabha Buddha whose sacred name is MAHASTHAMAPRAPTA meaning "one who has attained great strength". She is therefore called the Bodhisattva of Universal Strength. She is also an avatar of Anuttara Buddha, representing His infinite Wisdom just as Kuan Yin Bodhisattva is His Compassionate aspect, and together they are responsible in welcoming the faithful of the Buddha to His PURE LAND at the end of our death. Unlike Kuan Yin P'usa whose role is to grant help and to answer beings in misery, Ta-Shih-Chih P'usa renders help to those who are bent on purging to practice the Buddha's way of life and striving to reach perfection. It is said that the great P'usa has a Golden Peacock or Lotus Pradumna which She sends to those who hold Her Name at that time may not open it to the Pure Land. Those who wish to develop a harmonious life with Her should daily spend a few minutes contemplating on Her and repeat for "wisdom and strength in reflection", or mindfully holding Her name through the recitation of the prayer:
 "NAMO TA-SHIH-CHIH P'USA"

Note: While the description of "Mahasthamaprapta" is in accord with Abd'ul-Baha status, yet, just like in the case of Avalokitesvara (Kuan Yin) (Chapter 12), so too, in the case of Mahasthamaprapta (Ta-Shih-Chih) the Chinese version has changed the gender of these two male companions of the Buddha Maitrya-Amitabha into female, without any license from Buddhist Scriptures.

eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Baha now appointed his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, as the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith.¹ He accomplished this through the instrument of his *'Will and Testament'*, which is the central charter of Baha'u'llah's World Order. We quote below an excerpt from the section of 'Abdu'l-Baha's *'Will and Testament'* dealing with the appointment of Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith.

O my loving friends! After the passing of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Aghsan (Branches),² the Afnan (Twigs)³ of the Sacred Lote Tree, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God,⁴ and the loved ones of the Abha Beauty⁵ to turn unto Shoghi Effendi — the youthful branch branched from the Two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees⁶ and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness — as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsan, the Afnan, the Hands of the Cause of God, and His loved ones must turn...⁷

Shoghi Effendi⁸ was born in 1897, a descendant of Baha'u'llah through his mother, 'Abdu'l-Baha's daughter, and his father, a scion of the House of the Bab.

The life of 'Abdu'l-Baha, a beacon of hope and guidance to Baha'i and non-Baha'i alike, was ended and his mission accomplished. Long before his passing on 28 November 1921, 'Abdu'l-Baha had known that his time was near and had lovingly informed his family and friends to ease the pain of their approaching separation. Many were the tributes

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha's own son, Husayn, died in childhood.

² Relatives of Baha'u'llah.

³ Relatives of the Bab.

⁴ Eminent Baha'is chosen by Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha and later by Shoghi Effendi, for their devotion and high service to the Faith.

⁵ Baha'u'llah.

⁶ The Bab and Baha'u'llah.

⁷ *The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, 'Abdu'l-Baha, p. 11. Translated by Shoghi Effendi, 1921, Baha'i Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Ill., USA.

⁸ Shoghi Effendi was the eldest grandson of 'Abdu'l-Baha. Born in Akka on 1 March 1897 He was appointed by 'Abdu'l-Baha as the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith and the only authoritative Interpreter of its Sacred Scriptures. He died in 1957, leaving a fully functioning and rapidly expanding World Baha'i Community, now administered and directed by the Universal House of Justice, a Body* of men elected every five years by the various Baha'i National Administrative Bodies.

(* This is the new Samgha of Maitrya-Amitabha of which we shall have more to say later in Ch. 18).

paid to 'Abdu'l-Baha during his life and at his passing by the great and humble, but none can match the words of Shoghi Effendi, his chosen Successor, in attempting to describe the phenomenon that was 'Abdu'l-Baha.

The eyes that had always looked out with loving-kindness upon humanity, whether friends or foes, were now closed. The hands that had ever been stretched forth to give alms to the poor and the needy, the halt and the maimed, the blind, the orphan and the widow, had now finished their labour. The feet that with untiring zeal, had gone upon the ceaseless errands of the Lord of Compassion were now at rest. The lips that had so eloquently championed the cause of the suffering sons of men, were now hushed in silence. The heart that had so powerfully throbbed with wondrous love for the children of God was now stilled. His glorious spirit had passed from the life of earth, from the persecutions of the enemies of righteousness, from the storm and stress of well nigh eighty years of indefatigable toil for the good of others.¹

And he adds:

He is, and should for all time be regarded, first and foremost, as the Centre and Pivot of Baha'u'llah's peerless and all-enfolding Covenant, His most exalted handiwork, the stainless Mirror of His light, the perfect Exemplar of His teachings, the unerring Interpreter of His Word, the embodiment of every Baha'i ideal, the incarnation of every Baha'i virtue, the Most Mighty Branch sprung from the Ancient Root, the Limb of the Law of God, the Being 'round Whom all names revolve', the Mainspring of the Oneness of Humanity, the Ensign of the Most Great Peace, the Moon of the Central Orb of this most holy Dispensation — styles and titles that are implicit and find their truest, their highest and fairest expression in the magic name 'Abdu'l-Baha.'²

Siddharta, as we have seen, had already described him — Mahasthamaprapta — as the Unlimited Light.

For thirty-six years after his appointment by 'Abdu'l-Baha as the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi toiled with unceasing vigor and wisdom to

¹The Chosen Highway, "The Passing," p. 99. Lady Blomfield, 1940. Baha'i Publishing Trust, London.

²There are many works on the life of 'Abdu'l-Baha. Especially comprehensive is 'Abdu'l-Baha, by the Hand of the Cause, H.M. Balyuzi, George Ronald Publishers, London.

fulfill the mandate of his illustrious grandfather, and when his delicate constitution finally gave in at the age of sixty, the Baha'i world community with institutions in every country of the world, was *now* ready to take the final step towards erection of the crowning edifice — its supreme Body from which all direction would flow till the next millennium

Shoghi Effendi passed away on 4 November 1957, and among the many books written about his life and achievements, the pre-eminent is by his esteemed widow, Hand of the Cause, the eminent Ruhyyih Rabbani.¹

Besides detailing the lives and times of the Three Central Figures of the Baha'i Faith and Baha'u'llah's World Order, the prophecies of Siddharta also mention those among the Baha'is who excel, those men and women who through great devotion and service in accordance with Baha'u'llah's Teachings have attained an exalted rank. These are called the "Hands of the Cause of God" and it is their special responsibility to serve as the emissaries of the Faith in the "ten quarters" of the world. Wherever these "Hands" journey, the Baha'is, knowing of their service in the responsibility of spreading the Divine fragrances, offer them loving respect.

O Bhagavat, if, after I have obtained Bodhi, the Bodhisattvas who in immeasurable, innumerable, inconceivable, incomparable, immense Buddha countries round about in the ten quarters having heard my name, and having fallen down, shall worship me with prostrate reverence,² should not, when performing the duty of Bodhisattvas, be honoured by the world and by the gods, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.³

No individual has been given legislative and executive power by Baha'u'llah, Who vested such authority and responsibility only in the elected bodies of His administrative system. Yet He Himself initiated the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God by nominating a select number of persons who were charged with the responsibility of disseminating the Teachings of the New Day.⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi

¹ **The Priceless Pearl**, Ruhyyih Rabbani, 1969. Baha'i Publishing Trust, 27 Rutland Gate, London SW7.

² "Prostrate reverence". is also the manner of saying Baha'i obligatory prayers.

³ **The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, 8. 35.

⁴ Siddharta also in similar terms differentiates between the followers — however high the spiritual heights they have attained through individual effort in service to humanity — and the One they follow. "When a Bodhisattva has reached this position, he is like the

Effendi also nominated Hands of the Cause. Baha'u'llah calls them "The Hands of Ascendancy and Might" and proclaims,

*These Hands will gird up their loins to champion the Faith of God, and will, in My name the Self-subsistent, the mighty, subdue the peoples and kindreds of the earth.*¹

The Fulfillment of the process of Progressive Revelation for this planet, a process steadily advanced by every Divine Teacher through successive programs and unerring prophecies leading to His Advent, is what Baha'u'llah indisputably asserts to be His purpose for being.

I testify before God, to the greatness, the inconceivable greatness of this Revelation. Again and again have We in most of Our Tablets borne witness to this truth, that mankind may be roused from its heedlessness. In this most mighty Revelation, all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation. That which hath been made manifest in this pre-eminent, this most exalted Revelation, stands unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like.

— and referring to His own Divine Reality further proclaims,

But for Him no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the robe of prophethood, nor would any of the sacred scriptures have been revealed. To this bear witness all created things... Give ear to His voice calling aloud over land and sea, announcing to all mankind the advent of this Revelation — a Revelation through the agency of which the tongue of Grandeur is now proclaiming: 'Lo, the sacred Pledge hath been fulfilled, for He, the Promised One, is come!'

— and extols the glory of this Promised Age which has been ushered in by His advent.

This is the King of Days, the Day that hath seen the coming of the Best-Beloved, Him Who through all eternity hath been acclaimed the Desire of the World... The world of being shineth in this Day with the resplendency of this Divine Revelation. All created things extol its saving grace and sing its praises. The universe is wrapt in an ecstasy of joy and gladness. The Scriptures of past Dispensations

Tathagatas,... Insofar as he is in the world for the sake of saving beings. But as a grain of sand compares with the earth, or a puddle in a cow's footprint with the ocean, ... So great still is the distance of the Bodhisattvas from the Buddha." *Ratnagotravibhaga*, I, vv. 77, 78.

¹ *Suratu'l Haykal*, Baha'u'llah. *Dispensation of Baha'u'llah*, p. 11. Shoghi Effendi.

celebrate the great jubilee that must needs greet this most great Day of God. Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day and hath recognized its station...¹

Siddharta too emphatically affirms the superlative station of Baha'u'llah — Amitabha — and His Dispensation.

And again, O Ananda, in the ten quarters, and in each of them, in all the Buddha countries equal in number to the sand of the Ganga, the blessed Buddhas equal in number to the sand of the Ganga, glorify the name of the blessed Amitabha, the Tathagata, they preach his fame, they proclaim his glory, they extol his virtue. And why? Because all beings who hear the name of the blessed Amitabha, and having heard it, raise their thought with joyful longing, even for once only, will not turn away again from the highest perfect knowledge.

And, O Ananda, after thus seeing the cause and effect, the Tathagatas of the ten quarters, in immeasurable and innumerable worlds, glorify the name of the Tathagata Amitabha, preach his fame, and proclaim his praise.²

Finally, having conveyed what He considers are sufficient clues to the meaning and the incomparable greatness of Baha'u'llah, the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha, Siddharta concludes the discourse with His disciple Agita by stating that the success or failure of his quest is now up to Agita.

Thus indeed O Agita, I have done what a Tathagata ought to do. It is now for you to devote yourself to it without any doubt. Do not doubt the perfect and unfailing knowledge of Buddha. Do not enter into the dungeon made of gems built up in every way. For indeed, the birth of a Buddha, O Agita, is difficult to be met with, so is the instruction in the Law, and also a timely birth. O Agita, the way to gain the perfection (paramita) of all stocks of merit has been proclaimed by me. Do now exert yourselves and move forward.³

And so it is indeed for all of us — everyone must determine their own course and accept its consequences — for,

Now and then a man is found, now and then a Buddha appears, knowledge of the object of faith is acquired after a long time.

¹ *The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah*, pp. 6-12. Shoghi Effendi, 1934. Baha'i Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Ill.

² *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, 26, 30.

³ *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, v. 43.

Therefore one should strive to acquire (the knowledge of) the object (of faith).¹

— and proclaim His fame and preach His Dharma.

¹The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, v. 44.9. “The knowledge of the object of faith clearly means the Avatar Himself, i.e. Baha'u'llah (Amitabha). Here again the rarity of the appearance of the Buddha is implied.

THE MESSAGE OF BAHĀ'U'LLĀH THE TRUE DHARMA

This is the path; there is none other that leads to the purifying of insight.¹

The power propelling humanity is spiritual. For Man is a creature of the spirit. Bahā'u'llāh, like Siddharta and the other Avatars, taught that existence itself can be correctly understood only from a spiritual perspective. He urged His disciples to cleanse their hearts and develop spiritual sight — to forsake the ephemeral and seek the eternal — if they wished to grasp the essence of the pure Dharma — that “City of Certitude” — which, through neglect and non-belief, had become obscured after Siddharta's time and to which He, the promised Maitrya, was now summoning mankind. As Bahā'u'llāh describes the Path we can see that His concepts and even the terms used by Him are identical to those of Siddharta's:

Our purpose in revealing these convincing and weighty utterances is to impress upon the seeker that he should regard all else beside God as transient, and count all things save Him, Who is the Object of all adoration, as utter nothingness.

These are among the attributes of the exalted, and constitute the hall-mark of the spiritually-minded. They have already been

¹ **Dhammapada**, v. 274 – “... You follow this (path). This will be to confuse (escape from) Mara (death, sin).” In this and others (Dh. 273, 275 etc.) Siddharta affirms that His is the only “Way” for His day. Exactly the same assertion is made by every other Avatar and Bahā'u'llāh repeatedly proclaims it for our age.

mentioned in connection with the requirements of the wayfarers that tread the path of Positive Knowledge. When the detached wayfarer and sincere seeker hath fulfilled these essential conditions, then and only then can he be called a true seeker.

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being.¹ At that hour will the Mystic Herald, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, shine forth from the City of God resplendent as the morn, and, through the trumpet-blast of knowledge, will awaken the heart, the soul, and the spirit from the slumber of heedlessness. Then will the manifold favors and outpouring grace of the holy and everlasting Spirit confer such new life upon the seeker that he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. He will contemplate the manifest signs of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul. Gazing with the eye of God, he will perceive within every atom a door that leadeth him to the stations of absolute certitude. He will discover in all things the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and the evidences of an everlasting Manifestation.

I swear by God! Were he that treadeth the path of guidance and seeketh to scale the heights of righteousness to attain unto this glorious and exalted station, he would inhale, at a distance of a thousand leagues, the fragrance of God, and would perceive the resplendent morn of a Divine guidance rising above the Day Spring of all things. Each and every thing, however small, would be to him a revelation, leading him to his Beloved, the Object of his quest. So great shall be the discernment of this seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood, even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow. If in the uttermost corners of the East the sweet savors of God be wafted, he will assuredly recognize and inhale their fragrance, even though he be dwelling in the uttermost ends of the

¹ As Siddharta stated to the Brahmins of His day: "It is hard to be understood by y'u who are of different views, another tolerance, other tastes, other allegiance and other training." (*Digha-nikaya*, III. 40; *Ibid.*, 1.12. See also *Samyutta-nikaya*, I. 12.)

West. He will, likewise, clearly distinguish all the signs of God — His wondrous utterances, His great works, and mighty deeds — from the doings, the words and ways of men, even as the jeweler who knoweth the gem from the stone, or the man who distinguisheth the spring from autumn, and heat from cold. When the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will unfailingly perceive the breath of the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude.

Therein he will discern the wonders of His ancient Wisdom, and will perceive all the hidden teachings from the rustling leaves of the Tree that flourisheth in that City. With both his inner and outer ear, he will hear from its dust the hymns of glory and praise ascending unto the Lord of Lords, and with his inner eye will he discover the mysteries of “return” and “revival”.

How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendors which He, Who is the King of Names and Attributes, hath destined for that City!¹ The attainment unto this City quencheth thirst without water, and kindleth the love of God without fire. Within every blade of grass are enshrined the mysteries of an inscrutable Wisdom, and upon every rose-bush a myriad nightingales pour out, in blissful rapture, their melody... It bestoweth wealth without gold, and conferreth immortality without death. In each one of its leaves ineffable delights are treasured, and within every chamber unnumbered mysteries lie hidden.

They that valiantly labor in quest of God, will, when once they have renounced all else but Him, be so attached and wedded unto that City, that a moment’s separation from it would to them be unthinkable. They will hearken unto infallible proofs from the Hyacinth of that

¹ Brethren it is an old, old path, as Kappina has said. As a man, brethren, wandering in the forest, in the mountain jungle might see an ancient path, an ancient road, trodden by men of an earlier age and, following it, might discover an ancient township, an ancient palace, the habitation of men of an earlier age, surrounded by park and grove and lotus pool and walls, a delightful spot, and that man were to go back and announce to the king or to his minister, ‘Behold, sir, and learn what I have seen,’ and, having told him, he were to invite the king to rebuild that city, and that city were to become anon flourishing and populous and wealthy once more, even so, brethren, have I seen an ancient Path, an ancient road, trodden by Buddhas of a by-gone age, the which, having followed, I understand life and its coming to be and its passing away.” (Nagara Sutta.) See also Mahavagga, VI. 29. “Having attained this higher birth, I have found the truth and have taught you the noble path that leads to the city of peace.”

assembly, and will receive the surest testimonies from the beauty of its Rose, and the melody of its Nightingale. Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and readorned...

The City is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation...¹

All that we have discovered thus far could be summed up by the cynical as mere coincidence. What such persons demand, and not without reason, is: "What has Baha'u'llah got to offer for the problems afflicting the human condition, and how has His Message demonstrated its capacity to meet this all-important challenge, by actual deeds and achievements and not merely by words?" Of course, as with all such claims, the "Words", the Teachings, must come first before deeds can conform to the Divine Message. Hence, for all of us who seek the answers to "belief" and "behaviour", we must first state the salient features of the Message which Baha'u'llah directed from prison and exile over a hundred years ago to the governors and the governed, the priests and politicians, kings and commoners, scholars and statesmen. He left no stratum of humanity — which even now continues in great measure to ignore His Divine Call — with any further excuse for its perversity in the face of the peril which threatens to write *Finis* to mankind's very existence.

Progressive Revelation is the very purpose for the recurrent law of Buddha-rising; a law to which Siddharta and all the other Divine Teachers have unequivocally subscribed. But if, as we have read in the *Milindapanha*, "all the Tathagatas always teach the same thirty-seven dharmas which act as wings to enlightenment, they explain the same four holy Truths, they train in the same three kinds of training (morality, trance, and wisdom), and they all admonish us to practice vigilance,"² then what is the purpose of recurrent Revelation? While the fundamental aspects of the Message of every Divine Teacher are identical concerning the goal of the "unity of mankind" and the reason underlying this goal, yet the *means* to bring this about differ in every age. In other words, Man's concept of Man is continuously undergoing change — evolving and expanding — hence, the need to establish harmony and unity on an ever-expanding scale, requiring the recurrent manifestation of the Avatars and Progressive Revelation.

Surprisingly, many people cannot accept this perfectly rational

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXXV, pp. 266-70.

² Milindapanha, 1. (pp. 53-54 of the text). Also Mahavastu, I. 160.

concept — clearly attested by historical fact — when it comes to their Faith and Its Divine Founders, yet they unhesitatingly acknowledge the idea of the need for expanding resources to meet our growing *material* requirements, as the most rational of schemes. We would not question for one moment the process of feeding our newborn babe with milk and then gradually with more and more solid food to suit its growing need and powers of mastication and digestion. It would be madness — we agree — to open the door of the refrigerator and put a big juicy steak before a toothless babe. While the steak may have many nourishing ingredients, the babe would simply starve to death for it could not eat it.

Likewise, we think it is the height of logic to teach tiny tots and beginners with elementary pictures and alphabets even though we may have encyclopedias on our book shelf. We all know the futility of placing such precious volumes within reach of babes, since it would be only natural for the children as soon as they got their little hands on the volumes to begin tearing pages from them and perhaps even trying to literally eat the paper. Is it possible then that the scheme of educating our Soul — of effecting our spiritual growth through ever recurring Progressive Revelation — can be any less systematic and rational than what we see in the method used for our physical and mental growth? Of course not! So, if we become enamoured only with our *image*¹ of Siddharta and lose sight of His purpose which was to provide Spiritual guidance towards yet a further step in human development and to point the way to the goal which would require for its fulfilment the Advent of Maitrya, we are like the student who gets so attached to the teacher that he does not desire to leave that teacher and graduate. Such a student nullifies both his master's purpose and his own reason for being. How could such a disciple expect approval from his teacher when he negates the very reason for the teacher's appearance? Only those students who understand the need to progress to higher grades, even to graduation, truly fulfil the real purpose of all the teachers of the various grades. This was also the true purpose of Siddharta, Who came to revivify humanity in His day and to show the way to Maitrya-Amitabha — Baha'u'llah.

Hence, no true disciple of the Tathagata, who with pure heart and

¹ “The Lord then said: “Should anyone looking at an image or a likeness of the Tathagata, claim to know the Tathagata and should offer worship and prayer to him, you should consider such a person a heretic who does not know the true Tathagata.” **Prajnaparamita Sutta**, 26.

spiritual sight endeavours to learn of the Peerless Dharma, need despair of discovering the way that lies open to Baha'u'llah, Who is now proclaiming it (Dharma) once again in order to fulfill the promise of all the Tathagatas: the unification of the entire human race. As Baha'u'llah so clearly affirms, His Message is the renewal of Religion (Dharma) from the same Ancient Source (God) from which all Creation, including the Law for it, has sprung, and that all the Divine Teachers are the same Moon reflecting in different phases the light of the Primal Orb, God — the Absolute.

It is clear and evident to thee that all the Prophets are the Temples of the Cause of God, Who have appeared clothed in divers attire. If thou wilt observe with discriminating eyes, thou wilt behold Them all abiding in the same tabernacle, soaring in the same heaven, seated upon the same throne, uttering the same speech, and proclaiming the same Faith. Such is the unity of those Essences of Being, those Luminaries of infinite and immeasurable splendor! Wherefore, should one of these Manifestations of Holiness proclaim saying: 'I am the return of all the Prophets,' He, verily, speaketh the truth. In like manner, in every subsequent Revelation, the return of the former Revelation is a fact, the truth of which is firmly established...

The other station is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation, and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined revelation, and specially designated limitations. Each one of them is known by a different name, is characterized by a special attribute, fulfills a definite mission, and is entrusted with a particular Revelation.¹

Baha'u'llah's explanation concerning the essential oneness of all the Divine Teachers and of the truth of their purpose, namely, the unification of humanity through universal acceptance of one Supreme Creator — a single Father — has already been confirmed by Siddharta at various times in the preceding pages.² Siddharta, as we read from the following, also confirms the other part (second para) of Baha'u'llah's statement describing the progressive aspect of Divine Revelation and the unique station of each Avatar within the context of an ever expanding

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XXII, pp. 67-68, 4th Printing.

² Pages 40-2 of the text.

ethical framework to meet man's growing need:

*What do you think, O Subhuti, is there anything which the Tathagata has adopted from the Tathagata Dipankara with regard to the highest perfect knowledge? After this, the venerable Subhuti spoke thus to the Bhagavat: 'As far as I, O Bhagavat, understand the meaning of the preaching of the Bhagavat, there is nothing which has been adopted by the Tathagata from the holy and fully enlightened Tathagata Dipankara with regard to the highest perfect knowledge.' After this Bhagavat thus spoke to the venerable Subhuti: 'So it is, Subhuti, so it is. There is not, O Subhuti, anything which has been adopted by the Tathagata from the holy and fully enlightened Tathagata Dipankara with regard to the highest perfect knowledge.'*¹

Thus He indicates the need for a fresh Revelation which can only be brought to mankind by a new Divine Teacher Who does not simply "adopt" His principles from those of His Predecessor.

There is both a continuity and a newness in the Revelations of succeeding Tathagatas. They are like different stages in the growth of a tree — the sprouting of the roots from the seed, the emergence of the trunk, branches and twigs, and then the leaves, blossoms and fruit. Applying this allegory to the Religious gospels still extant, we may consider Krishna's message as having sown the seed while the commandments of Moses sprouted the roots; from them the trunk emerged, through the teachings of Zoroaster, grew into branches through the Dharma proclaimed by Siddharta, and spread into twigs by the gospel of Christ. Through Muhammad's laws these multiplied as the leaves and became blossoms by the appearance of the Bab, and finally, through the advent of Baha'u'llah, the One awaited by all the Faiths, bore the long-promised fruit.

Every Divine Teacher conveys greater meaning to the Dharma of His Predecessor and brings new Teachings that will make possible the rational application of the Dharma's truths to constantly changing times and their enlarged perspectives. The words of Siddharta to Sigala the householder demonstrate one example of assigning new meaning to ancient truths:

While the Blessed One was staying at the bamboo grove near Rajagriha, he once met on his way Sigala, a householder, who

¹ **Vajrachhedika** (or Diamond-Cutter) Sutta, XVII. See text pp. 57-58

clasping his hands, turned to the four quarters of the world, to the zenith above, and to the nadir below. And the Blessed One, knowing that this was done according to the traditional religious superstition to avert evil, asked Sigala: "Why performest thou these strange ceremonies?"

And Sigala in reply said: "Does thou think it strange that I protect my home against the influence of demons? I know thou wouldst fain tell me, O Gotama Sakyamuni, whom people call the Tathagata and the Blessed Buddha, that incantations are of no avail and possess no saving power. But listen to me and know, that in performing this rite I honor, reverence, and keep sacred the words of my father."

Then the Tathagata said:

Thou dost well, O Sigala, to honor, reverence, and keep sacred the words of thy father; and it is thy duty to protect thy home, thy wife, thy children, and thy children's children against the hurtful influences of evil spirits. I find no fault with the performance of thy father's rite. But I find that thou dost not understand the ceremony. Let the Tathagata, who now speaks to thee as a spiritual father and loves thee no less than did thy parents, explain to thee the meaning of the six directions.

"To guard thy home by mysterious ceremonies is not sufficient; thou must guard it by good deeds. Turn to thy parents in the East, to thy teachers in the South, to thy wife and children in the West, to thy friends in the North, and regulate the zenith of thy religious relations above thee, and the nadir of thy servants below thee.

"Such is the religion thy father wants thee to have, and the performance of the ceremony shall remind thee of thy duties."

And Sigala looked up to the Blessed One with reverence as to his father and said: "Truly, Gotama, thou art the Buddha, the Blessed One, the holy teacher. I never knew what I was doing, but now I know. Thou hast revealed to me the truth that was hidden as one who bringeth a lamp into the darkness. I take my refuge in the Enlightened Teacher, in the truth that enlightens, and in the community of brethren who have been taught the truth."¹

Bahā'u'llah too, like Siddharta, affirms that the fundamental truth of every Divine Dispensation, no matter what its present state of obscurity under a morass of superstition, prejudice and corruption, is the final

¹ The "Seven Sutras". Pali (Ch.: Guard The Six Quarters.)

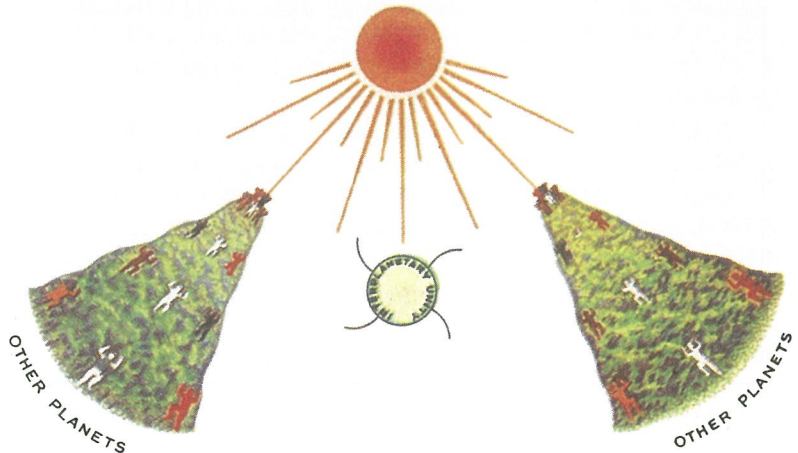
proof of that Faith's validity and of its Founder's claim to rank as an Avatar. But while the Avatar reveals the pure Dharma and gives to man the means to negotiate it to the goal of salvation and bliss, mankind, through its own neglect and perversity, loses sight of the efficacy, and, finally, the true purpose of Religion. It is towards restoring our feet on the path of the true Dharma that all of Siddharta's prophecies concerning Baha'u'llah (Maitrya-Amitabha and His Sukhavati) are directed and to which He, Baha'u'llah, now summons us with the logic and beauty of His Message.

O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight Path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure.¹

In our world, peoples of various Faiths confront each other with suspicion and sometimes hatred because they cannot explain the beliefs of others in other Faiths, especially when they have been led to believe in the uniqueness of their own Divine Teacher and His Message. Unless we remove such prejudice and honestly attempt to see the spiritual beauty and grandeur of every Divine Messenger of God, the world can never establish lasting unity and will continue to suffer devastating conflicts. We have to recognize that truth has spoken to us in various languages from many different locations and for countless ages. Not the eternal Dharma, but those who cling to outward form and pursue their vested interests through rites and prejudice are to be blamed for the misuse of Religion and for the mess we all find ourselves in concerning It.

The simple diagram on the following page is one way to illustrate the appearance of various Messengers and Their Gospels since the dawn of human history. The mountain in our picture has a double meaning. It symbolizes the progress and the aspirations of humanity to reach the peak, which is also the aim of Religion. Secondly, the mountain's base and its gradually decreasing circumference as we near the peak, signifies

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CX, p. 215.



MESSENGER OF GOD

Baha'u'llah _____ World Unity

Buddha, Mohamed, Christ _____ National Unity

Krishna, Zoroaster _____ Racial Unity

Ram ; Moses _____ Tribal Unity

First Messengers _____ Family Unity
 Long since lost
 in time

RATIONAL BEINGS BEGIN CLIMB TOWARD THEIR DESTINY

PROGRESSIVE DIVINE REVELATION IS THE TRUE CAUSE OF AN EVER ADVANCING CIVILIZATION

Fig. 10

© J.K.F.

Note: Nation-Building on a planetary scale began only after the advent of His Holiness Muhammad.

the Earth and its gradually diminishing size. We can understand that in the beginning the various races and groups of mankind were isolated from each other by insurmountable natural barriers and had no idea of the existence of their fellow beings beyond the first mountain range or just hidden from their view.

In the beginning, when man was merely sustaining an animal existence, every man's hand was raised against every other man and often, against every woman — even his own — when it came to grabbing for food, and where the only form of communication even with wife and children must have consisted of animal-like grunts and groans. Since each man conceived of himself as unique and all others as different and not entirely "human", the first Divine Messengers that came must have taught the most simple lessons of religion. For all we know, this may have consisted of merely impressing upon a single family that they were the children of an all-mighty "Power", Which loved all the members of that family equally, gave all of them the gift of Life, and desired that they live in love and unity. Probably this Divine Messenger was a member of one of those primitive families and quite possibly, He may have been killed by the family strongman — perhaps His own father — for teaching views contrary to the prevailing law of fist and fang. Notwithstanding, whatever the fate that befell that first Divine Teacher, the present status of our race, despite its slow climb from those depths, is certain evidence that that Divine Messenger's views of family love and unity ultimately triumphed. No one can say how long it took for the different members in the family to act with love and unity among themselves but when they did accept *in actual practice* this first Message — this first religion — then a surprising force for progress was released within the family. While in the past the two hands of each member of this primitive family were constantly on guard against the hands of every other member, now with the acceptance of the simple principles of love and unity, the hands of every member of the family were freed to work for progress of the whole group. Work was accomplished to a degree unknown before, simply by the acceptance of this first rudimentary principle of the first religion.

