

QUESTIONS BUDDHISM

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**MUST ANSWER**

# WHAT DID BUDDHA SAY AGAIN?

- ▶ “If Buddhists themselves cannot agree on which scriptural writings or traditions for practice are actually true statements from Buddha, how can Buddhism as a system claim ANY truth?”
- ▶ “Even within Buddhism, there are contradictory claims related to the validity of a variety of late appearing religious texts, all of which claim to accurately represent the words of Buddha. None of these texts stands unchallenged as having come from the time in which Buddha lived. Many have very questionable origins. How are we to know which authoritative? Many scholars actually say that it is impossible to say with confidence, “This is what Gautama Buddha said.” How can anyone make a claim for the truth without first establishing the foundation for that truth?”
- ▶ Source: “An Examination of the Buddhist Worldview” by Ted Miyake [http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V\\_Q06TKZPUo](http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V_Q06TKZPUo)

# WHAT'S KARMAS' NAME?

- ▶ “Who is the Karma Judge?”
- ▶ “If, as Buddhism teaches, there is no personal God that interacts with His creation, who determines whether or not a person has done something to merit either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ Karma? If this decision is made at the end of one’s life, who is actually making the decision? How can an impersonal force ‘decide’ anything? Who is the final judge of Karma, and mustn’t this judge by necessity be a personal being (capable of making a decision)?”
- ▶ Source: “An Examination of the Buddhist Worldview” by Ted Miyake [http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V\\_Q06TKZPUo](http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V_Q06TKZPUo)

# IS IT SO GREAT IF WE AREN'T EXPERIENCING ANY OF IT?

- ▶ “If achieving ‘nirvana’ means that we will be liberated from the illusion of consciousness, how then will we know (be conscious of) our achieving this ‘nirvana’? How can we be ‘conscious’ of this, if ‘consciousness’ will no longer exist?”
- ▶ “Our existence outside the material, physical world, presumes a conscious existence in which we can ‘realize’ or enlightened condition. How can we be conscious of this if consciousness will no longer exist?”
- ▶ Source: “An Examination of the Buddhist Worldview” by Ted Miyake [http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V\\_Q06TKZPUo](http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V_Q06TKZPUo)

# WHO IS GOING TO BE REBORN?

- ▶ “If there is no transcendent ‘self’ or ‘soul’, how do we transcend this life in order for reincarnation to be possible?”
- ▶ “If reincarnation is true, it makes sense that something of our true identity would move from one life to the next. What is this ‘something’ if not a soul? Who (or what) moves on from this life to the next?”
- ▶ Source: “An Examination of the Buddhist Worldview” by Ted Miyake [http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V\\_Q06TKZPUo](http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V_Q06TKZPUo)

# SHOW ME THE MONEY!

- ▶ “What real evidence do we have that reincarnation is true?”
- ▶ “Why is there not consistent evidence for the notion of reincarnation? On what evidence is this idea based, aside from the writings of Buddha? While we have good philosophical reasons to believe in the existence of the soul, what philosophical reasoning brings us to the conclusion that reincarnation is true?”
- ▶ Source: “An Examination of the Buddhist Worldview” by Ted Miyake [http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V\\_Q06TKZPUo](http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V_Q06TKZPUo)

# NO THANKS BRO, I GOT DIS'

- ▶ "If 'buddhas' and 'boddisatvas' exist to help others in achieving 'nirvana' what is the true value of 'self-effort'?"
- ▶ If, as a Buddhist, I rely on the help of a 'buddha' or 'boddisatva' how can my assisted work be accredited to me as Karma or even as true obedience to the Eight Fold Path. Doesn't assistance negate the self-effort required to establish Karma in the first place?
- ▶ Source: "An Examination of the Buddhist Worldview" by Ted Miyake [http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V\\_Q06TKZPUo](http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V_Q06TKZPUo)

# HE SAID, SHE SAID...

- ▶ “If ‘buddha-hood’ is actually achievable in this life, how are we to know that we are talking to a true ‘buddha’ or ‘boddisatva’?”
- ▶ “If there are those in our midst who have actually achieved this level of enlightenment, how are we to identify them. Why should we trust their own proclamations of ‘buddha-hood’? How will we recognize them or even distinguish them from non-Buddhist people who display all the attributes that are consistent with ‘buddha-hood’?”
- ▶ Source: “An Examination of the Buddhist Worldview” by Ted Miyake [http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V\\_Q06TKZPUo](http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V_Q06TKZPUo)

