

[home](#) [hinduism's influence on world religion](#) [contents](#)

From the beginning of her history, India has adored and idealized, not soldiers and statesmen, not men of science and leaders of industry, not even poets and philosophers, who influence the world by their deeds or by their words, but those rarer and more chastened spirits, whose greatness lies in what they are and not in what they do; men who have stamped infinity on the thought and life of the country. To a world given over to the pursuit of power and pleasure, wealth and glory, they declared the reality of the unseen world and the call of the spiritual life. This ideal had dominated the Indian religious landscape for over forty centuries. Hinduism has thus had a long and continuous evolution and in the process has influenced all other major world religions.

India, which is, in a sense, representation of the Asiatic consciousness, has never been isolated from the Western continent in spite of geographical, linguistic, and racial barriers. A large part of the world received its religious education from India. In spite of continuous struggle with superstition and theological baggage, India has held fast for centuries to the ideals of the spirit. Its influence or, at any rate, connection with Western thought, though not constant and continuous, has been quite significant. Commenting on the teachings of Christian missionaries as Plotinus, Clement, Gregory, Augustine and the like, Dean Inge observes: "They are the ancient religion of the Brahmins masquerading in the clothes borrowed from the Jewish, Gnostic, Manichaen and Neo-Platonic allegories. That is why Mahatma Gandhi told Romain Rolland in Switzerland on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference (1911) that Christianity is an echo of the Indian religion and Islam is the re-echo of that echo."

Jules Michelet (1789-1874) French writer, the greatest historian of the romantic school, affirms this: "Follow the migration of mankind from East to West along the sun's course and along the track of the world's magnetic currents; observe its long voyage from Asia to Europe, from India to France.....At its starting point in India, the birthplace of races and religions, the womb of the world...."

[Introduction](#)

[The Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism and Christianity](#)

[Buddha and Jesus](#)

[The Vedas, Mithraism and Christianity](#)

[Articles](#)

1. [Christmas' Hindu Roots - By D. Parsuram Maharaj](#)
2. [Buddhism in Christianity](#)
3. [Vedic Links to Judaism](#)
4. [Sikhism](#)



[Introduction](#)

Dr. Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975) the great British historian. His massive research was published in 12 volumes between 1934 and 1961 as 'A Study of History'. [Toynbee](#) was a major interpreter of human civilization in the 20th century. He has said:

" **India is not only the heir of her own religious traditions; she is also the residuary legatee of the Ancient Mediterranean World's religious traditions.** "Religion cuts far deeper, and, at the religious level, India has not been a recipient; **she has been a giver.** About half the total number of the living

higher religions are of Indian origin." he said.

(source: [One World and India - By Arnold Toynbee](#) p. 42- 59).

Volney, Constantin Francois de Chasseboeuf, comte de 1757-1820) historian and philosopher and French scholar. His principal work, [Les Ruines; ou, Méditation sur les révolutions des empires](#) (1791), which popularized religious skepticism, was influential not only in France but also in England and the United States; it went through many translations and editions and stimulated much controversy.



Volney of France was perhaps the first to propound in the 18th century that "**Jesus was a solar myth derived from Krishna' of Hindu mythology.**" Buddhism existed at least four hundred years before Christianity. Another French theologian, **Ernest Havet**, did the same in his study of primitive Christianity published in 1884. A

He was followed by **Ernest Renan**, the famous Catholic theologian from France, who pointed out **Buddhist parallels in the parables of Jesus** in his [Life of Jesus](#) published in 1863.

Max Muller noted "startling coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity in his [India - What It Can Teach Us](#) published from England.

A stronger case along the same lines was made by **Rudolf Seydel**, Professor in the University of Leipzig (Germany), whose first book, [The Gospel of Jesus in relation to the Buddha Legend](#), published in 1882, was followed by a more elaborate one, [The Buddha Legend and the Life of Jesus](#), published in 1897. Finally, **J. M. Robertson**, a British scholar and a Member of Parliament, revived the Volney thesis in

1900 by stating in his [Christianity and Mythology](#) that "**the Christ-Myth is merely a form of the Krishna-Myth.**"

(source: [Jesus Christ: An Artifice for Aggression - By Sita Ram Goel](#) p. 53).

In the past, the West and India were immediate neighbors. Before the Islamic civilization came between the two, the empire, which was first Persian, then Greek and later Roman, stretched from the Mediterranean to the Indus. The commercial ties between India and Europe were more direct than they have ever been over the last ten centuries. Indian monks and their disciples lived and taught for several hundred years in the Middle East and founded large monasteries, the traces of which can be seen mainly in Antioch and Alexandria. In the 4th A.D. Saint Jeremy fulminated against the fake prophets from India. **But his protest came to late, for the men from India had already left their mark on the Mediterranean mind in search of holiness.**

(source: [The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman \('Le Genie de l'Inde'\)](#) p.189-)

[Top of Page](#)

The Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism and Christianity

The **Dalai Lama** has said: "When I say that Buddhism is part of Hinduism, certain people criticize me. But if I were to say that Hinduism and Buddhism are totally different, it would not be in conformity with truth."

(source: [Who is a Hindu? – By Koenraad Elst](#) p. 233).



The Bhagavad Gita doctrine of *lokasmgraha* (good of humanity) and of Divine Incarnation influenced the Mahayana or the Northern school of Buddhism. The Buddhist scholar Taranath who wrote the history of Buddhism mentions that



the teacher of Nagarjuna, who is regarded as the chief originator of the Mahayana school of Buddhism, was Rahulabhadra who **“was much indebted to sage Krishna and still more to Ganesha.....This quasi-historical notice, reduced to its less allegorical expression means that Mahayanism is much indebted to the Bhagavadgita and more even to Shaivism.”**

(source: [Dr. Kern's Manual of Buddhism](#)).

(Artwork courtesy of The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc. www.krishna.com).

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has said: "Buddhism which arose in India was an attempt to achieve a purer Hinduism. It may be called a reform within Hinduism. The formative years of Buddhism were spent in the Hindu religious environment. It shares in a large measure the basic pre suppositions of Hinduism. **It is a product of the Hindu religious ethos.**"

(source: [Religion and Culture - By S. Radhakrishnan](#) p. 29).

The origin of Christianity is due also to Buddhist influence. The teachings of the Buddha got woven into Greek, Egyptian and Hebraic theology, giving rise to the new Christian religion. Renan sensed this when he wrote in his Life of Christ that 'there was something Buddhist' in the Word of Christ. **Flavius Joseph observed that the Pharisees of Alexandria had taken from the Indians the belief in resurrection of the dead.** Though this idea was alien to the Hebrew dogma, it gradually got absorbed into it, which probably explains the resurrection of Jesus Christ. At a more mundane level, Christians who venerate relics, ring bells and burn incense are unwittingly imitating Indian rituals that were established many centuries before Christianity. Ironically in the 19th century, some Christian missionaries expressed their indignation at Indian pagans ringing Christian bells and burning Christian incense when in point of fact it was the Christians who were imitating the Indians.

These influences from India may come as a surprise to many Christians. Yet they were often discussed in the early 19th century when Europe discovered the Vedas and the Upanishads in translation. European philosophers, especially **Soren Kierkegaard**, were amazed by the evangelical tone of these holy books from India. More recently, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Biblical manuscripts, some archaeologists who specialize in religion have spoken once again of an Indian connection between Buddhist monks and the Essenian community which lived next to Jerusalem.

(source: [The Genius of India - By Guy Sorman](#) ('Le Genie de l'Inde') p.189-195).

The Hindus venerate Christ as an Incarnation, and they see that his essential message is that of the Sanatana Dharma (the Eternal Religion). The special ethical and religious ideas contained in the teachings of Christ have no antecedents in the religious traditions in which he was born. Non-resistance to evil, love of enemies, monasticism, love of death, the assertion of man's innate perfection (kingdom of heaven is within you), universalism are principles not to be found in the religion into which he was born.



John the Baptist, who belonged to the monastic sect of the Essenes, was a Buddhist. **Dr. Moffatt**, in his book, [Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics](#), vol. v, p.410, remarks, "Buddhist tendencies helped to shape some of the Essenic characteristics." King Ashoka of India (third century B.C.) sent Buddhist missionaries to different parts of the world, from Siberia to Ceylon, from China to Egypt, and for two centuries before the advent of Christ, the Buddhist missionaries preached the ethics of Buddha in Syria, Palestine and Alexandria. The Christian historian, **Mahaffi**, declared that the Buddhist missionaries were forerunners of Christ. " Philosophers like **Schelling** and **Schopenhauer**, and Christian thinkers like **Dean Mansel** and **D. Millman** admit that the sect of the Essenes arose through the influence of the Buddhist missionaries who came

from India.

(source: [Complete works of Swami Abhedananda](#), vol.2, p.120).

Professor Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967) German scholar of religion, writing during and after the First World War, in an important article on 'Christian and Non-Christian Religions' writes: " The doctrines of the

Trinity and Incarnation as well as the Virgin Birth, belief in the Divine Sacrifice of love, the conception of irresistible Grace and justification by faith alone, prayer prompted by the grace of God, petition for forgiveness of sins, all-embracing love towards every creature, heroic love of enemies, belief in everlasting life, in the judgment and the restoration of the world - there is not a single central doctrine of Christianity which does not have an array of striking parallels in the various non-Christian faiths." (Hibbert Journal, January 1954)

(source: [Religion and Culture - By S. Radhakrishnan](#) p. 67).



(Josaphat sees a blind man, a cripple and a dying man. from Barlaam and Josaphat - Augsburg, 1477 source: [East-West Passage: the travel of ideas, arts and inventions between Asia and the Western world](#) - By Michael Edwardes).

Many incidents in Christ's life as well as the organization of the Catholic Church and its rituals suggest their Buddhistic and Hindu origin. The Gospel stories of the immaculate conception of a virgin mother, the miraculous birth, the story of slaughter of the infants by Herod, and the chief events of Christ's life seem like repetitions of what happened in the lives of Krishna and of Buddha. The idea of Incarnation is purely and Indian idea. It was not known among the Jews. The star over Buddha's birthplace and the prophecy of the old monk Asita are repeated in the Gospel story of Simeon. The temptation of Buddha by Mara, the evil spirit, the twelve disciples, with the beloved disciple Ananda, and the many miracles recall the stories in Christ's life.

Under cover of the legend of **Barlaam and Josaphet**, Buddha has found a place among Catholic saints and has his saint-day in the calendar of the Greek and Roman churches. The story is a Christianized version of one of the legends of Buddha, as even the name Josaphat would seem to show. This is said to be a corruption of the original Joasaph, which is again corrupted from the middle Persian **Budaisif** (**Budsaif=Bodhisattva**).

The rosary, the veneration of relics, asceticism, baptism, confession, etc. are also of Indian origin. The name Josaphet is **Bodhisattva** in the corrupt form. The story of the Buddha's life underwent an extraordinary transmutation as it moved west and became what is one of the most widespread legends ever told -- the story of Barlaam and Josaphat. More than sixty translations, versions, or paraphrases have been identified. It was altered to fit the religious climate of each language and culture. As it moved westward, the story was adopted and adapted by Manicheans in central Asia, and then it became Christianized. In its new version, Barlaam was a Christian monk who had converted Josaphat (the name was a linguistic development from the word Bodhisattva -- one capable of Buddhahood). It may be that

Georgian Christians in the Caucasus were the first to give the story a Christian cast, in the sixth or seventh century.

There are innumerable similarities between Hindu-Buddhist practices and doctrines and those of Christianity.