As we have stated, the purpose of religion is to enable humanity to progress. It accomplishes this by creating a sense of allegiance to a Higher Power and thereby provides the transcending bond for human unity. By binding people together in this manner it allows man's potential to achieve what only religion makes possible.

In those forgotten times, our little earth seemed infinitely larger than it does now. Our ancestors thought it was the whole universe, and the sun, moon and stars were lights large and small hanging above a flat world from a blue-coloured dome. Often it took years to travel from one part of their region to another, due to the dangers of terrain and wild animals and their total ignorance of the topography, and it took more time to cross one's own tribal preserve than it takes us to go around the world today. Hence, our forefathers thought themselves unique and alone in their universe. Now we can understand how the Supreme Creator, because of the problems confronting the human race in the dawn of its existence sent His Divine Messengers among men with teachings perfectly suited to their physical and mental condition and designed to lift man a step higher towards a more humane existence through the establishment of greater unity.

Slowly, after primitive man achieved family unity and while these families continued to war like wild beasts with every other family, the second group of Divine Messengers, with a slightly greater emphasis on the need for establishing inter-family love and harmony, must have made their appearance. Probably They also were persecuted and killed for Their unpalatable ideas, but Their Message took root and grew and ultimately triumphed, liberating even greater forces for the collective progress of the first human tribes.

At this stage on the accompanying drawing we begin to discern the faint rays of history emerging through the mist of legend, and we can link the names of the Divine Messengers Ram and Moses with tribal unity. Doubtless there were many more such prophets, in other parts of the world, both before and after Ram and Moses, Who manifested Themselves to guide primitive man toward the establishment of his first truly organized social state — the Tribe.

While ethnically homogeneous people, or what is commonly understood as "race", certainly existed long before the formation of tribes, yet racial unity as a socially organized entity was unknown because primitive man had no such concept. He rarely, if ever, met anyone of a different "race". Tribal unity was established thousands of years earlier than racial unity. Tribes of the same race continuously warred with each other and a tribe would even consider itself more closely related to the animals of its tribal totem than to the human members of other tribes.

As time passed, these tribes eventually coalesced into larger units.

Inter-tribal unity historically coincided with the appearances of such Divine Messengers as Krishna in India and Zoroaster in Iran and doubtless others in various parts of the world. Tribal frontiers expanded to cover larger geographical areas and for the first time tribes of different peoples came into contact with one another and primitive man slowly learned of ethnic homogeneity and developed an idea of "race" which has remained with us to this day. The Divine Teachings which had welded together an ethnically homogenous social order in different parts of the world continued to guide primitive man for some time. Ultimately these teachings provided a motive force for a larger unity which resulted in united tribes of socially and ethnically homogenous groups expanding their control over larger areas of the earth and establishing contact with similar movements of other races. This is illustrated by the decreasing circumference of the "mountain of progress" in our diagram. Men saw other races as their paths converged; they began to hear other voices in languages different from their own, and finally faced alien cultures whose progress had followed parallel paths and reached comparable heights.

For a time those disconcerting discoveries of alien cultures presented tremendous problems for the "world view" of ancient man, and he resisted the change by the familiar methods of destruction and conquest until he could no longer shut out the larger reality impinging on his old concepts. Ultimately the larger truths generated by the appearance — in various parts of the world at different times — of the Divine Teachers Siddharta, Jesus and Muhammad, enabled the human mind to transcend racial unity — at best a tenuous and transitory stage — and accept ethnically different groups and various social classes, thus welded together under a uniform standard of morals and manners large and flexible enough to establish in some instances the first nations of the world, even as early as 2000 years ago.

Clearly, then, many Messengers were sent to humanity and, due to the isolation of tribe from tribe and race from race, many of these Divine Messengers may have lived and taught at about the same time as their contemporaries and just a few hundred miles removed. The peoples of those times were as divided from each other by time and distance and as doubtful of each other's very existence as we of this century are of the existence of other rational beings inhabiting the planets. In those remote times this earth seemed large beyond imagination and even a small area of the earth appeared as a whole world to its inhabitants. Even 500 years

ago we could not imagine that the earth was round and thought that by sailing on the ocean we would fall over the rim of the earth. The existence of large areas of the earth such as North and South America and Australia were totally unknown.

It may astound us to know that until the exact day 23 May 1844, when the Bab first proclaimed His Mission to Mulla Husayn, the speed of human communication and transportation had not increased since the dawn of history and was limited to the speed of a fast horse. (Though steam locomotives had just become a reality, they could not excel the speed of a horse.) On that very day, exactly twelve hours after the Bab's momentous announcement of a new era, an American scientist, Samuel Morse, tapped out the first message to be transmitted by electromagnetic waves travelling at the speed of light, and it read "What Hath God Wrought". (Thus precisely fulfilling the Scriptural Prophecy).¹ It was hardly coincidence that the Bab's revelation should be accompanied by a quantum leap in the speed of human communication. Rather, it was one more demonstration of the inexorable working of Destiny. The appointed age for the unification of mankind had commenced, and the Spiritual Sun had revealed the shimmering cord of light itself as an instrument for carrying His radiant Message to bind humanity into one single body.

Unlike ages past when the Gospel of Siddharta and other Avatars took years and even centuries to reach other shores and other peoples, the Message of Baha'u'llah — Maitrya-Amitabha — is now carried on the wings of light itself — instantaneously — to every area of the world and can be heard through the media of satellite, radio and television communication "at the same time" regardless of distance. This too was foreseen by Siddharta and clearly described by Him as one of the phenomena associated with the Advent of Maitrya-Amitabha:

O Bhagavat, if in that Buddha country of mine the beings who are born there should not all acquire the divine eye, so as at least to be able to see a hundred thousand nyutas of kotis of worlds, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.²

O Bhagavat, if in that Buddha country of mine the beings who are born there should not all acquire the divine ear, so as at least to be able to hear at the same time the good Law from a hundred thousand nyutas of kotis of Buddha countries, then may I not obtain the highest perfect

¹ 186,000 miles per second. (See also f.n. 3, page 214 of the text.)

² Modern telescopes!

*knowledge.*¹

Little doubt that with the ushering in of this new era of human awareness and the technological means to realize planetary unity, the day of nationhood was outmoded. Nor can regional racial or class loyalties provide any guarantees against the planetary holocaust, the means for which are now within reach of even the smallest nations through our scientific discoveries. These self-same scientific achievements, generated by the mysterious power released by Baha'u'llah, have shrunk our planet into a tiny pin-head on which stand all of us, filled with dread and hope, acutely aware that while the next logical step in human development is indeed world unity and all that it means, man's perversity can also send him hurtling down into the primeval chaos of the stone-age.

Just as the difference between animal and man is creative thought arising from a rational soul, the difference between man and superman is religion arising from the Divine. Now for the first time the human race is confronted with super power, and it must transcend its petty foibles and lunacies and become a true super race — ethically as well as intellectually — or perish. This is the goal toward which Baha'u'llah's Gospel is directed. Moreover, He endows His Message with a universal breadth of vision concerning human destiny. While modern scientists continue on with their speculations about the meaning of life and the chances for its presence beyond this planet, Baha'u'llah, like Siddharta, proclaims the only rational purpose for a creation born of Universal Mind.²

To bring forth life — advancing to rationality — the life of the mind.
As He announces —

*Know thou that every fixed star hath its own planets, and every planet its own creatures whose number no man can compute.*³

¹ **The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, 8.8 ("Koti" is simply a very large quantity. It is used indiscriminately to indicate size, number, distance, etc. and has no specific value.)

² "Within this very body, mortal as it is and only ten spans in length, I do declare to you are the world and the origin of the world, and the ceasing of the world, and likewise the Path that leads to the cessation thereof." (**Udana**.)

³ **Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah**, LXXXII. page 163. See **Mahavagga**, I. "Sir," asked Kondanna, "Is this earth the one world in existence, or are there other worlds?" "Surely," said the Buddha, "there are innumerable worlds. That you can realise, physically, by looking at the sky on a clear night. The stars and the sun and the moon are other worlds, let alone, Sukra (Venus), Brihaspati (Jupiter), Budha (Mercury), Mangala (Mars), etc. Then, looking into the mind, do you not see many worlds? Dream worlds you may call them.

— the universe is teeming with life:

Verily I say, the creation of God embraceth worlds besides this world, and creatures apart from these creatures. In each of these worlds He hath ordained things which none can search except Himself, the All-Searching, the All-Wise.¹

And that the process of spiritual education through the medium of the Divine Teachers, the Prophets, is a universal law operating in all the worlds.

From Him all the Suns have been generated, and unto Him they will all return. Through His potency the Trees of Divine Revelation have yielded their fruits, every one of which hath been sent down in the form of a Prophet, bearing a Message to God's creatures in each of the worlds whose number God, alone, in His all-encompassing Knowledge can reckon.²

To an unprecedented degree, Baha'u'llah lays bare the book of creation, and its underlying purpose cannot fail to convey to us both grandeur and comfort. This infinite universe is not an alien creation, hostile to rational life, but the very womb for it. And we on this tiny grain of sand called the Earth are destined, in the fullness of time, to meet and fruitfully associate with our fellow beings on other planets. Baha'u'llah announces: "All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization."³ However civilization, from Baha'u'llah's perspective, does not consist merely of scientific discoveries or gadgetry but, more importantly, the ability of man to live in harmony with his universe and, above all, with the highest life form in it, the rational soul

Then, spiritually, every holy man will tell you about heaven and hell, the worlds of Indra and Yama, let alone Brahma's world. Yes, the gods exist, and other worlds exist as truly as we exist and this world exists. Why limit an infinite universe to this small world and to men as we know them?" [Baha'u'llah too speaks at length (*Gleanings*, LXXIX, p. 152) on the nature of dreams].

¹ *Ibid.*, LXXIX, pp. 152-3, Baha'u'llah's statement — made over a century ago — that the universe itself is "infinite in its splendor and deathless in duration," has also been dramatically confirmed by the latest findings of Astronomy. See *Time*, p. 48 "Science", 30 December 1974. Doubtless Baha'u'llah's other pronouncements concerning planetary systems for every star and creatures and rational beings on those planets will — in the fullness of time — also be fully confirmed. Who but the "Voice" of the Creator can tell what His creation contains. The serious student of such subjects could do no better than refer to the details and proofs contained in *Some Answered Questions*, Part I, Ch. I, pp. 3-5. Part IV, Chapters, XLVI, XLVII, etc. by 'Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA, 1930.

² *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, LI, p. 104.

³ *Ibid.*, CIX, p. 215.

— himself.

Baha'u'llah, more than any other Avatar, has left us with a wealth of Teachings, authenticated by the stamp of His own authority. It is neither possible nor intended in this book to include any but the barest sampling of the guidance Baha'u'llah has offered to mankind in its hour of greatest crisis. To obtain any comprehensive sense of Baha'u'llah's Message, the seeker should turn to some of the writing of Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi already available in many of the principal languages of the world. The intent of this book in quoting various excerpts from Baha'u'llah's Teachings is two-fold: to show the identity of concept and purpose with Siddharta's and, more importantly — in the face of the many bogus and second-hand panaceas being touted today — to demonstrate the viability of Baha'u'llah's program for providing mankind with the only sure path to world unity predicated on a just and humane order.

While the relationship with Siddharta's Teaching can be easily understood in the Teachings of Baha'u'llah, it is more important that the reader apprehend the concepts which Baha'u'llah has proclaimed as the master elixir for restoring health to the sick body of mankind.

Baha'u'llah's Message sets forth in a lucid and rational manner the process of Progressive Divine Revelation, occurring age upon age for the guidance of humanity to family, tribal, regional and national groupings and now, in this age, to planetary unification and well-being. It is faultless in its logic and supported by human history itself. However, the uniqueness of His Message is not predicated on mere explanation — however perfect — of the rational possibilities for life on other worlds or its chance for development toward greater intellectual and spiritual awareness, nor of the historical progress of mankind on this planet nor the underlying meaning of it. Such information is interesting because it illustrates the continuity of the main stage of human development toward world unity which can never be realized, without Baha'u'llah's solutions for the many problems now besetting mankind. This failure would create a chasm that would render meaningless humanity's long climb from its ancient past to that day in the future when mankind will enter into an even larger unity — interplanetary.

To provide humanity with the "why" — the reason — to be good and not merely the "how" or blueprint of social conduct, Baha'u'llah commences His dialogue with the present harassed and infinitely more cynical age by restoring to man a true concept of his own reality, which

all the Avatars have described as essentially spiritual. He states that as rational soul, man is the highest product of the Creator Mind. Our soul is not subject to the process of decay that affects all physical forms, including our bodies, which are merely vehicles for our soul's education on this physical plane — an education for exercising our *free will* correctly, in constructing for ourselves the “vehicle” or body for our existence in the hereafter — the spiritual realm.

Of all the creatures on this planet, man, alone, is both conscious of inevitable death and desirous for the continuation of his consciousness beyond the grave. Only man, motivated by the certainty of death, has quested for immortality, and for that end alone — notwithstanding the struggle with the temptations of his ignorance — he has sought out the Divine Guides to lead him from “delusion to Truth” and from “darkness to Light”.

More than at any previous time we are now capable of understanding the nature of the universe, and from the knowledge of its underlying orderliness, we recognize the essential purpose of the soul-mind (we ourselves) in the scheme of creation — the same purpose announced by every Avatar since the world began. And in conformity with the expanded horizons of present day thought, with its greater demands for rationality, Baha'u'llah provides us with the “why” and “wherein” for turning away from the things that perish — from death — and toward the assurance of immortality:

Know, verily, that the soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It is the first among all created things to declare the excellence of its Creator, the first to recognize His glory, to cleave to His truth, and to bow down in adoration before Him. If it be faithful to God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto Him. If it fail, however, in allegiance to its Creator, it will become a victim of self and passion, and will, in the end, sink in their depths.¹

Know thou that the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, LXXXII, pp. 158-9. See also Mahavagga, v. 1.29. “The rational nature of man is a spark of the true light; it is the first step on the upward road. But new births (note — not rebirth or reincarnation) are required to insure an ascent to the summit of existence, the enlightenment of mind and heart, where the immeasurable light of moral comprehension is gained, which is the source of all righteousness.”

of all infirmities of body or mind. That a sick person showeth signs of weakness is due to the hindrances that interpose themselves between his soul and his body, for the soul itself remaineth unaffected by any bodily ailments. Consider the light of the lamp. Though an external object may interfere with its radiance, the light itself continueth to shine with undiminished power. In like manner, every malady afflicting the body of man is an impediment that preventeth the soul from manifesting its inherent might and power. When it leaveth the body, however, it will evince such ascendancy, and reveal such influence as no force on earth can equal. Every pure, every refined and sanctified soul will be endowed with tremendous power, and shall rejoice with exceeding gladness...¹

And now concerning thy question regarding the soul of man and its survival after death. Know thou of a truth that the soul after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty. His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving kindness and bounty... The nature of the soul after death can never be described, nor is it meet and permissible to reveal its whole character to the eyes of men. The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose, underlying their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.²

Baha'u'llah proclaims that "the world beyond is as different from this world as this world is different from that of the child while still in the womb of its mother," and gives humanity a unique insight into the causal relationship between us and our endeavors in this existence, and the influence of those in the hereafter who have attained spiritual emancipation.

The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples. They are like unto

¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, LXXX, pp. 153-4.

² *Ibid.*, LXXXI, pp. 155-7.

leaven which leaveneth the world of being, and constitute the animating force through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest... All things must needs have a cause, a motive power, an animating principle. These souls and symbols of detachment have provided, and will continue to provide, the supreme moving impulse in the world of being... When the soul attaineth the Presence of God, it will assume the form that best befitteth its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation.¹

With this unparalleled vision of our true station, Baha'u'llah beckons us to the Path which His Teachings have marked out.

However, whatever is to follow, our paramount duty is towards our own tiny planet. The earth must be made whole first if there is to be any worthwhile future at all. And that, as Baha'u'llah so powerfully proclaims, is precisely His purpose among us.

Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men. This can best be achieved through pure and holy deeds, through a virtuous life and a goodly behaviour. Valiant acts will ensure the triumph of this Cause, and a saintly character will reinforce its power. Cleave unto righteousness. O people of Baha!... Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self. The Evil One is he that hindereth the rise and obstructeth the spiritual progress of the children of men. It is incumbent upon every man, in this Day, to hold fast unto whatsoever will promote the interests, and exalt the station, of all nations and just governments... Whatsoever hath led the children of men to shun one another, and hath caused dissensions and divisions amongst them, hath, through the revelation of these words, been nullified and abolished.²

He was the first to proclaim that the paramount purpose for Religion in this day is to serve the cause of cooperation between men and nations. By this way alone can Religion provide the solace for our emotional and spiritual needs while also becoming the motivation for our intellectual

¹ *Ibid.*, LXXXI, p. 157. "The Tathagata teaches that there is mind ... and there is no being that cannot be transformed into a vessel of truth." (*Milindapanha* — "All Existence is Spiritual.") "Truth, however, is large enough ... and in truth they will lead a life everlasting."

(*Mahavagga: Siha's*, "Questions Concerning Annihilation".)

² *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, XLII, pp. 93-95.

and scientific endeavours. Baha'u'llah recognized the forces His Message had generated in opening a new dimension of human awareness, and, to meet its imperatives, He raised Religion, which had become a thing of compromise between conscience and convenience, to the realm of conscious acceptance and practice consistent with reason.

Over a century ago, from one of the most backward lands of the day, Baha'u'llah enunciated twelve fundamental Principles:

- The Source of all Religions is One
- Independent investigation of truth
- Oneness of the human race
- Religion must be the cause of unity
- Prejudices of all kinds must be forgotten
- Equality of opportunity for men and women
- Universal education
- Religion and science must be in accord
- An international language
- A spiritual solution of the economic problem
- A world government
- World Peace

While today these principles may appear to the reasonable and farsighted as the imperatives for our age, a hundred years ago, they seemed utopian — if not downright impossible — to even the most astute observers.

This is the proof of the generating impulse of an Avatar — He comes alone and unaided, far ahead of His age, with goals and their means resisted by the might of mankind, and yet, within a short time He becomes *the guide* to whom men look for leadership from dilemma to certitude — and such a one is Baha'u'llah.

As time passes many yogis and saints — real or so-called — acknowledge and emulate a Krishna or a Buddha, yet there is no record of a single Avatar acknowledging any yogi or saint as the source of His knowledge or inspiration — transcendently or objectively. Since, among the tools available to man for determining the truth of anything in creation — not to mention Reality Itself — all but One are fallacious and not to be relied upon. Our senses are tricked constantly. Our logic is simply the product of our particular experiences and wholly unable to offer any correct determination of phenomena outside the “familiar”. Intuition through meditation, “transcendental” or otherwise, provides as many solutions as there are meditators — no two in accord. Traditions

and records, scriptural and historical, fall prey to the error of individual interpretation and many other stumbling blocks. Only the word revealed by the Divine Educator, authentically recorded, provides the infallible standard which separates truth from error, reality from imagination. For the thing which generates that infallible instrument is wholly beyond human experience — Omniscience.¹ But this Omniscience of the Avatar is never used to bludgeon the listener into submission and thwart the exercise of free will. No Divine Teacher ever asks His disciples to follow Him slavishly and surrender their independence of judgement. Instead, every Avatar encourages His listeners to open their minds and solve their problems by weighing the *pros and cons* pointed out by the Divine Manifestation. Even the mere discovery of truth however great is not enough unless it is accompanied by action conforming to the principle or truth. Since belief without experience would be like the knowledge of honey through the spoon holding it!

*The beginning of all things is the knowledge of God, and the end of all things is strict observance of whatsoever hath been sent down from the empyrean of the Divine Will that pervadeth all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth.*²

The deeper the subject and the greater the truth, the greater the need for freedom for accepting it. Hence Baha'u'llah upholds this law of *freedom to choose* as one of the most important principles of His Faith.

The principle of *independent investigation of truth*³ obviates the blind adherence to tradition and outmoded belief passed from generation to generation through rote and ritual and assures the application of reason born of *mature* consideration. Hence no one can be born a Baha'i but one can enroll if, after proper inquiry, one acknowledges Baha'u'llah as the Promised One and His Teachings to be the praxis of life, suited to the needs of our time. Admittedly, Baha'i parents will influence their

¹ And this as we have seen (pp. 289-91) both Baha'u'llah and Siddharta have unequivocally affirmed.

² *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, II, p. 5.

³ Siddharta also tells us: "Do not believe in traditions merely because they have been handed down for many generations and in many places. Do not believe because it is rumoured and is believed in by many. Do not believe because the writing of some old sage is produced. Do not believe because you think it is extraordinary, or that you have had an inspiration about it and that it must have been revealed to you, by a *deva* or wonderful being. After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it. One must not accept my **Dharma** from mere reverence. He must first try it as gold is tried by fire." *Anguttara-nikaya*, III. 653, (Kalamas Sutta).

children to espouse the Faith which they themselves have accepted, but compulsion of any kind is forbidden. All Baha'is are admonished to educate their children in the basic tenets of the Divine Teachings, whose Founders are all accepted on a par with Baha'u'llah Himself. This is buttressed by the very first of His fundamental principles: *The Source of all Religions is One*, repeatedly stressed throughout His Teachings, a principle that is in full conformity, as we have seen, with Siddharta's own pronouncements.

There is clearly delineated machinery and process for interpretation of His Teachings and provision for legislation within the Order to meet those exigencies of a changing world which are not expressly covered by His own laws and for administering a rapidly expanding worldwide community of adherents.¹ Freed from the strangleholds of dogma and ritual, the World Order is dedicated to no less a goal than the establishment of the *Oneness of the human race* — another of Baha'u'llah's fundamental Teachings — through the orderly fulfillment of all His principles.

As we have stated we cannot, except in a most cursory manner, attempt to sketch the salient features of the fundamentals of Baha'u'llah's Faith. His own voluminous works, with those of 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, stand as their own proof of superlative originality of thought and of perfect viability — the true panacea for a distraught and spiritually destitute humanity. The seeker will not find in Baha'u'llah's Message any hint of hesitancy in the prescription He offers to man. Coupled with their universal scope and depth are majesty and power in Baha'u'llah's pronouncements on what ails humanity and what can set it right. His warnings about the alternative to heeding His call may have been ignored during His lifetime as the railings of another doomsday prophet. They can no longer be set aside.

Knowing the nature of the power which would soon fall into the hands of mankind, Baha'u'llah detailed the nature and operation of the world state which must be established to preserve civilization and guide humanity toward *world government* and *world peace* — two more fundamentals of His Teachings. The efforts of the victor nations following the two world wars in this century are a far cry indeed from meeting the requirements of a supranational Body — World Government — described by Baha'u'llah to effectively safeguard World Peace and promote the welfare of mankind.

¹ In the Baha'i Faith there is no priesthood or hierarchy.

Plagued by big power interests and crippling vetoes, the League of Nations and now the United Nations were both doomed to impotence and deprived of lasting allegiance to their principles by the generality of their memberships. Unless member-nations possess the nuclear “persuasion” to assure that their voices are heard and their rights granted, they are relegated to the role of client states to the super-powers and to playing both sides against the other to gain whatever scraps are available. No statesman, either from the giant powers or from the dwarfs, can claim credit — Nobel Peace Prizes notwithstanding — for any virtuosity or sagacity which can definitely be said to have been the determining factor in staying the nuclear holocaust, poised for the last fifty years over humanity like the Sword of Damocles. The plain fact of all these hypocritical assertions regarding allegiance to the cause of peace is simply that the use of nuclear weapons to gain a bit more territory, a bit more influence, is accompanied with the clear risk of losing everything garnered thus far! So it is fear of death rather than faith in living and letting live that has preserved some semblance of sanity and stayed the nuclear club from smashing civilization. But whatever the safeguards against the predatory instincts of men and nations, there is no room for complacency. Small nations, recognizing their weakness in the face of those who hear only nuclear arguments and despite the destitution and hunger afflicting their people, have now entered the nuclear family of nations, not inconceivably to threaten and even carry out the threat of mutual annihilation. They would have little to lose — a choice between slow but certain starvation and a quick final “deliverance”!

In the face of this rapidly developing state of affairs, the Message of Baha’u’llah not merely throws light upon our plight but conveys an assurance of security and well-being that is impossible to refute. Hence let us investigate Baha’u’llah’s blue-print for World Government as described in the words of Shoghi Effendi.

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Baha’u’llah, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded.

This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the

component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples.

A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth.

A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system.

A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity.

A world metropolis will act as the nerve center of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate.

A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind.

In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will co-operate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples.

The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be coordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

This is not the spectacle of a helpless father trying to control a brood of unruly sons, all armed and totally indifferent to any behest from the helpless parent — which is what the present United Nations really is but, again in the words of Shoghi Effendi —

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising

unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation — such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.¹

Fully echoing the thoughts of Siddharta —

Man must needs fight

To make true peace his own.

He needs must combat Might with Right,

Or Might would rule alone.²

— that the Forces of Good must unite in their struggle against Evil, Shoghi Effendi states that:

Goodness, as mere goodness, cannot win the battle. To goodness must be added force. And then evil, of itself, will galvanize into successful action this force of goodness.³

On the paramount matter of justice for half the population of the earth — women — Baha'u'llah's has been the unique voice among the Founders of Religion. While it is not difficult to understand the reasons for the inferior status to which women were relegated in ancient times — even by Teachings of past Avatars — the time is past when physical prowess is taken as the only criterion of superiority or pre-eminence, for now we recognize that mental skill and attainment is the primary criterion in every important aspect of today's world. And here woman is at least as qualified as man. But here too, in the field of women's rights, Baha'u'llah's has been the original voice and unique leadership.

Long before the emergence of the suffragette movement in the advanced western nations; an Iranian woman called Zarrin Taj ("Golden Crown") born in 1818, the only woman of that exalted assembly of the Bab's first Eighteen Disciples (Letters of the Living) and titled Qurratu'l-Ayn ("Solace of the Eyes"), arose to champion the Faith of Baha'u'llah after the execution of the Bab and became the foremost voice in the

¹ *A Pattern for Future Society*, Shoghi Effendi, 1936, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA.

² *Mahavagga*, VI, 31. Also *Milindapanha*, pp. 254-57.

³ *A Pattern for Future Society*, Shoghi Effendi, 1936.

world for the cause of women's rights — one of the fundamental Principles of the New World Order. Later, titled Tahirih ("the Pure") by Baha'u'llah, she publicly broke with the centuries-old custom of keeping women as mere chattels, removed her veil to symbolize her belief in the new era, and was promptly branded as a heretic by the fanatical clergy of Muhammadan Iran. But Tahirih must not be taken for a mere fire-brand. She was the most famous poetess in Iranian history and inspired the admirations of kings and commoners. Iran's monarch, Nasiri'd-Din-Shah, captivated by her brilliance and beauty, offered to marry her, but Tahirih refused, stating that her course in the struggle for the new era and the cause of women's rights was set. She had chosen to endure prison and pain, for which she had already had premonitions, and would have no dealings with pleasures and palaces. Her fame was not restricted to the Muhammadan lands. It spread to the West, whose great and learned wrote of Qurratu'l-'Ayn in the most glowing terms:

Beauty and the female sex also lent their consecration to the new creed, and the heroism of the lovely but ill-fated poetess of Qazvin, Zarrin-Taj (Crown of Gold) or Qurratu'l-'Ayn (Solace of the Eyes), who, throwing off the veil, carried the missionary torch far and wide, is one of the most affecting episodes in modern history.

Lord Curzon, Great Britain's, Viceroy of India, in his book *Persia and the Persian Question, Vol. 1.*

No memory is more deeply venerated or kindles greater enthusiasm than hers (Tahirih's), and the influence which she wielded in her lifetime still inures to her sex.

Valentine Chirol in *The Middle Eastern Question, p. 124.*

Almost the most remarkable figure in the whole Movement was the poetess, Qurratu'l-'Ayn. She was known for her virtues, piety and learning... So strong in her Faith did she become that although she was both rich and noble she gave up wealth, children, name, position for her Master's service and set herself to proclaim and establish His doctrine...

Sir, Francis Younghusband in his book *The Gleam pp. 202, 203.*

O Tahirih, you are worth a thousand Nasiri'd-Din Shahs!

Sulayman Nazim Bey, the great author and poet of Turkey, in *Nasiri'd-Din Shah and the Babis.*

How could it be that a woman, in Persia where woman is considered so weak a creature, and above all in a city like Qazvin, where the clergy possessed so great an influence, where the Ulamas, by their

number and importance, attracted the attention of the government and of the people, — how could it be that there, precisely under such untoward circumstances, a woman could have organized so strong a group of heretics? There lies a question which puzzles even the Persian historian, Siph, for such an occurrence was without precedent!

Journal Asiatique, 1866, tom 7, p. 474.

Mulla Salih had among his children a daughter, Zarrin-Taj (Crown of Gold), who had attracted attention from early childhood... Her keen intelligence quickly perceived the fallacies of Islamic science without succumbing to it and soon she was able to discuss points which were most obscure and confusing... Her reputation became universal throughout all Persia, and the most haughty Ulamas consented to adopt some of her hypotheses and opinions. This fact is all the more extraordinary because the Shiite Muhammadan religion relegates the woman almost to the level of the animal. They consider that she has no soul and exists merely for reproduction.

A.L.M. Nicholas, Siyyid Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab, pp. 273-274.

The greatest ideal of womanhood all my life has been Tahirih... I was only seventeen years old when I heard of her life and her martyrdom, but I said, "I shall try to do for women of Austria what Tahirih gave her life to do for women of Persia."

Given to Martha Root in 1925 by Marianna Hainish of Vienna, Austria, mother of the President of Austria.

The only Westerner to have had an audience with Baha'u'llah, Professor Edward Granville Browne of Cambridge University, also wrote of Tahirih:

The appearance of such a woman as Qurratu'l-'Ayn is in any country and any age a rare phenomenon, but in such a country as Persia it is a prodigy — nay, almost a miracle. Alike in virtue of her marvelous beauty, her rare intellectual gifts, her fervid eloquence, her fearless devotion and her glorious martyrdom, she stands forth incomparable and immortal amidst her country-women. Had the Babi religion no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient — that it produced a heroine like Qurratu'l-'Ayn.¹

The clergy of Muhammadan Iran could not long brook Tahirih's

¹ A Traveller's Narrative, p. 309. Edward Granville Browne, Cambridge University Press, 1891.

open challenge to their subjugation of women, and within a few years her life was snuffed out by one of their henchmen who strangled her and threw her body in a well.

Tahirih was a candle that the Hand of Divine Power, acting through Baha'u'llah, had lighted in token of one of the twelve fundamental pillars of the new World Order. In 1852, at the age of 34, her physical presence ceased to trouble the night creatures, but the symbol she became as the first martyr to the cause of woman's emancipation would marshal legions of suffragettes to assail every rampart of injustice and finally disperse the cruelty and exploitation which had long been woman's lot.

