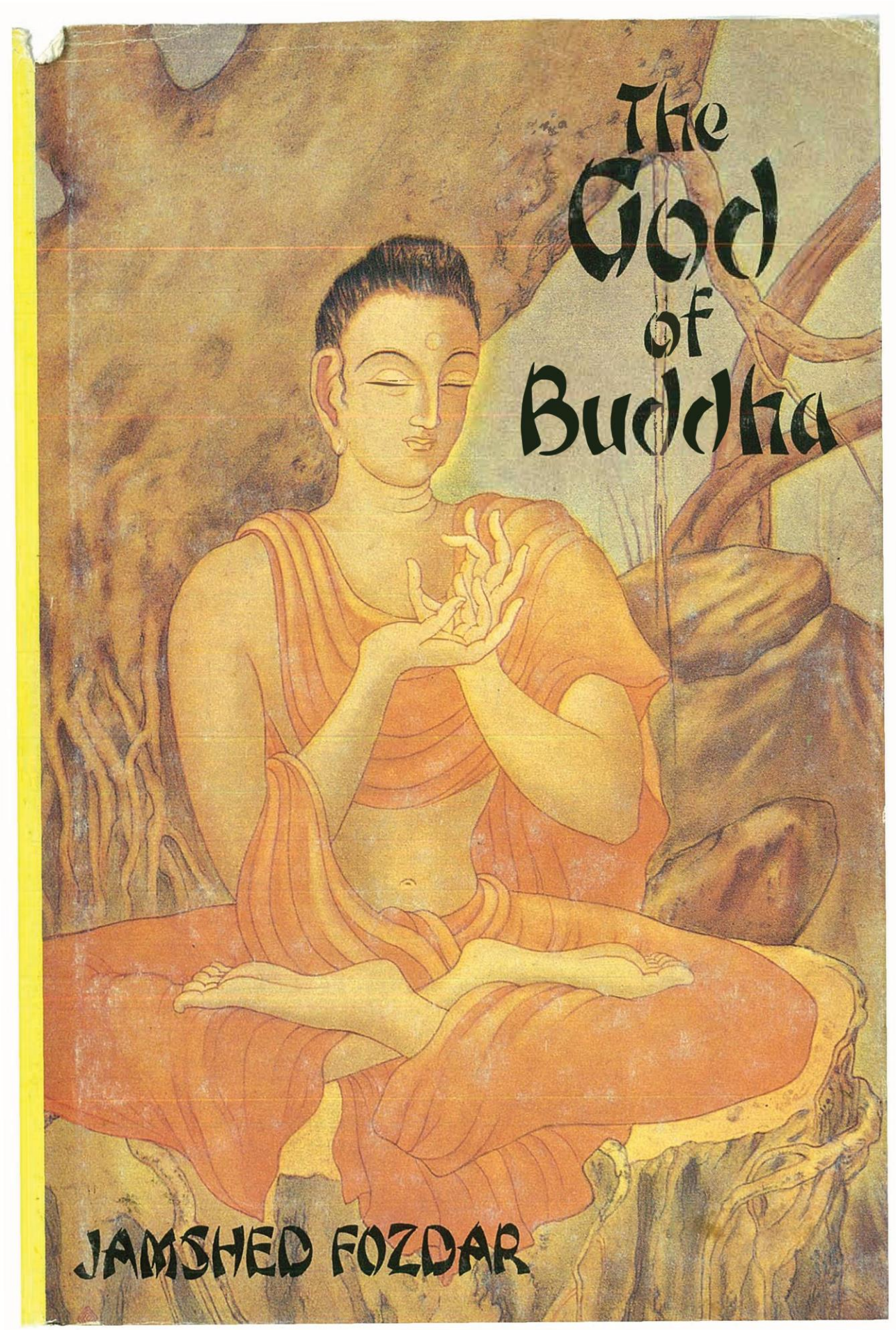
A Study Guide for *The God of Buddha* by Dr. Jamshed Fozdar



Contents

PREFACE 3

POSTSCRIPT TO THE THIRD EDITION 4

FOREWARD: THE ETERNAL THREAD OF TRUTH 5

INTRODUCTION 7

I. GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA 10

- Birth and Background 10
- Enlightenment 11
- Divine Station 13

II. DOCTRINE 16

- Renewal of Religion 16
- Dharma 17
- Faith and Service 19
- Renunciation 19
- Detachment 21
- The Pillars of Selfless Action 23
- Doing One's Duty 24
- Moderation Concerning Food 25
- The Meaning of Brahmin 26
- Soul, Mind, and Self 28
- Soul-Mind 29
- True Self 31
- Non-Ego Illusory Self 33
- Heaven and Hell 34
- The World of Devas (Gods) and Spirit Beings 35

III. NIRVANA 38

IV. THE GOD OF BUDDHA 43

- Point and Counterpoint 43
  - 'Gods', in Our Image, and the Unmanifest Brahma 43
  - Creation and Creator 45
  - Law and Law-Maker 46
- Obviating the Absurdities 48
- The Underlying Reality - God 49

EPILOGUE 54

SUMMARY 56

Preface

As with every task, so also with this thesis, the path towards the goal must be trod on the two feet of discovery and the analysis of that discovery, or, as in our specific quest, verification and interpretation of the recorded utterances of the Buddha on the basic principles as well as the more abstruse concepts of His Message.

Within the limits of possibility available to our time, the verification of the quotations listed in this book has not presented any great difficulty. However, since we have nothing reliable concerning His teachings which could be accurately dated less than 250 years after His passing, the other side of the coin - interpretation of His sayings - can be correct to any reasonable degree only if His utterances are examined within the context of His origins as regards both geography and time.

It is towards accomplishing this and eliminating centuries of misunderstanding and erroneous representation of the Buddha's Message that parallel quotations from the Hindu* scriptures have been presented, and the reader, so that he may have a better perspective for coming to his own conclusion, is urged to recognize that the Buddha was very fami1iar with most, if not all, of these Hindu Scriptures. It is hoped, therefore, that both types of readers, those interested in the subject only for talking purpose, and those more scholarly inclined towards details, may find in it not only points of interest but also food for thought on a fresh perspective.

In order to ensure a balance between the Sanskrit and Pali names given to the various terms, the reader is requested to treat as identical in meaning such words as Dharma and Dhamma; Nirvana and Nibbana; Gautama and Gotarna; Arahat and Arahant; Sutra and Sutta; Sangha and Samgha; Kanna and Kammana; Samsaras and Sankharas; wherever they occur in the text, as being mere differences of spelling, to account for the slight variation in their pronounciation (Sanskrit, as given by the first, and Pali, by the latter spelling). This rule holds both for the text as well as for the glossary which, it is hoped, will be of some assistance to the reader in obtaining a general concept of some of the terms he may come across in the text. Of course, it should be clearly recognized that the meaning in English of some of those terms will fall far short of the complete idea expressed by the original. This is the problem faced in any translation.

The use of capital letters for all nouns such as Religion, Founder, Message, God and the pronouns pertaining to these great spiritual concepts, while fully justifiable in deference to the sacred meaning which these words imply for all of us, has nevertheless been kept to a minimum to avoid difficult reading.

The number of chapter titles has been kept to a minimum while, wherever necessary, in order to deal with distinct yet related subjects within the format of the chapters. Sub-titles have been included for the sake of clarity and ease of study. The chapters themselves have been so arranged as to appear as stepping stones in a gradual approach to the goal of our quest, the God of Buddha.

* While recognizing that each and every major religion has identical teachings on the various aspects of its Message, the writer has, for the sake of brevity, refrained from presenting such quotes from the scriptures of the other great Faiths.

Postscript to the Third Edition

The aim of The God of Buddha to abolish the anomaly that plagued Buddhism for over two millennia as a religion without a 'ground of being', was clearly achieved and Buddhism's place as one of the major revealed religions within the fabric of progressive divine revelations has been established. Over twenty years and two editions later, the thesis promulgated by this definitive work remains irrefutable by any attempts predicated upon Buddhist scriptures, whether Theravadin or Mahayanist.

As we enter the twenty-sixth century of the Enlightened One's birth, it is hoped that The God of Buddha will continue to enlighten us all to ever greater awareness of our own humanity, through a clearer understanding of the meaning and message of Buddha-risings.

Asia, 1994. JAMSHED K FOZDAR

Foreword: The Eternal Thread of Truth

The journey through **The God of Buddha** by Dr. Jamshed Fozdar is more than an academic exercise; it is a spiritual homecoming. For centuries, a perceived wall has stood between the teachings of the East and the West, between the concept of "Nirvana" and the concept of "God."

Dr. Fozdar's work shatters this wall. He reveals that the Buddha did not teach a universe of "nothingness," but rather a universe built upon an Uncreated and Eternal Reality. This "Unborn" essence is the same Divine Source that has guided humanity through every age.

From the Dharma to the Glory

In the Baha'i Faith, we recognize this same Source. Baha'u'llah teaches that God is an "Unknowable Essence," far beyond human reach, who reveals His light through "Manifestations"—divine educators like the Buddha.

- The Buddha prepared the way by teaching us how to detach from the self and recognize the eternal Dharma.
- Baha'u'llah represents the "Maitreya" or the "Glory" promised in the scriptures, coming at a time when the world is ready to be united as one single family.

As you read this study guide, let it be a reminder that the "Noble Silence" of the Buddha was a sign of profound reverence for a Truth so great it cannot be named—a Truth that Baha'u'llah has now unveiled for the maturity of the human race.

Why is it commonly believed that the Buddha did not believe in God?

To understand why most Thais (and many Buddhists worldwide) view the Buddha as non-theistic, you have to look at the historical, linguistic, and cultural context of Thailand.

In the Thai context, the belief that Buddhism is "atheistic" or "non-theistic" stems from several key factors:

1. **The Rejection of "Theistic" Rituals**

- In the Buddha's time, "God" was often associated with the Brahminical concept of deities who required animal sacrifices and complex rituals to grant favors. The Buddha taught that liberation (Nirvana) comes from self-effort, mental discipline, and the Law of Karma, not from begging a deity for help.
- Thai Perspective: Thais emphasize the proverb "Attahi Attano Natho" (Self is the refuge of self). This is often interpreted to mean there is no higher power involved in one's salvation.

2. **Linguistic Interpretation of "Nirvana"**

- In Thai Dhamma studies, Nirvana is often described as Sabbanimittanam Samatho (the calming of all formations) or Sunyata (Voidness/Emptiness).
- The Misconception: Many interpret "Emptiness" as "nothingness" or "non-existence."
- The Baha'i/Fozdar View: As Dr. Fozdar points out, "Emptiness" refers to being empty of worldly qualities, not a lack of a Divine Source. It is the "Unconditioned" state.

3. **Focus on the Human-Centered Path**

- Thai Buddhism, particularly the forest tradition and modern reform movements, focuses heavily on the psychology of the mind. Because the Buddha did not give a name or a personality to the "Supreme Being" (to avoid people making idols out of the concept), many teachers concluded that the concept simply doesn't exist in Buddhism.

4. **Reaction to Western Missionary Efforts**

- Historically, when Christian missionaries arrived in Thailand, they presented "God" as a personified figure in the clouds. Thai scholars, wanting to protect the unique identity of Buddhism, emphasized that Buddhism was "scientific" and "rational," relying on Law (Dharma) rather than a "Creator God" who could be influenced by prayer.

5. Bridging the Gap

- Dr. Fozdar argues that what Thais call "The Eternal Dharma" (ธรรมะ) is actually another name for the Will of God. "The Buddha didn't deny God; he denied the wrong ideas people had about God."
- By emphasizing the "Unborn, Unoriginated, and Uncreated" (from the Pali Canon), this study guide can help Thai readers see that the "Supreme Reality" they seek in Nirvana is the same "Supreme Being" spoken of by Baha'u'llah.

A Note for Readers in Thailand

For those who wish to explore how these teachings are being put into practice today in the Kingdom, or to find Thai translations of the Baha'i writings mentioned in this guide, please visit:

- www.thailandbahais.org (General teachings and Thai library)
- www.bahai-history.org (History of the Faith's origins)
- www.thaibahaifaith.org (Teachings, history, applications, and perspective)

Introduction

Pages	Study Guide Information
	• This is a profound and dense introduction. The author's primary aim is to rescue the image of the Buddha from being seen as an "atheist" or a denier of the soul, placing Him firmly back into the spiritual lineage of India's quest for the Eternal. • Here are the main points from the text, expanded with detailed information.
	1. The Innate Human Desire for Immortality • The author argues that human beings are fundamentally incapable of sustained righteous behaviour without a belief in something eternal. • **The Psychological Driver:** The text suggests that the "intellect" alone cannot motivate a person to be selfless. Unless we feel our consciousness is linked to something immortal, there is "nothing left to work towards" and "no reason to strive." • **The Buddha's Stance:** Contrary to the popular view that Buddha abolished the "self," the author asserts that Buddha taught **Dharma as a door to the Eternal**. He used the promise of "The Imperishable State" to motivate people to give up small, fleeting pleasures for a "larger pleasure" (Eternity). • **The "Aladdin's Lamp":** This desire for immortality is described as the secret to making humanity "prick up their ears." Buddha didn't ignore this selfish desire; He used it as a starting point to lead men toward salvation. **2. The Buddha as a Reformer of Hinduism** • To understand the Buddha, one must recognize that He was "born, brought up, and died a Hindu." He did not create a vacuum; He addressed a specific crisis in Indian spirituality. • **The Genius of Ancient India:** The author defines India's spiritual genius as a "passion of the fragment for the whole"—the desire of the individual soul to become one with the Infinite. • **The Decay of Tradition:** By the time of the Buddha, Hindu practice had become "choked by atrophied traditions," rigid caste systems, and meaningless rituals performed in dead languages (Sanskrit). • **The Buddha's "Cleansing":** Buddha acted as a spiritual "Rosetta Stone." He swept away the "cobwebs of repetitious rites" to reveal the central theme of religion again. He chose to speak in **Maghada Prakrit** (the vernacular language) so the common people—not just the elite Brahmins—could access the truth. **3. The "Unoriginated" vs. Anthropomorphic God** • The text addresses the common misconception that Buddhism is atheistic. It clarifies that while Buddha rejected *idols*, He did not reject the *Absolute*. • **Rejecting the "Familiar":** Buddha avoided names like Brahma or Vishnu because they were "familiar symbols created by the mind of man." He believed the "Unknown" and the "Absolute" cannot be familiar or defined. • **The Causeless Cause:** The author cites the *Udana* to show that Buddha acknowledged an **Un-Create, Unoriginated, and Unborn** Entity. He simply relegated the popular gods (like Indra and Brahma) to a lower "empirical order," viewing them as spirit-beings who *themselves* needed the Dharma to find liberation.

- **Nirvana as an Attribute:** Nirvana is described not as the "Absolute" itself, but as the *state of bliss* or the end of sorrow that comes from reaching the Unoriginated Reality.

4. The Misunderstandings of Early Sects and Western Scholars

- The author blames both ancient followers and modern academics for the "deformity" of seeing Buddhism as atheistic.
- **The "Fundamentalist" Error:** Early Buddhist theologians became so obsessed with fighting Hindu idol-worship that they narrowed their focus solely to a "set of rules" (causality/Karma) and lost sight of the "Causeless Cause" behind the whole scheme.
- **The Brahmin Label:** The author suggests a "tragic possibility": that the Brahmins themselves might have been the ones to label Buddhism as "atheistic." By doing so, they ensured the masses would eventually reject it, thereby protecting the priests' own authority.
- **The Western Bias:** Modern Western scholars are accused of looking at Buddhism in a "clinical atmosphere of isolation," severed from its Indian roots. Because they use a "Judaeo-Christian" lens of an anthropomorphic (human-like) God, they fail to see the Buddha's sophisticated acknowledgment of a Transcendental Reality.