The Russian author, **Nicholas Notovitch** translated in 1894 a biography of Christ found in Nepal in a Buddhist monastery which said that Christ went there during the thirteen years of his life of which there is no record in the Gospel. Notovitch author of a book, **The Unknown Life of Christ**, asserting that during his long period of obscurity Jesus had stayed with Brahman and Buddhist monks, who had initiated him into Indian religions. The book was first published in French and edited, abridged, and translated into English by Violet Crispe in 1895. This study was based on the materials Notovitch had collected during his travels in India and Tibet, particularly on the records of Saint Issa discovered by him



at the monastery Himis. Inevitably the book excited fierce controversy and reproach from some theologians. Max Muller disputed Notovitch's assertions and questioned the authenticity of the latter's evidence. Despite this, Notovitch reaffirmed his views when the English version was published. The German scholar **Faber-Kaiser's** more recent book entitled **Jesus died in Kashmir** also supports Ahmadiya sect in Islam that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but came to India and died near Rozabal not far from Srinagar in Kashmir. (<http://www.tombofjesus.com/AcharaS.htm#Yuz>)

French historian **Alain Danielou** had noticed as early as 1950 that "a great number of events which surround the birth of Christ - as it is related in the Gospels - strangely remind us of Buddhists and Krishnaites legends".



Danielou quotes as examples the structure of the Christian Church, which resembles that of the Buddhist Chaitya; the rigorous asceticism of certain early Christian sects, which reminds one of the asceticism of Jain and Buddhist saints; the veneration of relics, the usage of holy water, which is an Indian practice, or the word 'Amen', which comes from the **Hindu 'OM'**.

There are some indication that Christ came to India for spiritual initiation and borrowed from Buddhism for his teachings. According to **Alain Danielou**, who wrote the **Histoire de l'Inde**,

"Many sects which developed in the first century before Christ in Palestine, had a strong Hindu and Buddhist influence and a great number of legends surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, are strangely similar to Buddhist and Krishnaites stories. He adds that the structures of the church resembles those of Chaitya Buddhism and that the early Christian asceticism seems to have been inspired by Jainism."

(source: [Rewriting Indian History](#) - By Francois Gautier pg 9-10)

Belgium's historian Konraad Elst also remarks "that many early Christian saints, such as **Hippolytus** of Rome, possessed an intimate knowledge of Brahmanism." Elst even quotes the famous **Saint Augustin** who wrote:

"We never cease to look towards India, where many things are proposed to our admiration".

Unfortunately, remarks American **David Frawley**, "from the second century onwards, Christian leaders decided to break away from the Hindu influence and show that Christianity only started with the birth of Christ". Hence, many later saints began branding Brahmins as "heretics" and **Saint Gregory** set a future trend by publicly destroying the "pagan" idols of the Hindus.

Refer to [Jesus of History](#) and [The Pagan Evidence](#) and [Jewish Evidence](#) and [Evidence of the](#)

[Gospels - hamsa.org](http://Gospels-hamsa.org)).

It is unknown as to how Christianity arrived in India during the first century. If Christianity could reach India during the first century and find a sanctuary why could not Indian religions, especially Buddhism which was equally proselytizing reach western Asia and the Greco-Roman world and find a footing there? The road surely must have been open both ways.



Lamas at a prayer meeting

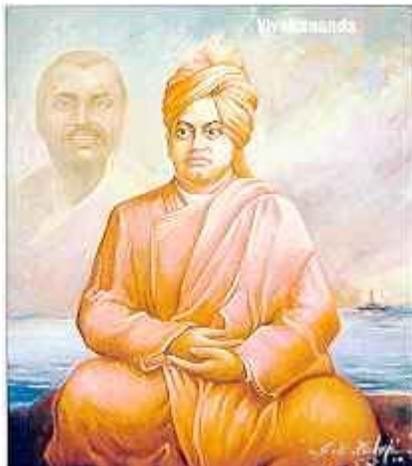
In 1842, two French missionary travelers to Tibet, **Hue and Gibet**, were shocked at the close resemblances between Catholic and Lamaistic rituals. They wrote, "The crozier, the exorcism, the censer with the five chains, the blessings which the lamas impart by extending the right hand over the heads of the faithful, the rosary, the celibacy of the clergy, their separation from the world, the worship of saints, the fasts, processions, litanies, holy water – these are the points of contact the Buddhists have with us."

(source: [The Legacy of India](#) - edited By **G T Garratt** Oxford At The Clarendon Press).

Indeed, **Lamaistic Buddhism**, which did not follow the serene metaphysical teaching of the Buddha closely, represented demons and torments of hell as lurid as those of mediaeval Christianity. Even in the most Judaic of the epistles in the New Testament the phrase "**the wheel of birth**" occurs, which **Schopenhauer** ascribed to Indian influence.

In an interview in Detroit in 1894, **Vivekananda** said, "Our religion is older than most religions and the Christian creeds came directly from the Hindoo religion. It is one of the great offshoots. The Catholic religion also takes all its forms from us, the confessional, the belief in saints and so on, and a Catholic priest who saw this absolute similarity and recognized the truth of the origin of the Catholic religion was dethroned from his position because he dared to publish a volume explaining all that he observed and was convinced of."

(Swami's reference was no doubt to [Bishop Brigandet's Life of Buddha](#)). (From [Vivekananda, New Discoveries by Marie Louise Burke](#), 2nd ed, p 208). For more refer to [Resurrection of the Dead In the Nag Hammadi Codices & Its Relationship to the Buddhist Doctrine of 'Rebirth'](#)).



Great Indian sages, such as **Sri Aurobindo** or Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the founder of the Art of Living, which is practiced in more than 80 countries, have often remarked that the stories recounting how Jesus came to India to be initiated, are probably true. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar notes, for instance, that Jesus sometimes wore an orange robe, the Hindu symbol of renunciation in the world, which was not a usual practice in Judaism. "In the same way", he continues, "the worshipping of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism is probably borrowed from the Hindu cult of Devi." **Bells too, which cannot be found today in synagogues, the surviving form of Judaism, are used in church and we all know their importance in Buddhism and Hinduism for thousands of years.** There are many other similarities between Hinduism and Christianity: incense, sacred bread (prasadam), the different altars around churches (which recall the manifold deities in their niches inside Hindu temples); reciting the rosary (japamala), the Christian Trinity (the ancient Santana

Dharma: Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh), Christian processions, the sign of the cross (Anganyasa), and so on.

The Catholic Church, however, developed with dualistic principles of God in heaven and creation below which have created an insoluble conflict between faith and reason. The conflict has reached its ultimate acuity in our day of scientific development. Hindus believe that the non-dualistic teachings of Christ have not been generally understood in the West.

Christianity's Hindu Heritage

Commenting on the teachings of Christian missionaries as Plotinus, Clement, Gregory, Augustine and the like, **Dean Inge** observes: "They are the ancient religion of the Brahmins masquerading in the clothes borrowed from the Jewish, Gnostic, Manichaean and Neo-Platonic allegories. That is why **Mahatma Gandhi told Romain Rolland** in Switzerland on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference (1911) that **Christianity is an echo of the Indian religion and Islam is the re-echo of that echo.**"

(source: [India in Primitive Christianity - Arthur Lillie](#)).

Objective and open-minded scholars long ago conceded that Christianity is at heart a revamped form of Judaism. In the process of its development as something distinct from its mother religion, it became hybridized with so much pagan influence that it ultimately alienated its original Jewish base and became predominantly Gentile. The source of this pagan influence is varied and vague in the minds of most advanced Bible critics, but it may owe more to Hinduism than most people suspect.

The average person does not connect India with the ancient Middle East, **but the existence of some trade between these two regions is documented, even in the Bible.** Note the reference to spikenard in the Song of Solomon ([1:12](#); [4:13-14](#)) and in the Gospels ([Mark 14:3](#); [John 12:3](#)). This is an aromatic oil-producing plant (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) that the Arabs call *sunbul hindi* and obtained in trade with India. It is axiomatic that influence follows trade, and the vibrant culture of India could not help but impact on anyone exposed to it. The influence on Judaism came for the most part indirectly, however, via the Persians and the Chaldeans, who dealt with India on a more direct basis. (Indeed, the Aryans, who invaded and transformed India over 1500 years before Christ, were of the same people who brought ancient Persia to its greatest glory. Persia's name today--Iran--is a corruption of *Aryan*.) The ancient Judeans absorbed much of this secondhand influence during the Babylonian captivity of the sixth century B. C., and during the inter testamental period, when Alexandria became the crossroads of the world, intellectuals both Jew and Gentile were exposed to a variety of ideas, some of which originated on the Indian Subcontinent.

From Pythagoras, who believed in the transmigration of souls, apparently because of his contacts with religious teachers from the east. Pindar, who believed in metempsychosis, Plato, who could not have been ignorant of Karma, through Klaxons, the Indian sage, who accompanied Alexander, Apollonius of Tyana, who came to Taxila to study under the Brahmins, Clement of Alexandria, the early Christian teachers of the second century A.D., who refers to Buddhists and Brahmins in his work and Plotinus, who went to Persia to meet the Brahmins, the Contacts between India and Greek thinkers seem to have been continuous.

According to **Klaus K. Klaustmaier**, in his book [A Survey of Hinduism](#) pg 18-19



"The kings of Magadha and Malwa exchanged ambassadors with Greece. A Maurya ruler invited one of the Greek Sophists to join his court, and one of the greatest of the Indo-Greek kings became famous as the dialogue partner of the great Buddhist sage Nagasena, while in the opposite direction, Buddhist missionaries are known to have settled in Alexandria, and other cities in the Ancient West. It is evident then, that Indian thought was present in the fashionable intellectual circuit of ancient Athens, and there is every reason to suppose that Indian religious and philosophical ideas exercised some influence on early and classical Greek philosophy. Both Greeks and Romans habitually tried to understand the religions of India by trying to fit them as far as possible into Greco-Roman categories. Deities in particular were spoken of, not in Indian but in Greek terms and called by Greek names. Thus Shiva, was identified as "Dionysos," Krsna (or perhaps Indra) as "Heracles." The great Indian epics were compared to those of Homer. Doctrinally, the Indian concept of transmigration had its counterpart in the metempsychosis taught by Pythagoras and Plato; nor was Indian asceticism altogether foreign to a people who remembered Diogenes and his followers."

Parallels have also been found between the Biblical account of the creation of man by God in his own image and the creation of woman out of man (Genesis I :27) and the statements in the Hindu scriptures in the Hindu scriptures that God became man and created woman (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad(1:3 and 1:4) and Brahma as God divided himself into svayambhu Manu (man) and Satarupi (Woman the Bhagavata purana). There is a further parallel between the temptation of Adam and Eve, Who ate of the apple (Genesis III) and the references to two birds "beautiful of wing, inseparable friends, dwelling together in the same tree (the universe) of whom one (the individual being) eats the fruit of action, while

the other (universal being) looks on and Svetesvatara Upanishad(4:6). The Indian scriptures, far from being in conflict with Western thought, seem very often to contain the same or parallel ideas as in Biblical literature. The ascent of man in the Books of Enoch is said to match a similar account in the Kausitaki Upanishad and even the concepts of the kingdom of God and the son of man have been discovered in the Rig Veda.

The precise pattern of influence was neither observed nor documented, but it can be inferred from the numerous uncanny similarities in concept and expression, not all of which can be coincidental. Let us examine the telltale evidence (none of which, it may be added, depends upon any apocryphal account of the alleged "lost years" of Jesus in India).

The Brahmin caste of the Hindus are said to be "twice-born" and have a ritual in which they are "born in the spirit." Could this be the ultimate source of the Christian "born again" concept (John 3:3)?

The deification of Christ is a phenomenon often attributed to the apotheosis of emperors and heroes in the Greco-Roman world. These, however, were cases of men becoming gods. In the Jesus story, the Divinity takes human form, god becoming man. This is a familiar occurrence in Hinduism and in other theologies of the region. Indeed, one obstacle to the spread of Christianity in India, which was attempted as early as the first century, was the frustrating tendency of the Hindus to understand Jesus as the latest avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu.



Hindu Trinity or Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva

It is in the doctrine of the **Trinity** that the Hindu influence may be most clearly felt. Unknown to most Christians, Hinduism has a Trinity (or Trimurti) too: **Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva**, who have the appellations the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer (and Regenerator). This corresponds to the Christian Trinity in which God created the heavens and the earth, Jesus saves, and the Holy Spirit is referred to as a regenerator (Titus 3:5). It is interesting to note, furthermore, that the Holy Spirit is sometimes depicted as a dove, while the Hebrew language uses the same term for both "dove" and "destroyer"!