Nearly seventy years would pass after Tahirih's martyrdom before the suffragettes of the western nations would win their struggle for franchise.¹

In every Divine Dispensation, one woman stands out among her kind as the peerless figure of her age. In Siddharta's time — notwithstanding the consternation caused His disciples by Siddharta's esteem for a known courtesan — it was Ambapali, rich and worldly-wise. But she was much more, and Siddharta saw the purity and charity in her which His disciples could not.²

The principle of *equality of opportunity for men and women*, proclaimed by Baha'u'llah over a century ago, was more than just a pious declaration of an ideal whose time had come. He gave the method of realizing it in the everyday workings of society by stating that if a parent has not the means to educate all the children, the girls must be given priority since as future mothers, they will be the first teachers of the family. The education of all children if the means are lacking, should become the responsibility of the community.

Today, many of the most responsible positions in the rapidly expanding world community of Baha'u'llah's avowed adherents are occupied by women. However, no person who has studied Baha'u'llah's writings regarding this fundamental principle, can possibly misconstrue them as being intent on annulling the natural concept of the family and

¹USA in 1920, Britain in 1928, France in 1932, Germany in 1933.

²In the Dispensation of Christ it was Mary the Magdalene, another courtesan. In Moses' Dispensation, Aseyeh the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh who reared Moses and was martyred for her belief in His Faith; Sita in the Dispensation of Ram and Radha in Krishna's time; Queen Katayoon ("Hoom") of Zoroaster's day and Muhammad's daughter Fatimah in His Dispensation.

the vital interplay of both parents in creating and sustaining a healthy home life. Here, as in every other aspect of His Teachings, Baha'u'llah sets forth a family relationship with emphasis on morality and justice and bounded by moderation. He imbues it with a far more enduring purpose than the ephemera which nowadays comprise the reason for marriage. According to the Teachings of Baha'u'llah, marriage requires consent of all living parents once the couple have chosen their partners-to-be. He states further that children should contribute to the harmony and unity of the household through obedience to their parents.

Baha'u'llah states that the paramount purpose for marriage must be the creation of a family in which the children can receive a moral and spiritual education as well as academic training, in order to contribute to a healthy society. Having classed neglect in educating one's children as an unforgivable sin¹ and raised the training of children to having, in effect, trained His own children,² Baha'u'llah recognizes that even with the best effort and intentions, human beings may sometimes find it beyond their means to continue in harmonious matrimony. Hence He permits divorce after a year of patience, that year being utilized by the couple's relatives, the community and its elected representatives toward effecting a reconciliation.

Baha'u'llah has brought to our age the spiritual solution to the problems of social estrangement, political corruption and economic imbalance. Yet it must be recognized that the effectiveness of any remedy depends upon the patient's willingness to take the cure.

While economic dogma has generally ignored man's spirit, Baha'u'llah addresses the spiritual aspect of man's nature in seeking economic solutions. The solution of the economic problem, one of the fundamental principles of the Message of Baha'u'llah, is preceded by the all important word, "spiritual" — *a spiritual solution of the economic problem*. The purely materialistic argument that we are merely intelligent animals and society has no ends worth striving for besides homogeneity

¹In view of this strict injunction we can appreciate how much more essential was the maintenance of a healthy family unit in the past and also Siddharta's advice against women leaving the life of the home and the upbringing of children. "If, Ananda, women had not retired from household life to the houseless one, under the doctrine and discipline announced by the Tathagata, religion, Ananda, would long endure..." (*Saddharmapundarika-Sutra*, ii. 36.)

²"He who educates his son, or any other's children, it is as though he hath educated one of My children." *Tablet of Ishrakat* (The Seventh Ishrak), Baha'u'llah.

and stability, while promising relief from man's inhumanity to man, in fact ends up with the dehumanization of man himself. Over a century ago Baha'u'llah delineated economic principles of security for the farmer, profit-sharing for the laborer, regulated tax, and an integrated system of production regulated and governed by an all-powerful international agency. He also stated that man and his society would have to be spiritually regenerated and a powerfully functioning supra-national authority or world government must be established before economic cooperation can replace the cut-throat economic competition which is now the main cause of war.

Nations unable to regulate their economies because of factors outside their control become prey to doubts about their options and often resort to war to gain the upper-hand. But war is the greatest economic waste and we must return to Baha'u'llah's fundamental principles of *World Peace* and *World Government* etc. as delineated by Shoghi Effendi and cited in previous pages.

The fact that none of the Divine Teachers of past Dispensations dwelt on aspects of the planetary Order for social conduct and government cannot detract an iota from Their greatness. The earth as we know it now simply did not exist in the mind of man during the advents of the Avatars Who appeared before the Bab and Baha'u'llah.

Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted. Every true Prophet hath regarded His Message as fundamentally the same as the Revelation of every other Prophet gone before Him.¹ If any man, therefore, should fail to comprehend this truth, and should consequently indulge in vain and unseemly language, no one whose sight is keen and whose understanding is enlightened would ever allow such idle talk to cause him to waver in his belief.

The measure of the revelation of the Prophets of God in this world, however, must differ. Each and every one of them hath been the Bearer of a distinct Message, and hath been commissioned to reveal

¹ Also *Milindapanha*, 1. "All the Tathagatas always teach the same... Truths... and they all admonish us to practice vigilance."

Himself through specific acts. It is for this reason that they appear to vary in their greatness. Their Revelation may be likened unto the light of the moon that sheddeth its radiance upon the earth. Though every time it appeareth, it revealeth a fresh measure of its brightness, yet its inherent splendor can never diminish, nor can its light suffer extinction.

It is clear and evident therefore, that any apparent variation in the intensity of their light is not inherent in the light itself, but should rather be attributed to the varying receptivity of an ever-changing world. Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared. God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquility of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world with the resplendent radiance of the Day Star of Divine knowledge, they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. It is towards the inmost essence of these Prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one

*and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted. These are not days of prosperity and triumph. The whole of mankind is in the grip of manifold ills. Strive, therefore, to save its life through the wholesome medicine which the almighty hand of the unerring Physician hath prepared.*¹

While there are no restrictions on diet, among Baha'u'llah's moral and social injunctions there are sanctions against polygamy, concubinage, adultery, slavery and the use of intoxicants and drugs except those prescribed by physicians for effecting cure.² He deprecates indolence and enjoins upon each some kind of honorable occupation —

*It is made incumbent on every one of you to engage in some one occupation, such as arts, trades, and the like. We have made this — your occupation — identical with the worship of God, the True One.*³

— and, by the same token, in this same passage, He proclaims that “the most despised of men before God is he who sits and begs.”⁴

Fully integrated in His World Order are teachings for individual conduct and spiritual growth which Baha'u'llah stresses are the warp and woof of any Religion which seeks to remake the world through the efforts of its adherents.

¹Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XXXIV, pp. 79-81. Also, **Dhammapada**, v. 146. “Why is there laughter, why is there joy while this world is always burning? Why do you not seek a light, you who are shrouded in darkness (ignorance)?”

²Siddharta, even in His day, forbade many of these practices: **Adultery** — “An unthinking man who courts another's wife gains four things, excess of demerit, broken rest, thirdly blame, and fourthly hell. There is excess of demerit as well as the way to the evil state; there is the short-lived pleasure of the frightened in the arms of the frightened, and a heavy penalty from the ruler. Therefore do not run after another man's wife.” (**Dhammapada**, vv. 309, 310). **Intoxicants** — “And he who gives himself to drinking intoxicating liquors, he, even in this world, digs up his own root.” (**Dhammapada**, v. 247.)

Nearly every Divine Teaching has forbidden intoxicants. For those ancient times without refrigeration, the **Bhagavad-Gita** states that all food or drink kept for over three hours is prohibited (fermentation takes more than three hours). Also Zoroaster in the **Spentemad Gatha** (Ch. 48.10) enjoins the uprooting of “this filthy evil of drink” and that “those persons who deal with intoxicating drinks are sinners.” (**Dadestan**, Ch. 40.41.)

³**The Tablets of the Glad Tidings** (The Twelfth), Baha'u'llah, Translated by Ali Kuli Khan, 1906. Baha'i Publishing Society, Chicago, Ill., USA.

⁴“Better is it for an irreligious unrestrained (person) to swallow a ball of red-hot iron than enjoy the charity of the land.” (**Dhammapada**, v. 308) See also verse 266. “He is not a mendicant simply because he begs others for alms. He who adopts the whole law is a mendicant, not he who adopts only a part.”

He commences His guidance by disabusing humanity from thinking that the usual excuses for covering up its failings of faith and conduct will be accepted.

*The incomparable Creator hath created all men from one same substance, and hath exalted their reality above the rest of His creatures. Success or failure, gain or loss, must, therefore, depend upon man's own exertions. The more he striveth, the greater will be his progress.*¹

And again,

*Suffer not yourselves to be wrapt in the dense veils of your selfish desires, inasmuch as I have perfected in every one of you My creation, so that the excellence of My handiwork may be fully revealed unto men. It follows, therefore, that every man hath been, and will continue to be, able of himself to appreciate the Beauty of God, the Glorified. Had he not been endowed with such a capacity, how could he be called to account for his failure? If, in the Day when all the peoples of the earth will be gathered together, any man should, whilst standing in the presence of God, be asked: "Wherefore hast thou disbelieved in My Beauty and turned away from My Self," and if such a man should reply and say: "Inasmuch as all men have erred, and none hath been found willing to turn his face to the Truth, I, too, following their example, have grievously failed to recognize the Beauty of the Eternal," such a plea will, assuredly, be rejected. For the faith of no man can be conditioned by any one except himself.*²

We will be judged on our own merits and not on a *relative scale*. The Law of Karma remains inviolate, according to Divine Justice to which we must adhere. As He proclaims:

O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in my sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behoveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XXXIV, p. 82.

² *Ibid.*, LXXV, p. 143. See also *Dhammapada*, 165. "By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself. No one purifies another." Also see *Dhammapada*, vv. 172. 173.

to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.¹

From this ground of justice Baha'u'llah tells us to advance to purity and radiant acquiescence in meeting life.

O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.²

Baha'u'llah forbids us to dispute with anyone and to use wisdom in presenting our views while always being tolerant of others.

O Son of Dust! Verily I say unto thee: Of all men the most negligent is he that disputeth idly and seeketh to advance himself over his brother. Say, O brethren! Let deeds, not words, be your adorning.³

Instead, He tells us to regard all peoples as being like ourselves and by disciplining self through diminishing personal likes and dislikes, attain to see ourselves in each other and become "even as one soul in many bodies."⁴ He admonishes us to look within ourselves and not at the short-comings of others.

O Son of Being! How couldst thou forget thine own faults and busy thyself with the faults of others? Whoso doeth this is accursed of Me.

O Son of Man! Breathe not the sins of others so long as thou art thyself a sinner. Shouldst thou transgress this command, accursed wouldst thou be, and to this I bear witness.

O Son of Spirit! Know thou of a truth: He that biddeth men be just and himself committeth iniquity is not of Me, even though he bear My name.

¹ **The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah**, Part I. v. 2. Translated by Shoghi Effendi, 1932, Baha'i Publishing Committee, London. Also *Buddhacarita*, 1533 — Ashvaghosha, "We are encompassed on all sides by the rocks of birth, old age, disease, and death, and only by considering and practising the true law can we escape from this sorrowpiled mountain. What profit, then, in practising inequity?"

² *Ibid.*, Part I. v. 1. Also *Dhammapada*, v. 261. "He in whom dwell truth, virtue, non-violence, restraint, control, he who is free from impurity and is wise, he is called an elder."

³ *Ibid.*, Part II, v. 5. Also see *Sutta-nipata*, vv.895-96. "Those who abiding in the (philosophical) views dispute, saying, 'This is the truth,' they all incur blame, ... This is little, not enough to (bring about) tranquility, I say there are two fruits of dispute; having seen this let no one dispute, understanding Kema (i.e. Nibbana) to be the place where there is no dispute." Also, *Dhammacariya-Sutta*, 3. "A mendicant who is fond of disputes, is walled in by ignorance, and understands neither religion nor the law of Gautama."

⁴ The saraha Dohakosa quotes Siddharta as saying: "This is myself and this is another." Be free of this bond which encompasses you about, and your own self is thereby released."

O Son of Being! Ascribe not to any soul that which thou wouldst not have ascribed to thee, and say not that which thou doest not. This is My command unto thee, do thou observe it.¹

Like Siddharta, Baha'u'llah upholds detachment as the hallmark of the truly spiritual person and avarice as death.

My captivity can bring on Me no shame. Nay, by My life, it conferreth on Me glory. That which can make Me ashamed is the conduct of such of My followers as profess to love Me, yet in fact follow the Evil One.² They indeed are of the lost... Say: He is not to be numbered with the people of Baha who followeth his mundane desires, or fixeth his heart on things of the earth. He is My true follower who, if he come to a valley of pure gold, will pass straight through it aloof as a cloud, and will neither turn back, nor pause. Such a man is, assuredly, of Me. From his garment the Concurrence on high can inhale the fragrance of sanctity... And if he met the fairest and most comely of women, he would not feel his heart seduced by the least shadow of desire for her beauty. Such an one, indeed, is the creation of spotless chastity. Thus instructeth you the Pen of the Ancient of Days, as bidden by our Lord, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.³

And He admonishes us against vain talk.

O Son of Dust! The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing, even as the cup-bearer, who proffereth not his cup till he findeth a seeker...⁴

¹ **The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah**, Part I, vv. 26, 27, 28, 29. Siddharta too reminds us in similar words. See **Dhammapada**, vv. 252, 125 and 306. "Whoever does wrong to an innocent person or to one who is pure and sinless, evil recoils on that fool even as fine dust thrown against the wind (recoils on the person throwing it)." "The fault of others is easily seen; our own is difficult to see. A man winnows others' faults like chaff, but his own faults he hides even as a cheat hides an unlucky throw." "He who speaks what is not (real) goes to hell; he also, who having done a thing says 'I do not do it.' After death both become equal being men with evil deeds in the next existence."

² Baha'u'llah explains that the "Evil One" is merely the "personification" of the absence of any good attributes and not some actual malevolent entity. See also **The God of Buddha**, pp. 122-3.

³ **Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah**, LX, pp. 117-18. Also see **Milindapanha**, vv. 52-6. "A man may dwell beside me, and yet, being disobedient, be far away from me. Yet he who obeys the Dharma will always enjoy the bliss of the Tathagata's presence."

⁴ **The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah**, Part II, v. 36. See also **Dhammapada**, vv. 258, 259. "A man is not learned simply because he talks much. He who is tranquil, free from

He abhors envy, lying, vindictiveness and subterfuge.

*O Son of Earth! Know, verily, the heart wherein the least remnant of envy yet lingers, shall never attain My everlasting dominion, nor inhale the sweet savors of holiness breathing from My Kingdom of Sanctity.*¹

— And he warns such hypocrites in unmistakable terms:

*O Ye Seeming Fair Yet Inwardly Foul! Ye are like clear but bitter water, which to outward seeming is crystal pure but of which, when tested by the divine Assayer, not a drop is accepted. Yea, the sunbeam falls alike upon the dust and the mirror, yet differ they in reflection even as doth the star from the earth: nay, immeasurable is the difference!*²

Baha'u'llah amplifies the ancient concept of the Golden Rule,³ taught by the Divine Teachers of past Dispensations, from that of cultivating our emotions to feel as if others are our very own self to the acceptance that others are higher and dearer than us, as high as Baha'u'llah Himself!

*O Son of Man! Deny not My servant should he ask anything from thee, for his face is My face; be then abashed before Me.*⁴

If only each of us could practice just this one injunction of Baha'u'llah it is obvious that the world would become another world — ineffably blissful — Nirvanic. It is not a difficult step but the key for taking this step is within our self. We are told, as even by Siddharta, that our ego is the hurdle we must vault over to experience perfection.

hatred, free from fear, he is said to be learned ... A man is not a supporter of the law simply because he talks much, but he who, little learned, discerns it by his body, he who does not neglect the law, he, indeed, is the supporter of the law."

¹ **The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah**, Part II, v. 6. See also **Dhammapada**, vv. 250, 251. "He in whom this spirit (of envy) is destroyed, removed by the very root, he, indeed, by day and by night, enjoys peace of mind. "There is no fire like passion, no capturer like hatred, there is no net (snare) like delusion, no torrent like craving."

² **The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah**, Part II, v. 25. See also **Dhammapada**, vv. 262, 318. "Not by mere talk, not by the beauty of the complexion, does a man who is envious, greedy, and wicked become of good disposition." "Those who discern evil where there is no evil and see nothing evil in what is evil, such men, following false doctrines, enter the evil path."

³ **The Udana**. "My thought has wandered in all directions throughout the world. I have never yet met with anything that was dearer to anyone than his own self. Since to others, to each one for himself, the self is dear, therefore let him who desires his own advantage not harm another."

⁴ **The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah**, Part I, v. 30.

Bahá'u'llah teaches that the greatest factor obstructing the conquest of our own self is false pride.¹ It is pride that shuts the doors to further knowledge of reality if that knowledge does not conform with our own prejudiced and preconceived views of reality. Too often we are prone to erect our own barriers which we expect truth to hurdle over to reach us, little knowing that we are thereby fencing ourselves in from the real world. Pride of material possessions, wealth, too, form the deadly bonds which enmesh our soul and stifle its progress. As Bahá'u'llah states:

O Son of Being! Busy not thyself with this world, for with fire We test the gold, and with gold We test our servants. O Son of Man! Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it. Thou thinkest thyself rich in its possession, and I recognize thy wealth in thy sanctity therefrom. By My life! This is My knowledge, and that is thy fancy; how can My way accord with thine?²

Bahá'u'llah asks us to regard the inevitability of death as the first stage of the journey to Eternity and warns us to detach ourselves from the trappings of this life.

Say: If ye be seekers after this life and the vanities thereof, ye should have sought them while ye were still enclosed in your mother's wombs, for at that time ye were continually approaching them, could ye but perceive it. Ye have, on the other hand, ever since ye were born and attained maturity, been all the while receding from the world and drawing closer to dust. Why, then, exhibit such greed in amassing the treasures of the earth, when your days are numbered and your chance is well-nigh lost? Will ye not, then, O heedless ones, shake off your slumber?

Incline your ears to the counsels which this Servant giveth you for the sake of God. He, verily, asketh no recompense from you and is resigned to what God hath ordained for Him, and is entirely submissive to God's Will.

The days of your life are far spent, O people, and your end is fast

¹ Siddharta too picks upon pride as the cause of spiritual stagnation. "Wrath must ye lay and utterly abandon pride", (*Samyutta-nikaya* I, 23). "And those who have cut off doubt, Their pride in recurrent becoming extinguished, These in the world are truly goers beyond Who have won..." (*Itivuttaka*, pp. 95-96). "Let a man put away anger, let him renounce pride..." (*Dhammapada*, v. 221).

² **The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'llah**, Part 1, vv. 55, 56. See also *Dhammapada*, v. 239. "As a smith removes the impurities of silver, even so let a wise man remove the impurities of himself one by one, little by little, and from time to time."

approaching. Put away, therefore, the things ye have devised and to which ye cleave, and take firm hold on the precepts of God, that haply ye may attain that which He hath purposed for you, and be of them that pursue a right course. Delight not yourselves in the things of the world and its vain ornaments, neither set your hopes on them. Let your reliance be on the remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. He will, ere long, bring to naught all the things ye possess. Let Him be your fear,¹ and forget not His covenant with you, and be not of them that are shut out as by a veil from Him.²

He admonishes us to take stock of our deeds every day, for none knows when he will be called to an accounting.

O Son Of Being! Bring thyself to account each day ere thou art summoned to a reckoning; for death, unheralded, shall come upon thee and thou shalt be called to give account for thy deeds.³

But to those who are freed from the ephemeral and seek the Eternal, Baha'u'llah extends a joyous welcome.

O Son Of the Supreme! I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou grieve? I made the light to shed on thee its splendor. Why dost thou veil thyself therefrom?⁴

He gives us the only criterion for remorse or rejoicing — remoteness from Him.

O Son Of Man! Sorrow not save that thou art far from Us. Rejoice not save that thou art drawing near and returning to Us.⁵

¹ "So long as an evil deed does not bear fruit, the fool thinks that it is like honey; but when it bears fruit, then the fool suffers grief... All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death." **Dhammapada**, vv. 69, 129.

² **Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah**, LXVI, pp. 127-8. Also see **Dhammapada**, vv. 235, 237, 236. "You are now like a withered leaf; even the messengers of death have come near you. You stand at the threshold of departure (at the gate of death) and you have made no provision (for your journey)." "Your life has come near to an end, you are arrived in the presence of Yama (the king of death). There is no resting-place for you on the way and you have made no provision (for your journey)." "Make for yourself an island (refuge), strive quickly, be wise. When your impurities are purged and you are free from sin you will reach heaven, the land of the elect."

³ **The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah**, Part I, v. 31. See also **Dhammapada**, vv. 150, 148. "Of the bones a citadel is made, plastered over with flesh and blood, and in it dwell old age and death, pride and deceit. This body is worn out, a nest of diseases and very frail. This heap of corruption breaks to pieces, life indeed ends in death."

⁴ **Ibid.**, Part I, v. 32.

⁵ **Ibid.**, Part I, v. 35. See also **Dhammapada**, v. 151. "The splendid chariots of kings wear away; the body also comes to old age but the virtue of the good never ages, thus the good teach to each other."

But Baha'u'llah makes it clear that in living, as in dying, the standard is one of sacrifice — without calculation or thought of gain — even to the sacrificing of one's very life.

O Son Of Man! For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.¹

O Son Of Being! Seek a martyr's death in My path, content with My pleasure and thankful for that which I ordain, that thou mayest repose with Me beneath the canopy of majesty behind the tabernacle of glory.²

The Eternal Lover calls to His immortal mate and recounts what is the most precious gift:

O Son Of Man! By My beauty! To tinge thy hair with thy blood is greater in My sight than the creation of the universe and the light of both worlds. Strive then to attain this, O servant!³

The forfeiture of life in the service of the Giver of Life by man, the possessor, is the supreme act of will which the physical universe, operating according to undeviating laws cannot duplicate.

Many are the Teachings Baha'u'llah has given to humanity to effect its spiritual reawakening so that it can realize the latent potential within it and reach undreamed-of heights, heights, as Siddharta has said, which would make us seem as “gods” to those of an earlier age.

Baha'u'llah's Teaching is a precious stairway leading to our true progress — our spiritual perfection. If we meditate on it, we will recognize that the spiritual life is the only life worth living. For it alone conveys to the questing mind of man the real purpose for his being here on this physical plane. And in so doing gives him the unvarying direction for the goal which awaits beyond. To be spiritual is to be the true analyzer of the experiences that daily impinge upon our senses. The mechanical person — one who acts on the basis of his lower faculties — simply reacts to experiences in a biochemical sense, in the manner of animals. But the truly reflective person studies the phenomenon of his experience, analyzes it in a detached manner and acts only after studying

¹ *Ibid.*, Part I, v. 48.

² *Ibid.*, Part I, v. 45.

³ *Ibid.*, Part I, v. 47. See also *Ananusociya-Jataka*, 328:

“Wherefore should frail man lament

What to him is only lent?

He too draws his mortal breath

Forfeith every hour to death.”

the possible consequences. This is the true man, as distinct from the instinctive creature. For he is mental. He thinks, reflects, meditates — none of which the animal can — since the beast is inherently bereft of mind.

Little wonder that the Baha'i Teachings — as those of Siddhartha's and the other Manifestations' — so forcefully enjoin upon man the responsibility to meditate, stating that one who does not meditate is lower than an animal. And justifiably so, since the beast is less blameworthy as it is incapable of meditating, while we who can obtain the greatest enlightenment from meditation have no excuse for neglecting to do so. But meditation, just as prayer, is the act of gathering the tremendous power of our mind — usually diffused and dissipated — and focussing it like a powerful ray of light upon the source, from which we seek information.¹ As 'Abdu'l-Baha tells us.

Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life; ... The spirit of man is itself informed and strengthened during meditation; through it affairs of which man knew nothing are unfolded before his view. Through it he receives Divine inspiration, through it he receives heavenly food.

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves. To illustrate this, think of man as endowed with two kinds of sight; when the power of insight is being used the outward power of vision does not see.

This faculty of meditation frees man from the animal nature, discerns the reality of things, puts man in touch with God.²

However, while the final goal of meditation — affirmed as we have seen by all the Avatars — is full cognizance of our own true self, it is also clear that this cognizance is not something within oneself and must be attained through long and arduous search. But the search is not to be directed at the lower plane — hence such practices as navel³ watching

¹ "This mind of mine would wander formerly as it liked, as it desired, as it pleased. I shall now control it thoroughly even as the rider holding the hook controls the elephant in a state of rut." *Dhammapada*, v. 326.

² *Paris Talks*, p. 175. 'Abdu'l-Baha, 1912, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 27 Rutland Gate, London S.W. 7.

³ This is universally misunderstood from the Hindu legends which refer to it (the navel) as the joining point of the soul (rational consciousness) and the body. The real meaning of this,

will not provide a clue — as it is not a knowledge of our physical innards that we seek but of our inner spiritual reality, our rational self, the soul-mind, which is what 'Abdu'l-Baha also confirms.

Nevertheless some thoughts are useless to man; they are like waves moving in the sea without result. But if the faculty of meditation is bathed in the inner light and characterized with divine attributes, the results will be confirmed.

The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror; if you put it before earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects he will be informed of these.

But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards ... the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained.

Therefore let us keep this faculty rightly directed — turning it to the heavenly Sun and not to earthly objects — so that we may discover the secrets of the Kingdom...¹

And so the concentrated beam of our mind's light must be directed to that "Source of All-Knowledge" and glean from it, as much as is within our capacity, the meaning of the riddle called Man. By the "Source of All-Knowledge" is meant the Avatar, for this age, Baha'u'llah, and not the Absolute which is totally beyond man's highest imagining.

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves.²

Therefore,

True loss is for him whose days have been spent in utter ignorance of his true self.³

Chief among the instruments established by Baha'u'llah to aid man in his spiritual progress are prayer and fasting. He regards these as the

is, that the rational consciousness, our soul, commences its journey into the physical plane at the instant of conception of which the umbilical cord, joined to the embryo at the navel, is both the anchor and the life-line for the formation of the soul's physical body.

¹ Paris Talks, pp. 175-6, 'Abdul'-Baha. See also *Dhammapada*, vv. 282, 372. "From meditation springs wisdom, from lack of meditation there is loss of wisdom... There is no meditation for one who is without wisdom, no wisdom for one without meditation; he in whom there are meditation and wisdom, he indeed is close to nirvana."

² *The Baha'i Revelation*, p. 139, Words of Wisdom, Baha'u'llah, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1955, London. See also *Prayers and Meditations*, Baha'u'llah.

³ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CXXXII, p. 287.

sun and the moon of His Revelation and clearly explains their purpose. *Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effect, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon his soul. Thus have the mysteries of the Revelation of God been decreed by virtue of the will of Him Who is the Source of power and wisdom.*¹

While to pray is to *communicate* with the Eternal it is also a time of introspection, of looking within oneself at our shortcomings and gauging how we can attain true freedom by cultivating spiritual attributes. Hence, prayers are not to be said in a meaningless way but only in a language one understands and with a reflective mind on what the words mean for us in our thoughts and acts towards our fellow men. The purpose of prayer is to attain a harmony with creation and the true purpose of our life here on this plane.²

The daily obligatory prayers revealed by Baha'u'llah are *three* in number. While He has revealed various prayers for different occasions the *three daily obligatory prayers*, together with a *few* other specific ones have been invested by Baha'u'llah with a special potency.

*That Bhikshu Dharmakara (Amitabha) ... O Ananda, was possessed of this perfection of prayers ... There is on this earth³ an appearance of a few only of such prayers. Of a few, however, existence cannot be denied.*⁴

As we see, Siddharta's perfect vision clearly affirms Amitabha's Laws and Land — despite His acknowledgement of such statements as “prayers have no efficacy and invocations are idle talk”⁵ of the Brahmin

¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CXXVI, p. 295.

² “Better than a hundred verses composed of meaningless words is one text on hearing which one becomes peaceful.” *Dhammapada*, v. 102.

³ “On this earth”, hence, once again drawing the seeker's attention to a physical location and not pointing to some nebulous ethereal realm.

⁴ *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, v. 10.

⁵ *Milindapanha*.

Kutadanta. And the three Daily Obligatory Prayers? They too, and the grace ensuing from their recitation, have been clearly mentioned by Siddharta.

*And in that Buddha country a flower-rain of heavenly Mandarava blossoms pours down three times every day, and three times every night.*¹

As we see, Bahá'u'llah also uses the same terminology — “the fragrance of the words” — in referring to prayers as the “mandarava blossoms” mentioned by Siddharta. Here in the above verse, Siddharta is clearly intimating His awareness that the earth is indeed round and that while on one side of the earth the sequence of the three daily obligatory prayers is completed, it begins on the other side. Hence, in one twenty-four hour period while each Bahá'i according to the injunctions of Bahá'u'llah prays three times — “in the morning, at noon, and in the evening” — the total number of times that prayers are offered in the world are six. As Siddharta states, “as it is in the forenoon, so it is at noon, at twilight,”² on the daylight side and then on the other side which experiences light — while night has fallen on this side, “in the first, middle, and last watch of the night.”³ And again,

*O Sariputra, there are in that Buddha country swans, curlews, and peacocks. Three times every night, and three times every day, they come together and perform a concert, each uttering his own note. And from them thus uttering proceeds a sound proclaiming the five virtues, the five powers, and the seven steps leading towards the highest knowledge. When the men there hear that sound, remembrance of Buddha, remembrance of the Law, remembrance of the Church, rises in their mind.*⁴

Finally, after describing the Bahá'is and the prayers they offer, Siddharta does a most remarkable thing, the very thing Bahá'u'llah has taught the Bahá'is concerning the manner of prayer and the direction to which they must turn when offering the *three daily obligatory prayers*. As a tribute to the future Great One — Amitabha — we have this poignant episode of Siddharta instructing Ananda in prayer, in a manner

¹ The Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha, 5.

² The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, 21.

³ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, 21.

⁴ The Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha, 6. (These birds both literally and figuratively inhabit the grounds of the Holy Shrines.)

similar to the true Buddhists of the future — the disciples of Amitabha — the Baha'is.

And now, O Ananda, stand up, facing westward, and having taken a handful of flowers, fall down. This is the quarter where that Bhagavat Amitabha, the Tathagata, holy and fully enlightened, dwells, remains, supports himself, and teaches the Law, whose spotless and pure name, famed in every quarter of the whole world with its ten quarters, the blessed Buddhas, equal to (the grains of) the sand of the river Ganga, speaking and answering again and again without stopping, extol, praise, and eulogize.¹

Facing Akka (“westward” of where Siddharta had stood with Ananda) wherever they may be on the face of the earth, the Baha'is too stand and then kneel or sit, in saying their prayers.

