

The Buddhas

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Man...being a compound of the essences of all...celestial Hierarchies may succeed in making himself, as such, superior, in one sense, to any hierarchy or class, or even combination of them. "Man can neither propitiate nor command the *Devas*, " it is said. But, by paralysing his lower personality, and arriving thereby at the full knowledge of the *non-separateness* of his higher SELF from the One absolute SELF, man can, even during his terrestrial life, become as "One of Us." Thus it is, by eating of the fruit of knowledge which dispels ignorance, that man becomes like one of the Elohim or the Dhyanis; and once on *their* plane the Spirit of Solidarity and perfect Harmony, which reigns in every Hierarchy, must extend over him and protect him in every particular.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 276

One of the fundamental teachings of Theosophy is that all life is interrelated and forms one Whole; that everything, from the Spirit to the tiniest atom, is a link in an immense chain. The sense of separateness that we have developed in us is in fact illusory. But for the one thread which unites all, the Universe would collapse; but this can never be. Students of life ought to seek for this thread if they would understand and solve their problems.

"He who would be an occultist," says H.P.B., "must not separate either himself or anything else from the rest of creation or non-creation." Is this not why the Buddhas of Compassion, having attained the highest degree of perfection and holiness during life, renounce the bliss and rest of Nirvana, or liberation from the world of men, to remain with suffering humanity as voluntary exiles, helping and guiding its onward progress?

Gautama, the Buddha, after reaching the goal of enlightenment, refused its fruition and remained on earth as a Teacher-Reformer; and esoteric tradition teaches that he still remains in the world, invisibly watching over and protecting mankind. It would be useful for us to ask what help, apart from the inspiration of his teachings and of the incidents of his life, he is giving us now. We learn, for instance, that the Buddhas who remain in the world are the living stones in the "Guardian Wall" which shields mankind invisibly from worse evils than it knows today.

This "Wall of Protection" is built by the "accumulated efforts of long generations of Yogis, Saints and Adepts, especially of the *Nirmanakayas*" (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 74 fn.). These *Nirmanakayas* are those Buddhas of Compassion who have woven for themselves glorious bodies in which they remain invisibly in the world, contributing towards man's salvation by influencing him to follow the Good Law and to tread the Path of Righteousness. Silently they impress the invisible atmosphere of our earth with

their Ideation, thus keeping the balance on the side of right.

How did Gautama arrive at this stage? H.P.B. tells us in the *The Theosophical Glossary* that he was "the most perfect of mortal men that the world has ever seen"; "the greatest Man-Reformer ever known." His intellectual integrity, his moral earnestness, his spiritual insight were stupendous. Through many lives he had built in himself the utmost unselfishness, self-sacrifice and charity. He reached Buddhahood or complete enlightenment "entirely by his own merit and owing to his own individual exertions."

This holds out a hope for us, for what he did we can at least try to do. By individual effort and merit we, too, can one day reach the stage of the highest Buddhahood. The stupendous aim of all evolution is hinted at in *The Secret Doctrine* II, 268); each atom, it is said, "may reach through individual merits and efforts that plane where it rebecomes the one unconditioned ALL."

A Buddha, before he can become such, has first to make a vow, in some life, that he will reach that goal; and so must we if we desire ever to attain to that stage. But how can we make such a vow and keep it alive in the heart through countless lives if we are vague as to what constitutes Buddhahood? Hence the need to be clear about this ideal in our own minds.

From the *Glossary* we learn that a Buddha is "the Enlightened": he has reached "the highest degree of knowledge" and has broken through "the bondage of sense and personality." He must have acquired "a complete perception of the REAL SELF" and learnt "not to separate it from all other selves." He must, moreover, have learnt "by experience the utter unreality of all phenomena of the visible Kosmos foremost of all" and reached "a complete detachment from all that is evanescent and finite." He must be able to "live while yet on Earth in the immortal and the everlasting alone, in a supreme state of holiness." The Buddhas, says *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 52), are those whose "whole personality is merged in their compound sixth and seventh principles—or Atma-Buddhi"; "they have become the 'diamond-souled' (*Vajra-sattvas*), the full Mahatmas."