5. The "Mind of the Artist" Analogy

- The Introduction concludes with a powerful analogy to explain why we cannot "see" or "prove" God through the intellect.
- **The Two-Dimensional World:** Imagine a painting in a "flat-top" world. A painting cannot see or understand the artist. The artist exists in a dimension beyond the painting's ability to analyze.
- **Attributes vs. Essence:** Just as the artist is known to the painting only through the "brushstrokes" (effects), the Supreme Creator is known to us only through **Attributes**.
- **The Inexpressible Truth:** The Buddha taught that the ultimate Truth is inexpressible. It cannot be "heard" directly, but it can be understood through the "Attributes" it manifests in the world.

Summary

Main Point	Explanation	Supporting Information
The Motive for Goodness	Mankind cannot be inspired to sustain righteousness without a vision of **Immortality**.	If the hope for eternity is removed, the author argues there is no reason to strive. Buddha used the "Dharma as a door to the eternal" to inspire this quest.
Buddha as a Reformer	The Buddha was a **Hindu reformer**, not the creator of a vacuum.	He came to "sweep away the cobwebs" of a Hindu system that had become choked by rigid castes and dead rituals. He spoke in the common tongue (Prakrit) to bypass elite priests.
The "Unoriginated" Reality	Buddha did not deny "God," but	He acknowledged an **Un-Create, Unborn, and Unoriginated**

		rather **anthropomorphism** (human-like gods).	Entity. He viewed popular gods (Brahma/Indra) as spirit-beings who were still subject to the Dharma.
	The Atheism Fallacy	The view of Buddhism as "atheistic" is a historical and academic **misunderstanding**.	Early "fundamentalist" monks and modern Western scholars stripped the Faith of its underlying Reality. The author suggests Brahmins may have labelled it "atheistic" to ensure its rejection in India.
	The Artist Analogy	The Divine cannot be defined by the mind, only known by its **Attributes**.	Like a painting in a 2D world cannot comprehend the 3D artist, the human mind cannot "reach" the Absolute. We can only know the "Creator" through the effects and qualities He manifests.

Chapter 1

Gautama The Buddha

Pages	Gautama The Buddha
	Birth and Background

- In this section of the book, the author moves from the philosophical foundations to the **historical setting** of the Buddha's life. He highlights the difficulty of separating legend from fact due to the long gap between the Buddha's life and the first written records.
- Here are the main points and detailed information for the Study Guide.

---

1. The Historical Gap and the Burden of Legend

- The author notes a significant challenge for any serious student of Buddhism: the lack of contemporary records.
- **The 250-Year Silence:** The first chroniclers of the Buddha's life did not write until at least 250 years after His passing. Because of this, "sober facts" are often inseparable from "pious legend".
- **Historical Confidence:** While we cannot be certain of every detail, the existence of the Buddha as a historical figure is anchored by archaeological evidence, most notably the **Asoka Pillar**.

2. Identity and Titles of the Blessed One

- The text clarifies the different names used for the Buddha, each carrying a specific meaning:
  - **Siddharta Gautama:** His personal name (Siddharta) and family name (Gautama).
  - **Sakyamuni:** Meaning "The Sage of the Sakyas," referring to His tribal origin.
  - **Tathagata:** A title meaning "He who has fully arrived" or "One who has attained self-realization."
  - **Buddha:** Not a name, but a title meaning **"The Enlightened One"**.

3. The Royal Origins and Context

- The Buddha was born into a world of small, tribal principalities that were soon to be swallowed by larger empires.
- **Birthplace and Date:** Born approximately **563 B.C.** in **Lumbini** (modern-day Rummindei in Nepal).
- **The Sakya Tribe:** His father, Suddhodana, was a "petty chieftain" (a small-scale king) at Kapilavastu.
- **The Asoka Connection:** The Emperor Asoka later marked this spot with a stone pillar, which remains one of the most important historical markers in religious history.

4. The Sheltered Life and the Great Awakening

- The narrative emphasizes the contrast between the Buddha's early luxury and the harsh reality of human existence.
- **Family Life:** He married his cousin, Yasodhara, and had a son named Rahula.

- **Suddhodana's Protection:** His father went to extreme lengths to hide the "travails and frustrations" of the world from his son, surrounding him with sensual delights to prevent him from seeking a spiritual path.
- **The Turning Point:** In his early twenties, Siddharta became cognizant of **disease, old age, and death**. This wasn't just a discovery of biological facts, but a profound psychological experience where he realized that decay is "merely the other side of the coin of life and growth."

Study Guide Table: The Historical Context

Main Point	Historical/Contextual Details	Spiritual Significance
Historical Reliability	Earliest records appear 250+ years after His death (approx. 483 B.C.).	Highlights the need to look past legends to find the "essence" of the Message.
Titles of Authority	Siddhartha, Gautama, Sakyamuni, Tathagata, Buddha.	Represents His journey from a Prince to a Sage, and finally to an Enlightened Being.
Royal Heritage	Born in **Lumbini (563 B.C.)** to King Suddhodana of the Sakyas.	Shows that even total material luxury cannot satisfy the human soul's quest for truth.
The "Four Sights"	Exposure to disease, old age, and death in His early twenties.	The realization of **Impermanence**—that physical life is inextricably linked to annihilation.

A Note for the Study Guide

- The author suggests that while Siddharta's reflections on suffering *energized* Him, it was a "deeper experience" (which the text will likely describe as His Great Renunciation and Enlightenment) that provided the *direction* and *goal*.
- In the Baha'i context, this transition from a sheltered life to the recognition of world suffering is seen as the "awakening" of a **Manifestation of God**. Just as the Buddha left His palace to find a cure for human misery, Baha'is believe all Messengers undergo a period of preparation before proclaiming the "Glad Tidings" to humanity. You can read more about how these historical figures are honoured in Thai Baha'i literature at **www.bahai-history.org**

Enlightenment

- In this pivotal section, the author explores the **Enlightenment of the Buddha**, framing it as a universal spiritual phenomenon shared by all Great Founders of Faith. He details the transition from Siddhartha's internal struggle to his definitive victory over doubt.
- Here are the main points and detailed information:

---

1. **The Universal Law of Prophetic Vision**

- The author draws a bold parallel between the Buddha and other "Manifestations of God" (Christ, Muhammad, Baha'u'llah, etc.).
- **The Divine Law:** Just as the moon needs the sun's rays to shine in the night, a Prophet must receive a "Divine Inspiration" to become a source of light for humanity's "night of the soul."
- **The Vision of the Samana:** Siddhartha's confirmation came through a vision of a *Samana* (a holy recluse). This figure represents the "Spirit" or "Celestial Messenger" that awakens the Prophetic mission.

2. **Correlatives: The Logic of Salvation**

- The vision provides Siddhartha with a logical framework for hope, known as the principle of correlatives.
- **Opposites Define Possibility:** If heat exists, cold is possible; if there is pain, there must be pleasure; if there is evil, good can be developed.
- **The Lake of Nirvana:** The Samana uses the analogy of a man covered in filth who must seek a nearby lotus pond. If the man remains dirty, it is not the fault of the pond but his failure to seek it. Similarly, Nirvana exists as a "deathless lake," but man must choose to walk the path.

3. **The Great Renunciation and Asceticism**

- Following his vision, Siddhartha takes the radical step of "Homelessness."
- **Severing Ties:** At midnight, he leaves his wife Yasodhara and son Rahula. This is the **Mahabhinishkramana** (The Great Renunciation). He chooses "the path of joy" over "the path of pleasure."
- **The Failure of Self-Mortification:** For six years, Siddhartha practiced extreme penance in the forests of Uruvela, becoming so emaciated he eventually collapsed. He realized that **extreme physical pain does not lead to spiritual clarity.**
- **The Middle Way:** By accepting food from a villager (Sujata), he abandoned the "dead-end" of self-torture, which led his five disciples to desert him in disgust.

4. **The "Spiritual Sunburst" under the Bo Tree**

- The moment of Enlightenment is described as occurring when Siddhartha's resolve was at its lowest, abandoned by all.
- **The Tree of Enlightenment:** Sitting under the *Ficus religiosa* (Bo Tree), he moved through stages of meditation until he reached the "supreme secret."
- **The Builder of the House:** Upon enlightenment, Buddha declared that he had finally found the "Maker" of the dwelling (the cause of rebirth). By destroying the "ridge-pole" (ignorance/desire), he attained the extinction of cravings.

Study Guide Table: The Path to Enlightenment

Key Event	Description	Spiritual Lesson
The Celestial Vision	Encounter with the "Spirit" of a holy man.	Confirmation of his destiny as a **Tathagata** and **Dharmaraja** (King of Truth).
The Great Renunciation	Leaving the palace, riches, and family at midnight.	To gain "The Imperishable," one must surrender that which they cannot keep.
Ascetic Rigors	Six years of starvation and self-mortification.	Physical suffering alone cannot purify the heart; a "Middle Way" is required.
The Victory (Bodhi)	Enlightenment reached as the physical sun set.	The "Spiritual Sunburst" ends the cycle of rebirth and reveals the Original Cause.

Connecting the Dots

- The author highlights that Buddha used the title **Bhagavad** (Blessed Lord), the same title used for Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. This reinforces the idea that Buddha's message was a **renewal** of the eternal Truth, not a rejection of it.

Divine Station

- In this detailed section, the author explores the **Divine Station** of the Buddha, arguing that He was not merely a man who achieved enlightenment through effort, but a pre-destined "Manifestation of Spiritual Reality." The text links the Buddha's identity to a cosmic lineage shared by Krishna, Rama, and other great Prophets.
- Here are the main points and detailed information:

---

1. The Pre-destined Descent (Tusita Heaven)

- The author suggests that Buddhahood is a "destined event" rather than just the result of human discipline.
- **The Descent:** According to tradition, before His birth, the Buddha was a *Bodhisattva* in the **Tusita Heaven**. At the request of the gods, He chose the specific time, continent, and family (the Sakyas) for His final birth to save mankind.
- **Purpose of Penance:** The author argues that Siddhartha's six years of extreme asceticism were not necessary for *His* enlightenment, but were a demonstration to show His disciples that the popular methods of the day (self-mortification) were "howling up the wrong tree."

2. The Buddha as a Title, Not a Name

- The text emphasizes that "Buddha" refers to a recurring spiritual office, not a single historical person.
- **The Office of Buddha:** Just as "President" or "King" is a title, "Buddha" (The Fully Enlightened) describes a type of being who appears successively at suitable intervals.
- **The Succession:** Gautama is represented as one of a long line (at least 24 predecessors are mentioned). When the Dharma is forgotten and the world is enveloped in wickedness, a new Buddha appears to "beat the eternal Dharma's drum."
- **Maitreya (Metteyya):** The prophecy of the "Buddha of Kindness" who will appear in the future to reopen the door of Nirvana when Gautama's message is forgotten.

3. The Super-Human Nature of the Tathagata

- In a famous dialogue with the Brahmin Dona, the Buddha clarifies His ontological station—He is neither a god, an angel, nor a human being.
- **The Unsoiled Lotus:** The Buddha explains that He has "cut off at the root" the outflows that would make Him a deva or a human. He compares Himself to a **lotus** that grows in the water but stands above it, unsoiled.
- **The Divine Father:** Because the Buddha looks with a "kind heart equally on all living beings," He is called the "Father" of humanity. This mirrors the relationship between Krishna and His devotees in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

4. Spiritual and Physical Kinship (The Solar Dynasty)

- A unique point in this text is the claim that the great Indian Teachers are related not only spiritually but also **genealogically**.

- **The Solar Dynasty (Okkaka/Ikshvaku):** The author links the Buddha's clan (the Sakyas) to the lineage of **King Rama**. Specifically, the Sakyas are descendants of **Lava**, the son of Rama.
- **The Continuity of Avatars:** The Hindu tradition regards Rama as the 7th, Krishna as the 8th, and Buddha as the 9th incarnation (Avatar) of Vishnu. The author notes that the ancestors of these figures all belonged to the "Solar Dynasty," creating a "physical kinship" across thousands of years.
- **The Family of Prophets:** The text mentions that cities founded by Rama's brothers and sons (like Taxila or Mathura) later became sacred centers for the Buddhist and Krishna traditions, showing a geographical and historical continuity.

Study Guide Table: The Divine Station

Concept	Explanation	Reference / Connection
Bodhissatva	The "Buddha-potential" who agreed to descend from heaven for the salvation of man.	Compares to the "Pre-existence" of Christ or the Holy Spirit.
Manifestation	An "oft-repeated manifestation of spiritual reality" into the world.	Mirrored in Krishna's promise to "body forth" whenever religion declines (Gita IV.7-8).
The "Third Station"	Buddha is neither God, nor angel, nor man, but "Buddha"—a category apart.	Analogized to the Sun: it is always shining; only our view is obscured by the "ego."
Genealogy of Grace	The physical descent of the Sakyas from King Rama (Okkaka).	Connects the three major Indian Avatars: Rama → Krishna → Buddha.

Connecting the Dots

- This chapter reinforces the Baha'i view of **The Manifestations of God** as "Spiritual Suns." Just as the sun that rose today is the same sun that rose yesterday, the spirit animating the Buddha is the same spirit that animated Rama, Krishna, and Baha'u'llah. They are "exactly the same" in terms of their divine reality.

- In the next section, the author then draws a sharp distinction between a **Buddha** (a divine "Manifestation") and a **worldling** (a mortal human). He argues that Buddhahood is not a state one can "earn" through study or yoga, but is a unique "difference of kind"—a destined, celestial event.

1. **The Fallacy of the "Self-Made" Buddha**

- The author warns against the naive view that anyone can become a Buddha through specific formulas or exercises.
- **The Dipankara Prediction:** In the *Diamond Sutra*, it is noted that the Buddha Gautama did not attain enlightenment through a "formula" (*dharma*). Instead, his Buddhahood was predicted ages ago by the former Buddha, Dipankara.
- **Grace vs. Effort:** While humans can attain "meditative calm" or "learning," the author asserts that the station of a Buddha is a **bestowal of grace** from the "Absolute" (the Unconditioned Reality).

2. **The "Race" of Prophets (A Different Creation)**

- The text identifies the Buddha as part of a "race apart"—the same lineage as Rama, Krishna, Christ, and Baha'u'llah.
- **The Egg Analogy:** The Buddha describes humanity as being "shut up in an egg-shell of ignorance." He is the "eldest" and "noblest" because He was the first to break that shell from the outside.
- **The Unsoiled Lotus:** Re-emphasizing His station, He is born in the world and grows in it, but like a lotus rising above murky water, He remains **unsoiled** by it.

3. **The "Supra-Human" Station (Further-Men)**

- The author includes a stern warning from the *Majjhima-nikaya*. Anyone who claims that the Buddha is "merely a man" who devised a system through "reasoning and investigation" is said to be in grave spiritual error (consigned to *Niraya* or Hell).
- **Trackless Travelers:** The Buddha is "trackless"—His mind cannot be followed or mapped by human logic because He has "infinite perception."
- **The Extinction of Gotama:** The author clarifies that when Siddhartha became the Buddha, the "self" of Gotama was extinguished. What remains is the **Truth** (the Dharma-body).