But in the end, in conformity with His oft-repeated admonition that “deeds not words should be your adorning,” Baha'u'llah proclaims that selfless service performed for the “weal of the world” is the highest form of prayer.²

On Fasting, Baha'u'llah states:

We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity (15 years); this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers ... The traveller, the ailing, those who are with child or giving suck, are not bound by the fast. ... Abstain from food and drink, from sunrise to sundown, and beware lest desire deprive you of this grace that is appointed in the Book.³

The period of the Fast is 2nd March through 20th March and is immediately followed by the New Year (21st March). The purpose of the Fast is to learn detachment so as to identify oneself more fully with His laws and precepts.

Urging us to transcend our mundane and ephemeral pursuits —

¹ **The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, 39. The “flowers” are merely symbolic of holy fragrance i.e. spiritual attributes or thoughts. “Non-recitation is the impurity of the seeker, non-exertion is the impurity of house; ...” **Dhammapada**, v. 241.

² “Even if he recites a larger number of scriptural texts but, being slothful, does not act accordingly, he is like a cowherd counting the cows of others, he has no share in religious life.” **Dhammapada**, v. 19. Also **Ako Sam Veda**, 1. “O man, if thou has power over the six passions (viz. lust, anger, greed, foolish attachment, envy and vanity), then do something constructive for the good of thy fellow-beings; otherwise thou art good for nothing.”

³ **Kitab-i-Aqdas, Baha'u'llah** ... See also **Dhammapada**, v. 234. “The wise who control their body, who likewise control their speech, the wise who control their mind are indeed well controlled.”

Others ere long will lay hands on what ye possess, and enter into your habitations, Incline your ears to My words, and be not numbered among the foolish.

For every one of you his paramount duty is to choose for himself that on which no other may infringe and none usurp from him. Such a thing — and to this the Almighty is My witness — is the love of God, could ye but perceive it.

Build ye for yourselves such houses as the rain and floods can never destroy, which shall protect you from the changes and chances of this life. This is the instruction of Him Whom the world hath wronged and forsaken.¹

— Baha'u'llah gives us the highest standards to lift us from the low ethical state where humanity has now come to rest.

Some have regarded it as lawful to infringe on the integrity of the substance of their neighbour, and have made light of the injunction of God as prescribed in His Book. Evil fall upon them, and the chastisement of God, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, afflict them! By Him Who shineth above the Day Spring of sanctity! If the whole earth were to be converted into silver and gold, no man who can be said to have truly ascended into the heaven of faith and certitude would deign to regard it, much less to seize and keep it ... Such a man will, with his inner eye, readily recognize how altogether vain and fleeting are the things of this world, and will set his affections on things above.

When the disease is most virulent the remedy must be most stringent. *Say: Be ashamed, O ye that call yourselves the lovers of the Ancient Beauty! Be ye admonished by the tribulation He hath suffered, by the burden of anguish He hath carried for the sake of God. Let your eyes be opened. To what purpose hath He labored, if the manifold trials he hath endured are, in the end, to result in such contemptible professions, and such wretched conduct? Every robber, every worker of iniquity, hath, in the days prior to My Revelation, uttered these same words, and performed these same deeds.*

Verily I say: Incline your ears to My sweet voice, and sanctify yourselves from the defilement of your evil passions and corrupt

¹Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXXII, p. 261. See also **Dhammapada**, v. 179. "He whose conquest is not conquered again, into whose conquest no one in this world enters, by what track can you lead him, the awakened, of infinite perception, the trackless?"

desires. They who dwell within the tabernacle of God, and are established upon the seats of everlasting glory, will refuse, though they be dying of hunger, to stretch their hands and seize unlawfully the property of their neighbor, however vile and worthless he may be.

The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety and trustworthiness, to resignation and submissiveness to the Will of God, to forbearance and kindness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds.

Say: Have mercy on yourselves and on your fellowmen, and suffer not the Cause of God — a Cause which is immeasurably exalted above the inmost essence of sanctity — to be sullied with the stain of your idle fancies, your unseemly and corrupt imaginations.¹

Urging man to turn his face towards the Imperishable, Baha'u'llah reiterates the highest goal — *to know oneself* and poignantly dwells upon man's spiritual inheritance and his true destiny.

O My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves — a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being. Ye would find yourselves independent of all else but Me, and would perceive, with your inner and outer eye, and as manifest as the revelation of My effulgent Name, the seas of My loving-kindness and bounty moving within you. Suffer not your idle fancies, your evil passions, your insincerity and blindness of heart to dim the luster, or stain the sanctity, of so lofty a station. Ye are even as the bird which soareth, with the full force of its mighty wings and with complete and joyous confidence, through the immensity of the heavens until, impelled to satisfy its hunger, it turneth longingly to the water and clay of the earth below it, and, having been entrapped in the mesh of its desire, findeth itself impotent to resume its flight to the realms whence it came. Powerless to shake off the burden weighing on its sullied wings, that bird, hitherto an inmate of the

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXXXVII, pp. 298-9.

heavens, is now forced to seek a dwelling-place upon the dust. Wherefore, O My servants, defile not your wings with the clay of waywardness and vain desires, and suffer them not to be stained with the dust of envy and hate, that ye may not be hindered from soaring in the heavens of My divine knowledge.¹

No matter the trials that we may have to face, the end is unspeakably glorious.

O My servants! Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you. Worlds, holy and spiritually glorious, will be unveiled to your eyes. You are destined by Him, in this world and hereafter, to partake of their benefits, to share in their joys, and to obtain a portion of their sustaining grace. To each and every one of them you will, no doubt attain.²

And as the true selfless Lover Who wants nothing but man's permanent well-being, Baha'u'llah lovingly advises us of the straight Path.

O My servants! Be as resigned and submissive as the earth, that from the soil of your being there may blossom the fragrant, the holy and multi-colored hyacinths of My knowledge. Be ablaze as the fire, that ye may burn away the veils of heedlessness and set aglow, through the quickening energies of the love of God, the chilled and wayward heart. Be light and untrammelled as the breeze, that ye may obtain admittance into the precincts of My court, My inviolable Sanctuary.

The Eternal is summoning the immortal!

O banished and faithful friend! Quench the thirst of heedlessness with the sanctified waters of My grace, and chase the gloom of remoteness through the morning-light of My Divine presence. Suffer not the habitation wherein dwelleth My undying love for thee to be destroyed through the tyranny of covetous desires, and overcloud not the beauty of the heavenly Youth with the dust of self and passion. Clothe thyself with the essence of righteousness, and let thine heart be afraid of none except God. Obstruct not the luminous spring of thy soul with the thorns and brambles of vain and

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CLIII, pp. 326-7.

² *Ibid.*, CLIII, p. 329.

inordinate affections, and impede not the flow of the living waters that stream from the fountain of thine heart. Set all thy hope in God, and cleave tenaciously to His unfailing mercy. Who else but Him can enrich the destitute, and deliver the fallen from his abasement? O My servants! Were ye to discover the hidden, the shoreless oceans of My incorruptible wealth, ye would, of a certainty, esteem as nothing the world, nay, the entire creation. Let the flame of search burn with such fierceness within your hearts as to enable you to attain your supreme and most exalted goal — the station at which ye can draw nigh unto, and be united with your Best-Beloved.¹

Since man's redemption is the very purpose of being for the Avatar, Baha'u'llah holds out the promise of salvation — even for the most errant and truculent.

My sole duty is to remind you of your failure in duty towards the Cause of God, if perchance ye may be of them that heed My warning. Wherefore, hearken ye unto My speech, and return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses. The greatness of His mercy surpasseth the fury of His wrath, and His grace encompasseth all who have been called into being and been clothed with the robe of life, be they of the past or of the future.²

Despite what has been amply demonstrated concerning the advanced nature of Baha'u'llah's enlightened Teachings for establishing the true Brotherhood of Man, there are always those who will be too willing to assert that the pace of our modern age is too rapid for Baha'u'llah's Teachings to keep pace or remain applicable for any but the briefest period. Such persons are simply devotees of the fairy tale that man's progress is a natural law. They have, it would seem, never heard of the ruins of the great civilizations which once flourished, as ours does now, but are no more.³ For such persons who are oblivious of the clear fact that Avatars are the rarest of phenomena, and for the others who attempt to trick the gullible, Baha'u'llah has a clear warning.

¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CLII, CLIII, pp. 322-3.

² *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, LXVI, p. 130.

³ "There are ways from light into darkness and from darkness into light. There are ways, also, from the gloom into deeper darkness, and from the dawn into brighter light. The wise man will use the light he has to receive more light. He will constantly advance in the knowledge of truth." *Buddhacarita*, vv. 15-22, 1533.

*Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying imposter. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will no doubt forgive him. If, however, he persists in his error, God will assuredly send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible indeed is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things ... Should a man appear, ere the lapse of a full thousand years and if such a man reveal to your eyes all the signs of God, unhesitatingly reject him!*¹

¹ **The Kitab-i-Aqdas**, Baha'u'llah. Note: This is perfectly in accord with the Hindu-Buddhistic system of the Four Ages (Kreta, Treta, Dwapar and Kali [See pp. 182-184, 187, 190-91]. As we have seen, Baha'u'llah and the Bab Who are none other than the Promised Ones Raja Suryavanshi Maru (Kalki Avatar) and Chandravanshi Devapi of the Hindu Scriptures and Maitrya-Amitabha and Avalokitesvara of Buddhist Prophecies — appeared as expected in the last quarter of the last joining period of the Kali Yug (see p. 223) which ended in B.E. 2486 (A.D. 1943). The Bab, at Whose Advent commenced the Baha'i Era, appeared first in B.E. 2387 (A.D. 1844) and Baha'u'llah followed in B.E. 2406 (A.D. 1863). Hence, from the calculations on pp. 215-224, we see that in keeping with the Advents of Ram, Krishna etc. occurring during the end joining period of the age — the darkest part of the night — the Bab appeared exactly 100 years prior to the culmination of Kali Yug and the commencement of Sat Yug which occurred in B.E. 2486 (A.D. 1943) i.e., Baha'i Era First Century. Therefore the next Avatar — Divine Manifestation — will, as Baha'u'llah states, appear after at least 1,000 years from Baha'u'llah's own Advent (by taking into consideration the length of the present Kreta [Sat] Yug, its two joining periods and the length of the first joining period of the next yug). We thus derive the following limits.

	ERA		
	Buddhist	Christian	Baha'i
End of Kali Yug	2486	1943	100
Sat Yug's 1st Jng. Period	100 years	100	100
Span of Sat Yug	1000 years	1000	1000
	3586	3043	1200 Total
Sat Yug's Last Jng. Period	100	100	100
	3686	3143	1300 Total
Treta Yug's 1st Jng. Period	200 years	200	200
	3886	3343	1500 Total

Here, like Siddharta before Him, Baha'u'llah clearly gives the specific span of time for which His Dispensation will carry that component of humanity which adheres to It, and whose kind He will enable to reach the next stage, to be unfolded a millennium or so from now. And what of those who are indifferent? They will have doomed "themselves by their selves." In a cryptic manner Siddharta also affirms this statement of Baha'u'llah regarding the span of the latter's Dispensation.

In the first place, Ananda, when the Great King of Glory, on the Sabbath day (Upasatha, a weekly sacred day), on the day of the full moon, had purified himself, and had gone up into the upper storey of his palace to keep the sacred day, there then appeared to him the heavenly Treasure of the Wheel (which simply means Dharma i.e. His Dispensation), with its nave, (i.e. its center or hub), its tire (or rim i.e. the farthest limit of His Dispensation's reach) and all its thousands spokes complete (meaning His Dispensation will last a thousand years.)¹

And the following verses of this same Scripture assert that the Dispensation of the Great King of Glory will conquer the whole world.²

When he beheld it (i.e. The Wheel of Dharma) the Great King of Glory thought:

This saying have I heard, 'when a king of the warrior race,³ an anointed king, has purified himself on the Sabbath day, on the day

In other words the next Avatar must appear between the years

Buddhist Era	3586	and	3886,
Christian Era	3043	and	3343
Baha'i Era	1200	and	1500.

These dates are only of academic interest but nevertheless in full conformity with the statement of Baha'u'llah, Who constitutes the "Challenge" facing humanity for our age. There is no way to hurdle over or by-pass His mighty claim. It must be squarely faced by each of us. Also asserted (see pp. 222-223) by Surdas' prophecy regarding Kalki (Maitrya-Amitabha), who will usher in a thousand years of the **Sat Yug**.

¹ **Digha-nikaya**. The Maha-Sudassana Sutta, v. 11, ("The Sutta of the Great King of Glory").

² This and the following passages about the duration and spread of the Dharma refers to the Dispensation of The Great King of Glory (Baha'u'llah) and not Siddharta's since Siddharta Himself as we have seen from the "Five Disappearances" and the entry of women into the Samgha — "The true Law (Saddhama) which was to stand a millennium, owing to the entry of women into the order, will now stand reduced by half." (**Kullavagga**, X, 1.6) — is referring in the above Scripture to Baha'u'llah's World Order.

³ Baha'u'llah like Siddharta was of the nobility i.e. "Kshatriya" rather than Brahmin or priest class.

of the full moon, and has gone up into the upper storey of his palace to keep the sacred day; if there appear to him the heavenly Treasure of the Wheel, with its nave, its tire, and all its thousand spokes complete — that king becomes a king of kings invincible.' May I, then, become a king of kings invincible.

'Then, Ananda, the Great King of Glory rose from his seat, and reverently uncovering from one shoulder his robe, he held in his left hand a pitcher, and with his right hand he sprinkled water up over the Wheel, as he said:

'Roll onward, O my Lord, the Wheel! O my Lord, go forth and overcome!'

'Then the wondrous Wheel, Ananda, rolled onwards towards the region of the East, and after it went the Great King of Glory, and with him his army, horses, and chariots, and elephants, and men. And in whatever place, Ananda, the Wheel stopped, there the Great King of Glory took up his abode, and with him his army, horses, and chariots, and elephants, and men.

'Then, Ananda, all the rival kings in the region of the East came to the Great King of Glory and said:

'Come, O mighty king! Welcome, O mighty king! All is thine, O mighty king! Do thou, O mighty king, be a Teacher to us!'

'Thus spake the Great King of Glory:

'Ye shall slay no living thing.

'Ye shall not take that which has not been given.

'Ye shall not act wrongly touching the bodily desires.

'Ye shall speak no lie.

'Ye shall drink no maddening drink.

'Ye shall eat as ye have eaten.'¹

'Then, Ananda, all the rival kings in the region of the East became subject unto the Great King of Glory.

'But the wondrous Wheel, Ananda, having plunged down into the great waters in the East, rose up out again, and rolled onward to the region of the South [and there all happened as had happened in the region of the East. And in like manner the wondrous Wheel rolled onward to the extremest boundary of the West and of the North; and there, too, all happened as had happened in the region of the East].

¹ Which simply means — as Bahā'u'llāh has proclaimed — that there are no dietary restrictions except alcohol, drugs, etc.

Siddharta leaves no doubt, by the above, that king and commoner must bend their knee in allegiance before the power of the Dispensation (Dharma Wheel) of the Great King of Glory — Baha'u'llah. But there is more and it is uncanny.

'Now when the wondrous Wheel, Ananda, had gone forth conquering and to conquer o'er the whole earth to its very ocean boundary, it returned back again to the royal city of Kusavati and remained fixed on the open terrace in front of the entrance to the inner apartments of the Great King of Glory, as a glorious adornment to the inner apartments of the Great King of Glory.

*'Such, Ananda, was the wondrous Wheel which appeared to the Great King of Glory.'*¹

For while "the wondrous Wheel" is indeed the Wheel of Dharma — and not something physical — the Cause of Baha'u'llah, whose destiny, as He Himself assures us is the spiritual conquest of the planet —

*When the victory arriveth, every man shall profess himself as believer and shall hasten to the shelter of God's Faith. Happy are they who in the days of world-encompassing trials have stood fast in the Cause and refused to swerve from its truth.'*²

— yet the following words of Siddharta,

It returned back again to the royal city of Kusavati³ and remained fixed on the open terrace in front of the entrance to the inner apartments of the Great King of Glory, as a glorious adornment to the inner apartments of the Great King of Glory.

definitely indicate something physical, albeit symbolizing the Dharma but nevertheless physical, round like the wheel, "a glorious adornment." But what precisely and exactly where? Surely nothing remains of Siddharta's Stupa ("inner apartments"), nor do any Buddhist Scriptures indicate any such symbol or adornment relating to "a glorious adornment" in connection with Siddharta's palace or Stupa. Moreover, Siddharta nowhere is known as "the Great King of Glory." Nor did Siddharta prophesy that His Dharma would conquer the world. This allegory of

¹ **Digha-nikaya.** The Maha-Sudassana Sutta, vv. 12-20.

² **Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah,** CL, p. 319.

³ This is a symbolic place related to the Sukhavati of the Sutras of the same name and cannot be correlated to the physical location of the city founded by Ram's son Kush. Similarly, "the Great King of Glory" is clearly identifiable with Amitabha.

“the Great King of Glory” and his “wondrous Wheel” is also prophecy. By it Siddharta is describing a future occurrence. And still the questions remain — *what* precisely is the “glorious adornment” and *where* exactly is “the open terrace in front of the entrance to the inner apartments of the Great King of Glory,” on which it remains “fixed as a glorious adornment to the inner apartments of the Great King of Glory?” They can now be answered. For what could more precisely describe the physical symbol of the wondrous Wheel (round) which *remains fixed* as “a glorious adornment” than the name of the most Glorious Itself — “O Glory of the All-Glorious” (Ya Baha’u’l Abha)¹ — the Greatest Name carved on the round golden plaque fixed as shown (p. 386) on the portico of the open terrace of the entrance-way to the inner apartments of the Mansion of Bahji once used by Baha’u’llah (the Great King of Glory) and now the Holiest Shrine of the Baha’i world, where rest His mortal remains.

The emblem of the wondrous Wheel which remains fixed as a glorious adornment uses the letters of the Arabic alphabet to symbolize the many connotations given by the Bab to the two key words — Baha (Bha) and Abha — which, in both Sanskrit and Arabic, are pronounced the same and mean the same — “Glory” or “Glorious”. These are the very words which are so profusely and precisely mentioned and described by Siddharta in the *Sukhavati-Vyuha Suttas*, the *Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutta* and the *Maha-Sudassana-Sutta*. It is these same words “Bha” and “Abha” which are also mentioned repeatedly in Krishna’s dialogue with Arjuna² in describing His Own supernal glory.³ With uncanny foresight Siddharta prophesied the symbolic wheel of the Greatest Name, which now remains fixed as a glorious ornament over the portals to the Holiest Shrine — the Resting Place of Baha’u’llah — in beautiful calligraphy on a round golden plaque as seen in the photo in Fig. 11.

While the Scriptures of every Divine Faith have alluded to the Greatest Name and some, as those of Hinduism, have even uttered

¹ Both *Baha* (arabic) and *Bha* (Sanskrit) as well as *Abha* (in both Arabic and Sanskrit) mean “Glory” or “Glorious”.

² *Bhagavad-Gita*, XI. 12, 32, 33.

³ While these two words “Bha” and “Abha” may seem as two separate words they are essentially one word as the word “Bha” means “glory” and “a” is simply a prefix denoting the preposition “of”. Hence “Abha” means (possessing) “of Glory” or simply “Glorious” which when capitalized denotes the Supreme and is often written as “The Glorious” or “The All-Glorious”. Hence Ya Baha’u’l Abha means, “O Glory of the All-Glorious”.



The approach to the Shrine of Baha'u'llah (Holiest of the holies). It adjoins His mansion of Bahji.

Fig. 11

“The wondrous Wheel... remained fixed on the open terrace in front of the entrance to the inner apartments of the Great King of Glory, as a glorious adornment...”





Fig. 12
Ya Baha'u'l Abha
(O Glory of the All-glorious)

syllables of it, yet nowhere among the many hundreds of prophecies, in the Scriptures of those Faiths, relating to the signs and descriptions of the Advent of Their Promised One — the Aeon-Énder — is there anything to rival the wealth of signs and conditions contained in Siddharta's sayings about Maitrya-Amitabha and His Sukhavati. Certainly no other Scripture describes or even hints of the very shape (round like the "wheel") of the golden plaque "fixed as a *glorious* adornment," or, to the meaning of the words "O Glory of the All-Glorious" — the Greatest Name — carved on "the wondrous Wheel" to adorn it, and its precise location atop the portals to Baha'u'llah's Shrine exactly as described by Siddharta's prophecy.

By virtue of its great sacred significance the Baha'is look upon it with reverence. Because of the veneration due the Greatest Name, 'Abdu'l-Baha discouraged its use as a decoration or ornament except in

the most dignified and reverential manner. And for general use by the Baha'is, He designed a symbol (Fig. 13), that captures the import of the Greatest Name and denotes its purpose.¹

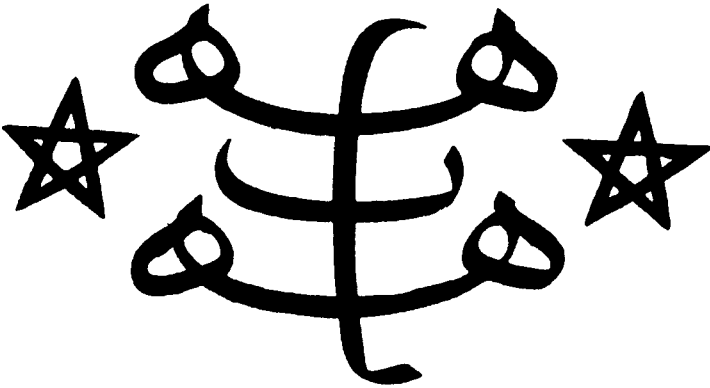


Fig. 13

To give the widest meaning and the best symmetry to the design of this symbol, 'Abdu'l-Baha also used the Arabic alphabet, since that is the script in which the Holy Scriptures are now revealed for our age by Baha'u'llah — Maitrya-Amitabha — the Great King of Glory.

The three horizontal lines in Fig. 13, composed by the combinations² of the Arabic letters "heh" and "beh" denote the Triple World often mentioned by Siddharta and His predecessors —

*The Tathagata sees (not as the ignorant common people) the Triple World — the world of the Uncreated and Causeless Cause, the world of Revelation or Spirit-Mind and the physical plane or the world of creation — as it really is.*³

¹Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Vol. I. p. 178, 'Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i Publishing Committee, New York, 1930.

²Which from Arabic numerology totals 9 and is the same as the totals of the names Baha or Abha since b (or Beh) = 2; H (or Heh) = 5 and a (or Alif) = 1.

³The Saddharmapundarika-Sutta ("The Lotus of the Good Law"), Ch. XV, pp. 302-3. See Text, pp. 39-40. Also Yajur-Veda, XIII. 36. "The Lord of Generations, the One greater than Whom none else is begotten, the One in the attire of Avatar (Manifestation) entered, inhabiting the worldly abodes, bestowing the richest bliss, He is the Bearer of the threefold splendor." and Bhagavad-Gita, III. 22.

— which is the same concept held also by the Three Central Figures of the Bahā'ī Faith and stated as: The World of God (i.e. identical to Siddharta's — “world of the Uncreated or Causeless Cause”). The World of the Manifestation or Command (which is what is meant by Spirit-Mind or Revelation in Siddharta's statement). The World of Man or Creation (which is identical with Siddharta's meaning of it).¹ These three worlds are connected by the Dharma — the Path — emanating from the Absolute and immanent in every aspect of the Cosmos which, as the perfect mirror, the Manifestation receives and focuses upon humanity.² The two five-pointed stars on either side, symbolizing the human body, indicate the Twin-miracle — Maitrya-Amitabha and Avalokitesvara — Bahā'u'llah and the Bab, Who have jointly ushered in this mighty Dispensation of the Greatest Name — “the wondrous Wheel.”

Looked at from another perspective this marvelous symbol also incorporates the prophecies of Siddharta concerning the *actual positioning* of the Two — Avalokitesvara (The Bab) and Mahasthamaprapta ('Abdu'l-Baha) — Holy Ones on either side of Maitrya-Amitabha — Bahā'u'llah — the Aeon Ender.

*...Perceive that an image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is sitting on the left ... and an image of Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta on the right-hand.*³

Hence the cover design incorporating the symbol of the Greatest Name as the centerpiece denotes the Two Dispensations. The one, of Siddharta — shown by its ancient symbol of the eight-spoked wheel — receding in the background as its invigorating influence upon the ocean of humanity is now spent, exactly as Siddharta had prophesied it would. The other, of Bahā'u'llah the glorious, newly arisen Spiritual Sun — Maitrya-Amitabha — bursting upon the world and suffusing it in the glory of the New Day whose generating impulse is symbolized by the Greatest Name and its radiance — the twelve fundamental principles proclaimed by Him for our age. The Lotus, from which the symbols of both Siddharta's and Bahā'u'llah's Dispensations arise, is the Principle of the Avatar — the Divine Teacher — as He has eternally proclaimed,

¹ This same concept is even more emphatically expounded in the *Majjhima-nikaya* (1.137-40) and the *Sanskrit Dhammapada*, v.

² See pp. 41, 113-116.

³ See Text, p. 320.

*... just so, Brahmin, although born in the world, grown up in the world, having overcome the world, I abide unsoiled by the world. Take it that I am Buddha, Brahmin.*¹

The “wondrous Wheel” of Baha’u’llah’s glorious Cause — whose standard is the symbol of the Greatest Name “O Glory of the All-Glorious” (Ya Baha’u’l Abha) — has within a single century spanned the oceans and indeed achieved the spiritual conquest over the habitants of the East and West, North and South. The Baha’i Faith has already moved the masses, soon it will also captivate the leaders and the kings. As Siddharta’s prophecy clearly states, the world must proclaim its allegiance to Baha’u’llah’s supremacy and rule. Those who turn away from His summons will have abdicated from life eternal.

For there can be no doubt that He, Baha’u’llah — the Great King of Glory — Maitrya-Amitabha, has indeed proclaimed “the teaching that is lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, and lovely in its consummation ... in the essence of its meaning and in its outward form” and made known for this age the higher life “in all its fullness and in all its purity,”² even as Siddharta had foretold. And those who seek to emerge from darkness into light, from delusion to truth and from death to immortality will accept Baha’u’llah’s Teaching because they understand that “*this is so meritorious and perfect that when accepted it is for the weal of all...*”³

¹ See Text, p. 60.

² *Digha-nikaya*, IV. 26, 25. (See also p. 168 of text).

³ *Anguttara-nikaya*, III, 653. (See also f.n. 3. p. 353 of text).

BAHA'IS THE NEW TRUE BUDDHISTS

The sun shines by day, the moon lights up the night, the warrior shines in his armour, the Brahmin shines in his meditation, but the awakened shines all day and night by his radiance (of spirit).¹

Now we come to the last part of Siddharta's prophecy in the *Anagatavamsa*, to which we must apply the only interpretation that can logically follow from the record of what has already been shown regarding this passage and the conditions established by Siddharta's own sayings. This reads thus:

*No human being will be found at that place.
All the devas of the ten-thousand world system,
gathered together, will hear Dhamma and many
thousands of them will attain to Dhamma.²*

By the lines "no human being will be found at that place" (in the last stage of this aeon) and only "the devas of the ten-thousand world system, gathered together," is indicated both a symbolic portrayal of our modern world, where with the scientific powers at our command we would appear as gods (devas) to the dwellers in those ancient times, and being able to fly through the skies from the ends of the earth (ten-thousand world system) could gather together at any "place" of our

¹ Dhammapada, v. 387.

² Anagatavamsa.

choosing, *as well as* a qualification that those many thousands of such “devas” (ourselves) who will hear the Religion (Dhamma) taught by the “Twin-miracle” (the Bab¹ and Baha’u’llah²) and who will attain to the acceptance of the Dhamma, will have done so by having detached themselves from the bonds of the world like the enlightened beings (devas) and live by only “feeding on happiness.”³ Hence, one can now understand what is meant by the line “no human beings.” Furthermore, common sense should also tell us that it is, after all, for humanity’s well-being and progress that the Avatars, the Buddhas, appear to proclaim and teach the Dharma (Religion), and if there were literally no human beings at all to hear the Message of the Divine Teacher there would be no point for His appearance “in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years.” We see Siddharta further clarifying this point in response to Subhuti’s question:

*Forsooth, O Lord, will there be any beings in the future, in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years’, during the time of the decay of the good Law (Dharma), who, when these very words of the Sutras are being preached, will frame a true idea?*⁴ —

by the following reply:

Do not speak thus, Subhuti. Yes, there will be some beings in the future, in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years, during the decay of the good Law, who will frame a true idea when these very words are being preached.

These disciples of the “Twin-miracle” (the Bab and Baha’u’llah) are called Baha’is and they are the true Buddhists of our times. For, in strict conformity with His Teachings, the followers of Baha’u’llah acknowledge, accept and adhere to the true Dharma proclaimed by all the Divine Manifestations — the Avatars, the Buddhas — even to the extent of sacrificing their very lives rather than renounce or deny a single one of these Divine Teachers. As Baha’u’llah has so forthrightly announced:

¹ Avalokitesvara.

² Maitrya-Amitabha.

³ Dhammapada, vv. 199, 200. “Let us live happily then, free from care in the midst of those who are careworn; let us dwell free from care among men who are careworn. Let us live happily then, we who possess nothing. Let us dwell feeding on happiness like the shining gods (devas).”

⁴ The Vajrachhedika (or Diamond Cutter) Sutra, VI.

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, the Source of infinite grace... hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence.¹ These sanctified Mirrors, these Day-springs of ancient glory are one and all the Exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty. The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory. They are the Treasuries of divine knowledge, and the Repositories of celestial wisdom. Through them is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and by them is revealed the light that can never fade.²

And again:

O Salman! The door of the knowledge of the Ancient Being³ hath ever been, and will continue forever to be closed in the face of men. No man's understanding shall ever gain access unto His holy court. As a token of His mercy, however, and as a proof of His loving-kindness, He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His divine guidance, the Symbols of His divine unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with the knowledge of His own Self. Whoso recognizeth them hath recognized God. Whoso hearkeneth to their call, hath hearkened to the Voice of God, and whoso testifieth to the truth of their Revelation, hath testified to the truth of God Himself. Whoso turneth away from them, hath turned away from God, and whoso disbelieveth in them, hath disbelieved in God. Every one of them is the Way of God that connecteth this world with the realms above, and the Standard of His Truth unto every one in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. They

¹ See text page 41. "And as all things originate from one Essence, ... Nirvana comes to thee, Kassapa, when thou understandest thoroughly and when thou livest according to thy understanding, that all things are of one Essence and that there is but one law." (Sanskrit **Dhammapada**, v.).

² **Kitab-i-Iqan (Book of Certitude)**, pp. 64-5, Baha'u'llah. Baha'i Publishing Trust, London, 1961.

³ The "Ancient Being" is the Absolute, the unknowable and incomprehensible Supreme, God.