Lord Krishna says: "I am the beginning, the middle, and the end" (BG 10:20 vs. Rev 1:8).

(Artwork courtesy of The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc. www.krishna.com).

In the **Bhagavad Gita**, a story of the second person of the Hindu Trinity, (Vishnu) who took human form as Krishna. Some have considered him a model for the Christ, and it's hard to argue against that when he says things like:

"I am the beginning, the middle, and the end" (BG 10:20 vs. Rev 1:8).

For more refer to chapters on [Dwaraka](#) and [Hindu Scriptures](#)).

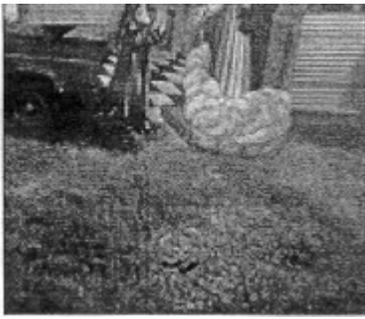
With the historical reality of Indian influence on the Middle East being an established fact, how can the Christians account for these similarities with anything less feeble than coincidence, or less bizarre than the notion of "Satanic foreknowledge and duplication," which is sometimes invoked to explain the similarities of Judeo-Christian precursors?

(source : <http://www.infidels.org/library/magazines/tsr/1994/3/3hare94.html> - By **Stephen Van Eck**)

Christ spend his youth in India? The celebration of the birthday of Christ might lose a little sheen if we seriously pursue the question, where did Jesus spend 18 years of his life, between the ages of 12 and 30? Both history and gospels, are completely silent about the life of Jesus before his 30th year.



A Chilean diplomat **Miguel Serrano** in his book, "[The Serpent of Paradise: The Story of an Indian Pilgrimage](#)" (1963) has written of



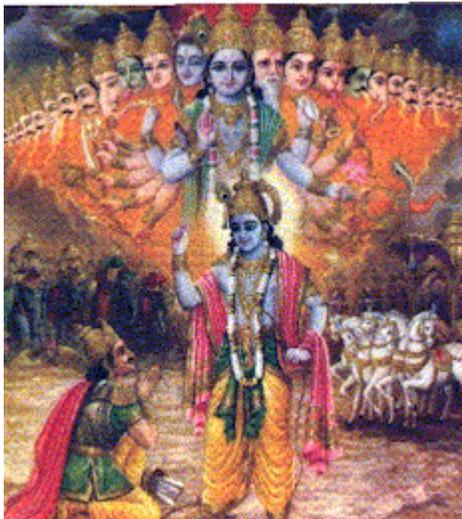
his rich and varied experiences among yogis and sadhus of India. He was looking for great mystics who he believed were living in the Himalayas guarding a magical science. **During his sojourn in Kashmir, Serrano came across evidence to suggest that Jesus Christ had come to India and that the tomb of Yousa-Asaf in Srinagar was in fact the tomb of Jesus.** He quotes a legend, according to which he was in Kashmir, the original name for Kashmir, Ka means "the same as" or "equal to" and shir means Syria. Manuscripts in the Sharda language, which is derived from Sanskrit, seem to bear close relationship to the biblical story. According to this Kashmir legend, Jesus came to Kashmir and studied under holy men,

who taught him mysterious practices. Later the legend says, Jesus returned to the Middle East and he then began to preach among the ignorant masses of Israel the mystical truths he had learned in Kashmir. To impress and to convert them he often used the powers he had acquired through the practices of Yoga, and these were then referred to as miracles. Then in due course Jesus was crucified, but he did not die on the cross. Instead, he was removed by some Essenes brothers, restored to good health and sent back to Kashmir, where he lived with his masters until his death. There is yet another theory, which holds that the Jewish race originated in India centuries ago and some of them came back almost by instinct in search of their roots. This theory ties in with the legend of Jesus Christ also came to live in India at the age of about 13. This legend asserts Jesus spent 17 years in India, finally returning to the country of his birth to preach the doctrine of salvation and to assert that he was the Son of God.

(source: [India Post - By Vinod Dhawan](#). vol. 6 December 29, 2000. p. 44). For more refer to [Did Jesus die in Kashmir - by Abu Abraham](#)).

Divine Incarnations

We find mention of prophets, messengers and messiahs in the different religions of the world. In Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity we have the doctrine of Divine Incarnation. The Christian religion as organized is dualistic. The Christian have a doctrine of incarnation fitting into their theology and their partial view of history and creation. They have only one incarnation.



According to the Eternal Religion (Sanatana Dharma) taught in the Gita, there are many divine incarnations. An incarnation is a special manifestation of the Divine in history. Such manifestations take place in response to special needs of the time, in the altered circumstances of life and history. They come in times of decline of civilizations due to materialism which causes disintegration of man and society.

Krishna in the Gita makes the classic declaration about incarnation.

"O Descendant of Bharata! Whenever religion becomes tarnished and irreligion prevails, I create myself. I incarnate myself in every age for saving the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of religion. "

The birth of an incarnation, like the birth of the universe, is a mystery. In Sanatana Dharma incarnation is periodic manifestation in time of the power of the Divine. It is a mystery, but the power play of the Divine in history is a fact of experience. Krishna says in the Gita that incarnations start rolling anew the wheels of religion. Buddha also spoke of his movement as starting the wheel of religion.

Interesting Parallels between the Hindu/Buddhist temple and the Catholic Church.

Angels

Apsaras

Saints

Sants

Halos	Halos
Catacombs	Cave-temples
Cathedral floor plan	Chaitya hall floor plan
Rosary	Rosary
Orders of priests/nuns	Orders of monks/nuns (in Buddhism)
Repetition in prayer	Repetition in prayer
Symbolism of wheel	Symbolism of wheel
Tree of life	Tree of life
Use of relics	Use of relics (Buddhism)
Temptation of Jesus by Satan	Temptation of the Buddha by Mara
Circumambulation	Circumambulation

(source: [The Church and The Temple - By Subhash Kak - sulekha.com](#)). Also Refer to [Indic Challenges to the Discipline of Science and Religion - By Rajiv Malhotra](#)).

[Top of Page](#)

Buddha and Jesus



Alexander's invasion of India in 327. B.C. starts a closer interchange of thought between India and the West. Buddhism must have been prevalent in India for over a century before Alexander's time, and he made an effort to acquaint himself with Hindu and Buddhist thought. He succeeded in encouraging an ascetic called Kalanos to join his entourage. He himself married a princess from Bactria, and a hundred of his superior officers followed his example and took Asiatic brides.

Pyrrho is said to have taken part in Alexander's expedition to India and acquired a knowledge of Indian thought.

Pliny tells us of a certain Dionysius who was sent to India from Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247). Asoka, who ascended the throne of Magadha in 270.B.C., held a Council at Pataliputra, when

it was resolved to send missionaries to proclaim the new teaching throughout the world. In accordance with this decision Asoka sent Buddhist missions to the sovereigns of the West, Antiochus Theos of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, Antigonos Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexandria of Epirus. From Asoka's statements it may be inferred that his missions were favorably received in these five countries. Between 190 and 180 B.C. Demetrius extended the Bactrian Kingdom into India and conquered Sind and Kathiawar.

The Greeks who settled in India gradually became Indianized. Of the monuments which survive of the Indo-Greek dynasties is a pillar discovered at Besnagar in the extreme south of Gwalior State (140B.C.) The inscription on it in Brahmi characters says:



"This garuda column of Vasudeva (Vishnu) was erected here by Heliodorus, son of Dion, a worshipper of Vishnu, and an inhabitant of Taxila, who came as a Greek ambassador from the great King Antialcidas to King Kasiputra Bhagabhadra, the saviour, then reigning prosperously in the fourteenth year of his kingship."

The greatest of the Indo-Greek kings was **Menander**, who was converted to Buddhism by the Buddhist teacher Nagasena (180-160 B.C.) His



conversion is recorded in the famous work **Milindapanha** (questions asked by King Milinda)

For more on Garuda column of Vasudeva refer to chapter on **Dwaraka**.

(Artwork courtesy of The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc.

www.krishna.com).

During all this period India and the West had extensive trade relations. When Alexander chose in Egypt the site for a city which was destined to perpetuate his name, the preparation for the blending of Eastern and Western cultures started. For a thousand years Alexandria continued to be a center of intellectual and commercial activity because it was the meeting-place of Jews, Syrians, and Greeks. **Milindapanha** mentions it as one of the places to which the Indians regularly resorted.

Two centuries before the Christian era, Buddhism closed in on Palestine. The Essenes, the Mandaeans, and the Nazarene sects are filled with its spirits. (The Mandaeans flourished in Maisan, which was the gate of entry for Indian trade and commerce with Mesopotamia. Indian tribes colonized Maisan, whose port had an Indian temple. Mandaean gnosis is full of Indian ideas.)

Nearly five hundred years before Jesus, Buddha went round the Ganges valley proclaiming a way of life which would deliver men from bondage of ignorance and sin. In a hundred and fifty years after his death, tradition of his life and passing away became systematized. He was miraculously conceived and wondrously born. His father was informed by angels about it, and, according to **Lalitavistara**, the queen (Maya) was permitted to lead the life of a virgin for thirty-two months. On the day of his birth a Brahmin priest predicts his future greatness. Asita is the Buddhist Simeon. He comes through air to visit the infant Gautama. Simeon came by the spirit into the Temple. Buddha grew steadily in wisdom and stature. Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. His enlightenment was marked by thirty-two great miracles. The blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, and the lame walk freely. He set out to establish the kingdom of righteousness. He has twelve disciples. Buddha has his troubles with his disciples. Devadatta, Buddha's cousin, was the **Judas** among his followers. On the last day before his death, Buddha's body was again transfigured, and when he died a tremendous earthquake was felt throughout the world.



Many of the parables between Buddha and Jesus are common. Buddha is a sower of the word. He feeds his five hundred brethren at once with a small cake which has been put into his begging bowl, and a good deal is left over, which is thrown away. In **Jataka** 190 we read of an eager disciple who finds no boat to take him across and so walks on the water.

Max Muller remarks that mere walking on water is not an uncommon story, and we must remember that the date of the Buddhist parable is chronologically anterior to the date of the Gospel of St. Luke. Between the language of Buddha and his disciples, and the language between Christ and his apostles, there are strange coincidences. When some of the Buddhist legends and parables sound as if taken

from the New Testament, though we know that many of them existed before the beginning of the Christian era.

Richard Garbe assumes direct borrowing from Buddhism in the matter of Simeon, temptations, and the miracles of walking on the water, and loaves and fishes. **We have many parallels between Krishna and Christ.**

- A marvellous light envelops Mary when Christ is born. a similar light envelops Devaki before Krsna is born.
- There is universal gladness of nature at their birth.
- Herod inquires of the wise men, " Where is he that is born King of the Jews? "(Matthew ii 40
- Narada warns Kamsa the King that Krsna will kill him (Harivamsa ii 56)

- Herod is mocked by the wise men (Matthew, ii 16) and Kamsa is mocked by the demon that takes the place of Yasoda's infant (ibid ii 59).
- The massacre of the infants is found in both.
- Joseph came with Mary to Bethlehem to be taxed: Nanda came with Yasoda to Mathura to pay tribute.
- The flight into Egypt is similar to that into Braj.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says:

"The curious may find matter for reflection in these coincidences in the lives of Buddha and Christ. But those trained in European culture find it somewhat irksome, if not distasteful, to admit the debt of Christian religion to non-Christian sources, especially Hindu and Buddhist."

" In these cases, **Max Muller** writes, "our natural inclination would be to suppose that the Buddhist stories borrowed from our Christian sources and not vice versa. But here the conscience of the scholar comes in. Some of these stories are found in the Hinayana Buddhist Canon and date, therefore, before the Christian era." It is not unnatural to suspect that some of the prominent ideas traveled from the older to the younger system. As Christianity arose in a period of eclecticism, it is not impossible for it to have adopted the outlook and legends of the older religion, especially as the latter were accessible at the time when intercourse between India and the Roman Empire was quite common. Let us realize that Christianity was in a formative stage and Buddhism was both settled and enterprising.