# I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER...IN YOUR PAST LIFE...

- ▶ “If a person’s present suffering is the result of bad karma from a prior life, why should we try to do anything to change their present condition? Aren’t they simply getting what they deserve?”
- ▶ “Why help those who are simply paying the price for an evil prior life? Passivity and apathy seem to be a common problem within Buddhism, largely in response to a concept known as ‘samsara’. Take a look at this recent article from an online Burmese magazine:
- ▶ “This passivity is largely due to the promotion of samsara. Taken from the Pali word sam (succession) sara (going, wandering), it refers to the cycle of human existence, or the cycle of life and death. Samsara poses that people are mere guests in this life, and life is just a transit point. Samsara is the flux of mind and body, of mental and physical phenomena. Humans are travelers in the realm of samsara, where nothing holds permanent. Moments of sadness and misfortune, as well as glory and happiness, are accepted as part of the natural ups and downs of life. Burma’s political and religious elite has affirmed samsara as the only indisputable Buddhist doctrine, and the public has meekly signed on. Because so many Burmese Buddhists tend to see themselves against the backdrop of samsara, it has wide reach over existing social structures, even though Burma is not religiously homogenous. Every experience, even a bad one, is seen as part of life and the impermanent nature of the world. Rather than being angered or aggrieved by unfortunate experiences, Burmese Buddhism preaches that it is best to let them go.”(by Min Zin, Engaging Buddhism for Social Change, March, 2003 [irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org))”
- ▶ Source: “An Examination of the Buddhist Worldview” by Ted Miyake [http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V\\_Q06TKZPUo](http://www.str.org/articles/could-buddhism-be-true#.V_Q06TKZPUo)

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO

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**BUDDHISM**

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

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# LET'S BE CLEAR OF THE DIFFERENCES

## LET'S BE CLEAR OF THE DIFFERENCES

- ▶ "Jesus sought to save the world, not himself. Buddha began by saving himself and then taught the world. The aim of Jesus is faith and individual existence in heaven in the presence of God; the *Summum Bonum* of Buddha is knowledge and the annihilation of self in Nirvana. In the face of such essential divergencies, the parallels alleged to exist between Buddha and Jesus seem to be cases of accidental coincidence, and it is almost certain that, despite the travel between Palestine and India, which may have influenced to some degree the apocryphal Gospels on the one hand and late Northern Buddhism on the other, Christianity and Buddhism developed to all intents and purposes independently."
- ▶ Above point taken from *Kingdom of the Cults* pg. 304

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

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# A WORD FROM RAVI

## PANTHEISTIC

- ▶ Buddhism is Pantheistic, and affirms that all is God and God is all.
- ▶ Does this make sense? Are there any reasons to believe that pantheism is true? Are there any problems with the concept of pantheism?

# PANTHEISM

- ▶ “Absolute pantheism is self-defeating. The absolute pantheist claims: “I am God.” But God is the changeless Absolute. However, humanity goes through a process of change called enlightenment because he has this awareness. So how could people be God when people change but God does not?”
- ▶ “Pantheists attempt to escape this criticism by allowing some reality to humanity, whether it be emanational, modal, or manifestational. But if we are really only modes of God, then why are we oblivious to it? H. P. Owen describes this as a “metaphysical amnesia” that pervades all our lives. If we are being deceived about the consciousness of our own individual existence, how do we know that the pantheist is not also being deceived in claiming to be conscious of reality as ultimately one?”
- ▶ Emanate: to come out *from* a source
- ▶ Modal: containing provisions as to the mode of procedure or the manner of taking effect –used of a contract or legacy
- ▶ Manifestation: a sign that shows something clearly
- ▶ Source: Geisler, N. L. (1999). In Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

# PANTHEISM

- ▶ “In fact, if the world is really an illusion, how can we distinguish between reality and fantasy at all? Lao-tse puts the question well: “If, when I was asleep I was a man dreaming I was a butterfly, how do I know when I am awake I am not a butterfly dreaming I am a man?” (Guinness, 14). If what we continually perceive to be real is not, how could we ever distinguish between reality and fantasy? Maybe when we cross a busy street, with three lanes of traffic coming toward us, we should not worry, for it’s all an illusion anyway. Indeed, should we even look when crossing the street, if we, the traffic, and the street do not really exist? If pantheists would live out their pantheism consistently, there would be no pantheists left.”