4. **Summary: Mortals vs. The Manifestation**

Feature	The Mortal (Worldling)	The Buddha (Manifestation/Avatar)
Origin of Knowledge	Derived from study, logic, and trial-and-error.	Bestowed as a "Spiritual Sunburst" or "Divine Revelation."
Nature of Being	Bound by the "egg-shell" of ignorance/ego.	A "Different Creation" that has broken the shell.
Relationship to Law	Subject to the laws of Karma and rebirth.	The "Lord of the Law" (Dharmaraja) who sets the wheel in motion.
Permanence	Dissolves upon death (unless enlightened).	Remains forever in the "Holy Body of the Law" (Dharma).

5. **The Continuity of the "Brahma-Wheel"**

- The chapter concludes by linking the **Brahma-wheel** (the Wheel of Divine Law) to the recurring mission of the Prophets.
- **The Great Knower:** Knowing God in His manifestation through a human (the Buddha) is the only way to know the "Pillar" of Truth.
- **The Eternal Father:** The Buddha is described as the "Father of the Universe," a title also found in the *Bhagavad Gita* regarding Krishna.
- **Connecting to Thai Baha'i Perspectives**
- This chapter's emphasis on the **uniqueness** of the Prophet's station aligns with the Baha'i belief that while we should all strive to reflect divine attributes, we can never "become" the Manifestation Himself. The Manifestations are like perfect mirrors reflecting the full sun, while we are like stones that can, at best, be warmed by that same sun.
- For Thai students, understanding that the Buddha is "unsoiled by the world" helps clarify why He is honoured as the "Supreme Teacher."

Chapter 2

Doctrine

Pages	Doctrine
	Renewal of Religion

- In this opening of the section on **Doctrine**, the author focuses on the **Renewal of Religion**—the idea that the Buddha did not come to start a "new" religion, but to restore a forgotten, eternal truth.

---

1. The One Eternal Religion

- The author posits that across all history, there is essentially only **one religion**.
- **The Golden Rule:** The fundamental moral truths (like the Golden Rule) underlie the message of every divine Messenger, whether Christ, Krishna, or Buddha.
- **A Standard for Return:** A Prophet appears when humanity has strayed from this "ancient way." Their mission is to provide the spiritual motivation to pull humanity out of mundane life and back toward "ineffable glory."

2. Restoring the Lost Yoga

- The text highlights that the Buddha's claim of restating ancient truths is a hallmark of all Divine Manifestations.
- **The Nagara Sutta Analogy:** The Buddha likened His Dharma to the discovery of an **ancient, buried city** that had been forgotten. He was not the architect of the city, but the one who re-opened the path to it.
- **Comparison to the Gita:** This mirrors Krishna's statement in the *Bhagavad Gita*, where He tells Arjuna He is restating the "ancient Yoga" that was lost to the world through the lapse of time.

3. The Identity of the Messenger and the Law

- A critical doctrinal point is established: the Buddha is not His "vile body" (physical form) but His **Dharma-body** (the Law).
- **"He who sees the Dharma sees me":** The author quotes several scriptures (*Samyutta-nikaya*, *Vajracchedika*) to prove that the only way to "see" or understand the Buddha is through His teachings.
- **The Human Garb:** The text warns that "fools" mistake the Messenger for an ordinary mortal because He wears a human body. In reality, His nature is "one with the Law."

Summary: Renewal of Religion

Concept	Explanation	Reference / Connection
Renewal	Religion is not invented; it is restored and clarified for a new age.	"Blessed is the teaching of the true law" (*Dhammapada* 194).

Dharma-kaya	The "Law-body" is the true reality of the Buddha.	"Whosoever sees Dhamma sees me" (*Samyutta-nikaya*).
The "Ancient Way"	The path taught by all previous Buddhas.	Likened to the "Ancient Yoga" mentioned by Krishna.

A Note on Historical Authenticity

- The author candidly notes that because the **Pali Canon (Pitakas)** was not written down until the Council of Ashoka (approx. 250 B.C.), there is a 200-year gap. This makes it difficult to distinguish the Buddha's original high ethical standards from later legends or sectarian changes. However, by comparing Pali, Sanskrit, and Ceylonese records, the "stamp of authenticity" can still be found on the fundamentals.
- This reinforces the Baha'i principle that while the *spirit* of religion is one, the *human records* and traditions can sometimes obscure the original light.

Dharma

- In this detailed expansion on **Doctrine**, the author explores the profound roots of the word **Dharma** and its role as the bridge to the Absolute. He emphasizes that while the "Absolute" (God) is incomprehensible, the Dharma is the "visible ray" that leads us back to the Sun.

---

1. **The Roots of Dharma: Order and Truth**

- The author traces the term back to the ancient term *Aryadharma* (The Noble Way).
- **Rita and Asha:** Dharma is linked to the Vedic *Rita* and the Avestan *Asha*, signifying a universal **Order**. This order isn't just physical (like gravity) but also metaphysical and moral.
- **The Rays of the Sun:** The author uses a powerful metaphor: if we could travel on a ray of light, it would lead us to the sun. Similarly, Dharma is the "ray" emanating from the Supreme. To walk the path of Dharma is the only way to reach the "Unoriginated Reality."

2. **The Buddha's Practical Approach**

- The text highlights a key difference between the Upanishads and the Buddha's method:
- **Focus on the "Visible":** Where the Upanishads dwell on the "Absolute" (Brahma), the Buddha directs us to the **Dharma**.
- **The Wise Teacher:** Just as a teacher tells a student to study the properties of sunlight to survive rather than staring directly at the sun (which would cause blindness), the Buddha focuses on the Moral Law because it is the "image of absolute truth" that we can actually grasp.
- **King of Kings:** The Buddha bowed to the Dharma, calling it the "King of Kings," showing that even a Buddha lives under the authority of this Eternal Law.

3. **The Law of Causality (Karma)**

- Dharma is identified as the unwavering law of **Conditioned Origination** (Karma).
- **Independence of the Law:** The author notes that the Law of Dharma exists whether a Buddha is born or not. The Buddha's mission is not to *create* the law, but to **reveal** it—to "beat the drum" so others can hear.
- **Anatta (No-Self):** A core teaching revealed by the Buddha is that all conditioned things are subject to suffering and are "without a permanent self" (*Anatta*).

4. The Great Commission: Teaching the Dharma

- Once freed from the "snares" of the world, a follower has a duty to help others.
- **Lovely in the Beginning, Middle, and End:** The Buddha instructs His monks to spread the Dharma out of compassion for the world, describing it as a message that is beautiful at every stage.
- **The Best Refuge:** Unlike mountains, forests, or shrines, which provide no real safety from pain, taking refuge in the **Buddha, the Law (Dharma), and the Order (Sangha)** is the only "safe refuge" that delivers one from suffering.

Connecting the Dots

- The author concludes that the Dharma is not something one "concocts" from ritual, but a "straight and perfect eternal path, sharp as a razor's edge." This aligns with the Baha'i view that **Religion is a Progressive Revelation**. Just as the Buddha "strained away the impurities" of ritual to reveal the pure Dharma, Baha'u'llah came to remove the "dust of vain imaginings" from the religions of today.

Faith and Service

- This section of the chapter focuses on the vital role of **Faith**, the harmony between **Religion and Reason**, and the supreme merit of **Teaching the Dharma**.

---

1. Faith: The Wealth of Man

- The author defines faith not as a blind acceptance of dogma, but as a "cohesive force" and the "very being of man."
- **The Shape of Faith:** Quoting the *Gita*, the text explains that faith is shaped by one's mental constitution—essentially, a person *is* what their faith is.
- **The Flood Crosser:** Faith is described as the instrument by which the "flood" of suffering and death is crossed.
- **Beyond Ritual:** The author emphasizes that "matted hair, dirt, or fasting" cannot purify a soul still clouded by doubt. True faith is an unselfish kinship with the **Divine Mind**.

2. The Two Wings: Religion and Reason

- One of the most striking metaphors in this section is the comparison of religion and reason to the **two wings of a bird**.
- **Reasoned Faith:** The author asserts that because man is a "rational soul," any religious proposition must be grounded in reason to have lasting worth.
- **The Mists of Prejudice:** Faith must be sustained through wisdom and reflection to clear the mists of superstition and arrogance.
- **Mutual Support:** Religion and reason are not incompatible; they beat in unison to lift the soul to "ever greater heights."

3. The Incomparable Merit of Teaching

- Both the Buddha and Krishna place the highest value on sharing the Truth with others.
- **The Seven Treasures vs. Four Lines:** The *Vajra-Sattva* states that giving away a universe full of gold and jewels is less meritorious than explaining just **four lines** of the Dharma to another person.
- **The Best Service:** Krishna states in the *Gita* that no one does a "dearer service" to God than the one who teaches the supreme secret to others.

- **Self-Transformation:** The author cautions that the Dharma cannot be taught through mere intellectual argument. One must become a **"living embodiment"** of the teachings. To teach the Dharma, one must first be "made anew" by it.

4. The Nature of the Fleeting World

- The section ends with a famous meditation on the impermanence of material reality. To teach others, one must first achieve "detachment from appearances."
- **The Six Similes:** The world is likened to a **star at dawn, a bubble, a flash of lightning, a flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.**
- **The King of Death:** He who looks upon the world as a mirage becomes invisible to the "King of Death" because he is no longer anchored to the ephemeral.

Summary: Faith and Service

Concept	Explanation	Reference / Connection
Faith (Saddha)	The spiritual "wealth" of man and the root of his being.	"Man in truth is made of faith." (*Chandogya Upanishad*)
The Two Wings	The necessary balance between spiritual belief and logical reasoning.	A core Baha'i principle: the harmony of Science and Religion.
Living Dharma	Teaching through conduct rather than just words.	"Become the living embodiment... through righteous conduct."
Impermanence	Viewing the world as a "bubble" or "mirage."	Necessary for detachment and the attainment of Nirvana.

Connecting the Dots

- This section beautifully mirrors the Baha'i teaching that **"The first sign of faith is love"** and that the independent investigation of truth (using reason) is a fundamental duty. The emphasis on "becoming the living embodiment" of the Dharma reflects Baha'u'llah's command: *"Let your actions be a guide to all mankind"*.

Renunciation

- In this segment, the author explores **Renunciation** not as a physical withdrawal from the world, but as a mental and spiritual state of self-mastery. He balances the traditional image of the wandering ascetic with the practical necessity of maintaining inner strength while living within society.

---

1. The Two Faces of Renunciation

- The text acknowledges the high respect in India for the *sannyasin*—the renouncer who "dies to the world" through funeral rites to symbolize a complete break from society.
- **The Buddha's Example:** Having abandoned wealth, family, and princely power, the Buddha exemplified the physical act of leaving the "home life" for the "homeless life."

- **The Author's Critique:** However, the author notes that true renunciation is not about isolation. Since our spiritual tests come from our interactions with others, withdrawing from society can actually prevent us from achieving true inner strength.

2. Meditation: The Fire of Knowledge

- The chief instrument for achieving renunciation while remaining in the world is **Meditation**.
- **Wisdom and Meditation:** The *Dhammapada* states that wisdom and meditation are inseparable. Meditation is the "shining light" that dispels the "darkness of ignorance."
- **The Raft of Knowledge:** Even for the "most sinful of sinners," the *Gita* promises that the raft of Knowledge can carry one across the sea of sin. Just as fire reduces fuel to ashes, knowledge reduces the "shackles of Karma" to nothing.

3. The Chariot Analogy

- Both Buddhist and Hindu scriptures use a powerful metaphor to describe the human psyche and the necessity of self-control.
- **The Body:** The Chariot.
- **The Senses:** The Steeds (Horses).
- **The Mind:** The Reins.
- **The Intellect/Teacher:** The Charioteer.
- **The Soul (Atman/Buddha-nature):** The Master of the Chariot.
- The author concludes that a "real charioteer" is one who curbs his rising anger and directs his senses with steady reins, whereas others merely "hold the reins" without true control.

4. Overcoming the "Five Fetters"

- To "cross the flood" of rebirth and reach the "farther shore," one must master and eliminate specific mental states:
- **Sever:** Doubt, egoism, lust, hatred, and false asceticism.
- **Eliminate:** Desire for form, pride, and ignorance.
- **Master (The Positive):** Faith, courage, cognizance, contemplation, and wisdom.

Summary

Concept	Explanation	Reference / Connection
Active Renunciation	Acting in the world without being "attached" to the results.	*Karmayogi* (*Gita* V.7)
The Chariot	A metaphor for the disciplined life.	*Katha Upanishad* & *Dhammapada*
Ignorance	The "greatest impurity" that must be cast away.	*Dhammapada* v. 243
The Goal	Reaching the "End of the Journey" (Nirvana/Liberation).	"From which he never returns."

Connecting the Dots

- This perspective on renunciation aligns closely with the Baha'i principle of **"Work as Worship."** Baha'is are taught that true spirituality is found by serving humanity and being "in the world but not of the world." One does not need to become a hermit to find God; instead, one finds God through self-control and service.

Detachment

- In this synthesis of Buddhist and Hindu thought, the author explores the concept of **Detachment** as a positive, focused redirection of the mind. Rather than a simple "turning away," detachment is defined as an "undeviating concentration" on the supreme goal (Nirvana or God), which provides the strength to navigate the "sea of desires."

---

1. **The Nature of Craving**

- The scriptures describe craving (*Tanha*) as a biological and spiritual trap:
- **The Creeper:** Craving grows like a weed or a creeper. If the root (ego/attachment) is not dug up, the suffering returns "again and again," just as a tree grows back if its roots remain uninjured.
- **The Hunted Hare:** Those driven by craving are likened to a "hunted hare" running in circles, fast-bound in fetters of their own making.
- **The Scattered Intellect:** The *Gita* contrasts the "one-pointed" intellect of the wise with the "scattered" mind of the undecided, who are distracted by flowery speech and the pursuit of worldly prosperity.

2. **Restraint: The First Step**

- Before one can achieve the high state of detachment, one must practice **Restraint** (*Samyama*).
- **Guarding the Gates:** The *Dhammapada* emphasizes restraint in the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, speech, and thought. A "well-controlled" person is one who delights inwardly rather than seeking external validation.
- **The Wind and the Ship:** The *Gita* warns that if the mind follows the roving senses, it carries away understanding "even as a wind carries away a ship on the waters."

3. **The Lotus Leaf Analogy**

- One of the most enduring symbols in both faiths is the **Lotus**.
- **Living in the World:** The lotus grows in stagnant, muddy water, yet its leaves remain dry and clean.
- **The Spiritual Application:** Similarly, a person who acts without attachment—offering all actions to the Divine—remains "untouched by sin," just as water drops roll off a lotus leaf without clinging to it. This signifies that one can livein society and fulfill duties while remaining spiritually pure.

4. **The Difference Between the Wise and the Fool**

- The author notes that the difference lies in **purpose**, not outward appearance.
- **The "Doer" Delusion:** The fool considers himself the "doer" of his actions, driven by egoism. The wise man realizes that "the senses are occupied with the objects of the senses" while his true self remains a witness, united with the Divine.
- **Tamasic Firmness:** The *Gita* identifies a "dark" (Tamasic) kind of firmness where a fool refuses to abandon grief, arrogance, or despondency, mistakenly thinking it is a form of strength.

- **The Middle Way:** The Buddha did not support extreme asceticism. Instead, he taught the "Middle Way"—a right attitude within the context of the Dharma that relegates sensory joys to their proper, limited place.

Summary: The Path to Serenity

Concept	The Problem	The Solution
Craving (Tanha)	Sorrows increase like "birana grass."	Dig up the root with wisdom.
Scattered Mind	Intellect is "endlessly diverse."	Become "one-pointed" through meditation.
Sensory Pursuit	Carries away understanding like a storm.	Practice "Restraint" in all things.
Attachment	Leads to bewilderment and loss of memory.	Act like the "Lotus Leaf"—in the water but dry.