Speaking of the Apocryphal gospels, such a cautious critic, as the late **Dr. Maurice Winternitz** says: " We can point to a series of borrowings from Buddhist literature which are absolutely beyond all doubt"

(source: [Visvabharati Quarterly](#) Feb. 1937, p.14).



Sir Charles Eliot, a famous scholar and linguist of Oxford observed, " A number of Buddhist legends make their appearance in the Apocryphal gospels and are so obviously Indian in character that it can hardly be maintained that they were invented in Palestine or Egypt and spread thence Eastwards."

(source: [Hinduism and Buddhism](#) - By Sir Charles Eliot vol. iii (1921), p. 441).

" The similarity of Roman Catholic services and ceremonial to the Buddhist is difficult to explain. "When all allowance is made for similar causes and coincidences, it is hard to believe that a collection of practices such as clerical celibacy, the veneration of relics, the use of the rosary and the prominent ideas traveled from the older to the younger system.

T. W. Rhys Davids, the famous Pali scholar and author of "[Buddhist India](#)," wrote,

"It is not too much to say, that almost the whole of the moral teaching of the Gospels as distinct from the dogmatic teaching, will be found in Buddhist writings, several centuries older than the Gospels; that for instance, of all the moral doctrines collected together in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, all those which can be separated from the theistic dogmas there maintained are found again in the Pitakas."

"There is every reason to believe that the Pitakas [sacred books containing the legends of Buddha] now extant in Ceylon are substantially identical with the books of the southern canon, as settled at the Council of Patna about the year 250 B.C. As no work would have been received into the Canon which were not then believed to be very old, the Pitakas may be approximately placed in the fourth century B.C. and parts of them possibly reach back very nearly, if not quite to the time of Gautama (Buddha) himself. **Albert Schweitzer**, who is regarded almost as a modern Christian saint, declined

to accept the historicity of the traditional view of Jesus. Both A. J. Edmonds, and Richard Garbe, have insisted on the Christian indebtedness to Buddhism.





Count Keyserling noticed a great affinity of spirit between Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity; and although he considered Mahayana Buddhism to be far superior to Christianity.

Otto Pflieger in his **Christian Origin**, E. T. (1906), p.226, says: " These Buddhist parallels to the childhood stories of Luke are too striking to be classed as mere chance; some kind of historical connection must be postulated." **M. Labbe Huc**, Nineteenth century: " The miraculous birth of Buddha, his life and instructions, contain a great number of the moral and dogmatic truths professes in Christianity."

T. W. Doane, Nineteenth century, ...nothing now remains for the honest man to do but acknowledge the truth, which is that the history of Jesus of Nazareth, as related in the books of the New Testament is simply a copy of that of Buddha, with a mixture of mythology borrowed from other nations.



Scholars have been profoundly struck and at times perplexed by the remarkable similarities between the Gospel story and the life and teachings of the Buddha, as told in the Jataka stories, and between the Buddhist and Christian parables and miracles. Both the Buddha and Christ are miraculously conceived and wondrously born and angels rejoiced at both births. He was miraculously conceived and wondrously born. His father was informed by angels about it and the queen - mother Maya (Mary in case of Christ) was permitted to lead the life of a virgin for thirty-two months. Christ was born in the royal tribe of Judah, Buddha was born in a royal household. On the day of his birth a Brahmin (Asita) priest predicts his future greatness. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon**. Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their

unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon**. Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve. **Asita is the Buddhist Simeon**. Early in his career, he was tempted by Mara to give up his quest for truth with promises of world dominion. Both reveal their unusual wisdom at about the same age, twelve.

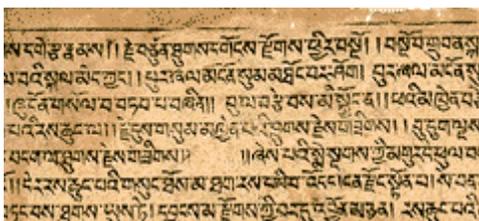
Nothing is known of Jesus' life during the next seventeen years and there have developed a variety of legends suggesting that he traveled to India, lived with the Essenes at Qumran. The Gospels, however, refute these suggestion by implication. Whether Jesus traveled abroad or not, that he chose to remain unknown after having revealed himself and his wisdom causes some surprise. As Jesus claimed to be God, it could not have been a period of preparation. In contrast, more is known of Buddha's life his childhood, youth, marriage, increasing discontent with the world, renunciation, quest of Enlightenment, and finally his attainment of the Buddhahood, followed by a long period of missionary activity until he died.

[Top of Page](#)

The Vedas, Mithraism and Christianity

"These two are the Almighty of the Gods, they are noble.
They will make our people full of vigor.
May we attain you, Mitra and Varuna, wherever Heaven and the days overflow."

- Rig Veda vii.65 (Mitra and Varuna are in all hymns to the Sun as the Divine Lord and Friend)



The contact between India and the West were more frequent in the period of the Roman Empire especially in the reign of Augustus, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. The Jatakas contain many references to Buddhist merchants and their adventures in distant lands. India had a reputation for high philosophy and religion in the middle of the second century A.D., for Lucian makes Demetrius, the Greek philosopher give up his property



and depart for India, there to end his life among the Brahmins.

Clement of Alexandria, who died about A.D. 220, knew the distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism. " There are, he says, some Indians who follow the precepts of Boutta,(Buddha) whom, by an excessive reverence, they have exalted into a god." Clement mentions that Pythagoras learnt from Brahmins among others.

The vast development of material prosperity in the Roman Empire had no spiritual purpose behind it. Its ultimate end seemed to be the satisfaction of selfishness, individual and corporate. The ancestral cults had ceased to hold the large part of the population in the Roman Empire. The religious-minded, for whom the Roman gods had lost their meaning and served only as occasions for civic ceremonial, sought to find spiritual solace outside the life of the society in an esoteric ideal of individual salvation. The people were attracted by the Eastern cults, which were streaming into the Empire, the cults of Isis or Mithras.

Mithraism was a religion with roots in India and Iran spread into the Roman world. **Mithraism** was the first officially recognized monotheistic cult of the Roman world. By the third century Mithra had evolved in the Roman world into the sun-god, Sol Invictus -- So far as is now known, Mithra appears as the bull-slayer only in his Roman manifestation. Mithraism was a formidable competitor of early Christianity. Renan's observation has often been quoted that if Christianity had failed, the whole of Europe would have been Mithraist.



First appears as an Aryan sun-god in **Sanskrit (Rig Veda)** and Persian literature circa 1400 BCE. The cult was introduced into the Roman empire in the 1st century BCE. The Mithra traditions and doctrines are collected in the Persian **Avesta** and a yasht, a special hymn of praise, is dedicated to Mithra. Mithra is the Persian name of the **Vedic Mitra**, the deity of light and truth, warring against the powers of darkness in association with **Varuna**. In India he was, in fact, regarded as the sun. In Vedic texts, the connection between Mithra and the bull, which later became the focal point of Mithraism, is perhaps more clearly found than in the **Avesta**. The cult of Mithraism appears to have come to the Roman Empire from Persia (Iran), having introduced to Rome by Cilician

seamen in about 68 B.C. Mithras is a Greek form of the name of an Indo-European god, Mithra or Mitra. Mithra was conceived as the intermediary between man and the Supreme God and the redeemer of the human race. Mithraism was carried to the remotest corners of the empire. But despite these opportunities, circumstances conspired against Mithraism, and " the ultimate success, permanent and undoubted, fell to the combination of Jewish and Greek worship called Christianity."

There are however, many similarities between Christianity and Mithraism. Besides sharing faith in a divine mediator and the hope of resurrection, both taught the efficacy of prayer, sacramental union with God, and his providential presence in all the events of daily life. Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist of the Christians are analogous to certain rites of Mithraism. It was when Christianity spread into the pagan world that the idea of Jesus as a savior God emerged, emulating already existing concepts. It was only in 324, several centuries later, that the Church at the council of Nicaea, called by Emperor Constantine, formally accepted by a majority vote Jesus Christ as the Savior God. The coming of Christianity under state control was to preserve it as a religion, and was the death knell of all other sects and cults within the Roman Empire.

Had Constantine decided to retain Mithraism as the official state religion, instead of putting Christianity in its place, it would have been the latter that would have been obliterated.

"If Christianity was somehow stopped at its birth, whole world would be following Mithraism today." - **Ernest Renan** (1823-1892) was an important French theorist who wrote about a variety of topics. His famous essay **"What is a Nation?"** (Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?) was first delivered as a lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882.



To Constantine however, Christianity had one great advantage, it preached that repentant sinners would be forgiven their sins, provided that they were converted



Christians at the time of their Passing, and Constantine had much to be forgiven for, He personally did not convert to the new religion until he was on his death bed, the reason being that only sins committed following conversion were accountable, so all sins committed by a convert, prior to conversion, didn't matter, and he could hardly have sinned too much whilst he was lying on his death bed. Mithraism could not offer the same comfort to a man like Constantine, who was regarded as being one of the worst mass-murderers of his time.

It was the birthday of Mithra, 25 December (winter solstice), that was taken by the early Christians as the birthday of Jesus. The need and urgency by the early Christians to compromise with existing traditions were further illustrated by the fact that even the Sabbath, the Jewish seventh day, Saturday, appointed a day of rest by God in the Mosaic Law and hallowed by his own resting day after the work of Creation, was abandoned in favor of the Mithraic first day, the Day of the

Conquering Sun, Sunday. The worshippers of Mithra were called "Soldiers of Mithra" which is probably the origin of the term "Soldiers of Christ."

The most frequent theme of Christ as the Good Shepherd is reminiscent of a similar identification of Mithra, who was often called the Good Shepherd. And it is interesting to note that since Mithra was addressed as Dominus, Sunday must have been "the Lord's Day" long before Christian times. Concepts such as "the blood of the Lamb" or "Taurus the Bull" were similarly borrowed from Mithraism. The Last Supper (the Eucharist) was taken from Mithraism to combine with the sacred meal of Palestinian Christianity. The ceremony of eating an incarnate god's body and drinking his blood is of remote antiquity, with its origin in cannibalistic practices, and there could have been several sources for the Christian rite, but its connection with the Mithraic Eucharist is most apparent. The Mithraic Eucharist is the commemoration of Mithra's Last Supper in a cave with Sol Helios before ascending to Heaven. Some scholars believe that the Resurrection of Christ derived from the Vigil of Mithra, who after his death reappeared to watch continuously over the faithful. The Mithraic high priest's title, Pater Patrum soon became the title for the bishop of Rome, Papa or Pope.

Thus, the extent of the indebtedness of Christianity to pagan religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Mithraism) is very great indeed.

Christianity and Roman Decline

Whether the rise of Christianity with its train of bitter religious conflicts and persecutions was a contributing cause of the Roman decline or not, the two certainly coincided. During the following hundred years, Roman authority gradually weakened, Roman armies suffered defeats, and Rome was sacked. By the end of the fifth century there was nothing left of the Roman Empire in the West.

Europe lapsed into the Dark Ages for centuries. Total and devoted acceptance of the authority of the new faith, as interpreted by its priests or guardians on earth, inculcated amongst the people an attitude of surrender and they handed over the right and responsibility of thinking to others. Passive submissions suppressed scientific inquiry and academic integrity, the main characteristics of the preceding age of Alexandrian syncretism. Intellectual stagnation, religious intolerance, and racial and regional exclusiveness characterized Europe for the next thousand years.

(source: [Eastern Religions and Western Thought - By Dr. S Radhakrishnan](#) and [India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal](#) and [The Bhagavad Gita: A Scripture for the Future - By Sachindra K. Majumdar](#)). Also Refer to [Indic Challenges to the Discipline of Science and Religion - By Rajiv Malhotra](#)).

[Top of Page](#)

Krishna Worship and Christ

Krishna worship was observed by the Yavana (Alexander's Greeks) who noticed the similarity between some of Krishna's exploits and that of Hercules. The stories of the child Krishna predate that of the child





Christ, and the similarities are too many to be coincidental.