*are the Manifestations of God amidst men, the evidences of His Truth, and the signs of His glory.*¹

Fully aware of this distinguishing feature of the Baha'is, Siddharta clearly announced it to Subhuti and made it a covenant of assurance for the sincere seekers of the pure Dharma "in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years," in order to enable such persons to attain the goal of their quest by discovering the disciples of Baha'u'llah — the Baha'is — whose attributes Siddharta described so perfectly more than twenty-five centuries ago.

*And again, O Subhuti, there will be noble-minded Bodhisattvas, in the future, in the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years, during the decay of the good Law, there will be strong and good and wise beings, who, when these very words of the Sutras are being preached, will frame a true idea. But those noble-minded Bodhisattvas, O Subhuti, will not have served one Buddha only, and the stock of their merit will not have been accumulated under one Buddha only; on the contrary, O Subhuti, those noble-minded Bodhisattvas will have served many hundred thousands of Buddhas, and the stock of their merit will have been accumulated under many hundred thousands of Buddhas; and they, when these very words of the Sutras are being preached, will obtain one and the same faith.*²

When we examine this remarkable statement in the light of what we have already noted (pp. 337-338) from the Teachings of Baha'u'llah and his even more emphatic injunction,

Beware, O believers, in the Unity of God, lest ye be tempted to make any distinction between any of the Manifestations of His Cause, or to discriminate against the signs that have accompanied and proclaimed their Revelation. This indeed is the true meaning of Divine Unity, if ye be of them that apprehend and believe this truth. Be ye assured, moreover, that the works and acts of each and every one of these Manifestations of God, nay whatever pertaineth unto them, and whatsoever they may manifest in the future, are all ordained by God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Whoso maketh the slightest possible difference between their persons, their words, their messages, their acts and manners, hath indeed

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XXI, pp. 49-50.

² The Vajrachhedika-Sutra, VI.

*disbelieved in God, hath repudiated His signs, and betrayed the Cause of His Messengers.*¹ —

we should have no doubt that the Baha'is alone can fully meet the complete sense of Siddharta's prophetic utterances, especially His last condition "and they, when these very words of the Sutras are being preached, will obtain one and the same faith." And as Siddharta states in another place — quoting Amitabha's prayer concerning the conditions that will exist in His Sukhavati (The Land of Bliss) —

*O Bhagavat, if, after I have obtained Bodhi, the Bodhisattvas, as soon as they have heard my name, in other worlds, should not obtain the Samadhi (ecstasy) called Samantanugata, in which Bodhisattvas honour one moment after another immeasurable, innumerable, inconceivable, incomparable, immense, blessed Buddhas,... then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.*²

The aforestated excerpts (from *Vajrachhedika* and *Sukhavati*) simply mean that while acknowledging the validity of the truths preached by all the Divine Messengers (the Buddhas) of bygone times, the followers of Baha'u'llah remain *completely united* in faith, in their acceptance of and adherence to the peerless Dharma now being proclaimed by Him.

The purpose of true Dharma is to eliminate ignorance and to eradicate separateness, the disease of "me and mine"³ and to establish unity — the oneness of humanity — and this can only be possible through the "one and the same faith," as confirmed by both Siddharta and Baha'u'llah. Namely,

to consort with the people of religions with joy and fragrance; to show forth that which is declared by the Speaker of the Mount; and to render justice in affairs. The followers of sincerity and faithfulness must consort with all the people of the world with joy and fragrance; for association is always conducive to union and harmony, and union and harmony are the cause of the order of the world and the

¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, XXIV, pp. 59-60. Also see, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Vol. II (pp. 339-40), by 'Abdu'l-Baha. "Likewise must we set aside prejudice in considering other Divine Educators, by investigating reality. For instance let us take His Holiness the Buddha ... there is no doubt whatever that they were prophets, for the mission of prophethood is education, and these wondrous souls trained and educated mankind."

² *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, 8.43.

³ *Anguttara-nikaya*, iii. 359. "Even so, do men of the true stamp declare the wisdom they have attained. They tell what they have gained, but do not speak of 'I'."

life of nations. Blessed are they who hold fast to the rope of compassion and kindness and are detached from animosity and hatred!

*This oppressed One exhorts the people of the world to forbearance and benevolence. These are as two lights for the darkness of the world and as two teachers to lead nations to knowledge. Blessed are those who attain thereto, and woe unto those who are headless!*¹

From the foregoing, the conclusion of the final excerpt from this prophecy of Siddharta concerning the last of the five disappearances — “the disappearance of the relics” — it becomes clear in reading that those who “attain to Dharma” (i.e. the Baha’is) in this age (i.e. ‘the last time, in the last moment, in the last 500 years’), will announce to those others who still seek, that Siddharta’s Dispensation has ended and all the conditions prophesied have been fulfilled.

And these will cry aloud, saying: ‘Behold, devatas, a week from today our One of the Ten Powers will attain complete Nirvana. They will weep, saying: ‘Henceforth there will be darkness for us.’ Then the relics, producing the condition of heat, will burn up that image leaving no remainder.

“This, Sariputta, is called the disappearance of the relics.”

“One of the Ten Powers” attaining “complete Nirvana” simply means the complete achievement of Siddharta’s purpose, which, since Siddharta was one of the ten Avatars (Manifestations) of Visnu (the Supreme), was to provide the guidance to the humanity of His time prior to Visnu’s tenth and final advent (Kalki or Maitrya-Amitabha) at the end of the aeon and describe the signs and conditions for those living “in the last time, in the last moment” to discover and accept the Aeon-Ender — Baha’u’llah. Those who do not discover that Baha’u’llah is the awaited Maitrya-Amitabha will “weep” in the “darkness” caused by the final disappearance of Siddharta’s Teachings (relics, see pp. 197-199), which have ceased to motivate and mould His disciples, for they, having failed as yet to discover the newly arisen Spiritual Sun — Baha’u’llah — are enveloped by the darkness and despair of their own making. While of those that have discovered and accepted Baha’u’llah — the Baha’is — Siddharta has more to say:

¹The Second Taraz (“Ornaments”). Title of one of the Tablets of Baha’u’llah. (Baha’i World Faith, p. 168.)

They are known, O Subhuti, by the Tathagata through his Buddha-knowledge; they are seen, O Subhuti, by the Tathagata through his Buddha-eye; they are understood, O Subhuti, by the Tathagata. All these, O Subhuti, will produce and will hold fast an immeasurable and innumerable stock of merit. And why? Because, O Subhuti, there does not exist in those noble-minded Bodhisattvas the idea of self, there does not exist the idea of a being, the idea of a living being, the idea of a person. Nor does there exist, O Subhuti, for these noble-minded Bodhisattvas the idea of quality (dharma), nor of no-quality. Neither does there exist, O Subhuti, any idea (samgna) or no-idea. And why? Because, O Subhuti, if there existed for these noble-minded Bodhisattvas the idea of quality, then they would believe in a self, they would believe in a being, they would believe in a living being, they would believe in a person. And if there existed for them the idea of no-quality, even then they would believe in a self, they would believe in a being, they would believe in a living being, they would believe in a person. And why? Because, O Subhuti, neither quality nor no-quality is to be accepted by a noble-minded Bodhisattva. Therefore this hidden saying has been preached by the Tathagata: ‘By those who know the teaching of the Law, as like unto a raft, all qualities indeed must be abandoned; much more no qualities.’¹

Simply put, this means that those who have discovered Baha'u'llah (Maitrya-Amitabha) have fully recognized and understood the principle of progressive Divine Revelation and know that the Divine Messengers — the Buddhas — are only the channels for its manifestation amongst humanity. Hence, the Baha'is do not attach themselves to the Person of the Messenger. They eschew the mental construction of qualities and differences leading to inferiority or superiority among the various Divine Teachers and avoid the interjection of their self and ego over those of the disciples of other Buddhas, which would create needless prejudice and conflict. Instead, by steadfastly adhering to the principle that Religion (Dharma) is renewed from time to time, they realize that the Truth is one and the goal the same, and only the means and methods are altered and expanded to meet the needs of an ever-evolving humanity.

To the Baha'is, Religion is not something exclusive or monopolistic in character nor has it anything to do with rituals, social mores or dietary

¹ The Vajrachhedika Sutra, VI.

habits. Its purpose is to enable us to discipline our whole being, physical and mental, through meditation and prayer to become harmonious beings — regardless of caste or color — morally awakened and integrated into the universal family of Man.

For those (the Baha'is) who have recognized the Twin-miracle the central theme is the promotion and maintenance of harmony and unity among the human race. As man is a finite creature and by his very nature limited to conceiving only relative phenomena, hence absolute truth is forever beyond him. Thus 'Abdu'l-Baha's assertion that unity is greater than right is a logical axiom.¹

If anything can be said to approach the "absolute truth" within the human context it is the following assertion of unity: namely, that there is a Primal Cause — a Universal Creator — and that all rational beings are its children. However far man may progress, whatever be his life-forms, this will be the unvarying truth on which he must achieve his unity and through it his progress. This concept of absolute truth and the unity resulting from it is foretold by Siddharta as the attribute of those of the future, the followers of Amitabha — the Baha'is — who will inhabit Sukhavati.

And again, O Ananda, in that Buddha country whatever beings have been born, and are being born, and will be born, are always constant in absolute truth, till they have reached Nirvana. And why is that? Because there is no room or mention there of the other two divisions (rasis), such as beings not constant or constant in falsehood.²

Based on this firm foundation, the Baha'is are those who Siddharta describes "while possessing nothing, dwell feeding on happiness like the shining gods."³

And again, O Ananda, all those beings who have been born in that Buddha country recite the story of the Law, which is accompanied by omniscience. And for the beings in that Buddha country there exists no idea of property whatever ... And again, O Ananda, for those beings who have been born in that world Sukhavati, there is

¹ Hence, discord for the sake of such "truth" is not to be preferred over concord, even with those persons who may all be in error. For such relative truth could present a different facet of itself tomorrow and thus render meaningless our conflicts on its behalf. While, in unity and harmony, we can discover the same relative truths without paying the futile price of destruction.

² *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, v. 24. Also see, v. 8.11.

³ *Dhammapada*, vv. 199, 200.

no idea of others, no idea of self, no idea of inequality, no strife, no dispute, no opposition. Full of equanimity, of benevolent thought, of tender thought,... of useful thought,... of firm thought, of unbiased thought, of undisturbed thought,... of thought (fixed on) the practice of discipline and transcendent wisdom,... equal to the ocean in wisdom,... devoted to the music of Buddha, they discard the eye of flesh, and assume the heavenly eye. And having approached the eye of wisdom, having reached the eye of the Law, producing the eye of Buddha, showing it, lighting, it, and fully exhibiting it, they attain perfect wisdom. And ... having subdued and calmed their thoughts, endowed with a perception of the causes of all things, clever in explanation of causes, endowed with the power of explaining the Law (or things such as they really are), clever in leading ... they, being regardless of worldly stories, derive true pleasures from stories transcending the world. They are clever in examining all things, perceiving even what cannot be seen, caring for nothing, attached to nothing, without cares, without pain, free without clinging to anything, free from impurity, of blameless behaviour, intent on the deep or profound laws, they do not sink, elevated to the entrance into the knowledge of Buddha difficult to comprehend, having obtained the path of one vehicle, free from doubt, beyond the reach of questionings, knowing the thoughts of others, ... by their patiently bearing the good and evil deeds of all beings, they are like the earth; by their cleaning and carrying off the taint of all sins, they are like water; by their burning the evil of pride in anything, they are like the king of fire; by not clinging to anything, they are like the wind; by pervading all things and yet not caring for anything, they are like the ether; by not being tainted by the whole world, they are like lotuses; by their shouting forth the Law, they are like the great cloud at the rainy season; ... by over-powering great troops, they are like bulls; by the highest restraint of their thoughts, they are like great elephants; by being well trained, they are like noble horses; by their fearlessness, confidence, and heroism, they are like the lion, the king of beasts; by affording protection to all beings, they are like the Nyagrodha (fig-tree), the king of trees; by not being shaken by any calumniators, they are like the (Sumeru), the king of mountains; by their feeling of unlimited love, they are like the sky; by their precedence, owing to their command of the Law, and their stock of all merit, they are like the great Brahman; by their not dwelling in

what they have accumulated, they are like birds; by their scattering all calumniators, they are like Garuda, king of birds; by their not being averse to obtaining difficult things, they are like the Udumbara flowers; calm like elephants, because their senses are neither crooked nor shaken; clever in decision, full of the sweet flavour of patience; without envy, because they do not hanker after the happiness of others; wise, because in their search after the Law, never tired of discussions on the Law ... blowing the great trumpet-shell of the Law, raising the great banner of the Law, lighting the torch of the Law, looking for wisdom, not foolish, faultless, passionless, pure, refined, not greedy, fond of distributing, generous, open-handed, fond of distributing gifts, not stingy in giving instruction and food, not attached, without fear, without desires, wise, patient, energetic, bashful, orderly, fearless, full of knowledge, happy, pleasant to live with, obliging, enlightening the world, free from sorrow, free from taint, having left off the winking of the eye, ... strong in reasoning, strong in prayer, not crooked, not perverse ... delivered from the thorns of pride, free from illusion, hatred, and passion; pure, devoted to what is pure, ... learned in the world, elevated by their purified knowledge, sons of the Gina,¹ endowed with the vigour of thought, heroes, firm, unselfish, sending forth the weapons of knowledge, possessed of purity, shining, free from faults and taints, endowed with memory, resting on serene knowledge. And such, O Ananda, are the beings in that Buddha country, stated briefly. But if the Tathagatas should describe them fully, even in a length of life that should last for a hundred thousand niyutas of kotis of kalpas, yet the end of the virtues of those good people would not be reached...²

The purpose for quoting at length this excerpt on the attributes of the true Buddhists of this age — the Baha'is — is two-fold. Firstly, those who seek Maitrya-Amitabha and His Sukhavati can see the grandeur of the heights to which humanity can rise. Secondly, those who have recognized Maitrya-Amitabha — the Baha'is themselves — should not become complacent if they too are to achieve their full potential on the

¹ Buddha.

² **The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, v. 38. Also, by reference to the text (pp. 264-65, 332-335 and 378-9) we can see how similar this address of Siddharta's is to the words of the Bab to His "Letters of the Living" and also with Baha'u'llah's words to His own disciples.

never ending road to perfection. Succinctly describing the greatness of those who attain to Amitabha and His Sukhavati, Siddharta affirms nevertheless that the new Order will be spiritually egalitarian, both in essence and in form.

And in that world, there is no difference between gods and men, except when they are spoken of in ordinary and imperfect parlance as gods and men. And, O Ananda, as a low man and impotent man, before the face of the mighty king, is neither bright, nor warm, nor brilliant, nor is he self-confident and radiant — thus Sakra, king of the Devas, if before the face of the Paranirmitavasavartin¹ gods, is neither bright, nor warm, nor brilliant, namely, with regard to his gardens, palaces, dresses, ornaments, his dominion, his perfection, his miraculous power, or his supremacy, his comprehension of the Law, and his full enjoyment of the Law. And, O Ananda, as the Paranirmitavasavartin gods are there, thus men must be considered in the world Sukhavati.²

The World Order of Baha'u'llah not only provides a perfect mechanism for preventing the usurpation of power by any individual, however great his name or fame, but also obviates the need for any priesthood or class. This too Siddharta clearly foresaw and foretold.

And in that Buddha country, O Ananda, no mention is ever made of the names of fire, sun, moon, planets, Nakshatras (constellations), and stars, or of blinding darkness. There is no mention even of day and night, except in the conversation of the Tathagata. Nor is there any idea of praedial property belonging to monasteries.³

The last sentence asserts the total absence of monasteries or monastic orders — clergy. Hence the new Samgha will be different in form from the ancient Order. And that is as it should be in order to meet the requirements of a greatly changed society and its more developed psyche.

The vital goal set by Baha'u'llah for His followers is the establishment of the *oneness of mankind*. This, He states, can only be achieved through unstinting effort by one and all who call themselves Baha'is to spread His Message to all the peoples of the earth.

¹“Paranirmitavasavartin” means “the ever-abiding” i.e. not subject to fall.

²The Larger Sukhavati v. 20. (See also text p. 240). Note also that the last line clearly affirms that the “beings” talked about in Sukhavati and also in the last period of the Dharma’s decay are human beings — “thus men must be considered in the world Sukhavati”.

³The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, v. 22.

And from each ray of light there proceed thirty-six hundred thousand kotis of Buddhas, with bodies of golden-colour, possessed of the thirty-two marks of great men, who go and teach the Law to beings in the immeasurable and innumerable worlds in the eastern quarter. Thus also in the southern, western, and northern quarters, above and below, in the cardinal and intermediate points, they go their way to the immeasurable and innumerable worlds and teach the Law to beings in the whole world.¹

It is incumbent on every Baha'i who is able, to proclaim the life-giving Teachings of his Faith. In pursuance of this aim many a Baha'i has left his native land as well as his worldly attainments and pioneered to distant lands, settling among peoples of different background and language.² They have continued to spread the fragrance of the New Garden of human growth which, even from the little we have seen of Siddharta's own prophecies, has surpassed all previous gardens in its perfection and universality. The Baha'is are fully convinced that not all the success they may achieve in their particular professions will have any significance either for themselves and their progeny or their fellowmen if humanity goes berserk.

God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of teaching His Cause. Whoever ariseth to discharge this duty, must needs, ere he proclaimeth His Message, adorn himself with the ornament of an upright and praise-worthy character, so that his words may attract the hearts of such as are receptive to his call. Without it, he can never hope to influence his hearers.³

They that have forsaken their country for the purpose of teaching Our Cause — these shall the Faithful Spirit strengthen through its power. A company of Our chosen angels shall go forth with them, as bidden by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. How great the blessedness that awaiteth him that hath attained the honor of serving the Almighty! By My life! No act, however great, can compare with it, except such deeds as have been ordained by God, the All-Powerful, the Most Mighty. Such a service is, indeed the prince of all goodly deeds, and the ornament of every goodly act. Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is the Sovereign Revealer, the Ancient of Days.

¹ *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, v. 16.

² See pp. 122 of the text.

³ *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CLVIII, p. 335.

Whoso ariseth to teach Our Cause must needs detach himself from all earthly things, and regard, at all times, the triumph of Our Faith as his supreme objective. This hath, verily, been decreed in the Guarded Tablet. And when he determineth to leave his home, for the sake of the Cause of his Lord, let him put his whole trust in God, as the best provision for his journey, and array himself with the robe of virtue. Thus hath it been decreed by God, the Almighty, the All-Praised.

If he be kindled with the fire of His love, if he foregoeth all created things, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him. Verily, thy Lord is the Omniscient, the All-Informed. Happy is the man that hath heard Our voice, and answered Our call. He, in truth, is of them that shall be brought nigh unto Us.¹

Only the Divine Teachings of love and unity offered by the Master Physician can halt mankind's fatal preoccupation with material gains and restore the essential spiritual balance. Forbidding His followers the use of any coercion or threat in propagating His World Order —

Know thou that We have annulled the rule of the sword, as an aid to Our Cause, and substituted for it the power born of the utterance of men. Thus have We irrevocably decreed, by virtue of Our grace.²

— Baha'u'llah lauds those who endeavour to do His bidding by word and deed.

If any man were to arise to defend, in his writings, the Cause of God against its assailants, such a man, however inconsiderable his share, shall be so honored in the world to come that the Concourse on high would envy his glory. No pen can depict the loftiness of his station, neither can any tongue describe its splendor.³

As He had assured Ajita, "I have done what a Tathagata ought to do", concerning a full description of Baha'u'llah and His rapidly developing Kingdom (Sukhavati), Siddharta seems to have left no stone unturned. In a way which can only be understood in our time, and that only in the context of the Shrines of the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha in Haifa and of Baha'u'llah in Akka, Siddharta's uncanny prescience describes the two kinds of persons (The true pilgrim and the mere tourist) who come to these Baha'i Holy Shrines.

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CLVII, pp. 335-6.

² Ibid., CXXXIX, p. 303.

³ Ibid., CLIV, p. 330.

First, Siddharta states that all persons, whether they are Baha'is (pilgrims) or non-Baha'is (visitors or tourists), must ascend (since the Bab's Shrine is on Mount Carmel) to visit these and that upon entering they all must walk respectfully.

The Bhagavat said: 'Do you see again, O Agita, those beings, who have ascended to the palaces which extend over a hundred thousand yoganas in the sky, walking about respectfully?'

*Agita said: 'I see, O Bhagavat.'*¹

And in keeping with the indescribable import of entering these Holiest of Holies for any being, even those who have doubts, Siddharta once again dwells on the good fortune of those beings.

The Bhagavat said: 'What do you think O Agita, is there any difference between the gods called Paranirmitavasavartins, and men in the world Sukhavati?'

*Agita said: 'I do not, O Bhagavat, perceive even one difference, so far as the men in that world of Sukhavati are endowed with great supernatural powers.'*²

But there is indeed a difference between those who doubt their experience of Sukhavati and those who are full of faith in it: The non-believers —

The Bhagavat said: 'Do you see again, O Agita, those men dwelling within the calyx³ of excellent lotus-flowers in that world Sukhavati?'

He said: 'As gods called Trayastrimsas or Yamas, having entered into palaces of fifty or hundred or five hundred yoganas in extent, are playing, sporting, walking about, exactly in the same manner I see, O Bhagavat, these men dwelling within the calyx of excellent

¹**The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, v. 40. See text p. 252 foot-note 3 — "The celestial city 'Alakananda' which is hard of ascent for human beings." We see from the above verse that the location described is a hill (involving "ascent") and also (in this same verse, text p. 251) "above in the sky (palaces) with charming parks..." while at another place (text p. 305) in this same Sutta, Sukhavati is described as "level on every side, lovely like the palm of the hand", thus on the face of it contradictory except for the fact that the Akka-Haifa complex forming the World Center of the Baha'i Faith has indeed both, the flat plain of Akka where, in the Mansion of Bahji, is situated the (Holiest) shrine of Baha'u'llah, and Haifa, which is the city on the slopes of Mount Carmel, upon which is situated the Shrine of the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha. No other Faith has its principal Shrines (verifiable from geographical evidence) so situated satisfying both these conditions, not to mention the many others just as specific.

²**The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, v. 40.

³"Calyx" is the outer protective covering of a flower consisting of a series of leaflike, usually green segments called sepals.

*lotus-flowers in the world Sukhavati.*¹

and the Baha'is —

*'Again there are, O Bhagavat, beings who, being born miraculously, appear sitting cross-legged in the lotus-flowers. What is there, O Bhagavat, the cause, what the reason, that some dwell within the calyx, while others, being born miraculously, appear sitting cross-legged in the lotus-flowers?'*²

They who dwell within the calyx are those outside the true Dharma due to their doubt. Because of their half-hearted belief in the prophetic utterances of even their own ancient Faith, they reject Baha'u'llah's Dispensation — which alone can provide for the needs of the present — and find themselves pushed out on the rim away from the center, the focus, the lotus-flower itself.

*The Bhagavat said: 'Those Bodhisattvas, O Agita, who, living in other Buddha countries,³ entertain doubt about being born in the world Sukhavati, and with that thought amass a stock of merit, for them there is the dwelling within the calyx.'*⁴

While the Baha'is possessing the vital attribute of belief are involved with the essential things of life, and are firmly rooted at the center of movement — the Wheel of Dharma:

Those, on the contrary who are filled with faith, and being free from doubt, amass a stock of merit in order to be born in the world Sukhavati, and conceive, believe, and trust in the perfect knowledge of the blessed Buddhas, they, being born miraculously, appear sitting cross-legged in the flowers of the lotus.

They are the ones who, fully confident of the fulfillment of the prophetic utterances of all the Buddhas, attain to the recognition of Baha'u'llah's Dispensation. Faith, as Baha'u'llah tells His followers, is the only criterion for entry into His Kingdom — faith, reared on reason and demonstrated by deeds — always accompanied, however, by humility and compassion.

He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be. How often hath a sinner

¹ *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, v. 40.

² *Ibid.*, v. 41. "The Lotus-Flower" signifies Religion (Dharma) and "sitting cross-legged in the lotus flower" i.e. after the manner of the Buddha means with faith firmly rooted in the Dharma.

³ Other Buddha countries' means other Faiths.

⁴ *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, v. 41.

*attained, at the hour of death, to the essence of faith, and, quaffing the immortal draught, hath taken his flight unto the Concourse on high! And how often hath a devout believer, at the hour of his Soul's ascension, been so changed as to fall into the nethermost fire!*¹

To which Siddharta concurs.

*And those noble-minded Bodhisattvas, O Agita, who, living in other Buddha countries, raise their thought in order to see Amitabha, the Tathagata, holy and fully enlightened, who never entertain a doubt, believe in the perfect knowledge of Buddha and in their own stock of merit, for them, being born miraculously, and appearing cross-legged, there is, in one instant, such a body as that of other beings who have been born there long before.*²

In other words, they who through their correct understanding of the prophetic utterances of their own Faith and fully confident in the omniscience of their Divine Teacher, raise their sight to see the fulfillment of His words in the person of Amitabha — Baha'u'llah — they become equal in faith to those who may have preceded them. For faith is not dependent on time. It is the great equalizer of the young and old, to wit "he is a saint in truth, who is a saint in youth..."

As we have noted from the foregoing (p. 404), while both pilgrims and visitors having "ascended" to the Holy Shrines walk about "respectfully," the following passage of Siddharta's marvellous prophecies describes exactly what they who are Baha'is i.e. the pilgrims, do at the Holy Shrines in Amitabha's Sukhavati. Firstly, the pilgrims come from the four corners of the earth, hailing from every Faith ("Buddha country").

*As there are Buddha countries equal to the sand of the river Ganga in the eastern quarter, whence all the Bodhisattvas come to worship the Buddha, the lord Amitayu; ... In the same manner there are as many Buddha countries in the southern, western, and northern quarters, whence they come with the Bodhisattvas to worship the Buddha, the lord Amitayu.*³

Secondly, they come bearing flowers, literally and figuratively "prayers".

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXXV, p. 266.

² The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, v. 41. "He who formerly was thoughtless and afterwards became reflective lights up this world like the moon when freed from a cloud." Dhammapada, v. 172.

³ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, v. 31. (1, 3).

And they having taken many bunches of flowers of different colours, sweetly-scented and delightful, shower them down on the best leader of men, on Amitayu, worshipped by gods and men; —¹

And in prayerful attitude the followers of Baha'u'llah then circumambulate the Holy Shrines expressing their gratitude and praise for having had their hearts opened to receive His glory — Amitabha.

These many Bodhisattvas having worshipped and revered the feet of Amitaprabha (Amitabha), and having walked round him respectfully, speak thus: "Oh, the country of Buddha shines wonderfully!"²

Humbly, they prostrate themselves before the three Holiest Resting Places — the Tombs of Baha'u'llah (Maitrya-Amitabha) in Bahji on the plane of Akka and of The Bab (Avalokitesvara) and 'Abdu'l-Baha (Mahasthamaprapta) on Mount Carmel (Haifa) — which are always completely covered with the continuous offerings of fresh flowers respectfully laid on Them by their loving devotees:

And they cover him again with handfuls of flowers, with thoughts jubilant, with incomparable joy, and proclaim their wish before that lord: "May our country also be such as this." ... And what was thrown there as handfuls of flowers arose in the form of an umbrella extending over a hundred yoganas, and the beautiful country shines and is well adorned, and flowers cover the whole body of Buddha.³ These Bodhisattvas having thus honoured him, how do they act? — Delighted they pronounce this speech:

"Gains by those people are well gained, by whom the name of the best man has been heard.

"By us also all the gain has been well gained, because we have come to this Buddha country. See this dream-like Maitra⁴ (haven) how beautiful it is, which was made by the teacher during a hundred thousand kalpas.

"Look, the Buddha possessed of a mass of the best virtues shines, surrounded by Bodhisattvas. Endless in his splendour (Baha'u'llah), and endless the light, and endless the life, and endless the assembly."⁵

¹ *Ibid.*, 31 (2).

² *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, 31 (5).

³ *Ibid.*, 31 (6, 7).

⁴ Literally the word Maitra (haven) is used here in the text and its clear purpose being to identify Maitrya with Amitabha and His Sukhavati.

⁵ *The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha*, 31, (8, 9, 10).

However far one may journey in quest of his goal, in whatever ancient Faith and it's hallowed spots one may seek to match the descriptions in these remarkably precise prophecies by Siddharta concerning the "Twin-miracle," "The Three Holy Ones" and Their Abode — Sukhavati — the time will be wasted if one's footsteps do not eventually reach the Baha'i Holy Shrines, which alone match exactly Siddharta's descriptions. And when arriving at the Holiest of Holies (the Shrines of Baha'u'llah and the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha), if they, unlike the Baha'is are empty of faith in the Truth of these three Holy Ones, then their coming to Sukhavati will have been in vain since their doubt would have blinded them to its Reality.

*See, O Agita, the excellent, immeasurable, unending, unlimited wisdom, that namely for their own benefit they are deprived during five hundred years of seeing Buddhas, seeing Bodhisattvas, hearing the Law, speaking about the Law (with others), and thus collecting a stock of merit; they are indeed deprived of the successful attainment of every stock of merit, and that through their forming ideas tainted with doubt.*¹

For they, who still think that these fantastically detailed and precise prophetic utterances are meaningless, are the very ones of whom Siddharta is talking here.

Thus, O Agita, it is with those Bodhisattvas who, having fallen into doubt, amass a stock of merit, but doubt the knowledge of Buddha... They are deprived of seeing Buddhas, hearing the Law, seeing Bodhisattvas, speaking about and ascertaining the Law, (gathering) any (new) stock of merit, and practising the Law, during five hundred years. Moreover they do not rejoice there or perceive satisfaction. But they wish to remove one another, and then they step out behind. And it is not known whether their exit takes place above, below, or across... See, O Agita, there might be worshippings of many hundred thousand nyutas of kotis of Buddhas during those five hundred years, and also many, immense, innumerable, immeasurable stocks of merit to be amassed. But all this they destroy by the fault of doubt. See, O Agita, to how great an injury the doubt of the Bodhisattvas leads.

¹ "Not abstinence ... nor observance of ... many immortal penances in this world, not these make clean the mortal who has not passed beyond doubt." *Amangandha Sutta*, 7.11 (Culla Vaga, 2).

Thus, before it is too late we are urged by Him to seek and discover the Source of all good — Amitabha — Baha'u'llah.

Therefore now, O Agita, after the Bodhisattvas without doubting have quickly raised their thoughts towards the Bodhi, in order to obtain power of conferring happiness for the benefit of all creatures, their stock of merit should be turned towards their being born in the world Sukhavati, where the blessed Amitabha, the Tathagata, holy and fully enlightened, dwells.¹

For those who — either through humility and reason or great trial and terror of their own making — are destined to eventually accept His glorious Reality and enter the haven of salvation, the future is glorious.

O Kamal! The heights which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain, in this Day, are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the potentialities of so great a favor will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men.²

Secure in the tranquility generated by Baha'u'llah's irresistible Order the human potential once liberated from the shackles of suspicion and prejudice, will pool its talents and resources and attain undreamed-of heights. Heights also foreseen by Siddharta and stated through Amitabha.