Connecting the Dots

- This teaching on "Detachment" is a cornerstone of the Baha'i Faith as well. Baha'u'llah wrote, *"The essence of detachment is for man to turn his face towards the courts of the Lord."* This mirrors the author's point that detachment is not a "metaphysical negation" but a positive focus on the Divine. By practicing this, one becomes a "great person" whose current body is their last—not necessarily in a physical sense, but as a final victory over the lower self.

The Pillars of Selfless Action

- In this pivotal section, the author addresses the common misconception that Buddhism is a religion of "inaction" or mere "contemplation." By drawing parallels between the **Dhammapada** and the **Bhagavad Gita**, he demonstrates that **Selfless Action** is actually the highest duty and the swiftest path to liberation.

1. Action as an Offering

- The author argues that perfection is not reached by merely avoiding evil, but by "active striving."
- **Quality over Quantity:** The *Dhammapada* states that a single day of virtuous, strenuous effort is better than a hundred years of idle or wicked life.
- **The "Divine Doer":** In the *Gita*, Krishna explains that He Himself must constantly act to keep the worlds from perishing. Therefore, man should act as an instrument of the Divine, regarding his work as an offering to the Dharma or God, rather than a means for personal gain.
- **Cleaving to the Soul:** The *Yajur Veda* and *Isa Upanishad* agree that when work is done "in God" and without attachment, **Karma does not cling to the man**. The action is performed, but the "spiritual debt" or "entrapment" is avoided.

2. The Eightfold Path: A Call to Activity

- The author points out a structural truth about the Buddha's primary doctrine:

- **7/8 Activity:** Out of the eight aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path, seven (Right Views, Aspirations, Speech, Action, Living, Exertion, and Recollection) are forms of active engagement. Only the last—Right Meditation—is purely contemplative.
- **The Practice of Truth:** In his conversation with the Brahmin Kutadanta, the Buddha explicitly states that learning the Vedas by heart is "idle talk" if not accompanied by practice. **"True wisdom can be acquired by practice only."**

3. The Yellow Robe and Hypocrisy

- Both traditions warn against "false renunciation":
  - **The Robe vs. The Heart:** Wearing the yellow robe (the sign of a monk) without cleansing one's inner impurity is described as undeserving and even dangerous.
  - **The Real Sannyasin:** The *Gita* defines a true *sannyasin* (renouncer) not as one who sits by a dead fire and performs no rites, but as one who **does the work he ought to do** without seeking its fruit.

4. Boundless Love: The Mother's Metaphor

- The author concludes with the ethical heart of these teachings: the "Metta" or Loving-kindness.
- **The Mother and Child:** Just as a mother protects her only child even at the risk of her own life, the seeker should cultivate a "boundless love" for all beings.
- **Overcoming Evil with Good:** A famous cross-religious parallel is highlighted: "Overcome anger by non-anger; overcome evil by good." This is the ultimate "Selfless Action."

Summary: The Pillars of Selfless Action

Principle	Buddhist View (Dhammapada)	Hindu View (Gita/Vedas)
Non-Attachment	"Insentient as to the rewards of merit." (*Vajra-Sattva*)	"Your right is to work only, but never to the fruit." (*Gita* II.47)
Authenticity	A cowherd counting the cows of others (reciting without acting).	A hypocrite is one who worships but ignores the needs of others.
Universal Love	Love all beings as a mother loves her child.	"Love one another as the cow her newborn calf." (*Atharva Veda*)
The Result	Attaining the "tranquil, blessed place."	"Reaches Me... having no attachments."

Connecting the Dots

- This concept of "Selfless Action" is perfectly mirrored in the Baha'i principle of **"Service to Humanity."** Baha'u'llah teaches that *"All effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity."* This removes the divide between the "sacred" and the "secular"—making your daily work a path to Nirvana or God.

Doing One's Duty

- In this compelling synthesis, the author addresses the misconception that the Buddha taught a path of "annihilation" or passivity. By juxtaposing the Buddha's dialogue with General Siha against Krishna's counsel to Arjuna in the **Bhagavad Gita**, the text illustrates that "Doing One's Duty" is a spiritual necessity that preserves, rather than destroys, the soul.

1. The Doctrine of Right Action vs. Non-Action

- General Siha approaches the Buddha with a concern: he has heard that the Buddha teaches "non-action" and the annihilation of the soul. The Buddha's response is a masterclass in nuance:
  - **What is Annihilated:** The Buddha teaches the annihilation of **lust, ill-will, and delusion**, not the annihilation of the person.
  - **What is Encouraged:** He teaches the "doing" of righteous actions in deed, word, and thought.
  - **The Gita Parallel:** Similarly, Krishna tells Arjuna that "Man does not attain freedom from action without entering upon action." True renunciation is not the absence of work, but the absence of **attachment** to the results of that work.

2. The Charioteer of Justice: War and Punishment

- A significant portion of this section deals with the ethics of force. General Siha, being a soldier, asks if a king may punish criminals or wage war to protect his people.
- **The Purpose of Punishment:** The Buddha explains that a criminal is punished not out of the ill-will of the judge, but by the weight of his own acts. Punishment is seen as a means to **purify the soul**.
- **The Righteous War:** The Buddha states that those who go to war for a righteous cause—after exhausting all means for peace—are not blameworthy.
- **Arjuna's Duty:** This mirrors the central theme of the *Gita*, where Krishna urges Arjuna to fight the "Righteous War" (*Dharma-Yuddha*) because as a warrior (*Kshatriya*), abandoning his duty would be a sin.

3. The Psychology of the Warrior-Sage

- Both traditions offer a specific mental framework for performing difficult duties:
- **The Sattvic Relinquisher:** A person who performs their duty because it *ought* to be done, giving up attachment to success or failure, is "imbued with the quality of goodness."
- **Victory over Self:** The Buddha tells Siha that the general who conquers himself is a greater victor than the one who conquers a thousand men in battle.
- **The Transient Nature of Victory:** The *Dhammapada* warns that "victory breeds hatred." The only victory that remains forever is one where the conqueror lifts the adversary up and makes peace.

4. Tolerance and Co-existence

- The Buddha demonstrates extraordinary tolerance by advising Siha to **continue giving alms** to his former teachers (the Nigganthas), even after converting to Buddhism.
- **Universal Love:** The author concludes that the message of all great religions is the transition from primitive conflict to "all-embracing love."
- **The Rig Veda Mandate:** The text closes with an ancient call for unity: "Let all their minds be as one mind... so that your affairs may be co-operatively well organized."

Summary: Duty and Equilibrium

Concept	The Buddha's Guidance	Krishna's Guidance
One's Own Task	"Let no one neglect his own task for another's."	"One's own duty, though devoid of merit, is preferable."
Self-Surrender	Surrender to Truth, but never to evil powers.	Surrender all actions to the Divine and fight.
Punishment	It must purify; the judge must harbour no hatred.	Act as an instrument of the Divine order (*Dharma*).
Peace	Appease enmity through non-enmity.	Treat alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss.

Connecting the Dots

- This section reinforces that spirituality is not an escape from responsibility. In the Baha'i Faith, this is expressed through the principle of **"Loyalty to Government"** and the duty to contribute to the **"Advancing Civilization"** [cite: 2025-08-01]. As the Buddha told Siha, the one whose mind is free from the illusion of self will "stand and not fall in the battle of life."

Moderation Concerning Food

- In this final exploration of "Living the Life," the author clarifies the Buddha's stance on **Moderation concerning Food**. He dispels common misconceptions regarding vegetarianism in early Buddhism and Hinduism, framing diet not as a set of rigid taboos, but as a practice of the **Middle Way**.

1. The Middle Way of Eating

- The Buddha taught that spiritual progress is impossible for those who veer into extremes.
- **The Two Extremes:** One must avoid both **self-indulgence** (gluttony) and **self-mortification** (starving oneself through extreme asceticism).
- **The Goal of Yoga:** The *Gita* (VI.16-17) reinforces this, stating that Yoga is not for those who eat too much or for those who do not eat at all. It is for those who are "regulated in diet."
- **Purity of Heart over Diet:** The author notes that "neither abstinence from fish or flesh" will cleanse a person who remains full of delusions. Purity is an inner state, not a dietary one.

2. The Case of General Siha and Meat-Eating

- The text recounts a famous incident involving **General Siha**, which establishes the Buddhist rule on meat:
  - **The Accusation:** Jains accused the Buddha of eating meat specifically killed for him.
  - **The Buddha's Ruling:** He declared that monks may eat meat and fish only if it is **"quite pure" (*Pavattamamsa*)** in three respects: they have not **seen, heard, or suspected** that the animal was killed specifically for them.
  - **Historical Context:** In the Buddha's time, beef-eating was common among the Hindu population, and animal sacrifices were a standard Vedic practice. The author uses the

Mahabharata and the *Majjhima-nikaya* to show that cattle-butchers were a normal sight at the crossroads of ancient India.

3. Sacrifice: From Animal to Self

- While acknowledging that animal sacrifice was practiced, the Buddha sought to transform the *meaning* of sacrifice:
- **The Higher Sacrifice:** In his conversation with the Brahmin Kutadanta, the Buddha taught that the **sacrifice of the self** (eradicating lust and evil desires) is far greater than the immolation of bullocks.
- **The Uselessness of Blood:** Blood has no power to cleanse the heart; only the "eradication of lust" and "obedience to the laws of righteousness" bring true purity.
- **The Compassion of the Buddha:** Later poets, like Jayadeva in the *Gitagovinda*, praised the Buddha specifically for condemning the slaughter of animals ordained in the older interpretations of the Vedas.

4. The Buddha's Last Meal

- To conclude the historical argument, the author points to the *Mahaparinibbana Suttanta*, which records that the Buddha's final meal before his passing consisted of **rice-cakes and dried boar's flesh** (*Sukara-maddava*). This final act underscores his teaching on accepting whatever is offered with a pure heart, provided it meets the criteria of moderation and non-intent.

Summary: Diet and Discipline

Principle	Buddhist Perspective	Hindu Perspective
Moderation	The "Middle Way" between fasting and gluttony.	Regulated diet is the key to Yoga.
Meat Consumption	Permitted if "pure" (not killed specifically for the recipient).	Historically practiced in Vedic times; later evolved toward *Ahimsa*.
True Sacrifice	Eradicating the ego and lust.	Sacrifice of the transient to reach the Eternal.
Purity	Found in "restraint according to the law."	"Action for the sake of God" is the true *Sat*.

The Meaning of Brahmin

- In the following exploration of social identity and spiritual status, the author explains **The Meaning of Brahmin**. He clarifies that the Buddha did not seek to destroy the concept of the Brahmin, but rather to rescue it from the "morass of rituals and caste dogma" and return it to its original, spiritual definition.

1. The Universal Ocean: Dissolving the Caste System

- The Buddha used a powerful metaphor to explain how spiritual discipline levels all social hierarchies.

- **The Rivers and the Sea:** Just as the great rivers (Ganga, Yamuna, etc.) lose their individual names and identities once they flow into the ocean, the four castes (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra) lose their former class names when they enter the "Doctrine and Discipline" of the Tathagata.
- **Individual Identity to Divine Person:** This perfectly mirrors the *Mundaka Upanishad*, which describes the "knower" being freed from name and shape to attain the "divine person."

2. Brahminhood by Conduct, Not Birth

- The author emphasizes that for both the Buddha and the authors of the *Mahabharata*, "Brahmin" is a title earned through character.
- **By Deeds, Not Descent:** The *Vasala Sutta* and the *Dhammapada* state that one does not become an outcast or a Brahmin by birth, but by **deeds** and **conduct**.
- **The Noble Low-Born:** The *Sundarikabharadvaja Sutta* advises: "Do not ask about descent, but ask about conduct." Even someone from a "low family" becomes noble through restraint and humility.
- **True Brahmin Characteristics:** According to the *Gita* ($XVIII.42$) and the *Dhammapada*, a true Brahmin is one who possesses:
  - Serenity and self-control.
  - Freedom from anger and greed.
  - Truthfulness and righteousness.
  - Purity (both internal and external).

3. Internal vs. External Sacrifice

- The Buddha challenged the Hindu preoccupation with external rituals, such as shaven heads, matted hair, or feeding the sacrificial fire.
- **The Internal Fire:** In the *Samyutta-nikaya*, the Buddha says he has left behind the "external" fire-laying. Instead, he kindles a fire **within** the heart, where the "tongue is the sacrificial spoon and the heart is the altar."
- **Useless Symbols:** The *Dhammapada* asks, "What is the use of matted hair, O fool... Thine inward nature is full of wickedness; the outside thou makest clean." Purity comes from "passing beyond doubt" and "extinguishing craving," not from garments of hide or dirt.

4. The Portrait of a Saint (Arahat)

- The author lists the qualities of those the Buddha calls a Brahmin (the Buddhist Arahat) and those Krishna calls "dear to Me":
  - **Harmlessness:** "Him I call a Brahmin who lays aside the rod... and neither kills nor causes death."
  - **Detachment:** One who takes nothing that is not given, who is content with whatever comes unasked for, and who has "renounced the feeling of doership."
  - **Equanimity:** Someone who is "balanced in success and failure" and takes "praise and reproach alike."

Summary: Defining the True Brahmin

Metric	The Mundane View (Caste)	The Spiritual View (Buddha/Gita)
Origin	Mother and Father (Lineage).	Conduct, Truth, and Righteousness.
Purity	Ritual baths and shaven heads.	Internal fire and cleansing of the heart.
Possessions	Ritual tools and "goods."	"Free from goods" and "free from attachment."
Social Rank	Fixed by the four castes.	All castes become "ascetics" in the ocean of Dharma.

Soul, Mind, and Self

- In this nuanced section, the author addresses the complex relationship between the **Soul, the Mind, and the Self**. He clarifies that the Buddha's famous "denial" of the soul was not an argument for nihilism or total annihilation, but rather a sophisticated rejection of a separate, unchanging "ego-monad."

1. **The One Reality: Soul as Mentality**

- The author explains that the Sanskrit word *Atman* (originally meaning "breath of life") was redefined by the Buddha:
- **No Dualism:** To the Buddha, the soul is not a separate entity living inside the body like a ghost in a machine. Instead, man's spiritual constitution—his thoughts, his mind (*Manas*), and his "self"—are one single reality.
- **Thoughts are the Self:** Our thoughts *are* our soul. The Buddha rejected the idea of a soul divorced from the mind and thoughts, choosing instead a "Middle Way" that acknowledges the reality of the soul without pinning it down to a rigid, empirical definition.

2. **The Five Skandhas (Aggregates)**

- The author highlights the *Samyutta-nikaya* to explain why the "unlearned man" becomes confused about the soul:
- **The Five Layers:** Most people mistake the soul for one of the five *Skandhas*: material properties (*Rupa*), sensation (*Vedana*), ideas, propensities, and mind.
- **The "I am" Delusion:** By identifying the soul with these transitory sensations, the ignorant man creates the notion of "I am" or "I shall be."
- **Wisdom of Dissociation:** The learned disciple, however, realizes that these five aggregates are not the soul. By removing ignorance, the false labels fall away, revealing the ineffable "real self" that is distinct from the transitory object world.

3. **Immortality and the Eternal Portion**

- The *Bhagavad Gita* offers a striking parallel to this Buddhist dissociation:
- **The Eternal Portion:** Krishna describes the soul (*Jivatma*) as an "eternal portion of Myself" that merely draws the mind and senses along with it.