Correspondences between events in Jesus' and Krishna's life:

Author **Kersey Graves** (1813-1883), a Quaker from Indiana, compared Yeshua's and Krishna's life. He found what he believed were 346 elements in common within Christian and Hindu writings. That appears to be overwhelming evidence that incidents in **Jesus' life were copied from Krishna's**. However, many of Graves' points of similarity are a real stretch.

He did report some amazing coincidences:

Yeshua and Krishna were called both a God and the Son of God.
Both was sent from heaven to earth in the form of a man.
Both were called Savior, and the second person of the Trinity.

His adoptive human father was a carpenter.

A spirit or ghost was their actual father.

Krishna and Jesus were of royal descent.

Both were visited at birth by wise men and shepherds, guided by a star.

Angels in both cases issued a warning that the local dictator planned to kill the baby and had issued a decree for his assassination. The parents fled. Mary and Joseph stayed in Muturea; Krishna's parents stayed in Mathura.

Both Yeshua and Krishna withdrew to the wilderness as adults, and fasted.

Both were identified as "the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head."

Jesus was called "the lion of the tribe of Judah." Krishna was called "the lion of the tribe of Saki."

Both claimed: "I am the Resurrection."

Both referred to themselves having existed before their birth on earth.

Both were "without sin."

Both were god-men: being considered both human and divine.

They were both considered omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

Both performed many miracles, including the healing of disease. One of the first miracles that both performed was to make a leper whole. Each cured "all manner of diseases."

Both cast out indwelling demons, and raised the dead.

Both selected disciples to spread his teachings.

Both were meek, and merciful. Both were criticized for associating with sinners.

Both encountered a Gentile woman at a well.

Both celebrated a last supper. Both forgave his enemies.

Both descended into Hell, and were resurrected. Many people witnessed their ascensions into heaven.

In addition, there are other points of similarity between Krishna and Yeshua:

"The object of Krishna's birth was to bring about a victory of good over evil."

Krishna "came onto earth to cleanse the sins of the human beings."

"Krishna was born while his foster-father Nanda was in the city to pay his tax to the king." Yeshua was born while his foster-father, Joseph, was in the city to be enumerated in a census so that "all the world could be taxed."

Jesus is recorded as saying: "if you had faith as a mustard seed you would say to the mountain uproot yourself and be cast into the ocean" Krishna is reported as having uprooted a small mountain.

Krishna's "...foster-father Nanda had to journey to Mathura to pay his taxes" just as Jesus foster-father Joseph is recorded in the Gospel of Luke as having to go to Bethlehem to pay taxes.

"The story about the birth of Elizabeth's son John (the Baptist), cousin of Jesus, corresponds with the story in the Krishna myth about the birth of the child of Nanda and his wife Yasoda." Nanda was the foster-father of Krishna.

The Greek God Dionysos, Jesus and Krishna were all said to have been placed in a manger basket.

Kersey Graves - Compared Krishna and Christ



Back in 1875, a man by the name of Kersey Graves presented a book — to the old Truth Seeker magazine titled [The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors.](#)

Kersey goes on then to describe the recent translation for the first time of the Hindu Vedas into the English language — and remember that he was describing this all about one hundred years ago. He discusses **Horace**



Greeley's expressed surprise at the translation when Greeley exclaimed, "No doctrine of Christianity but what has been anticipated by the Vedas."

"If, then, this heathen bible [the Vedas, compiled 1500-1200 B.C.] contains all the doctrines of Christianity, then away goes over the dam all claim for the Christian bible as an original revelation,

or a work of divine revelation or inspiration. "

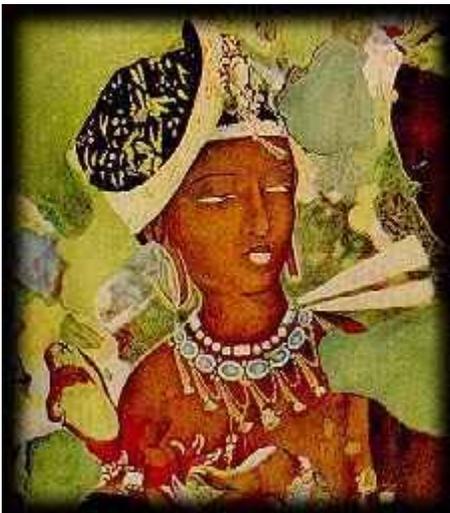
(source: religioustolerance.org and [American Atheist](http://AmericanAtheist.com)). Also Refer to [Indic Challenges to the Discipline of Science and Religion - By Rajiv Malhotra](#)).

[Top of Page](#)

Buddhism and its relation to Hinduism - Some information

Buddha is recognized as the ninth avatar (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu. It was several hundred years before the time of Lord Buddha that his birth was predicted in Srimad-Bhagavatam. **Buddhism is an offshoot of Hinduism and is considered one of the heterodox schools of Hindu philosophy.** The teachings of Buddhism are not significantly different from those of Hinduism, but are essentially the same as the teachings of the Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge) school of Hinduism.

Following are the major views:



Buddhism and Hinduism both aim at transcending the phenomenal existence. Buddha rejected the ritualistic aspects of the Vedas, but DID NOT deny the higher teachings of the Upanishads. The Vedic rituals in Hinduism are recommended for a beginner for attaining concentration and meditation on the spiritual path. This position is very clearly conveyed in the Bhagavad Gita in the following words:

" To the knower of Truth (God), all the Vedas are of as little use as a small water-tank is during the time of a flood, when water is everywhere." (BG. 2.46)

For both Hinduism and Buddhism religion is salvation. Bodhi or enlightenment, which Buddha attained is an experience. Perfect insight (sambodhi) is the end and aim of the Buddhist eightfold path.

Both believe in theory of KARMA and REBIRTH with one major difference. Hinduism believes that the atman (individual self or spirit) transmigrates from one birth to another, Buddhism holds that nothing transmigrates from one birth to another. In Buddhist view, karmas of one individual give birth to another, but no identity is retained between the two individuals.

Buddha declared the Self and the World are both unreal. To a Hindu, the Self is immortal and the world is an illusive appearance. However, behind the illusive appearance of the universe lies the Ultimate Reality which is the seed of all things and beings in the world.

Buddha advocated a monastic life for attaining nirvana, Hinduism teaches that truth can be realized by all people from all walks of life, including householders.

Buddha refused to discuss topics, such as the science of the soul, the creation of the universe and the existence of God. These are questions which occupy the center of interest in the Upanishadic literature.

[Top of Page](#)

Articles

1. [Christmas' Hindu Roots - By D. Parsuram Maharaj](#)
2. [Buddhism in Christianity](#)

Christmas' Hindu Roots

D. Parsuram Maharaj (Trinidad & Tobago, West Indies)

<http://www.swordoftruth.com/swordoftruth/articles/readersvoice/readersvoice3.html>

Last year Christmas Trinidad & Tobago's Archbishop Pantin in his weekly column repeated what scholars have been asserting for years on the origins of Christmas. Archbishop Pantin essentially officially confirmed the celebration of Christmas was 'borrowed' from pre-Christian religions. This type of 'borrowing' was not new to Christianity that aggressively practised a process of inculturation in order to increase its mass appeal and thereby win as many converts as possible. The practice is still employed by missionaries in Asia and even in Trinidad. What Archbishop Pantin did not develop was the celebration of the birth of the divine being was borrowed from a Hindu Deity. It is time that Hindus re-claim this celebration and its Hindu roots rather than to let continue to be hijacked by Christian mythology.



The festival that is now known as Christmas was actually a celebration for the Vedic Deity Mitra. According to "A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion" by John Dowson [1998] the Hindu Mitra was connected to the Persian Mithra which later was adopted by Rome. Mitra was a form of the sun, and in the Vedas he is generally associated with Varuna. Will Durant's "The Story of Civilization, Volume III. Caesar and Christ" [1944] wrote "as far back as the second century the Eastern Christians celebrated the nativity on January 6th. In 354 some Western churches, including those of Rome, commemorated the birth of Christ on December 25th; it was ALREADY the central festival of Mithraism, the natalis invivti solis, or birthday of the unconquered sun".

The Christmas date of December 25 was originally the celebrated birthdate of the Roman version of Mitras. The 4th-5th century Church decided to 'borrow' that date for the sake of establishing a national holiday. The Iranian version of Mit(h)ra was called the "Light of the World" is another interesting fact to note. Mithraism explained the world in terms of two ultimate and opposing principles, one good (depicted as light) and the other evil (darkness). Human beings must choose which side they will fight for; they are trapped in the conflict between light and darkness. Mithra came to be regarded as the most powerful mediator who could help humans ward off attacks from demonic forces.

In the religions of antiquity the vast majority of the pre-modern world was syncretistic, meaning that one religion would often incorporate the myth and ritual of other cults with which it came in contact. Often the deities would simply change names. This suggests that we may be comparing Jesus (one individual) to the combined characteristics of multiple agents that are all called by the SAME NAME. Mitra--he is a mixture of Hindu Iranian, Greek, and Roman religious beliefs. Both Hindu and Iranian Mithraism predates Jesus.



Hindu thought was filtered to the West via Greek colonies which are known to have existed in India prior to the time of the Buddha in the 6th century B.C.E. The Buddha actually refers to the Greeks in a discourse in the Middle Length Sayings. Alexander the Great's invasion brought Hellenism to India during the rise of the brilliant Mauryan empire (322-185 B.C.E.) in Northern India, and had significant impact on the upper class and urban segments.

After Alexander died, his empire divided into several pieces--one of which was called the Seleucid dynasty. In spite of the fact that the Seleucid and Mauryan dynasties were border-competitors, they still had a great deal of friendly interchange between them, and the first two kings of the Mauryan dynasty are referred to in Greek sources.

The peace treaty between them in 303 BCE included a marriage alliance, and Seleucus' ambassador Megasthenes lived for 10 years and travelled extensively in the Mauryan empire during the reign of the

founding king Chandragupta (Sandrocottos in the Greek). Megasthenes gathered huge amounts of information about India and wrote a book (which is lost), many parts/information of which are preserved in the writings of Strabo, Arrian, and Diodorus.



One of the most famous of the kings of this dynasty was Ashoka. Although he is not mentioned in any Greek sources, he "records having sent missions from India bearing his message of the victory of the Dharma to the Greek kings Antiochus II of Syria, Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirus."

Until his death in 232 BCE, he maintained frequent communications with the south and the west, even sending missionaries to Ceylon and to the West. Historical data and quotes shows, there was information about the religious content of proto-Hinduism transmitted to the West, and even about Buddhism. The last two centuries B.C.E saw the rise of the Parthian empire, which quickly became a barrier to cultural exchange.

There are material, significant, and pervasive similarities between Jesus Christ and other Savior-figures, and that these similarities are best explained by the hypothesis that the figure of Jesus is materially derived from or heavily influenced by these other Dying God/Savior-figures. The similarities between Jesus and the other relevant Savior-gods are material, significant, and pervasive enough to suspect a liberal borrowing. Scholars have proposed several theories to account for the obvious similarities between Christianity and the mystery religions. The birth and celebration of Christmas as a Christian festival is merely an example of one such borrowing.

[Top of Page](#)



Buddhism in Christianity

http://www.hindunet.org/alt_hindu/1995_May_2/msg00015.html

A few months ago, I heard Jesus quoted "even to have an angry thought" was as punishable as actually murdering someone. This idea seemed to have a direct correlation with the Buddhist idea of "mental volition", that even our thoughts create karma. This seemingly obvious connection poses the question: what other teachings of Jesus Christ could be found mirrored in the teaching of Gautama Buddha?



There are three main types of literature on the subject: First, books that date from the end of the nineteenth century which attempt to show that there was Buddhist influence in the fertile crescent and in Greece during the years before the birth of Jesus. This speculation arose as a result of the translations of Buddhist texts into European languages that occurred during the British colonialism of India. Scholars recognized the similarity in the stories of the births and life styles of Jesus and Buddha. It was also noted that many of their teachings were parallel. In these seminal works there is much speculation about Buddhist influence in early Christianity. These books are often scholarly works that use sources such as the records of historians who were roughly contemporary with Jesus, and other texts: Biblical (Christian, Jewish), Greek and Arabic, in an attempt show an historical connection between the two religious traditions.