O Bhagavat, if the beings who are born in that Buddha country of mine, after I have obtained Bodhi, should not hear, as quick as thought, such a teaching of the Law as they wish to hear, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.³

Instantaneous modern communications are perfectly described by the above prophecy. This simply proves again that the time foretold is now and it is *we* who must decide whether to accept Baha'u'llah or not, and take the consequences. The signs are clear. They relate to our times.

If, when I have approached the Bodhi throne, my name should not quickly reach the ten quarters, the broad and many endless Buddha countries, May I not be a lord of the world, endowed with power.⁴

¹ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, 41.

² Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CIX, p. 214.

³ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha 8.44. "After I have obtained bodhi" means after the formal proclamation of His Buddhahood. And "Buddha country" usually means Dispensation.

⁴ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, 9.3.

Such as instantaneous availability of Scripture through satellite television —

*O Bhagavat, if that Buddha country of mine, after I have obtained Bodhi, should not be so brilliant, that in it could be seen on all sides immeasurable, innumerable, inconceivable, incomparable, immense Buddha countries, as a round face is seen in a highly burnished round mirror, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.*¹

— and swift transportation to the ends of the earth.

*O Bhagavat, if in that Buddha country of mine the beings who are born there should not be possessed of... miraculous power and self-control, so that they could at least in the shortest moment of one thought step over ... countries, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.*²

as well as to and from Sukhavati by air travel in complete comfort is foretold:

O Bhagavat, if the Bodhisattvas who are born in that Buddha country of mine, after I have obtained Bodhi, should not all be able, after having gone to other Buddha countries, after their one morning meal, to worship many hundreds of Buddhas, ... with objects which give every kind of pleasure, and this through the grace of the Buddha, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.

*Having worshipped many kotis of Buddhas, and having gone to many countries by means of their miraculous power, and having performed adoration in the presence of the Sugatas, they will go to Sukhavati with devotion.*³

For all these wonderful developments are simply effects caused by Baha'u'llah's all-creative might. Including, as we have seen (pp. 345-6) — and also foreseen by Siddharta — the shimmering cord of light itself.

*Whatever worlds there are, similar (in number) to the sand of the Ganga, and the endless countries which exist besides, there everywhere I shall send out light, because I have attained such power.*⁴

Baha'u'llah Himself majestically reveals the mind-boggling heights which humanity is yet destined to attain.

¹ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha. 8.29.

² Ibid., 8.5.

³ The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha. 8.21 and 3.21.

⁴ Ibid., 4.7. Note that here countries (not Buddha countries) are mentioned.

Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth. All the wondrous works ye behold in this world have been manifested through the operation of His supreme and most exalted Will, His wondrous and inflexible Purpose. Through the mere revelation of the word "Fashioner", issuing forth from His lips and proclaiming His attribute to mankind, such power is released as can generate, through successive ages, all the manifold arts which the hands of man can produce. This, verily, is a certain truth. No sooner is this resplendent word uttered, than its animating energies, stirring within all created things, give birth to the means and instruments whereby such arts can be produced and perfected. All the wonderous achievements ye now witness are the direct consequences of the Revelation of this Name. In the days to come, ye will, verily, behold things of which ye have never heard before. Thus hath it been decreed in the Tablets of God, and none can comprehend it except them whose sight is sharp.¹

For He is the One Who has unleashed the human mind, and His Teachings are the only means for mankind to rise to its full potential. What marvels will a truly united humanity fashion once it sets its mind to do so? Time travel, anti-gravity units, anti-disease pills, greatly increased life-span, defect-free births, psychokinesis, telepathy, and thought-transference (the first glimmerings of which, latent in the human make-up, have already come to light and the advent of which Siddharta clearly foretold) —

O Bhagavat, if in that Buddha country of mine the beings who are born there should not all be skilled in the knowledge of the thoughts of other people, so as at least to be able to know the deeds and thoughts of beings belonging to a hundred thousand niyutas of kotis of Buddha countries, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.²

— all these and much more shall surely become reality. Even, as Baha'u'llah assures us, "omniscience" itself shall not be denied us within the human context!

In like manner, the moment the word expressing My attribute "The Omniscient" issueth forth from My mouth, every created thing will,

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, LXXIV, p. 142.

² The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, 8.9.

according to its capacity and limitations, be invested with the power to unfold the knowledge of the most marvelous sciences, and will be empowered to manifest them in the course of time at the bidding of Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Knowing. Know thou of a certainty that the Revelation of every other Name is accompanied by a similar manifestation of Divine power. Every single letter proceeding out of the mouth of God is indeed a mother letter, and every word uttered by Him Who is the Well Spring of Divine Revelation is a mother word, and His Tablet a Mother Tablet. Well is it with them that apprehend this truth.¹

And which Siddharta — through the words of Amitabha — fully confirms.

O Bhagavat, if those beings who are born in that Buddha country of mine, after I have obtained Bodhi, should not all recite the story of the Law which is accompanied by omniscience, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge.²

But, as Siddharta also tells us, the key to omniscience is in the Law — in Amitabha's Dharma — the Teachings of Baha'u'llah.

The prophecies by Siddharta concerning Maitrya-Amitabha and His Dharma are too many and exact for us to deny that they have now indeed been fulfilled in the Person of Baha'u'llah and His mighty Dispensation. Of course there will still be those who, when faced with the totality of a truth, will shut their eyes to the evidence before them. Instead, they seek for "facts" by separating the parts from the whole. They then probe the fragments so as to discover the "ultimate". They labor in vain. For that "ultimate" turns out to be *nothingness*. Hence, such quest must always end in futility because they are unable to utilise what they have discovered — nothing. Such seekers lose the purpose of life and aimlessly wander about with their noses to the ground seeking light under pebbles, when they could see the rising sun if only they will stand and see the whole horizon. If we take a few of these prophecies separately or in a disjointed manner they may appear — as they did to the ancients — as some flights of imagination, and even incoherent. But looked at in their entirety within the context of their origins in the Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures, as well as the details of the lives of Baha'u'llah, the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha, Their Teachings, the Baha'i Administrative

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, LXXIV, p. 142.

² The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, 8.23.

Order, the world-wide community of Their followers and the conditions and creations of our present-day world, the ancient puzzle of these fantastic prophecies stands completely and clearly unravelled.

Too much has already come to light from the prophecies attributed to Siddharta for any serious attempt at refuting¹ the validity of Baha'u'llah's claim of being the Promised One. One must either — acknowledging the Buddhist Scriptures and their prophecies — accept Baha'u'llah and His glorious Dispensation as the Peerless Dharma rediscovered for us, or deny it all by rejecting the Scriptures — in which event there is no case, since this book is primarily addressed to those who claim to be the devotees of Siddharta's Dharma and who regard themselves as Buddhists. For them, the Buddhists, Siddharta's charge to Ananda and Vaidehi to ensure the transmission of His prophetic utterances to "those beings who will in the future" need to discover Amitabha and His Sukhavati, has been carried out. We are those beings and that future is *now*. But for those who have eyes yet refuse to see, we truly sorrow, since the clouds of doubt and confusion have been swept away and the Sun of Baha has appeared.

Every Divine Messenger has extolled the greatness and glory of the Aeon-Ende — Baha'u'llah. Like the sayings attributed to Siddharta — *On this wise, O Ananda, that world is briefly called Sukhavati, not at full length. Even a kalpa, O Ananda, would come to an end, while the causes of happiness which exist in that world Sukhavati are being praised, and yet it would be impossible to reach the end of them.*²

— the Scriptures of all other Faiths are also replete with the praises of Baha'u'llah. For who but an Avatar can gage the concepts and praise the greatness of an Avatar? Certainly no mere "worldling". It is simply not within the capacity of the lesser to adequately grasp the greater. As

¹ Nor can the various Buddhist sects (Theravada, Mahayana, etc.) contend that the remarkable prophecies in **The Maha-Sudassana Sutta** (Digha-nikaya) of the Pali Canon, as well as the **Maha-Supina Jataka** and the **Anagatavamsa** of the Theravada are accepted by one sect, while those in the **Sukhavati-Vyuha** and **Amitayur-Dhyana Suttas** belong to the Mahayanists, since all are now precisely fulfilled by the Advent of the Bab (Avalokitesvara) and Baha'u'llah (Maitrya-Amitabha). For, sufficient evidence has been brought to light by this book showing that the prophecies from all these texts clearly predicated on Siddharta's utterances are inextricably interwoven and uniquely directed at the Three Central Figures of the Baha'i Faith and their World Order.

² **The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha**, 24.

Siddharta states through Amitabha, “The Buddha only knows the virtues of a Buddha; but not gods, Nagas, Asuras ... there is no such way, as when the knowledge of a Buddha is being manifested.”¹

The generality of mankind, mired in its doubts and venality, is neither interested nor able to see the supernal Light — The Enlightener of the World — for they are as the dead and the blind. But those sincere seekers, who through assiduous search and reasoning have sought the truth, can see with what marvelous precision these wonderful prophecies by Siddharta have been fulfilled in their minutest details, in the Persons of the Bab, Baha’u’llah and ‘Abdu’l-Baha. Siddharta warns us not to be blinded by our perversity from seeing the truth.

Such hearings of me will not be for people who have not done good; but those who are heroes and perfect, they will hear this speech.

And those by whom the Lord of the world, the enlightened and the light-giver, has been seen, and the law been heard reverentially, will obtain the highest joy.

*Low people of slothful minds cannot find any delight in the laws of Buddha; those who have worshipped in the Buddha countries learn the service of the Lord of the three worlds.*²

And He the Lord of the Triple World — Baha’u’llah — concurs.

O Fleeting Shadow! Pass beyond the baser stages of doubt and rise to the exalted heights of certainty. Open the eye of truth, that thou mayest behold the veiless Beauty and exclaim: Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators!

O Son Of Desire! Give ear unto this: Never shall mortal eye recognise the everlasting beauty, nor the lifeless heart delight in aught but in the withered bloom. For like seeketh like, and taketh pleasure in the company of its kind.

O Son Of Dust! Blind thine eyes, that thou mayest behold My beauty; stop thine ears, that thou mayest hearken unto the sweet melody of My voice; empty thyself of all learning, that thou mayest partake of My knowledge; and sanctify thyself from riches, that thou mayest obtain a lasting share from the ocean of My eternal wealth. Blind thine eyes, that is, to all save My beauty; stop thine ears to all save My word; empty thyself of all learning save the knowledge of Me;

¹ Ibid., 44.8.

² The Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha, 44 (1.3). Also Dhammapada, v. 174. “This world is blinded, few only can see here...”

that with a clear vision, a pure heart and an attentive ear thou mayest enter the court of My holiness.¹

And again.

O Man Of Two Visions! Close one eye and open the other. Close one to the world and all that is therein, and open the other to the hallowed beauty of the Beloved.

O Friends! Abandon not the everlasting beauty for a beauty that must die, and set not your affections on this mortal world of dust.²

¹ *The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah*, Part II, vv. (9-11).

² *Ibid.*, Part II, vv. (12, 14).

**BAHA'I ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
THE NEW SAMGHA**

*Blessed is the birth of the awakened;
blessed is the teaching of the true law;
blessed is the concord in Order;
blessed is the austerity of those who live in concord.*¹

Sufficient indication has been given already that Baha'u'llah's World Order has within it the machinery for administering the affairs of mankind on the local, national and international levels. Hence what is called for at this point is a brief summary of its structure and functions. It must be understood, however, that the Baha'i Administrative System is not a codex of operating procedures but a standard of individual and social relationships and responsibilities permeated with ethical values generated by allegiance to the infallible Guide — Baha'u'llah — on Whom the whole World Order ultimately rests. As He Himself affirms —

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine² with the fingers of might

¹ Dhammapada, v. 194.

² "Choice Wine" is used in a spiritual sense. Intoxicants, of course are forbidden in the Baha'i Faith. Siddharta also uses similar terminology: "I have shown you the way to the lake of Ambrosia, which washes away all evil desire. I have given you the refreshing drink called the perception of truth, and he who drinks of it becomes free from excitement, passion, and wrong-doing." *Mahavagga*, VI. 29.

*and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight! ... Whenever My laws appear like the sun in the heaven of Mine utterance, they must be faithfully obeyed by all, though My decree be such as to cause the heaven of every religion to be cleft asunder.*¹

Once a person has by his or her own volition accepted² the Faith of Baha'u'llah and seeks full participation in it, every means is available to improve one's own true self and the society of man. Unity and harmony is the theme repeatedly stressed throughout the Baha'i Administration, which also points out that the force to cement the bonds of unity and harmony is justice. But it is a justice predicated on a divinely inspired system of values which has expanded the individual conscience to embrace a truly universal concept of man.

*The Great Being saith: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. We cherish the hope that the light of justice may shine upon the world and sanctify it from tyranny ... That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race ... It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.*³

A new calendar based on solar time has been created by the Bab and is now used by Baha'is throughout the world. It divides the year into nineteen periods of nineteen days each. For convenience these periods are referred to as "months" and these months are named after divine attributes such as Glory, Beauty, Honor, Knowledge, Mercy, etc. To adjust to the solar year four Intercalary days are added (five in leap years). These occur between the end of the eighteenth month and the beginning of the nineteenth month. The Baha'i calendar has the great advantage of uniformity in the number of days of each month, unlike other calendars in existence today. The Baha'i New Year is fixed on the date of the vernal equinox, 21 March. On the first day of each Baha'i

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CLV, pp. 332-3.

² A person who accepts Baha'u'llah as the Messenger of God for this age is a Baha'i. There are no other ceremonies. The declaration of faith in Baha'u'llah is to be made to the Baha'i administrative Body where the person resides. By this simple act the newly enrolled Baha'i has the same rights and privileges as any other Baha'i anywhere.

³ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, pages 218, 250.

month,¹ all the members of the Baha'i community in each locality assemble at a central meeting place — a community hall or someone's home — for the purpose, as Baha'u'llah charges of "strengthening the bonds of fellowship and understanding" among themselves.

This gathering is called the "Feast", and it is truly so, both spiritually and materially. It consists of three parts. The first part is of a devotional character in which prayers and readings from the Holy Scriptures of the Faith are read or chanted. This creates a spiritual atmosphere which permeates and governs both the consultative part which follows and the social intermingling which concludes the Feast. The consultative period following after, consists of news of community activities, suggestions and consultation. In this way, every Baha'i can take part in the affairs of his own community while being informed of what is happening in other parts of the Baha'i world. This administrative aspect of the Feast is the second part and upon its conclusion refreshments are served and the members mix informally and get to know their fellow believers. This is the last part of the Feast.

As this gathering takes place every nineteen days it is called the Nineteen-Day Feast. Any Baha'i in good standing from any part of the world is welcome to attend the Feast wherever he happens to be on the particular day.

Ample opportunity is provided during the Nineteen-Day Feast to get to know the members of one's Baha'i community, and this further strengthens the process by which the Baha'is elect their governing bodies in accordance with the ordinances of their Faith. These Baha'i administrative Bodies are the new Samgha in this Dispensation of Maitrya-Amitabha — Baha'u'llah — and are established upon His own explicit instructions.

The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established, wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Baha (9), and should it exceed this number, it doth not matter. It behoveth

¹ *The Mahaparinibhana-Suttanta*, I. "Hast thou heard, Ananda, that the Vajjis hold full and frequent public assemblies? ... So long, Ananda, as the Vajjis hold these full and frequent public assemblies, they may be expected not to decline, but to prosper. So long as they meet together in concord, so long as they honor their elders, so long as they respect womanhood, so long as they remain religious, performing all proper rites, so long as they extend the rightful protection, defence and support to the holy ones, the Vajjis may be expected not to decline, but to prosper ... When I stayed at Vesali, I taught the Vajjis these conditions of welfare,..."

*them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men, and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together, and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly.*¹

Presently called Local Spiritual Assemblies, these administrative bodies are elected once a year in each locale by all the adult Baha'is of that community.² The date for the election is the first day of the Holiest Festival of Ridvan, 21 April, and the election is conducted by secret ballot in a spiritual attitude through prayers for guidance. Every adult member is both eligible to vote and be voted for in this election. High-mindedness and righteousness are emphasized as the guides for selecting the right membership for the Local Spiritual Assembly, and electioneering or canvassing is strictly forbidden. Unlike most elections for political office which involve every kind of promise, possible or impossible, by the candidates, the institution of the Nineteen-Day Feast where Baha'is meet at least nineteen times every year has made canvassing or vote-gathering subterfuges unnecessary. No special power or privilege accrues to any Baha'i upon being elected to membership on the Spiritual Assembly, since that would clearly contravene Baha'u'llah's Teachings forbidding the establishment of clergy or class or the vesting of power in the hands of individuals.

The members of the Spiritual Assembly consider themselves simply as parts of the Divinely ordained mechanism of Baha'u'llah's World Order and strive to attain their own best interests by working to ensure the full operation of the Faith's Administration, to whose service they

¹ *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, Baha'u'llah. See also the *Mahaparinibbana-Suttanta*, I. "I will teach you, O bhikkhus, the conditions of the welfare of a community. Listen well, and I will speak. So long, O bhikkhus, as the brethren hold full and frequent assemblies; meeting in concord, rising in concord, and attending in concord to the affairs of the Sangha; ... so long as their elders practise justice; so long as the brethren esteem, revere, and support their elders, and hearken unto their words; so long as the brethren are not under the influence of craving, but delight in the blessings of religion, so that good and holy men shall come to them and dwell among them in quiet; so long as the brethren shall not be addicted to sloth and idleness; ... so long the Sangha may be expected not to decline, but to prosper."

² As the functions of these bodies do not supersede or overlap local and national civic authority, but focus primarily upon the spiritual education and process for guidance and protection, these bodies have not yet assumed the name of "Houses of Justice" ("Adult" meaning 21 years of age").

have been called by their fellow Baha'is.¹ The responsibility of the Assembly to the animating principles of the Baha'i Faith and to guidance and protection of the local community of believers in its jurisdiction, as well as the trust and obedience that must be shown to it, are both delineated by 'Abdu'l-Baha:

*These Spiritual Assemblies are shining lamps and heavenly gardens, from which the fragrances of holiness are diffused over all regions, and the lights of knowledge are shed abroad over all created things. From them the spirit of life streameth in every direction. They, indeed, are the potent sources of the progress of man, at all times and under all conditions ... It is incumbent upon every one not to take any step without consulting the Spiritual Assembly, and all must assuredly obey with heart and soul its bidding, and be submissive unto it, that things may be properly ordered and well arranged ... If after discussion, a decision be carried unanimously, well and good; but if, the Lord forbid, differences of opinion should arise, a majority of voices must prevail.*²

Unlike the built-in disease of "loyal" (unto itself) opposition or the political partisanship implicit in the very structure of the world's political systems, the Baha'i Administration is free of obstruction. Once the majority opinion on any matter is determined by the members of the Spiritual Assembly, every member, whether he or she was part of the majority or not, is duty-bound to strive for its successful outcome.³

Unlike political systems, the Baha'i Spiritual Assembly, due to its principle of the minority whole-heartedly striving to fulfill the majority

¹ "There is no distinction between the monk who has taken the vows, and the man of the world living with his family. There are hermits who fall into perdition, and there are humble householders who mount to the rank of rishis." **Buddhacarita**, vv. 15-22. 1533.

² **God Passes By**, p. 332. Shoghi Effendi, 1944, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA. By "It is incumbent upon every one not to take any step without consulting the Spiritual Assembly, ..." in the above excerpt "any step" is in regard to matters of faith and its ramifications for the individual and the community.

³ Since man cannot for long be content with material gains the motivation to restrain our appetite so that we may govern with justice and compassion for all can only be generated by a religious Faith. It cannot be found in a purely political creed. Hence political solutions are only partial at best, and as is often the case, no solutions at all. Siddharta, too, endorses the principle of majority rule. **The Mahavagga**, X, 1, 2. v. 2. "These brethren know the Dharma and the rules of the order; they are learned, wise, intelligent, modest, conscientious, and ready to submit themselves to discipline; it is impossible that they should on my account act with selfishness or in malice or in delusion or in fear. Let him stand in awe of causing divisions, and rather acknowledge his offence on the authority of his brethren.

decision, speedily leads the community to the truth if the decision was correct, or is able to swiftly recognize error and, by reversing course, resort to alternate means of reaching the best result.

The number of Local Spiritual Assemblies has now increased so greatly that in over a hundred countries there are now "Secondary Houses of Justice", presently called the National Spiritual Assemblies. These National Spiritual Assemblies are also elected annually by secret ballot by delegates or representatives from all the localities where Baha'is reside. The delegates to the National Convention are apportioned according to the population of the Baha'is in each locality. The responsibilities of the National Spiritual Assembly are to "direct, unify, coordinate and stimulate the activities of individuals as well as the local Spiritual Assemblies within their jurisdiction."¹ At present the number of persons that can be elected on either a local or a national Spiritual Assembly is nine.

Finally, every five years since B.E. 2506 (21 April 1963) — exactly a hundred years after Baha'u'llah's Declaration of His Divine Mission — the membership of all the National Spiritual Assemblies gathers together in Haifa — Sukhavati — to elect the supreme body of the Baha'i world, the Universal House of Justice.² This body, elected by the membership of all the National Spiritual Assemblies according to the specific procedure delineated by Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha, to whose august membership (also totalling nine) any man in good standing in the Baha'i Faith is eligible, is vested by Baha'u'llah with the exclusive right to legislate on matters not explicitly addressed by His writings.³

¹ **God Passes By**, Ch. XXII, pp. 323-53. (Rise of the Administrative Order") Shoghi Effendi, 1944. Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Ill., USA.

² Buddhist Prophecies also speak of the nine man membership of the supreme Baha'i body — the Universal House of Justice — and describes them as "the nine honored ones in the eight petalled hall of the Garbhadhatu ... in the center of the lotus (meaning the heart of the Order i.e. the new Samgha). Garbhadhatu means "the primal source of the material world" and this refers to the supreme authority for legislative and executive power vested by Baha'u'llah in the Universal House of Justice. They are also variously mentioned as the 9 squares of indestructibility on the 8 petalled lotus. At no time has the number 9 constituted the membership of any Buddhist body and the reference here is clearly to the 9 member Body of the Baha'i Faith. See also **Amitayur-Dhyana Sutra**, 17 (The Eight Meditations) for additional references to these "Nine Honored Ones". And also the group of the **Lotus Sutra** (in the Mandala) of the nine Luminaries. The purpose of the mandala being to gather together the spiritual powers, in order to promote the operation of the Dharma, which is the same purpose with which the Universal House of Justice is charged.

³ "The wise man rejoices in the law made known by the elect." **Dhammapada**, v. 79.

The Universal House of Justice, on whose decisions in matters relating to the Baha'i Faith and the world community of its adherents Baha'u'llah has bestowed *infallibility*,¹ is the unique institution, the perfect guide for the New Samgha, which now propagates and preserves the Peerless Dharma.

It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them. God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth, and He verily is the Provider, the Omniscient...² This passage is written, at this time, by the Supreme Pen and is accounted of the Book of Aqdas. The affairs of the people are in charge of the men of the House of Justice of God. They are the trustees of God among His servants and the sources of command in His countries. O people of God! The trainer of the world is Justice for it consists of two pillars, Reward and Retribution. These two pillars are two fountains for the life of the people of the world. Inasmuch as for each day and time a particular decree or order is expedient, affairs are therefore entrusted to the House of Justice, so that it may execute that which it deems advisable at the time ... It is incumbent upon all to obey them.³

'Abdu'l-Baha further elucidates:

Unto the Most Holy Book (the Kitab-i-Aqdas) every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the truth and the purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice, and turned away

¹ This is what is meant by Amitabha's prayer, stated by the **Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha** (8.28). "O Bhagavat, if in that Buddha country of mine, after I have obtained Bodhi, either teaching or learning should have to be made by any being, and they should not all be in possession of the perfect knowledge, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge." Implying thereby that "any being" can consult the infallible Body — The Universal House of Justice — and "be in possession of the perfect knowledge."

² **Tablet of the Exalted Paradise** (Eight Leaf), Baha'u'llah. Translated by Shoghi Effendi in **The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah**, p. 50, 1934. Baha'i Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Ill., USA.

³ **Tablet of Ishrakat** (Eight Ishrak), Baha'u'llah. Translated by All Kuli Khan, 1906. Baha'i Publishing Society, Chicago, Ill. USA.

*from the Lord of the Covenant.*¹

Unlike politicians, who have a constant eye on their constituents when voting on any issue, the members of the Universal House of Justice are not influenced “by the feelings, the general opinion, and even the convictions of the mass of the faithful, or those who directly elect them. They are to follow, in a prayerful attitude, the dictates and promptings of their conscience,”² since “they (the Universal House of Justice) and not the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect them,” have been vested by Baha'u'llah with infallibility “God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth.”³ The National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, in their own deliberations, (which, while not endowed with infallibility) also adhere to this principle of unfettered decision-making.

Any Baha'i who presents a problem to his or her Local Spiritual Assembly and is not satisfied with its resolution, has the right of appeal to the National Spiritual Assembly whose responsibilities, with those of the Local Spiritual Assembly, are delineated below:

Let it be made clear to every inquiring reader that among the most outstanding and sacred duties incumbent upon those who have been called upon to initiate, direct, and co-ordinate the affairs of the Cause, are those that require them to win by every means in their power the confidence and affection of those whom it is their priviledge to serve. Theirs is the duty to investigate and acquaint themselves with the considered views, the prevailing sentiments, the personal convictions of those whose welfare it is their solemn obligation to promote. Theirs is the duty to purge once for all their deliberations and the general conduct of their affairs from that air

¹ **The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha**. 'Abdu'l-Baha. Translated by Shoghi Effendi, 1921. Baha'i Publishing Committee, Wilmette, Ill., USA. See also **The Mahavagga**, X, 1.2, v. 20. “Do ye, therefore, O bhikkhus, ... be respectful, affectionate, and hospitable to your teachers and superiors, or those who rank as your teachers and superiors.”

² On the other hand, in politics the various partisan groups must strive only for their party's fortunes and are obliged to tear down the opposition policy regardless of its benefit to the nation. Even a good policy is frequently hamstrung because of constant resistance and snipping from the “loyal” opposition, and may never bear fruit. The necessity to save face before the electorate leaves those in power little room to reverse the course of affairs and return to the correct course. Wrong or right, state policy is a victim of political partisanship and can neither rectify its mistakes nor reach the truth except through a tedious process of infighting and that too only at the expense of alienating the opposition.

³ Also see **The Constitution of the Universal House of Justice**, Baha'i World Center, Haifa, Israel, 1972.

*of self-contained aloofness, from the suspicion of secrecy, the stifling atmosphere of dictatorial assertiveness, in short, from every word and deed that might savour of partiality, self-centredness, and prejudice. Theirs is the duty, while retaining the sacred and exclusive right of final decision in their hands, to invite discussion, provide information, ventilate grievances, welcome advice from even the most humble and insignificant members of the Baha'i family, expose their motives, set forth their plans, justify their actions, revise if necessary their verdict, foster the sense of interdependence and co-partnership, of understanding and mutual confidence between them on one hand and all local Assemblies and individual believers on the other.*¹

And finally, in the extraordinary case that one cannot in good faith abide by the decision of the National Spiritual Assembly, he or she may then put the matter before the supreme body, the Universal House of Justice itself, whose decision is final because it is infallible.

The Local and National Spiritual Assemblies and the Universal House of Justice are engaged in activity that is conducive to the well-being of humanity, which is, as Baha'u'llah states —

*The training of the servants (people) for the upbuilding of countries, for the protection of men and for the preservation of (human) honor.*²

— and constitutes humanitarian and charitable activities of every kind. Moreover, no Baha'i institution or individual can solicit or accept financial assistance or gift from anyone except Baha'is in good standing, thus obviating the possibility of manipulation or influence from those who may not support the Cause of Baha'u'llah but may deem it prudent to invest in its fortunes for the sake of future benefit. Faith is the only criterion for participation in the building of the Baha'i World Order. Hence, Baha'is alone can contribute whatever they wish of their wealth, their time and — as has been amply demonstrated — their lives.

¹ *Principles of Baha'i Administration*, pp. 81-82, Shoghi Effendi, 1936. Baha'i Publishing Trust, United Kingdom. See also *The Mahavagga*, X, 1, 2.V.1. "Do not think, O bhikkhus, that you are to pronounce expulsion against a bhikkhu, whatever be the facts of the case, simply by saying: 'It occurs to us that it is so, and therefore we are pleased to proceed thus against our brother.' Let those bhikkhus who frivolously pronounce a sentence against a brother who knows the Dharma and the rules of the order, who is learned, wise, intelligent, modest, conscientious, and ready to submit himself to discipline, stand in awe of causing divisions."

² *The Tablet of Ishrakat*, Baha'u'llah. Translated by Ali Kuli Khan, 1906, Baha'i Publishing Society, Chicago, Ill., USA.

Aware of the improbability of preventing any schism among His disciples, in the absence of readily available materials for writing and with the tendency in His time of reliance on the memory of the certain few who could recite the Master's Teachings, Siddharta, aside from generally endorsing the principle of majority rule, did not create an administrative order to prevent division and sustain unity. Thus heresy, as in Devadatta's case, and schism in the case of the Kosambi monks, began even in Siddharta's own time and, as we have seen (pp. 146-7) continued to expand through the First and Second Councils. No other ancient Faith, because of difficulties of communications and verification of the Founder's words has been able to withstand the onslaught of schism even for as long as two decades after the passing of the Founder, e.g. the *Mahavagga* tells us of schism even in Siddharta's day.

*Both parties continued to perform official acts independently of one another; and when their doings were related to the Blessed One, he ruled that the performance of official acts were lawful, unobjectionable, and valid for both parties ... For He said "The bhikkhus who side with the expelled brother form a different communion from those who pronounced the sentence. There are venerable brethren in both parties. As they do not agree, let them perform official acts separately."*¹

Hence, despite His abhorrence of dispute and schism and His great warnings to Devadatta against creating division and His praise of unity — *Do not let there be a schism in the Order, for a schism in the Order is a serious matter, Devadatta. He who splits an Order that is united sets up demerit that endures for an aeon and he is boiled in hell for an aeon. But he who unites an Order that is split sets up sublime merit (Brahmapuna) and rejoices in heaven for an aeon.*²

— Siddharta could not preserve for long the unity of concept and practice among His disciples.

*Loud is the voice which worldlings make; but how can they be blamed when divisions arise also in the Samgha?*³

The assurance of infallibility, vested in the decisions of the Baha'i Universal House of Justice in Baha'u'llah's writing, is not to be found in any other Faith.

¹ The *Mahavagga*, X, 1, 2, V. 2.

² *Vinaya-pitaka*, II, pp. 184-196 (condensed).

³ The *Mahavagga*, X, 1, 2, v. 24.

This unique System, facilitated by the development of world intercommunications (also only brought into existence in the last hundred years) has frustrated any attempt (and there have been some) to create schism. Baha'u'llah Himself best describes His unassailable system.