- **The Tortoise Analogy:** Just as a tortoise draws its limbs into its shell, the wise man draws his senses away from the objects of sense. When the "Supreme" (or "Bodhi/Wisdom") is seen, even the taste for worldly pleasures vanishes.
- **Eligibility for Immortality:** Both faiths agree that when a person becomes indifferent to the "fleeting and transitory" contacts of the senses (pleasure, pain, heat, cold), they become eligible for immortality.

4. Rejecting Nihilism and the "Heresy of Self"

- The author strongly argues against the idea that Buddhism teaches the total non-existence of the soul:
  - **The Logical Necessity:** If there were no permanency to the self—if it simply vanished into nothingness—then righteous effort and "living-the-life" would be entirely pointless.
  - **Re-evaluating "Attavada":** Concepts like *Attavada* (the doctrine of self) and *Sakkaya-ditthi* (the heresy of individuality) should be understood as warnings against **ego-based attachment**, not as denials of spiritual existence.
  - **The Brahmin Critique:** The author suggests that the popular "non-soul" interpretation of Buddhism was often promoted by those who wished to see the Buddha's message fail by removing its most vital spiritual incentives.

Summary: Self vs. Non-Self

Concept	The Transitory "Non-Self"	The Real "Soul-Self"
Composition	The Five Skandhas (Form, Sensation, etc.).	The spiritual constitution and "One Reality."
Nature	Fleeting, transitory, and "objects of sense."	Ineffable, indefinable, and "eternal."
Mental State	Driven by "I am" and "This is mine."	Established in Wisdom (Bodhi) or the Supreme.
Fate	Dissolves or "perishes" with the body.	Becomes eligible for "immortality."

Connecting the Dots

- This deep dive into the soul reminds us that the purpose of religion is to discover the "Gem" within. Baha'u'llah wrote, *"O Son of Spirit! I created thee rich... and I have placed within thee the essence of My light."* This "essence" is what the Buddha sought to protect from the labels of the ego, and what Krishna called an "eternal portion" of the Divine.

Soul-Mind

- In this section of the **Soul-Mind**, the author addresses the destiny of the human spirit. He clarifies that the Buddha's "denial of the soul" was essentially a replacement of the word "soul" (often misunderstood as a physical ego-entity) with the word **"Mind"**—the spiritual center of our existence that survives the dissolution of the body.

1. **The Mind as the Real Self**

- To the Buddha, the mind is not just a biological function but our spiritual reality.
- **The Immortal Asset:** In a conversation with a Brahmin, the Buddha identifies the mind as that which "takes possession of everything not only on earth, but also in heaven." Its most secure treasure is **immortality**.
- **Survival of Character:** When a person dies, the Buddha tells Ananda that nothing remains but their **good thoughts, righteous acts, and the bliss of truth**. These are the "karma" that propel the mind toward higher states of existence or the "ocean of truth" (Nirvana).
- **The Gita Connection:** Krishna confirms that he dwells in the body as the **Inner Witness** (*Adhiyajna*). For those with a steadfast mind, this divine presence is realized even at the hour of death.

2. **The Chariot of Reason**

- The author uses the *Katha Upanishad* to illustrate the hierarchy of the human being, a concept echoed in both traditions:
- **The Hierarchy:** Beyond the senses are their objects; beyond objects is the **Mind**; beyond the mind is **Reason**; and beyond reason is the **Spirit** (*Atman*).
- **The Charioteer:** A man whose chariot is driven by reason and who holds the reins of his mind reaches the "End of the Journey."
- **Buddhist "Mind" vs. Hindu "Soul":** The Buddha explains to an officer of General Siha that "soul" as a separate "thinker" is a delusion, but "Mind" is a reality. He asserts that the mind is spiritual, and the **Bodhi (Enlightenment)** is the eternal law that transforms "brute nature into mind."

3. **The Dissolution of the "Self" into "Truth"**

- The author clarifies the "Anatta" (No-Self) doctrine by explaining that the "Self" is actually a barrier to "Truth."
- **Truth vs. Self:** The Buddha tells Kutadanta, "Where self is, truth cannot be; yet when truth comes, self will disappear." This does not mean the person ceases to exist, but that the **limited ego** is replaced by the **immortality of Truth**.
- **The Eternal Spirit:** The *Katha Upanishad* mirrors this, stating the Spirit (*Atman*) is never born and never dies. It is "smaller than the smallest atom, greater than the vast spaces."

4. **Yoga and the Stable Mind**

- What defines a "God-realized" or "Enlightened" soul?
- **Abandoning Craving:** Krishna explains that a person is "stable in mind" when they thoroughly abandon all cravings and are "satisfied in the self through the self."
- **Unity over Variety:** The *Katha Upanishad* warns that he who sees "variety" (separation) rather than "unity" wanders from death to death. The mind must learn the truth: **there are not many, but only ONE.**

Summary: The Anatomy of the Soul-Mind

Component	Function / Nature	Ultimate Fate
The Senses	Contacts with the world (Pleasure/Pain).	Dissolve with the body.
The Mind	The spiritual "vessel" of thoughts and acts.	Reborn in higher states; reaches Nirvana.
The Self (Ego)	The "I am" delusion and cleaving to existence.	Must disappear for Truth to emerge.
The Bodhi / Spirit	The eternal law and inner witness.	Eternal, never-born, and never-dying.

Synthesis of the Section

- The author concludes that whether we call it "Mind" or "Soul," the essence is the same: a spiritual reality that is honed through righteous action and selfless love. This path of self-improvement is not about "saving" a small ego, but about becoming a "vessel of truth."
- This resonates with the Baha'i teaching that the soul is a **"heavenly gem"** and that the mind is the **"first faculty"** bestowed by God to recognize truth. Baha'u'llah teaches that after death, the soul "sets out on its journey through the vastness of God's empire," continuing its progress forever.

True Self

- In this climactic synthesis, the author presents the concept of the **True Self** as the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey. He argues that the Buddha's "No-Self" (*Anatta*) doctrine was never meant to be a denial of the soul's existence, but a surgical removal of the **False Self**—the "not-self" composed of fleeting desires and sensory imprints.

1. **The Separation of the Real from the Unreal**

- The Buddha used the metaphor of the Jeta wood to illustrate this: if a man were to carry away branches and leaves, the disciples would not say "he is taking *us* away."
- **The Skandhas as "Not-Mine":** Just as the branches are not the man, the five aggregates (*Skandhas*) are not the self. The formula **"This is not mine; I am not this; this is not myself"** is a tool for liberation.
- **The Atman Parallel:** The *Katha Upanishad* mirrors this, describing the *Atman* as beyond sound, form, and taste—eternal and unchangeable. When a man realizes this "knowing self," he is freed from the "jaws of death."

2. **Self as the Lord and Refuge**

- The author highlights that the Buddha considered the self to be the chief instrument for awakening:
- **Self-Reliance:** "Self is the lord of self; self is the refuge of self" (*Dhammapada*).
- **The Inner Light:** In his final days, the Buddha urged: **"Be ye as those who have the self as their light... Betake yourselves to no external refuge."**

- **The Gita's Friend and Foe:** Krishna echoes this, stating that for the one who has conquered the lower self, the Self is a friend; but for the uncontrolled, the Self behaves as an enemy (*Bhagavad Gita VI.5-6*).

3. The Bubble and the Content

- The most striking metaphor in this section describes the dissolution of the ego:
- **Soap-Bubbles:** The *Mahavagga* states that when our individual "selves" (the egos) break like soap-bubbles, their **contents** (the true self) are preserved.
- **Preservation in Truth:** The true self does not vanish; it is "large enough to receive the yearnings of all selves" and leads a life everlasting in the Truth.
- **The Needle Point:** The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* describes the soul as having the "seed of Infinity," appearing as a flame the size of a thumb when bound by desire, but becoming as focused as a needle point when united with the Spirit.

4. Knowing Thyself as the Highest Goal

- The author concludes that "Know Thyself" is the identical dictum of all great religions.
- **Equating Dharma with Self:** The Buddha equated the experience of the real self with the **True Dhamma**.
- **The Inward Gaze:** While the senses are "outward-going," the sage seeking immortality looks **within** to find the Soul.
- **The Deathless:** By stopping the karma-formations of ignorance, the disciple stands "knocking at the door of the Deathless."

Summary: Identifying the True Self

The False Self (The Not-Self)	The True Self (The Real Self)
Composed of the five *Skandhas*.	Identical to the *Atman* and the *Dhamma*.
Dependent on external supports and senses.	Self-luminous; a refuge unto itself.
Ephemeral, objective, and in constant flux.	Eternal, unchangeable, and without end.
The cause of "Sakkaya-ditthi" (heresy of ego).	The "content" preserved after the bubble bursts.

Closing Reflection

- The author has masterfully demonstrated that Buddhism and Hinduism are not in conflict regarding the soul, but rather offer different vocabularies for the same journey: the movement from the **Perishable** to the **Imperishable**.
- In the Baha'i Faith, this journey is summarized in the *Hidden Words*: **"Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting."** This "Me" is the same Light the Buddha urged his disciples to hold fast to as their only refuge

Non-Ego-Illusory-Self

- In this final exploration of the self, the author makes a sharp distinction between the **Non-Ego (The Illusory Self)** and the **Intrinsic Individual**. He argues that the spiritual life is not about the annihilation of our being, but the peeling away of "scabs of craving" that obscure our inner light.

1. Self vs. Truth

- The Buddha presents a binary choice: **Where self (ego) is, truth is not.**
- **Self as Error:** The "self" mentioned here is the *fleeting error of Samsara*—the individual separateness, envy, and vanity that lead to perpetual dying.
- **Truth as Life:** Moving in the truth is partaking of **Nirvana**, which is life everlasting.
- **The Sun of Wisdom:** The *Bhagavad Gita* ($V.16-17$) parallels this, stating that for those in whom ignorance is destroyed, wisdom lights up the **Supreme Self** like the sun.

2. The Process of Becoming (Sankharas)

- The author uses the dialogue with Kutadanta to explain how the personality continues without a physical ego-monad:
- **The Harvest of Deeds:** Our current existence is a combination of *Sankharas* (mental formations) produced by past deeds. We continue to live in our *Sankharas*, reaping what we sow.
- **Justice and Karma:** While Kutadanta questions the fairness of "others" reaping his harvest, the Buddha clarifies that there is no "other"—there is only the continuity of the fruit of one's actions.
- **The Caterpillar Metaphor:** The *Upanishads* describe the transition between lives like a caterpillar wriggling from one blade of grass to another; the soul "draws itself over" to a new existence based on its former consciousness.

3. The Fallacy of Physical Reincarnation

- In an important scholarly note, the author distinguishes between **Evolution of the Soul** and the popular concept of physical reincarnation:
- **Higher Planes:** The Law of Karma operates perfectly in higher planes of consciousness. The author argues that physical reincarnation (returning to a human body) is a fallacy because there is a complete absence of memory of past lives.
- **Fruit of Good Works:** The *Dhammapada* likens death for the righteous to a traveler returning home, where the "welcome of kinfolk" (the fruits of good deeds) awaits them in the hereafter.

4. The Yoga of Renunciation

- The goal of religion is to provide the "how" and "why" of self-control.
- **The Four Noble Truths:** By destroying thirst (craving) and morbid cleaving, we destroy the **"selfishness of selfhood."** This is the key to escaping birth, old age, and death.
- **Pure Consciousness:** The real "we" is not the intellect, the body, or the emotions. It is **pure consciousness**—a mystery that is certain of its own reality but cannot be measured by empirical rules.
- **"Not This, Not This":** Both the *Upanishads* and the Buddha maintain a "noble silence" or a "Neti, Neti" (*not this, not this*) approach to defining the soul, as it is ultimately incomprehensible to the limited mind.

Summary: The Path to Total Certitude

Stage	Action / Realization	Result
Ignorance	Cleaving to the "Illusory Self" and sensory objects.	Wandering from "death to death."
Discipline	Practicing the Eightfold Way and Yoga.	Shedding the "encrustations" of the soul.
Wisdom	Destroying thirst and misconception.	The "Supreme Self" is lit up like the sun.
Liberation	Rising above "Heaven and Hell" through Truth.	Nirvana / Life Everlasting.

Heaven and Hell

- In this section the author addresses the concepts of **Heaven and Hell**. He clarifies that in both Buddhism and Hinduism, these are not merely physical locations but **states of being** determined by the Law of Karma—a process of "continuous education and self-purification" that lasts until true knowledge is obtained.

---

1. **The Two Roads: Action and Consequence**

- The author emphasizes that actions have an inescapable "ripening" process.
- **The Grieving and the Rejoicing:** The *Dhammapada* states that the evil-doer grieves in both this world and the next, afflicted by the sight of his own impurity. Conversely, the righteous man rejoices in both worlds, delighted by his purity of action.
- **The Three Gates to Hell:** The *Bhagavad Gita* ($XVI.21$) identifies the psychological roots of "hell" as **Passion, Anger, and Greed**. Shaking off these three is the only way to reach the "highest goal."

2. **The Imperative of Unity and the One Law**

- Contrary to the view that Buddhism is a loose philosophy, the author highlights the Buddha's strictness regarding the "Order" and the "Law."
- **The Danger of Schism:** In his admonition to Devadatta, the Buddha warns that splitting a united Order is a "serious matter" that leads to suffering for an aeon. Healing a split, however, creates "sublime merit" (*Brahmapunna*).
- **The "One Law":** He who violates the Buddha's doctrine and "scoffs at another world" is capable of any evil. To the Buddha, religion provides the necessary foundation of "beginning and end" that makes life meaningful.

3. **The Illusion of the Senses**

- Both faiths warn that the "nectar" of sense-pleasure is ultimately deceptive.
- **Poisonous Pleasure:** The *Gita* (XVIII.38) explains that joy derived from sense-contact appears like nectar initially but proves to be "mischievous like poison" in the end.
- **The Deathless State:** The *Dhammapada* teaches that one day of life spent perceiving the "deathless state" or the "highest law" is better than a hundred years lived in ignorance.

4. **The Foundation of Reality**

- The author uses the *Katha Upanishad* and the *Gita* to argue against a godless or nihilistic view of the world.
- **The Lost Souls:** Those who claim the world is "without foundation and godless" are described as "lost souls" whose lack of understanding leads to destruction.
- **The Eternal Centre:** Krishna declares, "I am the Self seated in the heart of all beings... the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all things." This central Truth is what the Dharma seeks to align us with.

Summary: Heaven, Hell, and the Middle Path

State/Concept	Buddhist Insight	Hindu Insight
Heaven	A state of "rejoicing" in the purity of actions.	Reached by work for salvation and sacrifice.
Hell	A "state of suffering" caused by evil deeds.	The "triple gates" of Passion, Anger, and Greed.
The World	A place of "beginning and end" (birth and death).	A field where the Self is seated in the heart.
True Wealth	Perception of the "Deathless State."	Union with the Eternal Brahma.

The World of Devas (Gods) and Spirit Beings

- In this section of Chapter II, the author addresses the **World of Devas (Gods) and Spirit Beings**. He clarifies that while the Buddha acknowledged the existence of deities like Brahma, Vishnu, and Indra, he placed them within the same cycle of existence as humans—subject to the **Law of Karma** and the necessity of the **Dharma**.

---

1. **Gods as an Order of Beings**

- The author explains that "gods" in the Buddhist and Hindu context are not supreme creators but an order of beings in the spirit plane.
- **Subject to Law:** These deities must adhere to the Dharma for their own progress. They are neither inherently superior nor inaccessible; in fact, a virtuous human can surpass them.
- **The Goal of Attainment:** Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* ($IX.25$) notes that worshippers reach the level of their devotion: those who worship gods go to the gods, but those who worship the "Supreme" reach the Supreme.
- **The Brahmin's Path:** A true Brahmin (the enlightened soul) follows a path so pure that even the gods do not know it (*Dhammapada, v. 420*).

