Consolation and a parable: two contacts between Ancient Greece and Buddhists

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Preamble

The war between claimants that Buddhism provided inspiration for the canonical gospels and enemies of all such notions, commencing about 1880, was at its height about 1916, pausing for breath during the First World War. It rumbled on into 1995.1 Dr. Christian Lindtner finds in St. Matthew actual translations of Buddhist Sanskrit texts, to the annoyance of Buddhologists. The prudent hold their fire, awaiting fresh ammunition.2 About a hundred parallels hitherto detected, as between New-Testament passages and Buddhist texts can be classified as startling, impressive, suggestive, and feeble. They remain irritants despite problems of chronology and self-serving prejudices. The protagonists in this warfare can be classified as: ‘maximalists’,3 who find a Buddhist idea beneath innumerable Christian verses; ‘minimalists’,4 who grudgingly admit that some ‘influence’ must have occurred; and ‘nihilists’,5 who deplore all suggestions of contact between the first Christian missionaries and their seniors, their Buddhist counterparts. We are recommended to ridicule ‘pseudo-scholars’ and ‘third-rate minds’. Mentors of this writer’s youth were utter ‘nihilists’.

One ‘stand-off’ between ‘maximalists’ and ‘nihilists’ coincided with a resurgence of pro-Buddhist activity from certain sinologists. T. Richard (‘Timothy Richard of China’) summarized the Lotus Sutra in his New Testament of Higher Buddhism,6 which, annotated by the Hon. Mrs. Elizabeth A. Gordon with New-Testament texts of ‘varying degrees of approximation’, formed the basis for her World-Healers, or the Lotus Gospel and its Bodhisattvas compared with early Christianity,7 followed by her Asian christology and the

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2 F. H. Hillyard, The Buddha, the Prophet, and the Christ (London: Allen, 1956). Albert Schweitzer was of this view.


6 Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910. Clark was and is a well-known publisher in biblical studies.


Attempts to solve our problem are clouded by vested interests. The air clears once debate centres upon intercourse (apart from well-known fables) between Ancient Greece and the Indian cultural world (including Afghanistan). What was the arena of contact? When and how could reception have taken place? What were the states of the novelties which editors admired; and how did they handle them? Every parallel must be examined in depth and its exoticism calibrated. To plot the frontiers of Hellenism will always interest students of archaeology, of numismatics in particular, and the other plastic arts.

Now we examine two parallels not handled by protagonists. One (the vocabulary of consolation) illustrates traffic from West to East, the other (the maxim of the Lame and the Blind) the opposite motion. When foreign ideas are adopted they tend also to be adapted, as Christian preachers are known to have adapted pagan forms and motifs. The ground is already prepared. One explanation is agreed between a rabbinist and a hellenist:

Borrowings in religion, at least in the field of ideas, are usually in the nature of the appropriation of things in the possession of another which the borrower recognizes in all good faith as belonging to himself, ideas which, when once they become known to him, are seen to be the necessary implications or complements of his own.

Beside the clumsy Quellenforscher who presumes against any artist’s being original, a principal enemy to research is the familiar objection, ‘Similar circumstances give rise to similar responses’—and the Golden Rule is an example. In fact identical problems can provoke varied solutions. Meanwhile, some of our parallels contain complex and sharp particulars that could hardly have been invented more than once. That India received much from the Greeks was shown in the old work of G. D’Alviella, which approached the problem with reserve, patience and balance. He demonstrated what Greece was then known to have received from India, without suggesting that Judaism, Christianity, or any late hellenistic movement received more than an aroma from India, which does seem to have contributed something. India’s interchange with Israel remains uncharted; but it falls outside our present scope. The Brahminical depot in fifth-century Alexandria (probably employed in

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8 Tokyo, 1921.
10 A task adumbrated in Derrett, *Bible*, taking some sixty examples. Aufhauser placed parallel texts side by side with negative or positive exclamations.
13 Derrett, *Bible*, app. II (the problem of precedence at table).
translation work, like their counterparts in China)\textsuperscript{17} was not known to D’Alviella. It too must be left for another study. But if Greek and Israelite ideas were available to Buddhists of the first or second centuries we need not doubt that the gospels also entered their libraries.