The second type of literature is the New Age genre books that attempt to tie the two masters together as emanations from the same cosmic divine source. In this group there is even a fairly extensive body of

literature that claims that Jesus went to India and there studied from Hindu and Buddhist masters between the age of thirteen and thirty. These are referred to as the "lost years of Jesus".

The third type of literature, which could be called, "Creating a Christian-Buddhist Dialogue", seeks to compare and contrast the teachings of the two masters in an effort to bridge the gap between cultures and make to the world a better place. This type of literature usually denies any borrowing or Buddhist influence in Christianity but does admit that certain elements within the two doctrines are similar..

Much of the early academic research that was done tended to center around the possibility of Buddhist influence in Palestine and in Greece during the two centuries prior to the birth of Christ. In India, around 270 B.C., the great king Ashoka ascended the throne, and after his conversion to Buddhism, he sent missionaries around the world to preach the word of the Lord Buddha. There are records, left by Ashoka, that indicate that "his missions were favorably received" in countries to the West. There are also records from Alexandria that indicate a steady stream of Buddhist monks and philosophers who, living in that area, which was at the crossroads of commerce and ideas, influenced the philosophical currents of the time.



There are strong similarities between Buddhist monastic teachings and Jewish ascetic sects, such as the Essenes, that were part of the spiritual environment of Palestine at the time of Christ's birth. The Essenes were a monastic order that did not marry. They lived in the desert and were very simple in their life styles. They did not believe in animal sacrifice and were vegetarians. They believed in the pre-existence of the soul and in angels as divine intermediaries or messengers from God. They were famous for their powers of endurance, simple piety and brotherly love. They were interested in magical arts and the occult sciences. John the Baptist was an Essene. His time of preparation was spent in the wilderness near the Dead Sea. Jesus was greatly influenced by his stay with John the Baptist. Many of the basic tenets found in the teachings of Jesus can be traced back to the ideas flourishing among groups such as the Essenes. Were these groups indeed influenced through several centuries of dialogue with Buddhist monks who traveled through Palestine?

Before, during, and after the death of Christ, there were Buddhist missionaries who visited Greece, Egypt and other countries in the Mediterranean area. One such visit is documented in 20 B.C. in Athens. In this account an ambassador from India was accompanied by a Buddhist philosopher who burned himself (to prove some point of impermanence?). His tomb became a famous tourist attraction and is mentioned by several historians. It has been argued that in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he alludes to this well known event when he writes that "though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing."

The fact that there was commercial trade between the Indian Subcontinent and Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt and the countries of the Fertile Crescent, for almost 2500 years before the birth of Christ is well documented. Cuneiform records dating from 2400 B.C. describe shipments of cotton cloth, spices, oil, grains, and such exotic items as peacocks from the Indus Valley region. Ideas as well as merchandise had been exchanged between the Middle East and India for centuries. Pythagoras is said to have been influenced by Oriental ideas and a Greek prince, Seleucus Nikator, shortly after the time of Alexander the Great, gave his daughter in marriage to the Indian sovereign and sent an ambassador, Megasthenes, to the court of Chandragupta, who was the grandfather of Ashoka. There were practitioners of Buddhism, living in the western parts of Ashoka's empire who were from Greece and also from Palestine. This is known because one of the famous edicts of Ashoka, carved on a pillar in what is now the country of Afghanistan, is written in both in Greek and Aramaic, the languages spoken in Palestine at the time.



Stories of Buddhist origin, and some of the basic concepts of Buddhism, were known in the West prior to, during, and after the time of Jesus. The most famous Buddhist story that made its way into Christendom, is the tale of "Barlaam and Josephat," which enjoyed considerable notoriety during the Middle Ages and ultimately resulted in the canonization, in the sixteenth century, of Buddha, as a Catholic saint. In the story of Barlaam and Josephat, Josephat, which is a corrupted version of the word "Boddhisattva", was an Indian prince



who was heir apparent to a throne occupied by his father, a tyrannical idolater who persecuted Christians. At Josephat's birth prophets predicted his future greatness as successor to the king, but one wise man said that the prince would achieve greatness not as a worldly king, but because he would convert to Christianity. To shelter his son, and prevent his conversion, the king kept him locked in the palace. Eventually, the young prince was allowed to leave the palace and saw a crippled man, a blind man and a senile man, and so learned of life's darker side (that life is suffering?). Josephat soon met a monk named

Barlaam, who converted him to Christianity. The story continues that when Josephat went to search for Barlaam he had to suffer austerities and was tempted by the devil to give up his faith. He eventually found Barlaam and the two lived as hermits until their deaths. Relics of these saints were worshipped in Europe and there were several churches built to Josephat in Russia, one in Vienna and in Portugal. As I said, they were canonized by the Catholic Church in the 16th century... Saint Josephat, the Boddhisattva.

Anyone who knows the story of the life of the Buddha will see the exact repetition of the tale in the story of Barlaam and Josephat: The fact that he was an Indian prince even provides the correct setting, the predictions at his birth of spiritual greatness, his early life spent locked in the castle and finally his exposure to people in pain and old age which led, in the case of the Boddhisattva, to enlightenment and in the case of Josephat to conversion. Even the austerities and temptations that they had to endure are parallel. There is no doubt that this is a Buddhist story transplanted and retold within a Christian context. The Buddhist origins of the story were obscured when the tale was retold in Europe, but earlier versions of the story exist in Arabic, which do not refer to Josephat's conversion, but which testify to the story's Buddhist roots. The fact that Saint Josephat was very popular in Europe, where his relics were worshipped, is an ironic aspect of this borrowing theory of Buddhist influence on Christianity since some scholars theorize that relic worship is a Buddhist implant into early Christianity. There are other Christian stories that have their origins in the Buddhist Jatakas Tales such as the conversion of the Roman general Placides, who was converted while hunting a beautiful deer.

There are numerous elements in Christian practices that could have originated from the many Buddhist missionaries who traveled from India spreading the teachings of the Buddha. Philosophically, Alexandria in Egypt was the center of early Christian thought. There is mention of a teacher called Ammonius Sakka, who had a great influence on the thinkers of the first century of the common era. Some scholars speculate that Ammonius Sakka could be a reversed form of "Sakya - Muni", one of the names of the Buddha, which means "the sage of the Sakya clan". (Sakya was Buddha's family name.) This philosopher-teacher who believed in reincarnation, has been called a Neo-Platonist. He was the teacher of Plotinus and Origen. Origen who was one of the early philosophers of the Christian church whose writings were later expunged at the Council of Nicea.



What are some other points of convergence between the practices of Christianity and Buddhism? There are a wealth of similarities: shaving or cutting of the hair of monastic initiates, ringing of bells, domed basilicas, shared legends, the practice of confession, relic veneration, celibacy, rosaries, monasticism, and the burning of incense. A comparison of the Sermon on the Mount with verses from the Dhammapada, yields a rich collection of interconnections and similarities. Even if some of these similarities are synchronistic in nature and are not borrowed, nonetheless, there are still many elements that have distinctive Buddhist overtones and which are not found within the predominant Jewish practices of the time. There are many stories about the life of Jesus and Buddha that are so similar that it is hard to believe that there was not some borrowing or merging of myths that occurred.

The story of the conception and birth of Christ in the Gospel of Luke has an uncanny resemblance to the birth stories of Buddha. In both cases the mother was a pure woman who had a vision and from this vision became pregnant with a extraordinary child, without the help of sexual intercourse. At their birth, each baby was surrounded by persons and events that marked them for greatness. Each was delivered outside while the mother was on a journey. Their births were both announced by angels in the heavens. It may be hard for us creatures of the twentieth century to appreciate the role of angels, but previously, they played an important part in the scheme of things: bringing messages, making great spiritual announcement with pomp and splendor. After the birth of Buddha a hermit sage, who had heard the celebrations of the angels, was told by them with great rejoicing that "In the city of Kaplilavastu, to king Suddhodana, a son is born. This boy will sit on the throne of enlightenment and become a Buddha." In

the Christian story, the angels appeared in great awe-inspiring beauty and told the shepherds that a child was born that day who is Christ the Lord. The story of the conception and birth of Christ in the Gospel of Luke has an uncanny resemblance to the birth stories of Buddha. In both cases the mother was a pure woman who had a vision and from this vision became pregnant with an extraordinary child, without the help of sexual intercourse. At their birth, each baby was surrounded by persons and events that marked them for greatness. Each was delivered outside while the mother was on a journey. Their births were both announced by angels in the heavens. It may be hard for us creatures of the twentieth century to appreciate the role of angels, but previously, they played an important part in the scheme of things: bringing messages, making great spiritual announcement with pomp and splendor.



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The Biblical accounts of the birth of Christ are somewhat different in Luke and in Matthew. In Matthew the account of the visitation by the Magi is dealt with in great detail. These Magi were astrologers from the East, where astrology had been a developed science for centuries. They represented the pinnacle of foreign scholarly achievement; and it was they, rather than the Hebrew, who were able to discern that the baby who lay in the manger in Bethlehem was a very special child. The word "Magi," is a Persian word that named a class of learned men who sought to master the occult sciences. This is the root of our word, Magic. Only later were they referred to as kings, initially they were called Holy Men. References to Magi in the Palestine of Jesus's day usually had negative connotations, but in Matthew's account, the reference is quite positive. Similarly, the infant Gautama was first adored by four divine archangels who presided over his birth in the wooded grove near Lumbini. Later, sages came to pay homage to the child and amazed his father. In both stories there is a reference to a star that announces the birth of the great child.



There are other similarities in the lives of these two great beings. Some may say that this type of comparison is inevitable when great spiritual leaders come into the world. However, some of the events in their lives have quite a resemblance. Both Buddha and Christ were precocious youths who confounded their teachers with their gifted knowledge. Both began their spiritual quest at about the age of thirty. Both fasted and prayed in the wilderness and both were tempted by the devil while practicing these austerities. The setting of these two accounts is almost identical as are the events. Both men were fasting when tempted by the devil who tried to entice them into worldly pleasures and trick them into using the magical powers that they possessed. Both men overcame the temptation and soon left their seclusion and took up the mission of a life of teaching and traveling. Jesus's life at this time seems very much like the age-old life of an Indian mystic or holy man. He traveled from village to village and lived off the hospitality of the people of the village. There are some differences, but, nonetheless, both

Buddha and Christ got into trouble with the ruling aristocracies by their deliberate blindness to social status and by taking food and refuge from courtesans and prostitutes.

Both masters told their disciples to leave behind their homes and families and to follow him. Both sent his followers out to preach their message. Both were social revolutionaries who reacted against the

conservative elements of their time. Both put an end to animal sacrifice which was popular in both Hinduism and Judaism. As you can see there are great similarities in the lives of these two great beings. Both forgave evil doers, both conquered death in a metaphysical sense. The earth shook when each of them died. Their messages are also similar: they told their followers to overcome anger, to practice non-violence, to "turn the other cheek" to be pure of mind and body.



There is, as well, the school of thought that says that Jesus traveled to India during the lost years of his youth. There is a temple in the state of Kashmir that is dedicated to Saint Issa. The priests say that Jesus traveled there two thousand years ago. Many of the miracles performed by Jesus are similar to miraculous powers possessed by holy men in India. Jesus even taught his disciples to perform these miracles such as Peter walking on the water. There is a work by a Russian who lived at the end of the 19th century, Nicolas Notovitch, who claims to have seen an ancient document that told the story of Saint Issa and his return to his home in the West and his subsequent violent death. These tales are unsubstantiated and somewhat fanciful, however the priests at the Kashmiri Temple to Saint Issa are devout and completely believe in the story. There are also visionaries such as Edgar Casey who had similar visions of Jesus. Jesus did adopt a remarkably Indian-like approach to

wandering, begging and preaching immediately upon beginning his public career. There is, however, documented evidence that Buddhists traveled to the region where early Christianity was developing. It must be remembered that Christianity did not become the established religion for several hundred years and actually it was not the accepted religion of the European masses for almost a thousand years. During this period, when church theology was being formulated, there was much discussion about the true nature of the savior and many of the early ideas of the church were discarded in favor of ideas that would support the establishment of a centralized Church. These factors are a discussion for another time, but suffice it to say that many scholars have tried to prove that the Councils at Nicea expunged all references to reincarnation from the words of Jesus. He was after all, influenced by the Essenes, who did believe in transmigration of souls.