To see the relationship between the Buddha and ourselves and the ALL we must find the thread which unites all aspects of life. We learn that there have been many Buddhas and that more are to come. What, then, is the root of Buddhahood? Going back to universals we find that

...in the esoteric, and even exoteric Buddhism of the North, Adi Buddha, the One unknown, without beginning or end, identical with Parabrahm and Ain-Soph, emits a bright ray from its darkness.

This is the *Logos* (the first), or Vajradhara, the Supreme Buddha. As the Lord of all Mysteries he cannot manifest, but sends into the world of manifestation his heart—the "diamond heart," Vajrasattva. This is the **second logos** of creation, from whom emanate the seven (in the exoteric blind the five) Dhyani Buddhas, called the Anupadaka, "the parentless." The Buddhas are the primeval monads from the world of *incorporeal being*, the *Arupa* world, wherein

the Intelligences (on that plane only) have neither shape nor name, in the exoteric system, but have their distinct seven names in esoteric philosophy. These Dhyani Buddhas emanate, or create from themselves, by virtue of Dhyana, celestial Selves—the *super*-human Bodhisattvas. These incarnating at the beginning of every human cycle on earth as mortal men, become occasionally, owing to their personal merit, Bodhisattvas among the Sons of Humanity, after which they may reappear as *Manushi* (human) Buddhas. The Anupadaka (or Dhyani-Buddhas) are thus identical with the Brahminical *Manasaputra*, "mind-born sons"—whether of Brahma or either of the other two Trimurtian Hypostases, hence identical also with the Rishis and Prajapatis. (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 571)

These Dhyani Buddhas "are, so to speak, the eternal prototypes of the Buddhas who appear on this earth, each of whom has his particular divine prototype." Thus, for instance, Amitabha was the inner "God" or particular "Dhyani-Buddha of Gautama Sakyamuni, manifesting through him whenever this great Soul incarnates on earth as He did in Tzon-kha-pa," the 14th-century Tibetan reformer. (*S.D.*, I, 108)

These Dhyani Buddhas are connected with the human higher triad "in a mysterious way" (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 49). Each of us has his inner "God" or guiding "Star" or presiding "Angel," which has its origin in one of these celestial beings; and each can by his efforts rise to the position where he becomes a perfect focus for all the power and radiance of his "Parent Star." As there is the emanation from these seven centres of force, which are not single Entities but Hierarchies, so there is the return. Does this not help us to see ourselves and all else as links in an immense chain? It is a chain which can lead us all the way to Buddhahood.

Referring to the many incarnations of Gautama Buddha, of Krishna, of Jesus as of many others, H.P.B. explains that each of these

had first appeared on earth as one of the seven powers of the LOGOS, individualized as a God or "Angel" (messenger); then, mixed with matter, they had re-appeared in turn as great sages and instructors who "taught the Fifth Race," after having instructed the two preceding races, had ruled during the Divine Dynasties, and had finally sacrificed themselves, to be reborn under various circumstances for the good of mankind, and for its salvation at certain critical periods; until in their last incarnations they had become truly only "the parts of a part" on earth, though *de facto* the One Supreme in Nature. (*S.D.*, II, 359)

We can see from this that the Buddhas have appeared in the world periodically. Esoteric philosophy teaches us that "every Root-race has its chief Buddha or Reformer, who appears also in the seven sub-races as a Bodhisattva. Gautama Sakyamuni was the fourth, and also the fifth Buddha: the fifth, because we are the fifth root-race; the fourth, as the chief Buddha in this *fourth* round" (*The Theosophical Glossary*: "Bhadrakalpa").