- ▶ Source: Geisler, N. L. (1999). In Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

## PANTHEISM

- ▶ “Pantheism is self-refuting, at least all forms that claim individuality is an illusion caused by my mind. For according to pantheism, individual minds are themselves aspects of the illusion and can therefore provide no basis for explaining it. ***If the mind is part of the illusion, it cannot be the ground for explaining the illusion. Hence, if pantheism is true in asserting that my individuality is an illusion, then pantheism is false, since there is then no basis for explaining the illusion*** (see D.K. Clark, chapter 7).”
- ▶ Source: Geisler, N. L. (1999). In Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. (emphasis mine)

# MORALITY

- ▶ If God is all, and all is God, as pantheists maintain, then evil is an illusion and ultimately there are no rights and wrongs. For there are four possibilities regarding good and evil:
  1. If God is all-good, then evil must exist apart from God. But this is impossible since God is all—nothing can exist apart from It.
  2. If God is all-evil, then good must exist apart from God. This is not possible either, since God is all.
  3. God is both all-good and all-evil. This cannot be, for it is self-contradictory to affirm that the same being is both all good and all evil at the same time. Further, most pantheists agree that God is beyond good and evil. Therefore God is neither good nor evil.
  4. Good and evil are illusory. They are not real categories.
- ▶ “Option four is what most pantheists believe. But if evil is only an illusion, then ultimately there is no such thing as good and evil thoughts or actions. Hence, what difference would it make whether we praise or curse, counsel or rape, love or murder someone? If there is no final moral difference between those actions, absolute moral responsibilities do not exist. Cruelty and noncruelty are ultimately the same.”

▶ Source: Geisler, N. L. (1999). In Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

# HOW COULD ONE KNOW?

- ▶ “Pantheism’s God also is unknowable. The very claim, “God is unknowable in an intellectual way,” seems either meaningless or self-defeating. ***For if the claim itself cannot be understood in an intellectual way, then it is self-defeating.*** For what is being affirmed is that nothing can be understood about God in an intellectual way. ***But the pantheist expects us to intellectually know this truth that God cannot be understood in an intellectual way.*** In other words, the pantheist appears to be making a statement about God to the effect that no such statements can be made about God. But how can one make a positive affirmation about God which claims that only negative affirmations can be made about God? Plotinus admitted that negative knowledge presupposes some positive awareness. Otherwise, one would not know what to negate.”

- ▶ Source: Geisler, N. L. (1999). In Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. (emphasis mine)

# LOGIC

- ▶ “Critics further claim that the denial of many pantheists of the applicability of logic to reality is self-defeating. For to deny that logic applies to reality, it would seem that one must make a logical statement about reality to the effect that no logical statements can be made. ***For example, when Zen Buddhist D. T. Suzuki says that to comprehend life we must abandon logic (Suzuki, 58), he uses logic in his affirmation and applies it to reality. Indeed, the law of noncontradiction (A cannot both be A and not-A) cannot be denied without using it in the very denial.*** Therefore, to deny that logic applies to reality, one must not make a logical statement about reality. But then how will the position be defended?”
- ▶ Source: Geisler, N. L. (1999). In Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. (emphasis mine)

## THE CORE OF ZEN

- ▶ “Zen Buddhism, in our opinion, is the most self-centered, selfish system of philosophy that the depraved soul of man can embrace, for it negates the two basic principles upon which all spiritual reality exists: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind...[and thy neighbor as thyself]” (Matthew 22:37, 39).”
- ▶ “For Zenists, it is love self first, last, and always. This is the core of Zen, which releases one from spiritual responsibility and substitutes intellectual enlightenment for conversion, and the absence of concern for one’s fellowman for peace with God.”
- ▶ Above points are taken from *Kingdom of the Cults* pg. 311

## THE RESULT OF BUDDHISM

- ▶ “Historically, Buddhism has produced nothing but indescribable conditions under which its subjects live. For in almost every area of the world where Buddhism of any form holds sway, there stalks the specter of disease, hunger, and moral and spiritual decay. The people of the Orient are the slaves of their religions, and Buddhism, with its egocentricity and inherently selfish concept of life and of responsibility to society, is by all odds one of the greatest offenders. Let those who consider Zen as a superior form of religious philosophy look well at its history and its fruit, for “by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20).”
- ▶ Above point taken from *Kingdom of the Cults* pg. 311

## TRUTH

- ▶ We simply have *no reason (given by the buddhists themselves even!) to believe* that a Buddhist concept of reality is **true**. We have no reliable sources of history of the events, nor reliable verification currently of the alleged doctrine which is taught.
- ▶ It is up to the Buddhists to defend their own claims of reality by dismantling all of the arguments which have been raised against it, and then they must raise up their own evidence for investigation.
- ▶ Until they accomplish this task, Buddhism is to be regarded as extremely lacking in intellectual credibility.