2. **Becoming a "God" Through Virtue**

- The Buddha suggests that "godhood" is a state achievable through meditation and merit.
- **Feeding on Happiness:** Those who live free from care and possess nothing "dwell feeding on happiness like the shining gods" (*Dhammapada, v. 200*).
- **Vigilance:** It was through vigilance and mindfulness that Indra rose to the lordship of the gods. Thoughtlessness, conversely, is the path to descent.

- **Emulation by the Divine:** Even the gods emulate and praise those who are enlightened, thoughtful, and strenuous in their spiritual practice (*Dhammapada, v. 181, 366*).

3. The Limits of the Spirit Plane

- The author makes a crucial distinction between the "World of the Gods" and the "Ineffable" (Nirvana).
- **Within Time and Space:** The worlds of gods, angels, and spirits are still within the empirical order of the universe—they are part of the "world of time."
- **Beyond the Gods:** Beyond these celestial realms lies the **Deathless State** (Nirvana). This is the "farther shore" which is difficult to reach and beyond the dominion of death.
- **The Goal of Recluses:** The *Bhagavad Gita* calls this the "Indestructible" goal, which striving recluses enter by freeing themselves from attachment.

4. The Farther Shore: Nirvana

- The section concludes with a reminder of the rarity of true liberation.
- **The Rare Arrival:** "Few amongst men are those who reach the farther shore; the other people here run along this shore" (*Dhammapada, v. 85*).
- **Thunderous Silence:** While the Buddha provided the map (the Dharma) to reach Nirvana, he maintained a "thunderous silence" regarding its nature, for no human words can relate its glory or its "ineffable bliss."

Summary: The Hierarchy of Existence

Level	Characteristics	Requirement
The World of Men	A mix of suffering and opportunity; the "near shore."	Adherence to the Eightfold Path.
The World of Gods	A state of happiness and power; still within time.	Vigilance, charity, and merit.
The Farther Shore	Nirvana; the Deathless; beyond all change.	Complete merging of individuality in Truth.

Summary of Chapter II: Living the Life

- Chapter II serves as a profound bridge between the original Vedic truths of Hinduism and the "reformed" application of those truths in the teachings of the Buddha. The author argues that the Buddha did not come to destroy religion, but to strip away the "morass of ritual" and return humanity to a life of **Reason, Moderation, and Righteous Action**.

---

1. The Philosophical Pillars

- **The Two Wings:** Just as a bird needs two wings to fly, a human needs both **Reason** and **Religion**. Faith without reason leads to superstition; reason without faith leads to a cold, directionless existence.
- **The Middle Way:** The Buddha rejected the two extremes of life: **Self-Indulgence** (gluttony/pleasure-seeking) and **Self-Mortification** (extreme asceticism). He taught that spiritual progress requires a balanced, regulated life.

2. **Redefining Identity: The True Brahmin**

- The author clarifies that for the Buddha, "Brahmin" was no longer a title determined by birth or caste, but a status earned through **conduct**.
- **Deeds over Descent:** One becomes noble by humility, self-restraint, and truthfulness.
- **The Internal Sacrifice:** The Buddha shifted the focus from animal sacrifices to the "sacrifice of the self"—eradicating lust and ego. He famously taught that the true altar is the heart, and the tongue is the sacrificial spoon.

3. **The Soul-Mind and the True Self**

- This section tackles the controversial Buddhist concept of *Anatta* (No-Self).
- **The Illusory Self:** The Buddha denied the "ego-self"—the separate, selfish entity that cleaves to sensory pleasures.
- **The Real Self:** He affirmed the existence of the **Soul-Mind** (spiritual constitution). Our thoughts, righteous acts, and wisdom are the "contents" of our being that survive the body.
- **The Bubble Metaphor:** When the individual "self" breaks like a soap-bubble, its contents (the real self) are preserved in the eternal Truth.

4. **Karma, Heaven, and Hell**

- **Karma as Education:** Rebirth is described as "continuous education" until true knowledge is obtained. We reap exactly what we sow in the "sankharas" (mental formations) we build through our deeds.
- **States of Being:** Heaven and Hell are not physical locations but psychological and spiritual states. Passion, anger, and greed are the "triple gates to hell," while purity of heart leads to a "clearer vision of Reality."
- **The Role of Religion:** Only Religion provides the "how" and "why" to motivate self-control, allowing the individual to eventually transcend the world of "coming and going."

Summary: Hinduism vs. Buddhism

Concept	Vedic/Hindu View (Pristine)	Buddhist Application
Diet	Moderation and regulated Yoga.	The Middle Way; meat is allowed if "pure."
Brahmin	A man of serenity and knowledge.	Anyone of any caste who is righteous.
Self/Soul	*Atman* (The eternal Spirit).	*Mind* (The spiritual vessel of karma).
Sacrifice	Vedic ritual offerings.	The "Internal Fire" of the heart.

Final Reflection

- The chapter concludes that the Buddha's purpose was to help humans recognize their true self as distinct from the ephemeral, objective cosmos. By mastering the self through the **Eightfold Path**, one stands "knocking at the door of the Deathless."
- In the Baha'i Faith, this same "Living the Life" is the goal of every believer. Baha'u'llah teaches that the purpose of our existence is to acquire virtues and "know and worship" the Creator through self-mastery.

Chapter 3

Nirvana

Pages	Nirvana
	• In this opening section of Chapter III, the author explores the relationship between the finite human mind and the infinite reality of **Nirvana** and **Brahma**. He argues that the Buddha's "noble silence" was not a sign of nihilism or ignorance, but a profound pedagogical choice to keep the disciple focused on the "cure" for suffering rather than the "description" of the cure. **1. The Simsapa Leaves: The Limitation of Words** • The Buddha used a powerful metaphor in the Simsapa grove to explain his silence: • **The Handful vs. The Forest:** The leaves in the Buddha's hand represent the truths he taught (the path to liberation). The leaves in the entire grove represent the infinite truths he *could* have taught but withheld because they were not "profitable" for holiness or peace. • **The Parable of the Poisoned Arrow:** A man hit by a poisoned arrow who refuses treatment until he knows the caste, name, and height of the archer will die before being cured. Similarly, a disciple who demands a complete description of the "Ineffable State" before practicing the Dharma will perish in their ignorance. **2. Nirvana is Not Annihilation** • The author addresses the common misconception that Nirvana means the end of existence. • **Extinction of Passion, Not Being:** Nirvana literally means the "blowing out" of the three fires of **lust, hatred, and delusion**. It is the extinction of aging and dying, not the extinction of the soul. • **The Isle of No-Beyond:** The Buddha calls Nirvana "the Isle" for those in mid-stream, caught in the flood of aging and death. It is the realm where "naught is grasped" and "no measure measures him who enters rest." • **The Hindu Parallel:** Krishna calls this state **Brahmabhuta** or **Brahmanirvana**—the abode of eternal peace. It is present all around those who have subdued their minds and realized God. **3. Brahma-Become: The Identity of the Saints** • The author highlights how the Buddha reinterpreted Vedic terms like "Brahma" to describe the state of an Arahant (Saint). • **Brahma-faring:** The holy life is lived for the "plunge into Nirvana." A saint who is "unspotted in the world" is described as having "Brahma-become." • **The 1/16th Fraction:** Remarkably, both the Buddha and the *Mahabharata* use the same mathematical fraction to express the superiority of spiritual joy: all worldly and heavenly pleasures are "not worth a sixteenth part" of the joy found in the destruction of desires. **4. The Goal Beyond Reason** • The author reminds us that while the mind may enter this realm, it must do so "shorn of every parameter of reason or logic." • **The Cup and the Ocean:** For human rationality to demand empirical proof of the Ineffable is like a cup insisting it can contain the entire ocean.

- **The Choice:** Every person faces two paths: the path of **Joy** (wisdom) and the path of **Pleasure** (ignorance). The wise choose the "highest freedom" of Nirvana over the "lordship over all the worlds."

Key Concepts of Chapter III

Concept	Definition in this Context
Simsapa Leaves	The specific, limited truths necessary for salvation.
Nirvana	The "Isle" of safety; the extinction of craving and sorrow.
Brahmabhuta	The state of being "Brahma-become"; identified with the Eternal.
Noble Silence	The Buddha's refusal to define the indefinable to avoid confusion.

Synthesis of the Section

- The author concludes that the "distinctive genius" of Buddhism was focusing humanity on the *attainment* of liberation rather than rituals. By acknowledging the common language of his time (Brahma, Nirvana), the Buddha provided a practical "re-dedication of purpose" for the soul to find its way back to the Source of Joy.
- This echoes the Baha'i principle of **Progressive Revelation**: that Divine Teachers moderate their message based on the capacity of their listeners, but the "Infinite Glory" remains ever-present in the background.

- In this extensive section of Chapter III, the author deepens the investigation into the relationship between **Nirvana**, **Brahma**, and the **Supreme Absolute**. He argues that the Buddha did not merely reject Hindu concepts but reinterpreted them to shift the focus from metaphysical speculation to the lived experience of liberation.

1. Brahma as a State, Not Just a Deity

- The author highlights a critical "transformation of terms" in the Buddha's teaching.
- **Brahma-Become:** The Buddha uses the terms *Brahmaprapti* and *Brahmabhuta* to describe a person who has attained Nirvana. To be "Brahma-become" is to have a self that is allayed, cool, and abiding in bliss.
- **The Shift from Creator to Condition:** While the Vedas often personified Brahma as a creator, the Buddha (and occasionally the *Gita*) treats "Brahma" as a state of ineffable bliss synonymous with the extinction of desire.
- **The Bridge to the Infinite:** The *Upanishads* describe this state as a "bridge" that old age, death, and sorrow cannot cross. Once reached, "all evils turn back".

2. The Hierarchy of Reality

- A key distinction is made between the "Great Brahma" (the highest being in the manifest universe) and the "Unmanifest Absolute."
- **Impermanence of the Highest Gods:** The Buddha points out that even the "Great Brahma," who rules a thousand-fold world system, is subject to "coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be".
- **Krishna's Parallel:** In the *Gita*, Krishna explains that all worlds, including the Abode of Brahma (*Brahmaloka*), are impermanent. Only by attaining the Supreme (God) does one escape rebirth.

3. **Nirvana: The Ineffable "State"**

- The author explains that Nirvana is not a "spot in space" but a **state of mind** that can be attained while still in the physical body.
- **The Trackless Path:** The path of those who have attained Nirvana is described as "difficult to understand, like that of birds through the sky". Their tracks (karmic traces) are obliterated, yet the "birds" (the souls) are not annihilated.
- **Neither Being nor Non-Being:** In a famous discourse from the *Udana*, the Buddha describes Nirvana by what it is *not*: it is not earth, water, fire, or air; not the infinity of space or consciousness. It is the "end of sorrow" because it is without beginning, foundation, or change.

4. **The Sun and the Aura: The Causeless Cause**

- The author offers a powerful metaphor to explain why Nirvana is a "state" but not the "Ultimate Reality."
- **The Sun Metaphor:** If the **Supreme Soul** (the Causeless Cause) is the Sun, then **Nirvana** (the state of bliss) is the light and warmth radiating from it. While the light is a proof of the sun, the light depends on the sun for its existence, not vice-versa.
- **The Rejection of Lesser Doctrines:** The Buddha recounted how he left his teachers, Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta, because their doctrines only led to the "sphere of Nothingness" or "Neither-perception-nor-non-perception." He sought and found the "incomparable noble state of peace" that was higher than these.

Summary: The Unity of the "Supreme Abode"

Terminology	The Buddhist Perspective	The Hindu/Gita Perspective
Nirvana	The "Isle" where aging and dying cease.	The "Supreme Goal" and "Abode of Bliss."
Brahma	A state of mind free from malice (*Brahma-become*).	The "Abode of Eternal Peace" present all around.
The Way	The Eightfold Path (Dharma).	Exclusive devotion and Yoga.
Achievement	Possible "in this very life."	Possible "before casting off this body."

Synthesis of the Discovery at Uruvela

- The author concludes that the Buddha's experience at Uruvela was the attainment of a state "not characterized by illness, death, or grief." By merging his consciousness with the Eternal, he became a "law unto himself," showing that the "stopping of becoming" is the ultimate safety from bondage.
- This aligns with the Baha'i teaching that while the "Essence of God" is forever hidden from human understanding, His "Signs" and "Attributes" (like the light of the Sun) are manifest in the world through His Messengers. To know the Messenger is to know the "Path" to that Ineffable Light.

- In the following critical synthesis of Chapter III, the author bridges the gap between the "state" of **Nirvana** and the **Underlying Reality** that must necessarily precede it. He argues

that while Nirvana is the goal, it is an emanation of something even more fundamental—the **Supreme Absolute**.

1. **The Distinction: Attainment vs. Production**

- The author analyzes the famous dialogue between **Nagasena** and **King Milinda**. This conversation highlights a crucial logical point:
- **The Way to Realization:** There is a path (Dharma) to *attain* Nirvana, just as there is a path to the Himalayas or a boat to the farther shore.
- **The Absence of Production:** However, Nirvana itself is not *produced* by our actions. Just as a man can walk to the mountains but cannot "create" them, a disciple can reach Nirvana but does not "cause" it to exist.
- **The Unconditioned:** Nirvana is described as "unconditioned" and "unmade." It exists eternally, independent of the human mind, though it is only *cognizable* by a mind that has been purified.

2. **The Missing "Sun": A Critique of Nagasena**

- The author suggests that Nagasena's metaphors (wind, lotus, space) are "wordy" and sometimes "childish" because they avoid naming the **Underlying Reality**.
- **The Sun Metaphor:** To explain light without mentioning the sun is incomplete. The author proposes that if the **Supreme** is the Sun, Nirvana is the **Aura** (the light and warmth) emanating from it.
- **The Correct Logic:** By admitting the Supreme as the "ground" of all things, we understand why Nirvana is co-existent and ever-existent. We do not create the light; we simply "open our spiritual sight" to see it.

3. **Nirvana in Two Perspectives**

- The author presents two ways to view Nirvana through Buddhist tradition:
  - **Nirvana as Dharma (The Law):** Like a lake that cleans filth, or medicine that heals a malady, Nirvana is the functional "cure" for the wrong-doer. It is a "blessed road" to salvation.
  - **Nirvana as the Ineffable State:** As described in the *Udana*, it is a realm where the physical elements (earth, water, air) and even mental states (perception, non-perception) do not exist. It is the "end of sorrow."

4. **The Immortal Tribute: A Life of Enlightenment**

- The Buddha's "silence" on God is reinterpreted here as the ultimate form of praise.
- **Living Temples:** Instead of raising stone temples or pagodas to praise a Creator, the Buddha sought to "generate an endless stream of enlightened minds."
- **The Proof of the Uncreated:** By treading a path toward the "Unborn" and "Uncreated," the Buddha's entire Message becomes a continuous tribute to the existence of that very Reality.

The Essence of Chapter III

Concept	Analysis
Nirvana	An eternal emanation; a state of cool, unconditioned bliss.
Dharma	The "Medicine" and the "Road" that leads to the state of Nirvana.

	The Supreme	The "Unoriginated Originator" and the "Sun of Reality."
	The Goal	To be "Brahma-become"—identified with the eternal peace.