**Consolation**

Bereavement being universal one would expect consolation to be uniform in objects and methods. Admittedly Christian consolation has peculiar features which modify, whilst following, pagan conventions in the genre.\textsuperscript{18} Jewish consolation, not neglecting Job, acknowledges the will of the ‘just Judge’ who requires mourners to be comforted\textsuperscript{19} as he himself mourns and needs to be consoled.\textsuperscript{20} Periods of mourning are defined, and the statuses of ‘sorrows’ and of ‘mourners’ are respected.\textsuperscript{21}

That a friend should seek to console a mourner even in silence is universal, and not confined to the learned who know the conventions.\textsuperscript{22} Cruelly but realistically one may point out that to indulge in mourning is self-serving (Cicero and Plutarch). If Academics and Peripatetics allowed moderate grief, mourning (a ματαιωμοσία) can be rejected as ridiculous by Cynics, by Epicureans as irrational, and by Stoics as reprehensible and womanish (Plutarch, *Mor.* 112F–113A). Aristotle (*N.E.* 9.11.4) and Seneca (*ep.* 63.13) find it dishonorable in men, though if one cannot resist the urge grieving should be shortened (Sulpicius to Cicero, *fam.* 4.5). Mourners are mourning their own loss (*Plut., Mor.* 111E). Curtailment of mourning was desired by Seneca,\textsuperscript{23} Shakespeare,\textsuperscript{24} and opponents of Queen Victoria’s mourning. The Bible limits mourning even in dire circumstances (*Deuteronomy* 21: 10–14; cf. *Qumran Temple Scroll* LXIII. 1–14). But one who consoles a mourner may overdo it, and be accused of mocking him/her.\textsuperscript{25}

The ancient Greek and Roman genre called *consolatio*\textsuperscript{26} has nothing in common with Buddhist ‘consolations’, save the truth that many have died. A

\textsuperscript{17} The story of Damascius at Photius, *Bibliotheca* (ed. Bekker, Berlin, 1825, vol. 2, 340) is entirely plausible. That they were totally ignorant of Christianity is unlikely.


\textsuperscript{23} Sixty years ago I attempted to console a Jain merchant who had lost his only son through typhoid fever. I dwelt on elementary domestic hygiene to which he listened with the fortitude of Job. I dwell on elementary domestic hygiene to which he listened with the fortitude of Job.


\textsuperscript{25} Sophocles, *Antigonae* 834–52.

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classical consolation will remind us that all are mortal; death is not to be feared; mishaps are common, many worse than yours; death exempts or releases from life’s miseries; the child’s cry at birth foretells all; time heals griefs; the virtues of the deceased are important; his/her achievements or satisfactions sufficed; and mourning beyond conventional limits is undesirable. Celebrated authors do not dwell on the deceased’s future (save them who have become stars); and few suggest that mourner and mourned will meet again, a Christian consolation. They do not dwell on hell. Cynics, Stoics, Epicureans and Greek epigrammatists find such myths unhelpful. Stoics believe the dead feel nothing, and are not to be pitied. Ancestors may receive new recruits to the shades; and metempsychosis is rarely alluded to. We observe that none of this hurts or belittles the mourner: but one does suddenly hear a sharp note.

Lucian speaking of Demonax (c. A.D. 150) relates one of his facetiae. He was a Cynic and was privileged to instruct anyone without apology or tact. He went to a man who was mourning his son and had shut himself up in the dark (a known practice: Plut., Mor. 113B), and told him that he (Demonax) was a magus and could raise the boy’s image, if only he could name three individuals who had never mourned for anyone. The father hesitated for long, but could not mention one. Demonax said, ‘Absurd man do you imagine that you alone suffer the unendurable, seeing there is no one exempt from mourning?’