*The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System — the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed. The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men's fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure.*¹

Siddharta's sevenfold "higher wisdom of mental activity" which Baha'u'llah has revealed for our time through His matchless Seven Valleys,² has also its counterpart in the goal of the Baha'i Administrative Order — the establishment of the Oneness of Humanity.

*The immense, complex, baffling task of unifying all peoples is set forth in its complete and inmost simplicity by 'Abdu'l-Baha in seven pregnant phrases ... 1. Unity in the political realm. 2. Unity of thought in world undertaking. 3. Unity of freedom. 4. Unity in religion. 5. Unity of nations. 6. Unity of races. 7. Unity of language.*³

Already the Baha'is have begun in deed and in fact to build the instrument destined to be the model and the nucleus of the Most Great Peace. The Administrative Order is as simple as it is profoundly conceived, and it can only be conducted by those whose lives are animated by love and fear of God. It is a system in which such opposites as unity and universality, the practical and the spiritual, the rights of the individual and the rights of society, are perfectly balanced not through arranging a compromise but through the

¹ **The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah**, p. 12, Shoghi Effendi, 1934.

² This work of Baha'u'llah was addressed to Shaykh Muhyid-Din the judge in the Persian border town of Khaniqin. Muhyid-Din, a student of Sufi philosophy, had put some questions to Baha'u'llah concerning the steps to be traversed for the attainment of cognizance of the Absolute, since it was his belief that the medium of the Divine Teacher — the Avatar — was not essential to reach the goal. Such a concept is, of course, contrary to Siddharta's own Teachings and Baha'u'llah's too, Who, in His above work conclusively lays to rest this fallacy.

³ These seven steps are also called "The Seven Candles of Unity".

*revelation of an inner harmony. Those who have the experience of operating the Order testify that it seems to them like a human body which is made to express the soul within.*¹

In its one hundred and fifty-second year, as it moves rapidly towards its goal of enveloping the human race within its pale, the Faith of Baha'u'llah alone can show a true cross-section of mankind, completely united in conscience and purpose and functioning under one Divinely endowed infallible Body — this New Samgha — the Universal House of Justice.

*O Son Of Being! My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure, and he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish.*²

¹ *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi (Introduction by G. Townshend, pp. ix, x), 1944.

² *The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah*, Part I, v. 9.

EPILOGUE

O Son of Utterance! Turn thy face unto Mine and renounce all save Me; for My sovereignty endureth and My dominion perisheth not. If thou seekest another than Me, yea, if thou searchest the universe for evermore, thy quest will be in vain.¹

O people of the Dharma,

Get up (rouse yourself), do not be thoughtless. ...

Follow the law of virtue, do not follow the law of sin ...

The world is blinded, few only can see here ...²

As Mahasthamaprapta — ‘Abdu’l-Baha — announced a century ago:

There are prophecies concerning this Manifestation (Baha’u’llah) in the Buddhistic books, but they are in symbols and metaphors, and some spiritual conditions are mentioned therein, but the leaders of religion do not understand. They think these prophecies are material things; yet those signs are fore-shadowing spiritual occurrences.³

But the symbols have now been revealed and the metaphors brought to light by the grace of Maitrya-Amitabha — Baha’u’llah. His Glorious World Order — the emergent “Sukhavati”⁴ — so unerringly foretold in Siddharta’s prophecies, has now become manifest.

Let us give salutation and praise to our glorious Guide, Siddharta, Whose Reality through His Dharma (“Whosoever sees Dhamma sees

¹The Hidden Words of Baha’u’llah. Part I, v. 15.

²Dhammapada, vv. 168, 169, 174.

³Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Baha. Vol. III, p. 565. ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Baha’i Publishing Committee, New York, 1916.

⁴Identical to the “Kusavati” in the Maha-Sudassana Sutta (Digha-nikaya).

me; whosoever sees me sees Dhamma’’), simple yet profound — and not the confusion and fantasies of men’s imagination — has shown us *when*, *where* and *what* to look for. And, at last led us to Baha’u’llah in Whom we now see manifest all the signs and conditions of Siddharta’s ancient Reality “in all its fullness and in all its purity.” And Who now, for our age, with perfect “knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as an educator, teacher of gods and men, an Exalted Buddha,” is the unique Guide, just as Siddharta had been for His day.

For none who have come thus far in our quest can deny that in Baha’u’llah and the Bab and the world community established on Their Teachings, all the *prophetic utterances* attributed to Siddharta have found complete fulfillment. Nor can those who have read even the brief account in this book of Their Message — Their Program of upliftment and joy for mankind — harbor any doubt that the Twin Manifestations — the Twin-miracle — after indeed rediscovering the peerless Dharma “lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress and lovely in its consummation ... both in the essence of its meaning and in its outward form” and making it into a “safe refuge” for mankind, proclaimed “the higher life in all its fullness and in all its purity.” No other program or theory, whether premised upon some ancient Doctrine or formulated by some modern agency can lay claim to such universal breadth of vision, all-encompassing scope and originality of thought as contained within the Message of Baha’u’llah to meet the vital need of the Human Condition for *World Unity*.

And finally, the world community of Baha’u’llah’s followers — the new Samgha — forever rid of class and clergy¹ and distinguished by their acts instead of words or robes — each Baha’i a true servant of his fellow man — administering to the weal of the world, as did the Samgha of Siddharta’s time, has truly made their Lord “the head of an order of many thousand monks” just as Siddharta had been “the head of an order of many hundreds.”²

Nothing outside the Baha’i community can seriously demonstrate a dynamic example of unity of conscience and purpose — or has succeeded in changing religious animosities and cultural differences into a harmonious whole — within its diverse elements, united on common ground and drawing their life and light from the single Sun — Baha’u’llah.

¹ “Many men who are clad in yellow robes are ill-behaved and unrestrained. Such evil doers by their evil deeds go to hell” (Dhammapada, v. 307).

² *Digha-nikaya*, IV. 26, 25.

All other attempts at promoting such *unity in diversity*, whether by politician or priest, of the east or the west, have failed the acid test — fragmented against the rocks of human perversity and the demands of a new age — because of the inability to provide that vital motivation — the instinct to unify, to share, serve and sacrifice — which only Baha'u'llah has instilled in the human psyche in this day.

It is folly to think that true world peace — as opposed to the present armed armistice — can be achieved by the self-discipline of nations or governments which are in essence nothing more than blown-up replicas of the individual man as we find him today, with horrendous weapons in his hands and fear and distrust in his heart. New men are needed to stay our doom, and to build a new humanity. Once more, as in ages past, the human psyche needs a transcendent faith. For without such faith there cannot be any abiding trust. To those with clear minds and open hearts the power to bring forth the new race of men rests, in this age, only with Baha'u'llah and His stupendous Revelation, not simply because of His having fulfilled all the prophecies of Siddharta; nor even by virtue of His unique and perfectly suited Teachings for this threatened and anguished age; but, by the truth of the indisputable evidence of the world-wide community of His adherents representing the true cross-section of the very humanity which still languishes sore vexed outside the portals of Baha'u'llah's redemptive grace — the safe haven of His invulnerable Cause — and to which the Baha'is, gladly sacrificing their own substance, are extending a loving welcome.

What greater tribute to the Tathagata Siddharta do you seek O people of the Dharma? What greater service can anyone demonstrate for Siddharta, than now being rendered by the followers of Baha'u'llah — Maitrya-Amitabha — who carry the Buddha's name and Teaching to every land and all those millions — from whatever religious or racial background — who having accepted Baha'u'llah must also acknowledge the divinity of His Predecessor, the glorious Tathagata Siddharta and esteem His Teaching. Thus millions, in remote corners of the world, who had never before heard the name of Siddharta, the Buddha, now through the Teachings and disciples of Baha'u'llah love and adore Siddharta as much as they do Baha'u'llah. For "they, when these very words ... are being preached, ... obtain one and the same faith."¹ What greater proof

¹ Vajrachhedika Sutra, VI.

do you await? Baha'u'llah has not come to diminish the true lovers of Siddharta but to increase. Not to take away from, but to add to the devotees of the peerless and eternal Dharma.

Take stock O people of the Dharma.

*Come, look at this world resembling a painted royal chariot. The foolish are sunk in it; for the wise there is no attachment...*¹

For,

*Better than absolute sovereignty on earth, better than going to heaven, better than lordship over all the worlds is the reward of reaching the stream.*²

the austerity of those *who live in concord* in the Cause of Baha'u'llah is best for you if you are truly wise. Heed His call and fulfil your destiny while there is yet time.

*O Moving Form of Dust! I desire communion with thee, but thou wouldst put no trust in Me. The sword of thy rebellion hath felled the tree of thy hope. At all times I am near unto thee, but thou art ever far from Me. Imperishable glory I have chosen for thee, yet boundless shame thou hast chosen for thyself. While there is yet time, return, and lose not thy chance.*³

And again,

*Bestir yourselves, O people, in anticipation of the days of Divine justice, for the promised hour is now come. Beware lest ye fail to apprehend its import and be accounted among the erring.*⁴

Grasp your chance O people of the Dharma. It will not come again.

SIDDHAM

OM NAMO MAITRYA-AMITABHAYA BUDDHAYA

May His Glory Cover Us All

¹ Dhammapada, v. 171.

² Ibid., v. 178.

³ The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah, Part II, v. 21.

⁴ Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XII, p. 17.

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GLOSSARY

PART I

HINDU, BUDDHIST AND ZOROASTRIAN TERMS

Abhidhamma	Metaphysics.
<i>Abhidhamma-pitaka</i>	A collection of treatises in which Buddhist philosophy is systematically elaborated according to Theravada teachings.
Abhuta	Uncreate.
Adityas	Vedic gods. From Aditya, the Sun.
Agni	Fire, the god of fire.
Ahetu-ja	Without any original cause.
Ahimsa	Non-violence. This teaching, especially prominent in Buddhism, proscribes the taking of life and inculcates a gentle attitude to all living creatures.
Ahriman	In Zoroastrianism, the spirit of evil. The arch-rival of Ahura-Mazda.
Ahura-Mazda	God in Zoroastrianism. The Creator, the source of light and the embodiment of good.
Ajata	Unborn.
Ajatasatru	The prince of Rajagriha who murdered his father King Bimbisara and usurped the throne. Also plotted with Devadatta to kill Siddharta.
Akata	Unmade.
Alara	One of the sages to whom Siddharta is said to

- Amatogadha
Ambapali
Amitabha
Amitayur-Dhyana Sutra
Amoha
Anagamin
Ananda
Ananuvejjo
Anatta
Anguttara-nikaya
- have gone for instructions. The other being Udraka. Both were of Brahmin caste.
The deathless state.
A rich courtesan who espoused the Dharma and became one of the great disciples of Siddharta.
See Chapter Eleven. One of the best-known Buddhas of devotional Buddhism, who has created a paradise (the Pure Land Far to the West) into which those who call upon his name with faith will be reborn. Also known as "amitayus" meaning "Immortal One", Also f.n. 2., p. 4.
Mahayana Sutra. Translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Sanghavarman, an Indian student around eighth century Buddhist era.
(Pali) Correct understanding. Knowledge.
A venerable one who will never be reborn as a mortal, but only in a higher world or in heaven.
The foremost disciple of Siddharta (the Buddha) and also one of His cousins. He urged Siddharta to admit women into the Samgha.
That inconceivable deeper mode of life.
Unreality. This is the Pali form of the Sanskrit *anatman*, i.e. non-Atman. The Buddhist doctrine of *anatta* is that there is no Self or Atman, either in the cosmos or in individuals: there is no permanent underlying Self behind psychological phenomena, but a person is simply a stream of impermanent states, experiences, etc. *Anatta* is with Anicca and Dukkha, one of the characteristics of all individual experience. This concept has now been conclusively disproved. Also see *The God of Buddha*, pp. 63-74, European Edition, Casa Editrice Baha'i, Ariccia, Italy, 1995.
'Enumerating' (Dialogue, Pali canon) 'Gradual

Anicca	Sayings', a section of the <i>Sutta-pitaka</i> . 'Impermanent' (Pali). The Buddha's teaching is that all things are impermanent, a constant succession of changes, with nothing permanent underlying them. However, this view is modified in the Mahayana with the elaboration of the concept of an Absolute. These two concepts are not mutually contradictory (Sanskrit: Anitya).
Aniccata	Death.
Anjana	Mother of Hanuman.
Anupadhishesa	Unbounded liberation. Nirvana.
Anussutam	Pure, without lustful appetites.
Anuttara	Unsurpassable, incomparable, the most perfect being.
Anuttara Samyak-sambodhi	Consummation of incomparable enlightenment.
Apadam	Trackless. He who defies all description, who has no mark or track by which he can be described. The Buddha.
Apadana	Stories about Buddhist saints in the <i>Khuddakanikaya</i> .
Aparam	Beyond.
Apratishthita	Without ceasing. (Also meaning 'altruistic' or 'dynamic Nirvana').
Apsara	Celestial nymph.
Arahat	The perfect disciple; one who has completed the discipline required to attain liberation. One who has destroyed the spokes (ara) of the wheel of life (hata).
Aranyakas	'Forest Texts' composed around 600 B.C. (Symbolic interpretations of rituals and sacred formulas). Also known as 'abider in joyful peace'.
Ariyan	Noble, saintly. Variant of Aryan.
Ariyanam	Those who tread on the path of sanctity.
Arjuna	Krishna's foremost disciple. Third of the Pandava brothers and to whom Krishna's discourse in the <i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> is addressed.

Aruparaga Asamkrita	Desire for life in heaven. Unconditioned, uncompounded. (Pali: Asamkhata). 'Nibbana is the only Dhamma not conditioned by any cause'. Also called Asankhata.
Asat Asavas	False. That which is non-existent. Unreal. The 'cankers' which obstruct spiritual achievement, e.g. sensual longing, desire for continued separate existence, ignorance.
Ashvaghosha	Famous Buddhist poet, author of <i>Buddhacarita</i> , a biography of the Buddha in Sanskrit, first century.
Ashoka	First Buddhist emperor of India (B.C. 274-232). Grandson of Chandragupta Maurya. After his conversion to the Buddhist Faith, Ashoka assumed the royal title 'Piyadassi' (of benevolent aspect). Under his auspices, the third Buddhist Council was held in Pataliputra. Buddhism lost royal patronage after the death of Ashoka. The Mauryas were succeeded by the Sungas and the latter by the Kanvas, who were all staunch supporters of Brahmanism. However, Buddhism by then had already become a mass religion and hence continued to remain popular. Variant: Asoka.
Asrava	'Influence', a factor of being.
Asura	Demonic power. Gigantic being.
Asvins	The Divine Twins.
Atman	The soul, conceived as one in reality, with Brahma. Self, as an imperishable spiritual entity.
Attadipa	The self as our light.
Attasayana	The self as our refuge.
Avatara	(<i>Lit.</i> Descent). One who has descended. Divine manifesting (descending) itself in human form. Variant: Avatar. See Chapter Three.
Avacya	Ineffable.
Avijja	Ignorance, delusion, a synonym of Moha.
Ayodhya	Means "unconquerable". A city in the region

- of Koshala. Ancient capital of the Ikshvaku dynasty.
- Avalokitesvara "He Who gazes down with Mercy". See Chapter Twelve.
- Avesta* *Zend-Avesta*. The original document of Zoroastrianism. The Avesta consists of the following parts:
The Yasna, the principal liturgical scripture which includes the *Gathas* which consist of the discourses, exhortations and revelations of Zoroaster.
The Vispered, a smaller liturgical work.
The Vendidad, the priestly code.
The Yashts, songs of praise.
The Khordah Avesta, a collection of short prayers, plus miscellaneous excerpts of now extinct scriptures.
- Balaraman Brother of Krishna.
- Bhagavan The Lord, Creator-God. Also called Ishvara. Variants, Bhagavad and Bhagavat.
- Bhagavad-Gita* 'Song of God': Song (Gita) of the Lord (Bhagavad). Perhaps the most famous religious writing of Hinduism. Recognized as an orthodox scripture of the Hindu religion and possessing equal authority with the Vedas. Upanishads and the *Brahma-Sutra*. Forming the triple canon (prasthanatraya) of Hinduism and the most consistent among these three. Sixth book of the *Mahabharata*. The *Bhagavad-Gita* does not represent any specific school of Hindu Thought but the whole warp and woof of Hinduism and beyond Hinduism, religion in its universality ever continuous, conveying worth and direction to human life. As the message it conveys also acknowledges the past traditions and values of the background from which it speaks, the *Gita* is officially designated as one of the Upanishads, some scholars allege that the *Bhagavad Gita* is in-

- fluenced by the Upanishads upon whose ancient wisdom, 'Prajnapurani', the *Gita* is supposedly predicated and enunciated by the divine seer Krishna who elucidates the multi-faceted and priceless diamond of truth and its powers of redemption for humanity. As the oft-quoted analogy from the *Vaishnaviya-Tantrasara* relates, "the Upanishads are the cows and the cowherd's son Krishna is the milker; Arjuna is the calf, the nectar-like *Gita* is the excellent milk and the wise man is its drinker."
- Bhagavad-Purana* Legends of Krishna's youth.
- Bhakti Devotion of God.
- Bhante Respected sir. Formal manner of addressing a bhikku.
- Bhavana Meditation and development of mind and insight. Contemplation, concentration.
- Bhikku Mendicant monk. (Pali: Bhikshu).
- Bhikkuni Nun (Pali: Bhikshuni).
- Bimbisara King of Rajagriha and a disciple of Siddharta.
- Bhuta Spirit, ghost.
- Bimba Image.
- Bodhi Enlightenment, the profound insight and illumination attained by a Buddha.
- Bodh Gaya The place where Gautama attained enlightenment, later came to be known as Bodh Gaya (six miles south of Gaya) and is regarded as the most important centre of Buddhist pilgrimage.
- Bodhisattva One moved by compassionate zeal to aid his fellow men toward salvation, hence willing to postpone his own entrance into Nirvana to this end. A Buddha-to-be. A spiritual hero, (Pali: Bodhisatta).
- Brahma The neuter word is used in the Upanishads and elsewhere for the Sacred Power sustaining the cosmos. Deeper investigation as well as references in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the Buddhist texts of *Samyutta-nikaya* strongly

	imply that it (Brahma) is a 'state' or a 'condition' more akin to the Buddhist concept of Nirvana. It is not of 'itself' the Ultimate Divine Reality, the Supreme Person, the determining power behind the universe. It cannot of itself be regarded as personal and something to which love and reverence is directed. Also viewed as the 'creator' aspect of the Hindu Trinity. <i>Variant</i> , Brahman.
Brahmabhuta	Brahma-become.
Brahmachari	Moving or dwelling in Brahma.
Brahmavihara	Living like Brahma. Divine state.
Brahmin	A Hindu of the highest class, namely the priestly class. The other three classes in order: Kshaitrya (King or warrior class), Vaisyas (Traders or artisan class); Sudras (Labourers).
Buddha	The Enlightened One. From Bodhi.
<i>Buddhacarita</i>	'The Acts of the Buddha'. The first full-length biography of the Buddha by the first century Indian poet Ashvaghosha.
Buddhaghosa	Pali author, fifth century;
<i>Buddha-vamsa</i>	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> .
Buddham	Treatise on lives of 24 preceding Buddhas and also of Gautama.
Buddhankura	The Awakened. Anyone who has arrived at complete knowledge. There are many Buddhas, some lived in the dim past; others may rise in the future.
Buddhiyoga	Presumptive Buddha, Buddhabija.
Chakravarti	The method by which one gets beyond Vedic ritualism and performance of one's duty without any attachment for the results of one's action.
Chanda	Sovereign Lord. World Ruler.
Channa	Will, resolve.
Citta	Charioteer of Siddharta, also His disciple.
	Memory, recognition: the faculty of systematic cognition. Consciousness. Thought. Mind. The word is sometimes used for the Atman, which

	can be looked on as pure consciousness.
Dana	Benevolence, loving charity.
Darius I	Surnamed Hystasp, called "the Great" 558-486. King of Persia (522-486 B.C.). Became a follower of Zoroaster.
Dasaratha	Father of Rama, King of Koshala (Ayodhya).
Deva	Heavenly being. Literally 'shining one'. In no sense a creator, neither omniscient nor omnipotent. Simply a denizen of another world.
<i>Dhammapada</i>	Way of Truth; Path of virtue; Words of the doctrine; Utterances of Religion. The <i>Dhammapada</i> proper is a part of the <i>Khuddakanikaya</i> of the <i>Sutta-pitaka</i> . The Pali version contains 423 verses divided into 26 chapters. The version in Chinese has 39 chapters and 502 verses.
Dhammadana	'Gift of the Law'. The discipline of grounding in the Buddhist religion.
Dhammassa guto	Guardian of the law, or guarded by law. One whose acts are directed by a sense of justice.
Dhamma-tthitata	Rule of Law.
Dharma	Rule of duty or of social obligation, the Reality. Religion, Law, Doctrine, Truth. The Pali form of this Sanskrit word is Dhamma. <i>Lit:</i> Mode of being.
Dharmakaya	'Body of the Law'.
Dhatu	Principle.
Dhyana	Meditation (Pali: Jhana).
<i>Digha-nikaya</i>	Collection of 'long' dialogues which is probably the oldest and most authentic part of the <i>Suttapitaka</i> (Pali canon).
Dipankara	The Buddha preceding Gautama. <i>Lit:</i> Dipa means 'Lamp' and Kara means to 'become'. Dipankara means 'to make a lamp of one's self', or to become a beacon. Buddha Gautama was also called dipankara. This word is more a title than a proper name.
Dosa	Malice, anger.
Dukkha	Sorrow, suffering, grief, pain.

Eight-fold Path	The Noble Eight-fold Path sums up the Buddha's prescription on how to attain Nirvana. The first two 'stages' of the Path. Right View and Right Aspiration, refer to the attitude to be taken up by the aspirant for Nirvana: the next Right Speech, Right Conduct and Right Means of Livelihood, refer to the moral and social requirements to be met by the aspirant: while the last three, Right Endeavor, Right Mindfulness (Sati) and Right Contemplation, refer to the mental and spiritual disciplines that are needed.
Four Stages	The four stages of the Noble Eightfold Path are: (1) Conversion to the Dharma. This act frees one from the delusion of self; from doubt as to the Buddha and His Doctrine, and from reliance on rites and ceremonies. (2) The state of those who will only return once to this life. (3) The state of those who will never return to this world. (4) The state of Arahat, the Holy One.
Ganga Gathas	Ganges. One of the great rivers of India. Verses (Indo-Iranian origin). Zoroastrian Scriptures.
Gandharva	Heavenly musician. A class of beings.
Gita	Song. <i>See Bhagavad-Gita.</i>
Gopala	See Govinda.
Gosala	Ajivikas.
Gotra.	Clan.
Govinda	Names of Krishna indicating His origin as the "god of flocks and herds" and also symbolic of the Divine Shepherd and His flock — mankind.
Guru	Master, teacher.
Guru Nanak	Founder of Sikhism, 1469-1538 A.D.
Hinayana	The Lesser Vehicle (Theravada — path of the Elders).
Indra	One of the chiefs among the gods.
<i>Ittivuttaka</i>	Sacred writings of southern Buddhists

	consisting of one hundred and ten extracts, beginning "Thus it was spoken by the Blessed One". Part of the <i>Khuddaka-pitaka</i> .
Itthataya	This state.
Hanuman	A monkey that figures in the <i>Ramayana</i> . The Hindu ideal of the perfect servant.
Jains	Members of the Jain sect, a religious movement that arose in India contemporary with Buddhism.
Jambudvipa	India. Ancient name of India used by the Buddha as well as in the <i>Mahabharata</i> (Ch. 11, p. 314). According to the ancient Indian concept a continent in the centre of the world's surface. Also known as the "golden" (Jambud) land.
Jarata	Existence.
<i>Jataka Tales</i>	<i>Jataka</i> is a great collection of Buddhist birth stories. These folk stories tell about Siddharta's meritorious deeds in His previous incarnations. The <i>Jataka</i> verses collated around B.E. 700 by the gifted poet Aryasura occur in the second of the three great divisions of the Pali canon and in the Miscellaneous collection of Discourses (Khuddhaka-nikaya) of this division. It consists of 547 <i>Jatakas</i> , each containing an account of the life of Siddharta during some incarnation of His previous existences as a Bodhisattva or a being destined to enlightenment before He became Buddha, the Enlightened One.
Jati	Rebirth. Individual existence.
Jina	Victor, conquerer.
Jivanmukti	Liberation realized within this life.
Jivatman	The soul as a separate individual.
Jnana	Gnosis.
Kalki	Manifestation of Visnu (Chaps. 9-14).
<i>Kalki-Purana</i>	Prophecies and legends concerning the advent of Kalki.
Kalpa	Aeon, an age of epoch of time (Pali: Kappa).
Kama	Desires. Sensuality, bodily passions.
Kaniska	The best known of the Kusan kings, flourished

	in the second century A.D. and ruled over a large part of India from his capital Purusapura (Peshawar). Under his auspices was held the Fourth Buddhist Council.
Kanthaka	Name of Siddharta's horse.
Kapilavastu	The city state of the Sakyas.
Karana	Cause, origin.
Karaniyam	One's duty. What ought to be done.
Karma	Volitional action, which is either wholesome or unwholesome. It is that which passes in unbroken continuity from one momentary heap (mass) of the skandhas to another, either during the life of a person or after his death, until the result (vipaka) of every volitional activity of body, speech or thought, is arrived at. Pali. Kriya.
Kassapa	(Sanskrit: Kasyapa). The name Kassapa applies mainly to Kassapa of Uruvella, One of the great pillars of the Buddhistic brotherhood. However, according to the <i>Anguttara-nikaya</i> , he is not the same person as Maha-Kassapa who presided over the first Council at Rajagriha.
Khina	Terminated.
<i>Khuddaka-nikaya</i>	Collection of minor texts, part of the <i>Sutta-pitaka</i> .
Klesa	Sin.
Koti	Infinitely large quantities. One koti is ten million separate world cycles.
Krishna	Krishna, the eighth manifestation (avatar) of Vishnu. The most widely revered and most beloved figure in the Hindu pantheon. While little can be authenticated of the historical Krishna, He is mentioned in the <i>Chandogya-Upanishad</i> as one who taught man's life as a sacrifice: "As Ghora Angirasa told this to Krishna, the son of Devaki, he also added, since he had become free from desire, that in the final hour, one should take refuge in these

- three beliefs. Thou art the indestructible (aksitamasi); thou art the unshakeable (acyotamasi); Thou art the essence of life (prama-samsitam asiti).” Krishna’s antiquity is indeed very great. Krishna worship is also mentioned in the earliest Pali canon, (in the Buddhist work *Niddesa*). Panini, the great grammarian and a senior contemporary of the Buddha names Vasudeva and Arjuna as those who are being worshipped. (The affix ‘Vun’ comes in the sense of ‘this is his object of veneration’ after the word Vasudeva and Arjuna — Vasudevarjunabhyam). Also, Patanjali in his *Mahabhasya*, commenting on Panini (IV. 3.-98) calls Krishna (Vasudeva) Bhagavad. May the power of Krishna assisted by Sankarsana increase. (Patanjali’s *Mahabhasya* on *Panini-Sutra*). Also refer to pp.188-190 of Text.
- Kshaitrya** One, (the second) of the four fundamental castes of Hinduism.
- Kusinara** A town in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh, where the Buddha passed into Nirvana in His eightieth year.
- Lalitavistara** Standard Sanskrit work of the Northern Buddhists on the Buddha’s life down to the time when He openly came forward as a teacher.
- Lankavatara-Sutra** The proclamation of the teaching in ‘Lanka’ (Ceylon), Mahayana scripture.
- Loba** Desire, craving, lust.
- Loka-dhatu** One world cycle.
- Lokattora** Supramundane.
- Madhyamika** Middle Way.
- Mahabharata** One of the two great epics of ancient India. (The other being the *Ramayana*.) Its theme is a battle between the forces of good personified by the sons of Pandu and evil represented by the sons of Dhritarashtra. Its most famous aspect is the *Bhagavad-Gita* consisting of the

- dialogue of Krishna with Arjuna, the third son of Pandu.
- Mahabhinishkramana-Sutra* 'Book of the Great Renunciation' is a Sanskrit work of around the second century A.D. on the story of the Buddha leaving His home and family.
- Mahabrahma* Great Brahma.
- Mahaparinibbana-Sutta* The Pali account from the second Pitaka of the passing of the Buddha. This is the oldest and most reliable of all authorities. It cannot be dated later than the end of the fourth century B.C. nor earlier than the time when Pataliputra (Patna) had become an important center of the Buddhist Church.
- Mahaparinirvana-Sutra* A Mahayana work, quite different from the Pali work *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*.
- Mahaprajnaparamita-Shastra* The book of the Great Teaching of Complete Enlightenment, attributed to Nagarjuna.
- Mahasthamaprapta* Bodhisattva "Great" of "Strong" Limb. Also known as "Manju-sri.. See Chapter Fifteen.
- Mahavagga* Part of the *Vinaya-pitaka*.
- Mahavamsa* 'Great-Chronicle'. Pali historical work.
- Mahavastu* 'Book of the great events' Hinayana work in hybrid Sanskrit.
- Mahavira* The last of the Tirthankaras of the Jains, who emphasized an ascetic life. He was a senior contemporary of the Buddha. The same person as Nigantha Nataputta.
- Mahayana* The Greater Vehicle, or the broad path to salvation. The cardinal tenet of the Mahayana is that the Buddha is not just a human teacher but an eternal phenomenon that manifests itself on earth at intervals of time for the salvation of mankind.
- Mahayana Literature* It is entirely in Sanskrit and a large part of it corresponds to the works of the Pali canon. "They are not translations from Pali but rather parallel texts derived from the same Indian source, the lost Magadhi canon on which the

Pali books are based.” These books embody older material along with some new ideas added on to them. Besides these works, other important early works of Mahayana are, the *Mahavastu* (owned also by the Hinayana school, but it is in spirit a Mahayana work presenting as it does the Buddha as a Supernatural being) *Lalitavistara*, the *Buddhacarita* Ashvaghosha, the greatest Buddhist poet who also wrote the well-known *Saundranada Kavya* dealing with some aspects of the life of Buddha.

The important Mahayana works exist in the form of Sutras or couplets. Among them the important ones, apart from the *Lalitavistara*, are the *Saddharmapundarika*, the *Prajnaparamita*, the *Gandhavyuha*, the *Vajracchedika*, the *Sukhavati-Vyuha*, the *Lankavatara-Sutra* and the *Madhyamika-Sutra* of Nagarjuna.

Many of the Sanskrit works on Mahayana are lost, but some of them exist in their Chinese and Tibetan translations. We thus know of their one-time existence from these translations. The existence of other works is known only from references to them in existing texts. There are also many original works on Buddhism in Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan languages, besides translation of almost all of the important Indian works on Buddhism.

Mahishasaka

Maitri

Maitrya

Hinayana School.

Friendliness, sympathetic.