Final Synthesis of Chapter III

- This chapter concludes that the Buddha's focus was practical: to free the soul from the "poisoned arrow" of ego. By defining Nirvana as the "end of becoming," he provided a way for the human soul to merge back into the **Eternal Scheme of Things**.
- As Baha'u'llah states, *"The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence."* The Buddha's path of righteousness is one such supreme way to that Presence.
- For more Thai resources on the unity of these eternal truths and the history of the Baha'i Faith in Thailand, please visit **www.thailandbahais.org** or **www.thaibahaifaith.org**

Chapter 4

The God of Buddha

Pages	The God of Buddha
	Point and Counterpoint
	• Through the long aeons of progress, Man is gradually beginning to recognize that he is still very far from contact with Ultimate Reality and that all his knowledge of the phenomenal world is still only knowledge about its form and not of the intrinsic content, whose subtle essence continues to evade him as completely as it did his beetle-browed ancestor of a billion years ago. But, unlike our past foolish attitude, which demanded empirical verification for accepting any phenomenon, we are becoming progressively 'wiser, and humbler concerning the absolute limits_ of our faculties and gadgets for acquiring any true concept of Ultimate Reality. And, thus, in contrast to the fool who believes in nothing till it is proved, modem man cognizant of the limitless possibilities of phenomenal existence, totally outside his references of proof, is wisely beginning to accept the possibility of everything until it is disproved. • We shall now take up some of the standard Buddhistic arguments concerning their non-belief in the existence of the Supreme, the Absolute, Allah, or God. Such Buddhistic arguments are not predicated on the Buddha s own original concepts or teachings; yet they are an outgrowth from misunderstanding those same concepts and teachings and, hence, it is our bounden duty to re-examine these and where no ground exists for their acceptance, to discard them.
	'Gods', in Our Image, and the Unmanifest Brahma
	• In Chapter 4, the author addresses the complex relationship between the Buddha's teachings and the concept of a **Supreme Reality**, often obscured by modern misunderstandings or the superstitious "man-made" gods of the Vedic period. **1. The Divine Urging: Brahma and the Buddha** • A pivotal moment in the Buddha's life occurs after his Enlightenment at Uruvela. Initially, the Buddha hesitated to preach, fearing the profound and subtle nature of the **Dharma** would be misunderstood by a world "sunk in craving." • **The Intervention:** The scripture recounts that **Brahma Sahampati**, sensing the Buddha's hesitation, descended from the heavens to entreat him to teach, noting there were "beings with little dust in their eyes" who would perish without the word. • **The Implication:** The author suggests this implies Brahma possessed a form of omniscience and a "higher foresight" regarding the salvation of humanity. Rather than a competitor, Brahma acts as a "principle"—the eternal factor that confirms the mission of every Buddha.

2. **The "God-in-Man's-Image" Absurdity**

- The author explains that the Buddha's famous refutations were not directed at the **Ultimate Reality**, but at the "vain imaginings" of the Brahmins who created a God based on their own limited nature.
- **The Parable of the Staircase:** The Buddha compared the Brahmins' talk of "union with Brahma" to a man building a staircase to a mansion he has never seen and cannot locate. He ridiculed the idea that mere invocations or rituals could unite a man with the Divine if the man's nature remained full of lust and pride.
- **The Origin of the 'Overlord' Concept:** In the *Brahmajala Sutta*, the Buddha explains how the idea of a "Creator God" arises. When a world-system begins to renew, the first being born in the "empty God-plane" mistakenly believes he created subsequent beings simply because they appeared after he felt lonely. The Buddha uses this to show that what men call "God" is often just a high-ranking, but still finite, being.

3. **The Buddha's Claim: Knowing the Way to Brahma**

- Crucially, while the Buddha discredited the Brahmins' *theories*, he explicitly claimed to know the **straight path to a union with Brahma**.
- **The Native's Knowledge:** He compared his knowledge to that of a man born and raised in a village; such a man has no doubt about the way home.
- **The True Union:** The Buddha asserted that the **Tathagata** (the Buddha) sees the universe "face to face" and reveals a life of purity that is the only way to reach the state "contrary to the five hindrances" (lust, malice, etc.).

4. **Patterns of Divine Manifestation**

- The author identifies a consistent pattern in the lives of the enlightened:
- **The Set Task:** Just as the Arahat Anuruddha was set a task by the Buddha, the Buddha refers to a "task set me" by a higher authority before his passing.
- **The Unmanifest Source:** This "Setter of Tasks" is the **Unmanifest Brahma**, the **Uncreate**, or the **Absolute**. These terms represent the "Underlying Reality" that the finite mind cannot define but the Prophet experiences and manifests.

Summary: The Two Concepts of "Brahma"

Concept	Man-Conceived Brahma (Vedic)	Unmanifest Brahma (Absolute)
Nature	Created in man's image; subject to pride/ego.	Profound, subtle, and beyond logic.
Accessibility	Claimed by rituals/invocations (Vain).	Attained through the Eightfold Path (Dharma).
Buddha's View	Ridiculed as "blind talk."	Acknowledged as the goal of the "straight path."
Status	A "high being" within the world-system.	The "Unoriginated" behind the cosmos.

Synthesis of the Perspective

- The author concludes that the Buddha was not an atheist in the modern sense, but a **spiritual iconoclast** who smashed the idols of human imagination to reveal the "Sun of Reality." By living a life of "Brahma-faring," the disciple moves toward the Absolute through a "dynamic and vibrant life of righteousness."
- This perspective aligns with the Baha'i view that while God's essence is "Unknowable," the Manifestation (the Buddha) is the "Mirror" that perfectly reflects the Divine Will and directs humanity toward the "Eternal Abode".

Creation and Creator

- In Chapter 4, the author defends the concept of a Creator-God against traditional Buddhist philosophical objections, particularly the argument that if God were the sole cause, all of creation would have to appear at once.

1. The Logic of Instantaneous Creation

- The author argues that "instantaneous creation" is not a flaw in the concept of God, but a necessary attribute of a **Supreme Mind**.
- **The Mind vs. The Physical:** In the human mind, an idea (like a paper airplane) is conceived instantly. The time-lapse occurs only when we try to manifest that idea in the physical world.
- **The Absolute Outside Time:** Because the Absolute is not bound by the space-time continuum, there is no "time-lapse" between Divine Thought and Creation.
- **Co-existence:** Creation is co-existent with the Absolute, much like rays of light are co-existent with the sun. The sun is not just the "orb," but the entire electromagnetic and gravitational field that contains its planets.

2. The Artist and the Painting

- A powerful metaphor is used to explain the relationship between the Creator and the Created:
- **Dynamic Rest:** Consider a perfect painting. To the electrons within the canvas, there is constant motion and change (the Law of Karma). Yet, to the eye of the Artist, the painting is "at perfect rest"—complete and unchanging.
- **The Inconceivable Cause:** If the painting had eyes, it might see the artist's fingers or eyes, but it could never "see" or understand the **Mind** that conceived it. Similarly, describing God through physical attributes is as erroneous as a painting describing an artist by his hands alone.
- **The Missing Link:** Just as monkeys have hands but do not create paintings, it is the *Mind*—indescribable and inconceivable—that is the true cause.

3. The Limits of Finite Yardsticks

- The author critiques both Brahmin priests and Buddhist philosophers for trying to measure the Infinite with finite logic.
- **The Brahmin's Error:** They concoct forms and rituals for a "Brahma" they have never seen face-to-face.
- **The Philosopher's Error:** By using logic to deny the Absolute, they inadvertently undermine their own faith. If we reject the Absolute because it lacks "empirical proof," we

must also reject **Karma, Dharma, and Nirvana**, as none of these can be verified by human gadgets or deductive logic.

- **The Leap of Faith:** Since a **Tathagata** (Buddha) is incomprehensible even when present, the seeker eventually recognizes that the "whole package" of spiritual truth must be accepted through intuition and faith.

Summary: The Finite vs. The Infinite

Perspective	The Finite (Human/Creation)	The Infinite (Absolute/Creator)
Time	Bound by a time-lapse between thought and action.	Exists outside the space-time continuum.
Causality	Subject to the laws of physics and Karma.	The Originator of the Law of Causality.
Perception	Sees only "effects" (the painting).	Sees the "Whole" in perfect rest.
Verification	Requires empirical proof and gadgets.	Cognizable only through spiritual insight.

- The author ends by suggesting that if the "electrons" in the painting (beings in the universe) possessed mind, they would slowly develop freedom and eventually recognize that **"Mind is everything."**
- This resonates with the Baha'i principle that "The signs of God are revealed in all things," yet the Essence remains "sanctified above all attributes".

Law and Law Maker

- The author addresses the logical necessity of a **Law-Maker** behind the **Law** (Dharma/Karma). He argues that removing the concept of a Supreme Intelligence from Buddhism does not make it more "rational," but rather strips it of its ability to satisfy the deepest cravings of the human soul.

1. **The Logical Necessity of the Law-Maker**

- The author challenges the idea that the existence of a Law-Maker is somehow "inimical" or contrary to the existence of the Law (Karma).
- **Law as Proof of Intelligence:** Just as traffic laws do not create roads, and judiciary laws do not create judges, a moral law like Karma does not create the universe. Laws are always the product of an **Intellect**.
- **The Perfect Machine:** The more perfect and self-operating a law is, the greater the intelligence required to conceive it. The fact that the universe operates on an "infallible" Law of Causality is, in itself, the greatest proof of a Supreme Law-Maker.
- **The "Higher Mind":** Whether we call it the Absolute, the Creator, or the Ultimate Reality, this "Causeless Cause" is the source of the mind-boggling grandeur of life—from the microcosm of atoms to the macrocosm of galaxies.

2. **Satisfying the Craving for "Ultimates"**

- The author asserts that no religion can survive or inspire centuries of faith if it does not address "Ultimates."
- **The Fundamental Test:** A religion's success is measured by its ability to answer questions about death, immortality, purpose, and the nature of the Law-Maker.
- **Faith in the Face of Death:** It is the "vision of the ultimates"—the belief in an underlying Reality and a purposeful immortality—that allows people to smile in the face of death and shoulder sacrifices.
- **The Buddha's Silence:** The Buddha did not deny the Absolute; he simply refused to engage in the "ridiculous anthropomorphic concepts" (God in man's image) that characterize so much religious debate.

3. **The Reality Behind the Concepts**

- The author concludes that while terms like Karma, Dharma, and Nirvana are essential to Buddhist practice, they are not the *Ultimate Reality* itself.
- **Nirvana as a Product:** Nirvana is a state, and Dharma is a law. By definition, a state or a law must be predicated on a "ground" or "cause."
- **The Sustaining Power:** The concept of an Ultimate Reality remains the only sustaining power for human hope and the belief in immortality. Without this "Causeless Cause," spiritual concepts become empty and life appears as a mere purposeless mirage—a view the Buddha explicitly rejected.

Summary: The Law and the Law-Maker

The Concept	The Misunderstanding	The Author's Rationale
The Law (Karma)	Self-originated and self-operative without a mind.	A law always requires an Intellect/Mind to create it.
The Law-Maker	A "personal God" with human qualities.	An inconceivable Absolute beyond all descriptions.
Faith	Blind allegiance to rituals.	Allegiance to a vision concerning "Ultimates" and Immortality.
Buddhism	A system concerned only with the "relative" world.	A path leading back to the "Unmanifest Brahma."

- The author has effectively argued that the Buddha's teachings on Dharma and Nirvana are not an end in themselves, but the "straight path" to the **Unmanifest Absolute**.
- By recognizing this, we see that the Buddha's "silence" was a profound act of reverence for a Reality that "thought cannot conceive." This perspective is deeply resonant with the Baha'i understanding that all great Messengers are "Exponents of the same Truth" and "Manifestations of the same Light".

Obviating the Absurdities

- In this section, the author systematically deconstructs several logical "absurdities" often cited by Buddhist philosophers to negate the existence of a Supreme Reality. He argues that these objections are rooted in a "primitive pride" and a misunderstanding of both the finite and the infinite.

1. The Reality of Imagination and the Intangible

- One common objection is that "God" is merely an imagined concept with no more reality than the "son of a barren woman."
- **The Power of Mind:** The author responds that all thinking is a form of imagination. The ability to conceive of "intangibles" (like Nirvana or Dharma) is exactly what separates humans from animals.
- **A Matter of Knowledge:** The "son of a barren woman" is a fiction only because of a temporary lack of biological knowledge. To use this as an analogy for the Absolute is to equate our own ignorance with the nature of reality.

2. The Mind vs. The Elements

- Philosophers often argue we should "stick to what we know," like the physical elements, as a first cause.
- **The Knower of the Field:** The elements are not a "first cause" but are themselves effects of energy. The author uses the metaphor of the human mind: we create artifacts with our mind, yet we cannot "conceive" the nature of the mind itself. Similarly, we can manipulate nature without understanding the **Supreme Mind** that created it.
- **Order and Intelligence:** Just as a piece of cheese and a human brain look identical at a sub-atomic level (as packets of energy), it is only by stepping back and seeing the "total entity" that we recognize the presence of intelligence and mind.

3. The Problem of Evil and Free Will

- If God is perfect, why is the world full of suffering?
- **The Shadow Metaphor:** Evil is not a "thing" in itself; it is a negation—the absence of good—just as darkness is the absence of light. There is no "Devil" or "Hell" within the Absolute Mind; these are mental states experienced by finite minds due to their own erroneous choices.
- **Free Will:** The author argues that for the Creator to "interfere" and wipe the slate clean every time humans made a mistake would negate the power of free will. The Supreme works through **perfect laws** (Karma), not capricious bribes.

4. Time, Creation, and the Absolute

- Some claim that the universe is a product of "Time."
- **Time as a Relationship:** The author points out that Time is a function of space; it exists only in the plane of relativity. Therefore, Time cannot be the "Absolute" cause. Instead, Time and Space are co-equals contained *within* the Absolute Mind.

5. The "I" and the Cosmos

- The idea that "everything is a reflection of my own 'I'" is dismissed as a violation of the Buddha's own teaching on *Anatta* (non-self).

6. **The Persistence of Reality**
- If all individual "I's" were annihilated, the cosmos would remain unchanged because it is a creation of the **Absolute Mind**, not the human ego.

Summary: Resolving the Absurdities

The Absurdity	The Author's Response	The Spiritual Reality
God is just imagination.	Thought *is* imagination; it is our tool to probe the intangible.	Mind is the source of all things.
Stick to the elements.	The elements are effects, not causes.	The Knower (Mind) is greater than the Field (Matter).
Evil proves God's failure.	Evil is a negation (ignorance), not a primordial substance.	Humans have free will to choose heaven or hell.
Time created the world.	Time is relative and requires creation to exist.	The Absolute is the "Creator of Time."
Proclaiming God's virtue is selfish.	Recitation keeps "intangibles" in focus for the wavering mind.	Glorifying the Truth is the path to Nirvana.

- The author concludes that the "Absurdities" arise when the finite mind tries to force the Infinite to fit its own limited "yardsticks." The Buddha's silence on these matters was not a denial of God, but a refusal to participate in the "puppet play" of human logic. By acknowledging the **Law-Maker** behind the **Law**, we restore the "master emotion" of Religion that builds civilizations and satisfies the soul.

The Underlying Reality - God

- In this section the author argues that the historical Buddha was not an atheist or a nihilist, but a "Hindu among Hindus"—a reformer who revived the pristine purity of the belief in an **Underlying Reality** or **God**.

1. **The Necessity of the Absolute**
- The author contends that no religion could survive, much less transform human civilization, without addressing the deepest human craving: the passion for **immortality**.
- **The Ground of Being:** For "immortality in truth" to have any meaning, there must be an eternal source. Just as a condition must have a cause, the "born and created" world must have an "Unborn and Uncreated" source.
- **The Failure of Atheism:** The author asserts that no society predicated on atheism has ever sustained a unity of conscience or righteousness for long. Thus, the Buddha's success as a world-religion founder is proof that He acknowledged a Divine Ground.