Demonax did not invent this sally, which has no place in the conventional

28 Plato, Apol. 29A. 40C. Cicero, Tusc. i. 38. 91; 47. 112; 49. 117. Ecclesiastes 7: 2. Shakespeare, 2 Henry IV, III, ii. 37. 40; Romeo and Juliet III, iv. 4.
29 Homer, Il. 24. 46–9; Juvenal, Sat. 13.9. 10, 53. 60, 126–7. 135. 143, 159–61. Ps.–Plutarch, Mor. 103B–C. 106A–C; Crantor, ibid., 104C–D; Basil, ep. 5. 4.
33 Plato (?), Menexenus. Fame will survive the virtuous: Cic., Tusc. i. 38. 91. Cf. Thucydides 2. 44. The praise of the dead boy at Plut., Mor. 120A–B is excellent consolation: Plut., Mor. 608D. Gregg, Consolation, 44–5. 59. 140. Abodi de R. Nathan 14.
34 Cicero, Fam. IV. 5. 5. Plut., Mor. 111B. Libanius, ep. 393.
37 Greek anthology VII. 25. 61, 131, 260, 370 (five instances out of over 740 printed). At no. 23 such joys are doubted. Cf. Socrates at Cic., Tusc. I. 41. 98.
39 Cic., Tusc. I. 7. 14; 8. 15; 37. 90; 38. 91–2; Plut., Mor. 109E–F.
40 Plut., Mor. 611E; Cic., Tusc. I. 49. 118.
scheme of consolatio. Legend traces it to the fertile mind of the fifth-century B.C. philosopher Democritus of Abdera, who consoled king Darius for the loss of his wife in exactly this way. Neither Democritus nor Demonax shared the man’s grief, nor did they suggest that others did or should. Such ‘consolation’ strikes us as derisory, for we regard true consolation as sharing the loss, and virtue survives the virtuous. The Democritus-Demonax consolation was brutal; which is not to say it was ineffective. Pseudo-Callisthenes’ Alexander romance (emerging in the third century A.D.) contains a similar device. In an apocryphal last letter to his mother Alexander the Great enjoins her to prepare a memorial banquet:

‘Let no one come who knows past or present sorrow; for I did not intend this banquet for sorrow but for joy.’ But no one could be found, great or small, rich or poor, who had known no sorrow, and so no one came. Olympia perceived Alexander’s wisdom, observing that he wrote this as a consolation for those whom he left, in order that they should realize that what happened was nothing unusual.

The mourner could actually advertise for individuals who have not mourned! A few Western ‘nuclear’ families might now pass that test. If in Greece or Rome separate domiciles existed, in India the joint family was continuously celebrating births and deaths. The notion was meaningful there.

Though rational attempts to console are not unknown (Anguttara-nikāya iii. 57–62), the definitive formula of Buddhist ‘consolation’ is at Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra, ch. 6 (Digha-nikāya XVI, text ii. 140, 156–63).

The Buddha says vaya-dhamma samkhāra, ‘all component (or composite) things are subject to decay’. Repeated at his demise we hear anicca samkhāra, tam kuta ‘ettha labbā ti, ‘Impermanent are all component things; how is it possible (they should not be dissolved)?’ This is repeated by the god Brahmā Sahampati.


\[43\] Homer, II. 24. 507–51; Plato, Menexenus; Pliny, ep. 6.16; Sen., ad Marc. 9.2, 15.1, 16.3; ep. 13.99 (99. 6, 22). Plut., Mor. 106A. E. Greek anthology VII. 590, 673, 680, 690.


\[46\] Sen., ad Marc. 24.1. Greek anthology VII. 743 (the 29 children).


\[50\] Text ii, 157; trans., ii, 175. For the phrase ‘How is it possible?’ see Samyutta-nikāya v. 163–4; also XXII §18(7).
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by the god Sakka,52 and by Anuruddha, the clairvoyant (Samyutta-nikāya I, 14, §1: LII, 8, 1–2), who admits the weeping monks have lost a ‘dear one’. They are not free from the ‘passions’: ‘We must become distinct from dear ones’.53 Composite things are impermanent: Mahā Kassapa repeats it,54 a lesson familiar to arahants (approx. ‘saints’),55 and devatas (godlings).56 The self-possessed do not indulge in dramatic mourning (as in fact mourners for the Buddha did [Culla-vagga XI, 1, 1]). Severance from dear ones brings impassibility, not misery (cf. Manu 6, 62; 12, 79). In metempsychosis one cannot trace an individual’s births and rebirths. Buddhists would agree that reason should moderate the παθή (passions), including sorrow; for birth itself implies mortality, natthi jātassa amaṇḍaṃ.

The Buddha knew the fate of an individual deceased,57 ignoring mourning.58 He did not mourn even his disciples Sāriputta and Moggallāna (Samyutta-nikāya v. 163–4). Mourning proves mourners’ failure to rid themselves of ‘craving’ (ibid., XV, 1 §3; XXXV §§63–4, 88, 94). A ‘passion’ had fuelled their grief.59 To have a dear one (piya) is to have sorrow (dukkhā); loss of him/her manifests ‘clinging’.60 Attachment, being this-worldly, hinders attainment of nirvāṇa,61 as illustrated by the case of Visākhā, an episode in the Udāna62 and in Buddhaghosa’s commentary on the Dhammapada.63 The former, canonical, is probably the older, while Buddhaghosa (fifth century) tries to be traditional rather than original. Visākhā may have found her ‘consolation’ by the Buddha brutal. She is forced to admit that deaths are common (cf. Samyutta-nikāya XV, 1 §3). The Buddha told her, in effect, that if she mourned for her grandson it was her own fault—she should have freed herself from affection, conformably (in fact) to Dhammapada 213: pematọ jayaṭi soko, pematọ jayaṭi bhayaṃ (from affection arise grief and fear).