I realize that these ideas are heretical to some people. However to me, they are fascinating. That Jesus was divine, that He was God made man, I do not deny. I call Him an AVATAR, a Boddhisattva... but, I do not say that He is exclusive in this role.

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See also: Neander Hutchinson (Literature) Barlaam and Josephat

[Top of Page](#)

Christianity: a naive beginning to a Buddhistic peace movement...(excerpts) [The Will To Power 1888](#) By Nietzsche (1844-1900) the great German Philosopher, poet, classical philologist, who became one of the most provocative and influential thinkers of the 19th century. He was deeply influenced by Schopenhauer in his youth. One of the great European philosophers, [Friedrich Nietzsche's](#) beliefs were best expressed in his [Thus Spake Zarathustra](#), in which his teachings are put into the mouth of the wandering prophet Zarathustra.

" Christianity: a naive beginning to a Buddhistic peace movement at the very seat of resentment - but reversed by Paul into a pagan mystery doctrine, which finally learns to treat with the entire state organization -wages war, condemns, tortures, swears, hates.

Paul starts from the need for a mystery felt by the broad, religiously excited masses: he seeks a sacrifice, a bloody phantasmogoria which will stand up in competition with the images of the mystery cults: God on the cross, blood-drinking, and unio mystica with the "sacrifice."

He seeks to bring the afterlife (the blissful, atoned afterlife of the individual soul) as resurrection into a casual relationship with that sacrifice (after the type of **Dionysus, Mithras, Osiris**).

He needs to bring the concept of guilt and atonement into the foreground, not a new way of life (as Jesus himself had demonstrated and lived) but a new cult, a new faith, a faith in a miraculous transformation ("redemption" through faith).

He understood what the pagan world had the greatest need of, and from the facts of Christ's life and death made a quite arbitrary selection, giving everything a new accentuation, shifting the emphasis everywhere – he annulled primitive Christianity as a matter of principle.

The attempt to destroy priests and theologians culminated, thanks to Paul, in a new priesthood and theology - in a new ruling order and a church. The attempt to destroy the exaggerated inflation of the "person" culminated in faith in the "eternal person" (in concern for "eternal salvation"), in the most paradoxical excess of personal egoism.

This is the humor of the situation, a tragic humor: Paul re-erected on a grand scale precisely that which Christ had annulled through his way of living. At last, when the church was complete, it sanctioned even the existence of the state."

For more interesting articles:

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Raising a holy rukus - CNN

<http://www.cnn.com/2000/books/news/09/21/jesus.mysteries/index.html>

Christ And Christianity In The Year 2000 - The Jesus Myth

By N. S. Rajaram

<http://www.swordoftruth.com>

Christianity - By Emma Goldman

<http://au.spunk.org/library/writers/goldman/sp001501.html>

First published in April 1913, in the Mother Earth journal.

[Top of Page](#)

Vedic Links to Judaism

Brahma/Saraswati - Abraham/Sarah?

According to **Dr. Venu Gopalacharya** " Abraham and Sarah (Sarai) refer to the Indian version of Brahma and Saraswati. This indicates that this is an abridgement of some of the versions in the Indian Puranas .

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has informed in his book, **Pracya Mattu Paschatya Sanskriti**, that the Greeks asserted that the Jews were Indians whom the Syrians called Judea, the Sanskrit synonym of which is **Yadava** or Yaudheya, and the Indians called them Kalanis, meaning orthodox followers of the scriptures.

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" The Jewish bible says that Abraham and Sarai went to the Middle East to escape a terrible flood that had taken place in their original homeland, at approximately the time that **Dwaraka** sank under the sea. I think it significant that Sarai was the half sister of Abraham and that Saraswati was the half sister of Brahma. Sarai had a handmaiden named Hagar. Ghaggar was a tributary of the river Saraswati. It would not surprise me if the tombs of Abraham and Sarai at Hebron, Israel are also those of Brahma and Saraswati. *There are even those who think that Jerusalem's Temple mount could be the resting place of Krishna.* There is no doubt. The **Yadavas** founded ancient Israel. The real name of the Jews, Yahuda, seems to suggest this." (refer to www.viewpoint.com .)

The Jews spell the name of the city of 'Yerushalayim,' of which the Sanskrit synonym is Yadu Ishalayam, which means the temple of the Lord of the Yadus (the descendents of Lord Krishna's clan.)

Star of David - the Jewish emblem consists of two interlocking triangles, one pointing up, the other down, which is a Trantic Vedic symbol or **Shri Yantra**.

[Top of Page](#)

Sikhism

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) **born of Hindu parents**, (his father Kalu Mehta was a Revenue official and Vedi (bedi) Khatri by caste) proclaimed his faith around 1500 AD in one God who was Nirankar (without bodily manifestations) and a caste-free society. Those who accepted his creed described themselves as Sikhs or his disciples. They remained a part of the Hindu social system. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru, declared: "We are neither Hindus nor Muslims." **Nevertheless, in the Adi Granth he compiled around 1600 AD a little over 11,000 names of God that appear over 95 per cent are of Hindu origin: Hari, Rama, Gopal, Govind, Madhav, Vithal and others.** Some like Allah, Rab, Malik are Muslim. The exclusively Sikh word for God, Wahguru, appears only 16 times.

The **Granth Sahib** is compiled. It contains the works not just of the Gurus but also of Jaidev, Nam Dev, Trilochan, Parmanand, Sadhna, Beni, Ramanand, Dhanna, Pipa, Kabir, Ravidas, Mira, Surdas – Hindu poets and seers, Sufi bhakatas, each from a different part of the country. The Granth, a scholar reminds us, **invokes the name of Krishna ten thousand times, of Rama two thousand four hundred times.** It invokes Parabrahma 550 times, Omkar 400 times. It invokes the authority of the Vedas, Puranas, Smritis about 350 times. The names of the Nirguna Absolute – Jagdish, Nirankar, Niranjan, Atma, Paramatma, Parmeshwar, Antaryami, Kartar – are invoked twenty six hundred times. Those of Saguna deity – Gobind, Murari, Madhav, Saligram, Vishnu, Sarangpani, Mukund, Thakur, Damodar, Vasudev, Mohan, Banwari, Madhusudan, Keshav, Chaturbhuj, etc. - are invoked two thousand times.

The rapture of the Gurus in describing Rama and Krishna, their reverence for Yashodha and Krishna, for Krishna and Radha, their repeated affirmations that in this day and age, in this Kaliyuga, the unailing, indeed

the only panacea, is to chant the name of Rama – what does all this mean? The description of the formless, attributeless Absolute is explicitly derived from the Vedas, Upanishads and the Gita; the legends of the Puranas – of Krishna and Sudama, of Prahlad and Hiranyakashyap – are recounted to what do these facts testify?

Guru Tegh Bahadur is executed explicitly for his defence of the Hindus of Kashmir, he is executed in the company of his Hindu devotees. **Guru Gobind Singh** composes a paen to Rama – Ramavatara – and another to Krishna – Krishnavatara. He declares as his aspiration:

Sakal jagat mein khalsa panth gaaje
Jage dharma Hindu, sakal bhand bhaje

Let the path of the pure prevail all over the world
Let the **Hindu dharma** dawn and all delusion disappear.

He declares as his goal:

Dharam vedamaryaada jag mein chalaun
Gaughaat kaa dosh jag se mitaun

May I spread **dharma and prestige of the Veda in the world.**
And erase from it the sin of cow-slaughter.

(source: [A Secular Agenda: For saving our country, For welding it - By Arun Shourie](#) p. 3 - 11).



Guru Gobind Singh invoked the names of Shiva, Sri and Chandi - Maharaja Ranjit Singh went to Hardwar to bathe in the Ganga and expressed the wish that on his death the diamond and Koh-i-Noor should be gifted to the temple of Jagannath at Puri.

Guru Gobind Singh, the last Sikh Guru who founded the Khalsa Panth in 1699 AD, invoked the names of Shiva, Sri and Chandi.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh also had Brahmins perform havans, regarded cows as sacred, punished cow-killing with death, went to Hardwar to bathe in the Ganga and expressed the wish that on his death the diamond and Koh-i-Noor should be gifted to the temple of Jagannath at Puri. Till then relations between the Hindus and the Sikhs were of naunh-maas — as the nail to the flesh out of which it grows. Inter-marriages between Hindus and Sikhs of same castes were common. **Many Hindu families brought up their eldest sons as Khalsas, whom they regarded as Kesha Dhaaree Hindus (Hindus who did not cut their hair or beards).** (For more on Ranjit Singh refer to chapter on [European Imperialism](#)).

Seeds of Hindu-Sikh separatism were sown by the British after they annexed Punjab in 1839 AD. They made reservations for Khalsa Sikhs in the Army, Civil Services and legislatures. Thus an economic incentive was given to Khalsa separateness. The feeling was eagerly nurtured by leaders of both communities. The lead was taken by Swami Dayanand Saraswati of the Arya Samaj. He visited Punjab and in his intemperate speeches described Guru Nanak as a semi-literate imposter (Dambhi). Sikhs picked up the gauntlet and made Swamiji or mahasha a synonym for a bigoted Hindu. Sikh separatism was boosted by the Singh Sabha movement started in the 1880s. It found expression in a booklet by Sikh scholar Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha entitled "Hum Hindu Naheen Hain" — we are not Hindus. Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs started treading different paths. The Hindus opened DAV and Sanatan Dharm schools and colleges. The Sikhs opened Khalsa schools and colleges. They closed ranks to face Muslim dominance and later against the demand for Pakistan. Though Muslims conceded that Sikhs were Ahl-e-Kitaab (people of the Book) as were the Jews and the Christians, they regarded them too close to the Hindus to be accommodated in Pakistan. **When Partition came, Punjabi Muslims drove both Hindus and Sikhs out of their country.**

With the affluence that came with the Green Revolution, the younger generation of Sikhs in increasing numbers began to give up the Khalsa tradition of keeping their beards and hair unshorn. They became clean-shaven (mona) Sikhs. The dividing line between the two communities became blurred because a mona Sikh was no different from a Hindu believing in Sikhism, no different from millions of Punjabi and Sindhi Hindus who revered Granth Sahib and frequented gurdwaras.

(source: [Hindu-Sikh relations - By Khushwant Singh](#) - tribuneindia.com).

Sikhs and Hindus: A Common Heritage

The ritual aspects of the Sikh tradition demonstrate the Hindu origins remaining in the scriptures.

Many scholars have stated that the Granth contains specific references to Hindu gods such as Rama and Krishna. The gurudwaras, or Sikh temples, have always been decorated with pictures of Hindu devas and devis.

If the Guru Granth Sahib were to be examined, there is no difference between Hinduism and Sikhism because the Granth is based on the Hindu scriptures and beliefs.

An authority on modern Sikhism, Dr. Gopal Singh, indicated in his translation of Shri Guru Granth Sahib that the worship of Rama and Krishna is found in the Granth.

Guru Gobind Singh describes in the Dasma Granth how Akal (God) had expanded Himself to first become Vishnu, then Brahma and Shiva. This is described in the [Vichitra Natak](#).

The Guru then goes on to describe the characteristics of Vishnu. He also goes on to discuss the origins of gods, demons, Garuda and other beings in the same manner as Vedvyas did before. The Tenth Guru then goes so far to claim his own origin from Lord Rama and His descendants.

Most people of the Punjab know that the city of Lahore was built by the elder son of Rama, Luv, while the city of Kasur was built by Kush, the younger son. A powerful point can be made here in that Guru Gobind Singh states Guru Nanak as being a descendant of Kush, while himself (Guru Gobind) is a descendant of Luv. Guru Gobind describes the genealogy in great detail and tells how this came to be so. Except for Guru Angad and Guru Amardas, the eight remaining Gurus were recognized as descendants of Lord Rama, whether it is because of devotion or respect, this view is held by both Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs.