2. The Four Pillars of the Buddha's Faith

- The author identifies four distinct concepts in the Buddha's discourse that mirror the fundamental pillars of all great religions:

1. **The One Essence:** The source from which all things originate (The Unoriginated/God).
2. **The One Law:** The governing principle of creation (Dharma/Karma).
3. **The Path/Goal:** The process of overcoming ignorance to reach the peace of Nirvana.
4. **The Teacher:** The Tathagata (Buddha), who reveals the Law according to the capacity of the seekers.

- "The origin of all things is one—the Unoriginated... from the Unoriginated emanate all things and they are subject to one law... those who understand this... attain to that ineffable bliss of Nirvana."

3. Comparative Terminology: Same Truth, Different Words

- The author argues that modern man is no closer to "defining" the Absolute than the ancients, because the subject lies outside human verification. Therefore, the differences between Buddhism and Hinduism are largely **terminological**:

Buddhist Terms	Hindu (Upanishadic) Terms	Nature of the Concepts
Mind	Soul (Atman)	The intangible "real self."
Nirvana	Brahmaloka / Moksha	The ineffably blissful state of liberation.
The Uncreated / Unborn	Primal Person / Brahman / God	The "Causeless Cause" or Ground of Being.
Tathagata	Avatar / Manifestation	The Divine Spokesman or Teacher.

4. Beyond Nirvana: The Absolute Shore

- The author notes a profound detail in the *Udana* (v. 81), where the Buddha describes a state where there is **"neither this shore nor the other shore"** (the "other shore" being Nirvana).
- **The Supreme Reality:** This suggests a condition beyond even the state of liberation—the Absolute Itself.
- **The Negative Character:** Just because the Buddha used negative terms ("Unborn," "Unformed") to describe the Absolute does not mean It does not exist. It simply means the Absolute is outside any plane of human thought or "yardstick" of measurement.

Summary: The Essence of the Buddha's "God"

Attributes	Description	Scriptural Support
Uncaused	The "Element" without beginning in time; the foundation of all.	*Ratnagotravibhaga*
One Essence	All things originate from one source and one law.	*Saddharma Pundarika*

Inconceivable	Sees without eyes, hears without ears; pure consciousness.	*Taittiriya Upanishad*
Eternal Rest	Where there is no "coming or going" or "ceasing-to-be."	*Udana*

Final Thoughts

- Chapter 4 concludes by affirming that the Buddha and the Hindu Avatars (like Krishna) spoke of the same **Supreme Lord**. The "man who is free from credulity" is the one who recognizes this **Uncreated Reality** abiding in all perishable beings.
- As the Baha'i teachings state, "The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, He hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear". The Buddha was one such "Gem," reflecting the light of the Absolute to a world in need.

- In this pivotal analysis, the author highlights that the Buddha's "silence" regarding a Creator was not a denial, but an act of reverence for a **Causeless Cause** that defies all human yardsticks. By weaving together the Pali Canon and the Upanishads, the author presents the Buddha as a master psychologist who understood that human progress requires a connection to the **Eternal**.

1. The Four Pillars of Spiritual Reality

- The author identifies four distinct "pillars" in the Buddha's teachings that mirror the structure of all major faiths. These are not identical but are linked in a chain of emanation:
  1. **The Unoriginated (The Essence):** The "One Essence" from which all things originate. It is the only true "Ground of Being."
  2. **The Law (Dharma):** The "One Law" that emanates from the Essence to govern the universe.
  3. **The Peace (Nirvana):** The goal of salvation and the end of sorrow reached by those who follow the Law.
  4. **The Teacher (Tathagata):** The "King of Truth" who reveals the Law according to the capacity of the people.

2. The "Builder of the House"

- The author provides a striking re-interpretation of the Buddha's first words upon enlightenment (*Dhammapada 153-154*). While some see "craving" as the builder, the author argues:
- **The Discovery:** The Buddha exclaims, *"Now are you seen, O builder of the house!"* addressing a "him"—a conscious Intelligence.
- **The Act of Grace:** Enlightenment was not a human invention but a **Divine Bestowal**. The Buddha admits he was once "shut in the egg-shell of ignorance" until the Absolute revealed the Truth to Him.
- **The Result:** By discovering the "Builder," the Buddha broke the cycle of rebirth. His mind, set on the Eternal, attained the extinction of earthly desires.

3. The Trinity of the Eternal, Truth, and Buddha

- To clarify the relationship between these concepts, the author separates them into three levels:

- **The Eternal:** The unknown, incomprehensible Absolute (God).
- **The Truth (Dharma):** The "image" of the Eternal; the law that portrays the Absolute.
- **The Buddha:** The perfect mirror who reflects the Truth. He is the *Dharmaraja* (King of Truth) who says, *"Whosoever sees me sees the Dharma."*

Summary: Identifying the Absolute

Terminology	The Finite/Born	The Infinite/Unborn
Source	The "house" (body/ego).	The "Builder" (Supreme Mind).
Condition	Samsara (Coming and going).	Nirvana (The depth of the Eternal).
Logic	Dependent on causes (Karma).	The "Causeless Cause" (Sunyata).
Access	Mortal eyes and senses.	The heart and "insight-knowledge."

The Perspective

- The author concludes that without the "Uncreated," existence becomes a "meaningless finis." It is the discovery of the Absolute that gives life direction. As the *Katha Upanishad* and the *Dhammapada* both suggest, when a man finds the **Essence**, he finds the **Source of Joy**.

- In this final, profound synthesis of Chapter 4 the author explores the **"Supra-Logical"** nature of the Absolute and the central role of the **Universal Mind**. He argues that the Buddha's silence was not an absence of belief, but an acknowledgment that the finite mind cannot contain the Infinite.

1. **The Limits of Human Logic**

- The author explains that human reasoning is "puny" when faced with the mystery of the cosmos. Because we are bound by space and time, we cannot define that which exists outside of them.
- **The Calm Silence:** Just as the teacher Baskali answered with silence in the Upanishads, the Buddha remained silent to show that the Absolute is "above all determinations."
- **The Anthropomorphic Trap:** The Buddha rejected the "God of man's conjecture"—a personal deity who could be swayed by bribes or whims. To the Buddha, a God who is a "victim of his own emotions" is less than the mind that imagines him.
- **The True Escape:** If the Absolute is perfect, then Its laws must be perfect. Our escape from the "born and created" world is not through supplication, but through **unswerving devotion to the Dharma**.

2. **The Universal Mind vs. The Finite Mind**

- A cornerstone of this chapter is the distinction between Mind and the laws it creates.
- **Order Implies Intelligence:** From the smallest increment of energy to the largest galaxy, the cosmos demonstrates "intelligent guidance."
- **Mind as the Only Reality:** The Buddha stated that "the Mind is everything." While Karma, Dharma, and Nirvana are perfect laws, they do not possess "Mind" (volition). Therefore, they must emanate from a **Universal Mind** that is the "Causeless Cause."

- **The Creator of Time:** We may eventually learn to manipulate life and space, but we will always be the "handiwork" of the Mind that created Time itself.

3. The "Lovely" and the Path to Harmony

- The author identifies a specific term used by the Buddha: **The Lovely**.
- **Beyond Identity:** The Buddha described "Brahma-faring" (living the holy life) as "intimacy with the Lovely." Since one does not have intimacy with an inanimate concept like Karma, "The Lovely" implies a relationship with a sentient, Supreme Reality.
- **Harmony with the Will:** True freedom is not the exercise of random choice (which is born of ignorance), but **harmony with the Supreme Will**. When the "self" breaks like a soap bubble, what remains is the truth of the Eternal.

Summary: The God of Buddha

The Concept	The Author's Clarification
Silence	An answer expressing the "inexpressible" nature of God.
The "Lovely"	The Absolute Reality with which the Buddha held "intimacy."
Universal Mind	The source of the "One Law" (Dharma) and "One Essence."
Sunyata	The "Voidness" that is the supra-existential state of the Absolute.
True Freedom	Submerging the finite will into the perfect, singular Truth.

Conclusion of Chapter 4

- The "God of Buddha" is not a theological construct but the **Underlying Reality** that gives purpose to existence. As the author notes, "the discovery of the Uncreated and belief in It gives us the most joyful experience of serene certitude." The Buddha's mission was to lift humanity out of the "quagmire of ignorance" and set its feet on the **road of Dharma**.
- For more information on the Baha'i perspective on the "Unknowable Essence" and its Manifestations in Thailand, please visit **www.thailandbahais.org** or **www.thaibahaifaith.org**.

Epilogue

Pages	Epilogue

- This powerful epilogue serves as a final bridge between the historical Buddha and the eternal "Universal Mind," arguing that Buddhism's true power is recovered only when we acknowledge its divine origins and its deep roots in the spiritual soil of India.

---

1. The Tragedy of Disconnection

- The author highlights a "double-edged misfortune":
  - **For India:** Losing Buddhism meant losing its "fairest fruit."
  - **For Buddhism:** Being uprooted from the metaphysics of the **Vedas**, **Upanishads**, and the **Bhagavad Gita** led to interpretations that were spiritually detached.
  - **The Foreign Lens:** Foreign scholars often focus on the mechanics of language but miss the "cultural essence." Western "isms" (atheism, agnosticism) have tried to draft the Buddha as a secular hero, failing to realize that His alchemy was essentially **divine**.

2. The Buddha as a Divine Manifestation

- The text argues that the Buddha was not just a philosopher, but a **Prophet** and **Divine Manifestation**.
- **Einstein's God:** Even modern scientists like Albert Einstein acknowledged a "superior reasoning power" revealed in the universe. This aligns with the Buddha's "Universal Mind."
- **The Absolute:** The Absolute cannot be known directly, only through Its attributes. This is why the Tathagatas are "silent"—not because the Absolute doesn't exist, but because It is beyond human logic.

3. Gandhi's Defence of the Buddha's Theism

- Mahatma Gandhi's insights provide a clarifying lens:
  - **Rejection of the "Base" God:** Buddha didn't reject God; he rejected the corrupt, anthropomorphic version of God that demanded animal sacrifices or was prone to malice.
  - **Nirvana as Abode:** Nirvana is not extinction; it is the "living happiness" of a soul that has found its home in the **heart of the Eternal**.

Summary: The Path to Rejuvenation

Theme	The Secular Misconception	The Spiritual Reality
Origins	A man-made philosophy.	A message from the "Unborn & Uncreated."
Nature of God	Absent/Atheistic.	A "Universal Mind" governing through eternal Law.
Nirvana	Void/Extinction.	Union with the "Causeless Cause."
Relationship	Separate from Hinduism.	A reform and fulfilment of the Indian tradition.

Theme	The Secular Misconception	The Spiritual Reality
Origins	A man-made philosophy.	A message from the "Unborn & Uncreated."
Nature of God	Absent/Atheistic.	A "Universal Mind" governing through eternal Law.
Nirvana	Void/Extinction.	Union with the "Causeless Cause."
Relationship	Separate from Hinduism.	A reform and fulfillment of the Indian tradition.

A New Springtime

- The author concludes that for Buddhism to blossom again, it must retrace its steps to that **"Timeless Cause."** It requires another "spiritual dawn" to sweep away misconceptions and re-anchor the Faith to the Reality of God.
- As you explore these profound connections, you may find further inspiration in the Baha'i resources available in Thailand, which emphasize the unity of all Divine Manifestations:
  - **www.thaibahaifaith.org** (Recommended Thai resource).
  - **www.thailandbahais.org** (Comprehensive content on teachings and history).
  - **www.bahai-history.org** (Origin and history of the Faith).

Summary

Pages	Summary
	The Core Arguments: A Synthesis
	1. The Nature of the Absolute (The Uncreated Reality) • Fozdar challenges the modern "atheistic" label often applied to Buddhism by arguing that the Buddha's silence was a profound act of reverence, not a denial of existence. • **The Rejection of Anthropomorphism:** The Buddha did not deny "God," but rather rejected the "base" concepts of a deity—one who could be bribed with sacrifices, felt human malice, or exhibited favouritism. • **The Causeless Cause:** Fozdar highlights the Buddha's explicit references to the **"Unborn, Unoriginated, and Uncreated,"** identifying this as the Absolute Reality. This is the "Universal Mind" or "Supreme Intelligence" that governs the cosmos through the perfect, unalterable laws of **Dharma**. • **The "Lovely" and Sentient Absolute:** By citing the Buddha's goal of attaining "intimacy" with the "Lovely," Fozdar posits that the Absolute is not a cold, mechanical law, but a sentient, attractive Reality that draws the soul toward it. **2. The Station of the Buddha (The Divine Manifestation)** • The book re-evaluates the Buddha's identity, moving beyond the "human philosopher" narrative to a station of cosmic significance. • **The Divine Mirror:** The Buddha is presented as the **Dharmaraja** (King of Truth), a perfect mirror who reflects the Light of the Eternal. His teachings were not the product of human intellect but a **Divine Bestowal**—a "gift from the Wholly Beyond." • **Discovery of the "Builder":** Fozdar emphasizes the Buddha's victory cry upon Enlightenment: *"I have seen thee, O Builder of the House!"* This recognizes a conscious Supreme Architect behind the architecture of existence. • **Progressive Revelation:** The author situates the Buddha within a chain of Divine Manifestations, suggesting that Enlightenment is the same "Holy Spirit" appearing in different cultural garments across history. **3. The Redefinition of Nirvana (Extinction as Liberation)** • Fozdar, echoing the insights of Mahatma Gandhi, corrects the misconception that Nirvana is "annihilation" or "nothingness." • **The Extinction of the "Base":** Nirvana is the extinction of the *ego*—the "base" qualities of lust, malice, and corruption—rather than the extinction of the soul. • **The Abode of Peace:** It is described as a state of **"Living Happiness"** and "Positive Peace," where the consciousness finally anchors itself in the "Heart of the Eternal." • **The Other Shore:** Fozdar frames Nirvana as the transition from the perishable/temporal world to the **Imperishable/Timeless** Realm—a return of the spark to the Flame. **4. Reclaiming the Indian Heritage (The Metaphysical Context)** • A major historical thrust of the book is that Buddhism cannot be understood in isolation from its Indian roots.

	• **The Refinement of the Vedas:** Fozdar argues that the Buddha was a **Divine Reformer** of the Hindu tradition, not its destroyer. His teachings were the "Springtime" of the Vedic spirit, stripping away the "Winter" of ritualism and caste corruption. • **The Tragedy of Cultural Divorce:** The author contends that when Buddhism was exiled from India, it fell into the hands of foreign scholars and monastics who stripped it of its original "God-centric" and "Soul-centric" metaphysical core. • **Restoring the Oneness:** By reconnecting Buddhism to the **Upanishadic Absolute (Brahman)**, Fozdar seeks to reconcile the Great Religions of the East and West into a single, cohesive history of God's guidance to mankind. **5. The Baha'i Perspective: The Oneness of Religion** • Ultimately, Fozdar's synthesis serves the Baha'i principle of **Progressive Revelation**. • **The Great Chain of Guidance:** The Buddha is seen as one in a series of Divine Educators (including Krishna, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad) who appear in every age to advance human civilization. • **Baha'u'llah as the Maitreya:** Fozdar concludes that the spiritual "reawakening" promised by the Buddha is fulfilled in the appearance of **Baha'u'llah**, who represents the "Maitreya" (the Buddha of Universal Fellowship) expected to unite the world's diverse creeds into one single, harmonious family.