And in *The Secret Doctrine* we read:

...there never yet was a great World-reformer, whose name has passed into our generation, who (a) was not a direct emanation of the LOGOS (under whatever name known to us), *i.e.*, an *essential* incarnation of one of "the seven," of the "divine Spirit who is sevenfold"; and (b) who had not appeared before, during the past Cycles....Krishna and Buddha speak of themselves as *re-incarnations* (SD II, 358-59)

The title given to the highest Buddhas—"Buddhas of Compassion"—leads us to the necessity of unfolding compassion in our own lives, in our own measure. By the Law of Compassion, the eternal fitness of things, the whole Universe is sustained. The *desire* for Buddhahood, in order to be kept alive, needs the warmth of compassion, the mother of all virtues.

The degree of compassion we have unfolded can be gauged by asking ourselves the question the *The Voice of the Silence*, the Book of Compassion, poses: "Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind?" The method of attunement is also hinted at: "...thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF." The Universe is one—one heart, one mind, one SELF. If a single link in this chain of oneness tries to separate itself from the rest, it creates disharmony in the whole chain. The Law of Compassion needs to be understood as an abstract, impersonal law, whose nature, being absolute Harmony, is thrown into confusion by discord and the feeling of separateness from the whole.

These ideas are of the heart, of our higher "feeling" nature, and we need the light of our mind to strengthen them. An effort to *understand* the great unity of life, to see its logicity, needs to be made. We do live and breathe in all because nothing that lives and breathes can be separated from the ALL; but we are not conscious of this fact. To awaken to it is our task. That which awakens us is generally suffering, our own or that of others. At first we *weep* with them; then we *act* for them. The *feeling* of sympathy and pity for others' woes transforms itself into *at-one-ment* with the object of sympathy or pity, so that others' woes become our woes.

But we must not stop there. In *The Light of Asia* the Buddha declares:

I, Buddh, who wept with all my brothers' tears,
Whose heart was broken by a whole world's woe,
Laugh and am glad, for there is Liberty!

A point that has already been touched upon bears repetition. All the great Buddhas were at one time men like us; but in their case the process of evolution was quickened through their own self-induced efforts. The Solitary Watcher and the "Maharajahs" who preside over the four cardinal points were once *men*. The highest Archangels or Dhyan Chohans, the Divine Intelligences charged with the supervision of the Kosmos, as also the conscious "Builders" or "Cosmocrates" who fashion matter according to the ideal

plan ready for them in the Divine and Cosmic Ideation, were all *men*, having lived aeons ago, in other Manvantaras, on this or other Spheres. But, as the *Jatakas* or events of the Buddha's former births show, such perfection is reached by passing through many grades of form and degrees of intelligence. Every being has to pass through the same evolution. "The hidden symbolism in the sequence of these re-births (*jataka*) contains a perfect history of the evolution on this earth, *pre* and *post* human, and is a scientific exposition of natural facts." (*The Theosophical Glossary*: "Buddha Siddhartha") The Third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* also points this out to us.

We believe in an impersonal "Unknowable" and know well that the ABSOLUTE, or Absoluteness, can have nought to do with worship on anthropomorphic lines; Theosophy rejects the Spencerian "He" and substitutes the impersonal It for the personal pronoun, whenever speaking of the Absolute and "Unknowable." And it teaches, as foremost of all virtues, *altruism* and self-sacrifice, brotherhood and compassion for every living creature, without, for all that, worshipping man or Humanity. In the Positivist, moreover, who admits of no immortal soul in men, believes in no future life or reincarnation, such a "worship" becomes worse than fetishism: it is *Zoolatry*, the worship of the animals. For that alone which constitutes the *real* Man is, in the words of Carlyle, "the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself 'I'...a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man." This denied, man is but an animal.

It is the old, old story, the struggle of matter and spirit....But the period when nascent Humanity, following the law of the natural and *dual* evolution, was descending along with spirit into matter—is closed. We (Humanity) are now helping matter to ascend toward spirit; and to do that we have to help substance to disenthral itself from the viscous grip of sense.

—H. P. Blavatsky, *The Babel of Modern Thought*