A further analysis of the Guru Granth, the Dasma Granth and Hindu scriptures will show that there is no difference between the philosophies they all convey. The philosophy and devotion of Hindus belonging to the Shakti cult (Mother Goddess) can also be seen by Guru Gobind's monumental work "Var Durga Ki" which is revered by both Sikhs and Hindus. The only conclusion that one can make is that there is no philosophical or cultural difference between the Hindus and Sikhs. It is only that Sikhism is a simplistic form of Hinduism and is separate from any other religion that could have influenced it during its evolution.

Guru Arjun, who compiled the Granth Sahib, writes in the fifth Granth "**O God you are as great as you**

adopted the form of Vamana [fifth incarnation of Vishnu], you are also Ram Chandra [seventh incarnation of Vishnu] but you have no form or outline". This "no form or outline" concept can also be found in the Divine Manifestations, the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita where Krishna states He has a form and is beyond form. Guru Arjun goes on to make references to Narsimha [fourth avatar], Warha [second avatar], Krishna [eight avatar] and Kach [third avatar].

Guru Nanak makes specific references to Lord Rama and wrote several hymns about Lord Krishna. All throughout the Granth praises are specifically addressed to the avatars of Vishnu, particularly to Rama and Krishna. **A very interesting observation of the literature is the occurrence and reference to the name "Bithal", which is found throughout the Granth. Bithal is the Punjabi version of the Marathi name "Vithal" which is another name for Lord Krishna. Hardyal Singh M.A.**, a famous Punjabi revolutionary during the time of the British Raj, said that **"if you were to remove every page that contained the name of Bithal or Ram from the Granth, you will be left with nothing more than a few pages and the book case."** The Guru Granth Sahib clearly states that Bithal is the Lord.

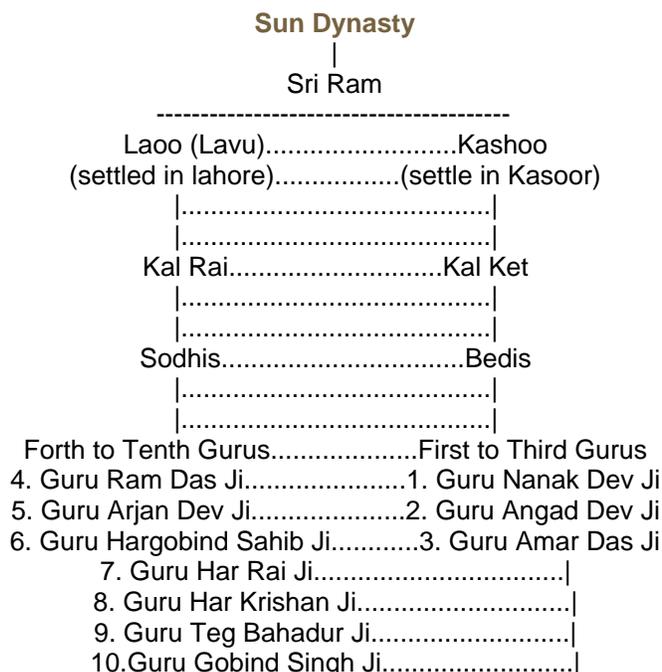
The goal of Hindus and Sikhs alike is not to reach a heaven, because this achievement is only temporary, but to break the cycle of life and death in order to achieve moksha (salvation or nirvana). If one fails, they may have to repeat either one, some or all of their existences. This is not the view held by the other tradition that could have influenced Sikhism, namely Islam.

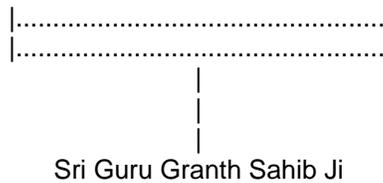
Reference is made to the avatars of Vishnu in the Granth Sahib. There are ten major avatars referred to as the Dasha Avatars, there are fourteen minor avatars as well. All these avatars are recognized in the Guru Granth Sahib even if Hindus of different sects may not recognize them all. The Dasma Granth deals with all the avatars beginning on page 169. Volume two of the **Dasma Granth** is exclusively based on Krishna. It is accepted that Guru Gobind Singh was a staunch believer in Durga Mata (Mother Goddess) as many of his hymns such as 'Deh Vo Shiva' are directed towards Shiva (not the male god but his female consort also known as Shakti or Devi who at times is referred to by His name).

In the entire Guru Granth Sahib, the Vedas are respected and referred to as sacred. Guru Gobind Singh states that the Vedas originated from Brahma and the path of the Vedas is the only path for the people to follow:

Chaupai 197 Brahma char he ved banaie Sarab lowg tih karam chale Brahma created the Vedas Guru Nanak also recited the famous aarti (song of worship) of **Ek Omkar** which he composed in praise of **Lord Jagannath of Puri**. He also went on pilgrimage to Badri Nath which is sacred to Hindus. Guru Tegh Bahadur, in pilgrimage to Jwalamukhi in Kangra. **Guru Gobind Singh worshipped Durga and fought the mughals to free Ayodhya Masjid (the controversial mosque of Ayodhya)**. Guru Ramdas wore a Vaishnav tilak on his forehead.

Divine Descendance of Sikh Gurus





(source: [Sikhs and Hindus: A Common Heritage](#) and [Divine Descendance of Sikh Gurus](#)).

Bharat Gupta, associate professor at Delhi University writes: "...in the 19th century Sikh separateness was redefined by the earlier British historians first and the Indians later. Sikhism was made to appear as a new religion, Anti Vedic, and a mixture of Indic-Islamic tenets, not based on philosophical tenets but on things like dress and food and architecture of Gurdwaaras and supposed rejection of caste. In this fabrication, the Khalsa has been fore grounded, almost equated with all Sikhism, and the Naamdhaaris, Nirankaaris, and such denominations of the Sikh tradition have been ignored, even persecuted"

Japji Sahib is Based on the Upanishads - says Khuswant Singh

Sikhs are kes-dhari [sporting unshorn hair] Hindus. Their religious source is Hinduism. Sikhism is a tradition developed within Hinduism. **Guru Granth Sahib reflects Vedantic philosophy and Japji Sahib is based on the Upanishads.**

Sikhism, like unity of God, casteless society, etc. were also preached by other Vaishnava bhaktas [saints] of the time.

In the [Encyclopedia Britannica](#) Khuswant Singh has said that Sikhism is a tradition developed within Hinduism or an extension of the **bhakti** movement. Again, in [The Wall Street Journal](#) (Oct. 12, 2001) he states that **Sikhism is a branch of Hinduism.**

(source: [Japji Sahib is Based on the Upanishads - By Khuswant Singh](#) - sikhtimes.com).

Sikhs and Hindus

Hindus are conditioned to regard Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism as "panths" or sects. My folks told me that the elder son would become a Sikh while the younger remained Hindu; that the Gurus were devotees of Ram and Krishna; that the Marathi sant-poet Namdev's hymns are included in the Granth Sahib; that, prior to the tenth Guru, there was no separate name for the followers of Guru Nanak and they were considered a part and parcel of Hinduism; that Guru Gobind Singh gave the name "Sikh" to those who were willing to fight the tyranny of the Mughals. I was taught that Hinduism is a generic name given to all the faiths which have roots in India and believe in Parmatma (God), Prarthana (prayer), Punerjanma (reincarnation), Purushartha (Karma) and Prani Daya (kindness to all living beings). Sikhism believes in all...

At a meeting in Bombay on August 19, 1964, **Tara Singh** declared,

"Sikhs and Hindus are not separate. Sikhs will survive only if Hindus survive. Sikhs are part and parcel of the Hindu Society. Guru Govind Singhji brought in Gurumukhi the wisdom and philosophy from our scriptures and Puranas. Are we going to give up this heritage? In fact Hindus and Sikhs are not two separate communities. Name is Sikh and beard... Mona (non beard) Sikh and Sevak... That is all... Sikhs live if Hinduism exists. If Sikhs live Hinduism lives. They are not two separate communities. They are one indeed. "

What are the roots of Sikhism...? **Here are some stanzas from the Gurus and the Guru Granth Saheb:**

_____ * Taha hum adhik tapasya sadhi / Mahakal kalika aradhi ~ Guru Gobind Singh.



(There I worshipped and did penance to seek **Kali**.)

* Ram katha jug jug atal / Sab koi bhakhat net Suragbas Raghuver kara / Sagri puri samet Jo en Katha sune aur gaave / Dukh pap tah nikat na aave ~ **Guru Gobind Singh**

(The story of Ram is immortal and everyone should read it. Ram went to heaven along with the whole city. Whoever listens to or sings His story, will be free of sin and sorrow.)

* Vedahun vidit dharm pracharyun / Gohat kalamka vishva nivaryun Sakal jagat mein Khalsa Panth gaajey / Jagey dharm Hindu sakal bhand bhajey ~ Guru Gobind Singh

(May I preach the Vedas to the whole mankind / May I remove the blot of cow-slaughter from the whole world / May the Khalsa Panth reign supreme /

Long live Hinduism and falsehood perish).

* Kahaiya Hinduan daro na ab tum / Im likho pathon dil sain Guru Nanak ki gadi par / Ab hain Tegh Bahadur Unko jo Muhummedi kar lihoon / To ham hain sab sadar Arya Dharma rakhak pragatiyo hain ~ **Guru Tegh Bahadur**

(Hindus, do not fear, Guru Tegh Bahadur is Guru Nanak's successor. If Muslims bother you, I'll take care of them. For I am the protector of Hinduism.)



* Tin te sun Siri Tegh Bahadur / Dharam nibaahan bikhe Bahadur Uttar bhaniyo, dharam hum Hindu / Atipriya ko kin karen nikandu Lok parlok ubhaya sukhani / Aan napahant yahi samani Mat mileen murakh mat loi / Ise tayage pramar soi Hindu dharam rakhe jag mahin / Tumre kare bin se it nahin ~ Guru Tegh Bahadur's reply to Aurangzeb's ordering him to embrace Islam.

(In response, **Shri Tegh Bahadur says, My religion is Hindu and how can I abandon what is so dear to me? This religion helps you in this world and that, and only a fool would abandon it. God himself is the protector of this religion and no one can destroy it.**)

* Sakal jagat main Khalsa Panth gaje / Jage dharam Hindu sakal bhand bhaje ~ Guru Gobind Singh.

(The Khalsa sect will roar around the world. Hinduism will awaken, its enemies will flee).

(source: [Betrayal - By Varsha Bhosle](#) - rediff.com and [VHP and Master Tara Singh](#)). For more refer to chapters on [Islamic Onslaught](#) and

[European Imperialism](#)).

For more on [Sikh and Hindus: A Common Heritage](#) - Hinduweb.org.

[Top of Page](#)



Did You Know

Got the Time?



According to Astrophysicist **Carl Sagan**, the age of the universe is somewhere around 12 billion-years-old. The Hindu tradition has a day and night of Brahma in his range, somewhere in the region of 8.4 billion years.

Dr. Sagan said, "As far as I know, India is the only ancient religious tradition on the Earth which talks about the right time scale. In the West, people have the sense that what is natural is for the universe to be a few thousand years old, and that it is billions of years is mind-reeling, and no one can understand

it. The Hindu concept is very clear. Here is a great world culture which has always talked about billions of years."

"The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. **It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology.** Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still."

There is the deep and appealing notion that the universe is but the dream of the god who, after a Brahma years, dissolves himself into a dreamless sleep. The universe dissolves with him - until, after another Brahma century, he stirs, recomposes himself and begins again to dream the great cosmic dream.

[Carl Sagan](#) further says: " The most elegant and sublime of these is a representation of the creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle, a motif known as the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva. The god, called in this manifestation **Nataraja, the Dance King**. In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, a reminder that the universe, now newly created, with billions of years from now will be utterly destroyed."

These profound and lovely images are, I like to imagine, a kind of premonition of modern astronomical ideas."

(source: [Cosmos - By Carl Sagan](#) p. 213-214).

For more information on this topic, please refer to chapters on [Indian Culture](#) and [Symbolism in Hinduism](#)).

[Top of Page](#)