Maitrya (Sanskrit) which means “He whose name is kindness.” Also known as Metteya in Ceylon or Ariya Metteya in Burma, Thailand and other south-east Asian lands. As Byam-Pa in Tibet, Miroka in Japan and Milo in China. See also pp. 234-5.

Majjhima-nikaya

‘Medium-length’ (Dialogues. Pali canon.) Part of *Sutta-pitaka*.

Majjhima Patipada	Middle Path.
Mamayitam	The unattached person.
Manas	The discriminative and deliberative faculty of mind. Faculty of perception.
Mano	Pride.
Manovijnava	Discriminative knowledge.
Manu	The Lawgiver of the Hindus. The Divine Teacher antedating Rama in the sequence of Aryan Avatars Who appeared in India around 8,500 B.B.E. (Before Buddhist Era). Regarded as the "Progenitor of mankind". A symbolic term referring to the spiritual regeneration of humanity.
Manush	The rational being. Man.
Mara	The Evil One. The Great Tempter. Death. At times equated with the five Skandhas. Not a person but personification of negative attributes. Same as Yama.
Marga	Way leading to sorrow.
Maya	Illusion.
Milinda	The Indo-Greek king Menander or Menandros (B.C. 115-90). The <i>Milindapanha</i> , or 'Questions of Milinda' (which is a non-canonical Buddhist text), shows clearly this ruler's great interest in the Buddhist Faith.
<i>Milinda Prasnaya</i>	<i>Milindapanha</i> , or 'Questions of King Milinda'. A very ancient Pali work dated around the first century of the Christian era. It is a discourse between Milinda and Nagasena (or Nagarjuna), the founder of the Madhyamika school of Northern Buddhism.
Moksha	Ultimate or final liberation of the soul from the cycle of birth and death.
Muni	A sage.
Nagarjuna	Also called Nagasena. One of the greatest Buddhist philosophers. He lived in the Kaniska period and was chiefly responsible for formulating the Mahayana doctrine. Author of <i>Madhyamika-karikas</i> .

Nairanjara	River along whose bank Siddharta wandered before attaining to His Divine Mission.
Namarupa	Nama means name, rupa means form.
Narayana	Visnu, His embodiment as Krishna.
<i>Nidanakatha</i>	Biography of the Buddha in Pali attributed to Buddhaghosa, fifth century.
<i>Niddesa</i>	An old commentary, ascribed to Sariputra, on the latter half of <i>Suttanipata</i> , itself a section of the <i>Khuddaka-nikaya</i> .
Niraya Hell	The hell of filth.
Nirmanakaya	Transformation of body.
Nirodha	Extinction — Removal of sorrow. (Nirodha-Sumapatti: Extinction of all conscious process.)
Nirvana	The state achieved by the conquest of craving. The spiritual goal of Buddhism. (Pali form: Nibbana, which literally means 'the going out', as of a flame). According to the Buddha it can also be attained here in this life. See Text pp. 91-2.
Om!	Sound symbolizing the Unconditioned, Uncreate. Unborn.
Padam Santam Pali	The path of tranquility or peaceful abode. The word means 'text'. Hence the language of the Buddhist canonical texts and also the commentaries on those texts which are collectively called Tipitaka, of the Theravada Buddhist scriptures. The term 'palibhasa' originally meant the language of the canonical texts of the Theravada. These texts, which originated and were compiled in north India between the first and second Buddhist Councils, were subsequently (after Ashoka's time) carried to Ceylon, then Burma and Thailand more than a thousand years later. We cannot yet with certainty assign a locality of origin to Pali and, while it seems to have evolved from Sanskrit and other dialects, including Magadhi (or Maghada Prakrit, the language in which the Buddha preached) and is in many respects

closely related to Vedic and Sanskrit, its actual origins may lie in some other old Indo-Iranian dialect. It is, however, fairly certain that the Buddha Himself, who taught in Maghada Prakrit and was, of course, fully conversant in Sanskrit, did not speak Pali, since it was not in use as a language at that time in the area of His activities. Pali has a great mixture of divergent dialects caused by the need to assimilate the different views of the great wandering Buddhist teachers whose versions in various dialects of the Buddha's teachings were not always identical. The Pali scriptures (Tipitaka) were long preserved orally, being committed to writing under King Vattagamini of Ceylon around 29 B.C.

Pali Canon

Tipitaka ('three baskets'), collection of Hinayana scriptures transmitted to Ceylon, Burma, Thailand etc., consisting of *Sutta-pitaka*, *Vinaya-pitaka*, and *Abhidhamma-pitaka*.

Pana

Faith.

Panch Sila

As a means of adhering to the noble eight-fold path, the Buddhists, by popular convention adopted the following five Pali stanzas. These five stanzas direct each person to dedicate one's self to their adherence.

(1) Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami (I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from destroying life).

(2) Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam sanadiyami (I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from stealing others' property).

(3) Kamesu micchacara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami (I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from sexual immorality).

(4) Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami (I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from falsehood).

	(5) Sura — meraya-majja-pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami (I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from taking intoxicants).
Paramatma	Ultimate soul. Final Reality.
Paramattha	Pali: The ultimate form of natural phenomena (truth in the ultimate sense).
Paramita	Perfection, ideal virtue. It is derived from Parama: superlative. Best, Alpha, often translated as 'gone over to the other shore', reached Nirvana.
Paranirvana	'Beyond Nirvana,' the state into which one who has attained Nirvana passes at death. Complete or Final Nirvana.
Paratantra	Dependent reality.
Parinishpanna	Highest reality.
Parjna	Or Prajna. Transcendental wisdom or insight.
Parsva	Parsva, who flourished in the 8th century B.C., is regarded as the twenty-third Jaina Tirthankara. He taught the Four Fundamental principles constituting the basic code of conduct, namely: Truth, Non-Violence, Non-Covetousness, Non-Acquisitiveness (Caturyana Dharma: Satya, Ahimsa, Asteya, Aparigraha). These were later embodied in Buddhism.
Pathama Maha Sangayana	First Buddhist Council held at Saptapani Guha, 100 days after the Buddha's passing, and attended by 500 Arahats, presided over by Arahat Maha Kassapa and included both Arahat Ananda and Arahat Upati. This council sat for three months and collated the following which were to be popularly known as the Pali canon: <i>Abhidhamma-pitaka</i> (The Higher Doctrine); <i>Vinaya-pitaka</i> (Discipline for the Order); <i>Sutta-pitaka</i> (General Discourses).
Paticcasamuppada	Law of Conditioned Origin.
Patigha	Hatred.
Patimokkha	The disciplinary code of the bhikkus.

<i>Patthana</i>	'The Book of Origins', on the causes of existence.
Pitakas	Collections, as the canonical books of the southern Buddhists are called. The Mahayana teaches five instead of the four stages found in the Pitakas and the <i>Lalitavistara</i> .
<i>Prajna-paramita</i>	'Perfection of Insight'. Also name of a group of Mahayana texts, and of the philosophical teachings of Nagarjuna. Wisdom of the highest and clearest kind.
Prakriti	Nature. Phenomenal.
Prana	Breath. The life principle.
Prapti	A force maintaining the living equilibrium of the factors composing a personality.
Pratyeka-Buddha	One seeking salvation independently of others.
Prithagjana	Worldling (Pali: Puthujjana).
Puggala-pannatti	Discipline for those who have entered the Path.
Puranas	Legendary Scriptures of the Hindus of approximately the same age as the Vedas but in form comprehensible to the unlettered. There are a total of 54 Puranas (i.e. 18 Maha-Purans, 18 Purans and 18 Up-Purans) e.g. Padma Puran, Visnu Puran, kalki Puran etc. Variant: Puran. See f.n. 3 (p. 182).
Purush	The soul, conceived as individual or (sometimes) as universal (the soul of the universe). The Spirit Supreme.
Rahula	'Impediment'. Siddharta's son.
Ram	Seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Hero of the Hindu epic <i>Ramayana</i> .
Ramanuja	A Brahmin of southern India of the 12th century, who promulgated a doctrine predicated on the worship of Krishna.
<i>Ramayana</i>	The epic poem of Valmiki on the life of Ram.
Ratna	Jewel (also Ratan).
<i>Rig-Veda</i>	The earliest of the Vedas.
Rishi	A sage, ascetic. Also sacrificial priests associated with the devas in Swarga (heaven).

Rita (Rta)	Vedic for Law.
Rupa	Shape, form. Material properties or attributes, of which, according to Buddhism, there are twenty-eight in number.
Ruparaga	Love for earthly existence.
Saoshiyants	Redeemers (Zoroastrian). Benefactors of humanity.
Saddha	Conviction. Faith.
<i>Saddharmapundarika</i>	'Lotus book'. 'Lotus of the Good Law'. Mahayana scripture, second century.
Sadhu	<i>Lit:</i> 'Very good'. A sage.
Sakka	King of the Gods, e.g. Brahma, Indra.
Sakkaya-ditthi	Delusion of self.
Sakra	Indra, chief of the Aryan pantheon.
Sakya	<i>Lit:</i> 'Oak-hearted'. A royal race on the northern frontiers of Maghada a region of Bihar, claiming descent from Rama and Lachman, the exiled sons of King Okkaka of the Solar dynasty. Suddhodana Gotama, father of Siddharta (the Buddha), claimed descent from Ikshvaku of the solar dynasty (Sanskrit: Ikshvaku. Pali: Okkaka).
Sakyamuni	The sage of the Sakyas, i.e., the Buddha.
Samadhi	Complete concentration. The state in which the mind is in communion with the Divine.
Samana	An ascetic, religious man. Pali word derived from 'sam' — to quiet, i.e. he who quiets the senses. (Sanskrit: Sramana — he who works hard.)
Samata	Altogether everywhere, universal sameness, having no partiality.
Sambhara	The achievement of merit and knowledge during previous lives.
Samjna	Perception, notion, conscious volition.
Sammitiyas	Hinayana school.
Samsara	Karma-formations, conditioned things, impulses, predisposition (Samska). The ocean of birth and death, i.e. of successive individual existences in transmigration. The cycle of

	becoming. (Pali: Sankara or Samskara-predisposition, stirring of volition). In Buddhism these are divided into 52 parts.
Sanskrita-laksanani	All phenomenal existence. Conditioned factor of being (Sanskrita Dharma).
Samuddaya	Cause of sorrow.
Samyaksambuddha	The completely and perfectly enlightened.
Samyutta	'Classified'.
<i>Samyutta-nikaya</i>	'Collection of Discourses of related content', part of the Sutta-pitaka. (Pali canon).
Sangha	The order of Buddhist monks. Assembly, community. Pali, Samgha.
Sankaracharya	The leading exponent of Advaita Vedanta, and author of commentaries on the <i>Upanishads</i> , the <i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> and the <i>Brahma-Sutra</i> (780-820 A.D.).
Sankhya	One of the traditional systems of Indian metaphysics, closely associated with Yoga. Its main teachings are as follows: (1) There is a fundamental distinction between matter 'prakriti' and soul 'purusa'; (2) there are innumerable souls, and these are involved in matter and, therefore, with the endless round of Samsara; (3) liberation consists in the individual soul isolating itself from matter and thereby escaping further entanglement in rebirth; (4) liberation accrues upon insight (viveka), whereby the soul perceives its essential distinctness from matter. Yoga adopts the general metaphysical system of Sankhya, but asserts that liberation requires a certain form of physical and mental discipline. See pp. 153-5 of the text.
Sanna	Abstract ideas. According to Buddhism these are divided into six classes corresponding to the six classes of sensations.
Sannyasin	One who has retired from active life to devote himself to spiritual concerns. This possibility is controlled in Hinduism by the doctrine of

- four stages of life; that of being a student, that of the householder (i.e. family man), that of one who withdraws from the householder's duties, and, finally, that of the homeless wanderer or religious mendicant (Variant: Samnyasin).
- Sariputta One of Buddha's foremost disciples, distinguished for his faith.
- Sarnath A township near Banares, acquired fame as the venue of the Buddha's First Sermon.
- Sarvadharmā Revealed standards. Whole realm of formulations.
- Sarva-jnata Omniscience.
- Sasana Religion. The Teaching of the Buddha.
- Sati The Pali word for 'recollection' or 'mindfulness', right 'sati' typifies one of the last three stages of the Eight-fold Path. It is a central part of Buddhist mental and spiritual training always to be 'mindful' or 'aware' of what one is doing, one's motives, etc.
- Satya Truth.
- Satya-siddhi Name of Hinayana school of followers of Harivarman.
- Shantiparamita Perfection of Patience.
- Shashtra Book of teachings.
- Shiva Vedic god. The 'destroyer' aspect of the Hindu Trinity. Variant: Siva.
- Shrada Faith, devotion, reverence, humility.
- Shravasti Known from ancient times as the 'city of wonders', located in Northern India near the Nepalese border. Ruled from earliest times by the Ikshvaku kings and perhaps also founded by Lava, elder of the two sons of Rama. Shravasti became the capital of Oudh (Ayodhya) at the time of the Buddha and is located only a short distance northwest of Kapilavastu, the Buddha's birthplace (Variant: Sravasti).
- Siddharta Proper name of the Buddha. He was Siddharta

	Gotama (or Gautama), son of Suddhodana Gotama, king of Kapilavastu.
Siddhas	The "upright ones". The "fulfilled ones".
Sila	Good Conduct, Discipline.
Silabbata-paramasa	Dependence on rites.
Sindhu	River Indus.
Sirima	Sirima is the Buddhist counterpart of the Brahmanic goddess Stri.
Sita	Wife of Rama.
Skandhas	The five factors constituting an individual person; i.e. body, feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness: Aggregates (Ūpadi).
Sramana	An ascetic.
Sravaka	'Hearer', a disciple not yet capable of independent progress.
Sronaparanta	"The golden land". In the Buddha's day what is now called Bengal. Variant, Sonaparanta.
Sthityanyathatvam	Change of state.
Stupa	A reliquary, often bell-shaped and built in the open to contain relics of the Buddha or his disciples, or to commemorate the scene of their acts. In the course of time it came to symbolize the Buddhist doctrine.
Sudras	One of the four fundamental castes in Hinduism.
Sugata	A wholesome path, 'well-gone', an epithet of the Buddha.
Sukhavati	"Land of Bliss".
<i>Sukhavati-Vyuha Sutras</i>	The Larger supposedly preached by Siddharta near Rajagriha and the Smaller in the Jeta grove near Sravasti. The Sutras together with the <i>Amitayur-Dhyana-Sutra</i> deal at great length on Amitabha and His coming "Land of Bliss". Similar to the <i>Maha-Sudassana-Suttanta</i> (Digha-nikaya).
Sumeru	(Pali: Sineru). The legendary central mountain of the world. Also Meru.
Sunya	The void, emptiness. The Madhyamika philosophy emphasizes the voidless (Sunyata)

	of the Absolute, for it cannot be described in empirical terms and all theories or views about it fall into self-contradiction.
Sunyata	'Voidness', used to characterize the Absolute in certain Mahayanist teachings.
Susa	Capital of ancient Iran when Iran was part of Assyrian Empire and known as Elam.
Sutta	A text or teaching supposedly spoken of by the Buddha (Sanskrit: Sutra). A string of logia to be learnt by heart; and almost all other Indian literature, even the literature of law and grammar, is compiled in verse.
<i>Sutta-nipata</i>	A collection of 70 didactic poems of the Theravadin Buddhist Canon.
<i>Sutta-pitaka</i>	'Basket of Discourses', part of the Pali canon or 'discourses for the laity'. These sacred books of the southern Buddhists consist of the following 5 parts: (1) <i>Digha-nikaya</i> . The collection of 34 long treatises; one of which is the <i>Mahaparinibbana Sutta</i> . (2) <i>Majjhima-nikaya</i> . The collection of 152 treatises of moderate size. (3) <i>Samyutta-nikaya</i> . Continuation. (4) <i>Anguttara-nikaya</i> . Miscellaneous, the largest book in the three Pitakas. (5) <i>Khuddaka-nikaya</i> . The collection of short treatises. This is added by one school to the next Pitaka. It contains the following short books: (1) <i>Khuddaka-Patha</i> and (2) <i>Dhammapada</i> .
Svayambhu	One who has attained by himself alone. Buddha.
Swarga	The ineffable bliss. Nirvana.
Tanha	Craving for existence, selfish or blind greed (Sanskrit: trisna).
Tantra	'Woven'. System of rites and doctrines.
Tathata	'Thusness'. 'Suchness' — a word used in the Mahayana for the Absolute or Ultimate Reality. The use of the word 'Suchness' indicates that

Tathagata	it cannot be described in ordinary language. He who has fully arrived, i.e. the Perfect One. A title of the Buddha. One who has arrived at a condition which cannot be described, but can only be said to be 'thus' or 'like this'.
Tath'eva	'That is exactly so'. The utterances of a Tathagata.
Tat Twam Asi <i>Theragatha</i>	"That Thou Art". The Absolute. 'Songs of the Monks'. <i>Therigtha</i> : 'Songs of the Nuns'. These are parts of the <i>Khuddakanikaya</i> .
Theravada	Pali term meaning 'The Way of the Elders'. Strictly, the Theravada is only one among the many original Hinayana schools, the rest having disappeared.
Thiti	Prime of existence (Sanskrit: Stithi).
Tirthankara	A Jain teacher.
Tiratna	Three jewels: the three essential things, i.e. Buddha, Dharma, Sangha.
<i>Tripitaka</i>	'The Three Baskets'. Canonical Buddhist scriptures. (Pali: Tipitaka), is arranged in three parts: <i>Vinaya-pitaka</i> ; <i>Sutta-pitaka</i> ; and <i>Abhidhammapitaka</i> .
Triple World	The Triple World (Triloka), to which constant reference has been made in Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures is: The world of the Uncreate, the world of Spirit-mind and the physical world. Known also as Bhur (the physical plane), Bhuvar (the astral plane) and Swarga (the ineffable plane).
Tusita heaven	The heaven of delight, the third-lowest heaven, where Bodhisattvas await their last birth.
<i>Udana</i>	'Song of exultation' (inspired words of the Buddha), ancient Buddhist work of second century Buddhist era consisting of eighty-two short lyrics, supposed to have been uttered by Gautama under strong emotion, at important crises in his life. Each lyric is accompanied by details of the circumstances under which it

	arose. Literally, spontaneous verse. Part of the <i>Khuddaka-nikaya</i> .
<i>Udanavarga</i>	Sanskrit version of the <i>Dhammapada</i> .
Uddhacca	Self-righteousness.
Upacaya	Birth.
Upadana	Grasping, Desire.
<i>Upanishads</i>	Philosophical dialogues of treatises on the <i>Vedas</i> of ancient India. Written from B.C. 1000 to B.C. 500. The word 'Upanishad' is derived from the combinations Upa (near), ni (down) and sad (to sit): i.e. sitting down near, such as a group sitting down near their teacher to learn secret doctrine. The <i>Upanishads</i> are attached to the <i>Brahmanas</i> and certain mystical doctrine.
Upeksha	Equanimity.
Uposatha	Fasting.
Utpada	Origin.
Vajji	Name of a people living in the neighbourhood of Magadha, before whom the Buddha had preached and most of whom had become followers of His Dharma.
Vajra	Adamantine.
Vajrayana	'Diamond Vehicle', youngest stream of Buddhism.
<i>Vajrachchedika-Prajna paramita Sutta</i>	Diamond Cutter Sutra, a small book belonging to the Maha-Prajnaparamita (Perfection of Transcendental Wisdom). One of the many books in the canon of Mahayana Buddhism and by far the largest, running into many volumes.
Vaishyas	One of the Four Fundamental castes of Hinduism.
Vajra-Sattva	The 'diamond being', or the 'imperishable truth'.
Varanasi	Banares, the holiest city of the Hindus. (Variant: Varnasi).
Varuna	Chief pre-Vedic god.
Vasubandhu	Traditionally thought to be the brother of

	Asanga, fourth century. Hinayana teacher of the Sarvastivadin school, author of the <i>Abhidharma Kosha</i> ; in the light of recent research, not identical with the Mahayana author Vasubandhu.
Vasudeva	A name of Narayana, or Visnu as Krishna.
Veda	'Knowledge'.
Vedas	<i>Lit:</i> Books of Knowledge Oldest (B.C. 2000-1000) scriptures of the Hindu Aryans. Principle Vedas are four: <i>Rig Veda, Sam Veda, Atharva Veda, Yajur Veda.</i>
Vedana	Feelings, sensations. Divided into six classes according to Buddhism, those received by each of the five senses and sixthly by the mind.
Vedanta	'End of Veda', the Upanishads at the end of the Veda: also the name of the system based upon them, especially that of Shankara.
<i>Vessantara-Jataka</i>	The <i>Vessantara-Jataka</i> tells the story of the Bodhisattva's life as prince Vessantara in his last but one incarnation before he became Gautama Buddha. As Vessantara, he practised the perfection of charity. One by one, he gave away all the things he possessed and was banished by his father for his excessive charity. While he was in exile, he even gave away his wife and children who were, however, restored to him at the intervention of Indra.
Vicikiccha	Doubt.
Vidya	Rapt contemplation, Wisdom.
Vidya-carana-sampana	Possessing knowledge and virtue.
Vijnana	Thought, covering the whole group of mental activities from the most concrete ideation to the most abstract meditation. Intelligence.
Vikramaditya	A king identified with Chandragupta II.
<i>Vimana-vatthu</i>	'Celestial Mansion'. Also part of the Pali canon by same name, which lists the good deeds for being reborn as a deva.
Vinaya	Discipline.

<i>Vinaya-Pitaka</i>	Discipline for the Order (Pali canon) — early Buddhist sacred books of the southern Buddhists consisting of 5 sections of 227 rules of the monastic doctrine. (1) <i>Parajika</i> , On sins involving expulsion. (2) <i>Pacitti</i> , On sins requiring forgiveness. (3) <i>Mahavagga</i> , (Collectively called <i>Khandaka</i>) and (4) <i>Cula-vagga</i> , (Contains rules for the daily life of the monks). (5) <i>Parivara-patha</i> , A resume of the preceding books.
Visnu	The 'preserver' aspect of the Hindu Trinity: Brahma (Creator). Visnu (Preserver): Shiva (Destroyer). Visnu is generally considered to incarnate from time to time to preserve righteousness and reiterate the spiritual goal for the salvation of humanity. Rama, Krishna and Buddha are considered by the Hindus to be the seventh, eighth and ninth incarnations respectively of Visnu. Variant: Vishnu.
<i>Visnu-Purana</i>	Legends of Krishna's youth.
<i>Visuddhimagga</i>	'The Path of Purification', work of Buddhaghosa.
Vyakarana	Prediction, Prophecy.
Vyasa	Compiler of <i>The Bhagavad-Gita</i> .
Vyaya	Cessation.
Wheel of the Law	Dharma.
Yaksha	(Sanskrit: Raksha), Demonic being, demon.
Yama	Death personified. Ruler of the Underworld. Same as Mara.
Yamaka	'The Pairs'. The apparent contradictions of contrasts.
Yoga	'Yoking' of Thought, spiritual discipline. One of the traditional Indian metaphysical systems, closely associated with Sankhya, from which it derives its fundamental ideas. But it differs from Sankhya in stressing the need for meditative practices in order to attain liberation,

and also in elevating one of the souls (purusas) into the position of Supreme Soul or Lord (Isvara) who assists other souls towards liberation. But it should be noted that isolation from matter is the ultimate objective, and not union with Isvara. The meditative practices can be divided into physical and mental ones, the former being preparation for the latter. The term yoga is also used more generally for any such system of meditation (e.g. we can speak of Buddhist yoga, etc.).

Yogacara

A philosophical school of Buddhism, arising out of the Madhyamika, from which it differs (1) in emphasizing the need for yoga in order to attain to final truth and (2) in adopting an idealist position in regard to reality the Absolute being conceived as Absolute Mind, in line with the description of the highest states of trance as being the realization of pure consciousness.

Yogi

One who practices yoga.

Yojana

A distance of about seven miles.

Figuratively, 'a great distance', e.g. miles and miles. Variant: Yogana.

Zend-Avesta

The entire body of Zoroaster's Teachings.

Zoroaster

Also Zarathustra, the Avatar who appeared in Iran 101-24 B.B.E. (Before Buddhist Era or B.C. 635-558). The best estimates of Arab (Al Biruni) and Greek chroniclers independently place His death in His seventy-seventh year, at the hands of Tur Bura Toor, 228 years before the conquest of Iran by Alexander the Great in 330 B.C. Zoroaster is said to have received Enlightenment concerning His Divine Mission at the age of 30 and He travelled to many areas of Iran proclaiming a strict monotheistic creed. Zoroaster is also said to have visited Palestine (the Holy Land, now modern Israel).

Zoroastrianism

The Teachings of Zoroaster set forth in the *Zend-Avesta* are monotheistic.

PART II

TERMS RELATED TO BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS AND HISTORY

Aba	Cloak or mantle.
‘Abdu’l-Baha	Servant of Baha (Baha’u’llah). Abbas Effendi, Baha’u’llah’s eldest son. Also titled “Master”. 1844-1921. See Chapter 15. MAHASTHAMAPRAPTA.
‘Abdu’l Hamid II	Ottoman sultan of Turkey (1876-1909 A.D.)
‘Abdu’l Aziz	Ottoman sultan of Turkey (1830-1876 A.D.)
Aghsan	Literally “branches”. Denotes relations and descendants of Baha’u’llah.
Afnan	Literally “twigs”. Denotes relations of the Bab.
A.H.	“After Hijirah”. Date of Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina, and basis of Muhammadan chronology.
Akbar	“Greater”.
Akka	Twin city of Haifa in Israel.
Aqa	“Master”, Title given by Baha’u’llah to ‘Abdu’l-Baha.
Bab	“Gate”. Title assumed by Mirza Ali Muhammad, after the declaration of His Mission in Shiraz in 2387 B.E. (May 1844 A.D.). AVALOKITESVARA.
Babi	Follower of the Bab.
Badi	Literally “the wonderful”.
Baghdad	Capital of Iraq.
Baha	“Glory”, “Splendor”, “Light”. Title by which Baha’u’llah is designated.
Baha’i	Follower of Baha’u’llah.
Bahji	Literally “delight”. Denotes that part of the Plain of Akka where the Shrine and the Mansion of Baha’u’llah are situated.
Bani-Hashim	The family from which Muhammad descended.
Baqiyatu’llah	“Remnant of God”. Title applied both to the Bab and Baha’u’llah.

<i>Bayan</i>	“Utterance”, “explanation”. Title given by the Bab to His Revelation, particularly to His books.
<i>Bisharat</i>	Literally “Glad-tiding”. Title of one of the Tablets of Baha’u’llah.
Epistles Haji	Tablets of Baha’u’llah. A Muhammadan who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.
Holy Land	Palestine.
Husayn	Diminutive of Hassan (“Good”). Meaning encompasses “Kindness”, “compassion”. Also given name of Baha’u’llah.
Il	Clan or Gotra.
Imam	Title of the twelve Shi’ih successors of Muhammad. Also applied to Muslim religious leaders.
Imam-Jumih	The leading imam in a town or city; chief of the mullahs.
Iqan	“Certitude”. The title of Baha’u’llah’s epistle to the uncle of the Bab.
Iran	Persia.
Ishraqat	“Effulgence”. Title of one of the Tablets of Baha’u’llah.
Istanbul	Capital of Ottoman Empire.
Ka’bih	Ancient shrine at Mecca. Now recognized as the most holy shrine of (Muhammadanism) Islam.
Kabir	“Great”.
Kalimat	“Words”. Title of one of the Tablets of Baha’u’llah.
<i>Kitab-i-Aqdas</i>	“The Most Holy Book”. Title of Baha’u’llah’s Book of Laws.
Man-Yuzhiruhu’llah	“He Whom God will make manifest.” The title given by the Bab to the promised One.
Mihdi	Title of the Manifestation expected by Islam. Lit: “One who is guided.”
Mirza Husayn-Ali Noori	Baha’u’llah 1817-1892. (See Chapters 14 and 16). MAITRYA-AMITABHA.
Mirza Mihdi	“The Purest Branch” son of Baha’u’llah.

Mount Carmel	Mountain on which is located the Shrine of the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Baha in Haifa, Israel.
Mujtahid	Muhammadan doctor-of-law.
Mulla	Muhammadan priest.
Mulla Husayn	First Disciple of the Bab. Titled "Babu'l Bab (The Gate of the Gate).
Nabil	"Learned", "noble". Title of great Baha'i historian — author of <i>The Dawn-Breakers</i> .
Nasiri'd-Din-Shah	Shah of Iran (Persia). 1829-96 A.D.
Naw-Ruz	"New-Day". Name applied to the Baha'i New Year's Day; according to the Persian Calendar the day on which the sun enters Aries. (21 March).
Nightingale of Paradise	Manifestation of God; Prophet.
Qa'im	"He Who shall arise". The title designating the Promised One of the Muhammadan Faith.
<i>Qayyumu'l Asma</i>	One of the Bab's best-known works.
Qiblih	The direction to which people turn in prayer; especially Mecca, the Qiblih of all Muhammadans and Akka for the Baha'is. (See text pp. 373-6.)
Quddus	The greatest Disciple of the Bab. The eighteenth "Letter of the Living".
<i>Quran</i>	Koran, The Mother Book of the Muhammadan Faith, revealed by Muhammad.
Ridvan	The name of the custodian of Paradise. Baha'u'llah uses it to denote Paradise itself.
Sahibu'z-Zaman	"Lord of the Age"; one of the titles of the promised Qa'im.
Sadrih	Branch.
Salman	Formerly called Ruz-bih. One of the heralds of Muhammad.
Sarkar-i-Aqa	The "Honorable Master" applied by certain Baha'is to 'Abdu'l-Baha.
"Seventh Sphere"	The highest stage of the invisible Realm. Denotes also the Manifestation. Baha'u'llah.
Shi'ih	"Follower". One of the two great religious schools of Muhammadanism.
Sirat	"Bridge" or "path", denotes Dharma.

Siygid	Descendant of Prophet Muhammad.
Siygid Ali Muhammad	The Bab. 1819-1850. See Chapter 14.
Shiraz	City of south Iran; birthplace of the Bab.
Shoghi Effendi Rabbani	Guardian of the Baha'i Faith 1897-1957. Great grandson of Baha'u'llah, Shoghi Effendi was born in Akka.
Sufi	Order of Muhammadan mystics.
Sun of Truth	Avatar; Manifestation of God; the Divine Teacher; Prophet.
Surih	A chapter in the Quran.
Tahirih	The only woman among the First eighteen Disciples of the Bab.
Tajalliyat	"Splendors". Title of one of the Tablets of Baha'u'llah.
Tarazat	"Ornaments". Title of one of the Tablets of Baha'u'llah.
Teheran	Capital of Iran. Birthplace of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha.
The Universal House of Justice	The Supreme legislative and executive Body of the Baha'i world.
"White Path"	Symbolizes the Dharma (Religion).
World Center	Akka-Haifa. The seat of the Universal House of Justice. SUKHAVATI.

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(Footnotes indicated by *)
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