Who finds the ‘Visākhā’ style of consolation helpful, corresponding very

52 Text ii, 1578–9; trans., ii, 175.
53 Text ii, 158 (alum dvuso mū socittha, mū paridevittah); trans., ii, 177. Text ii, 158 9 nānābhāvo vinā-bhāvo annathā-bhāvo. Cf. Samyutta-nikāya XII, 11; text iv, 327–8; trans., iv, 232–4. At Majjhima-nikāya LXXVII, text ii, 106–12; trans. I. B. Horner vol. 2, 292 6, affection is said to originate (piya) vajjikā)—no attempt is made to console the man mourning the loss of his only son.
55 Text ii, 158; trans., ii, 177.
57 ‘Bound for heaven’: Majjhima-nikāya ii, 142; trans. I. B. Horner, Middle Length Sayings (Pali Text Society, 1976), vol. 1, 182; Digha-nikāya XVI, text, ii, 141; trans., ii, 154. Devadatta, enemy of the Buddha, was swallowed up by the earth, but promised (so the Mahāyāna) ultimate bliss. Cf. Samyutta-nikāya XXXV §90; trans. Woodward, Kindred sayings, vol. 4 (1980), 36. The fates of suicides are divined casuistically (e.g. Samyutta-nikāya XXII §87).
58 Cf. Jātaka 352 and 454 (M. Winternitz, History of Indian literature, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1977, vol. 2, 142). Though thinking of Avalokiteśvara will release creatures from troubles (Dadharmapundarīka 24, 17, 25) and Bodhisattvas are concerned for others as for themselves (Bodhicaryāvatāra 8, 90, 117; 10, 2), consolation of mourners is not their specific task.
61 Sorrow, lamentations, and pain arise from piyām (pleasure); piye asanto na bhavanti, ‘where piyām is not, these are not’.
crudely to the Stoic ideal of ἀπάθεια, which even the great author on consolatio, Crantor, abandoned for μετροποσάθεια, a moderate grief? An attempt was made to refurbish it with the exotic story of Kīsa Gotamī. She had once uttered a blessing on Gotama,64 which is found in several cultures.65 Now she comes to him begging him to revive her child.66 Her story is found in the commentary on the Therī-gāthā,67 and in the Mūla-sarvāstivāda-vinaya.68 The latter does not contain the Buddha’s injunction (the crux of the story), so even that late compilation fails to include what Buddhaghosa has provided,69 which Winternitz, following Thiessen in 1880, believed antedated Western parallels.70 Vague as it is, the approximate dating of these versions and allusions is consistent with the following story’s having been imported from outside the Theravāda tradition.

Kīsa Gotamī came with her dead child to the Buddha for a medicine to revive him. Gotama agreed if she would bring mustard-seed from a house in which no son, husband, parent, or slave had died. She went from one house to a third [so the Therī-gāthā version], discovered her error, informed the Buddha, took the corpse to the charnel-ground, and the story ends happily: she may defy the death-dealing Māra.71 No doubt she resembles Merope in Euripides: τεθναν ψαδες οβεᾳ θυμη βροτων (besides myself other women have lost children [Plut., Mor. 110D]).

Beautiful as it is, Sir Edwin Arnold’s Light of Asia (1879) settles no technical problems within Buddhism. Yet Book 5, the Consolation of Kīsa Gotamī (based on Buddhaghosa) illustrates my thought.72 Originally she was ‘consoled’ by the discovery that death was ubiquitous and living things impermanent. But this was not credible by 1879. Arnold adds, ‘... the whole wide world weeps with thy woe. The grief which all hearts share grows less for one. Lo! I would pour my blood if it could stay Thy tears and win the secret of that curse which makes sweet love our anguish ...’. If this is consolation, the historical Buddha had no time for it, though the blood hyperbole would make sense in the Mahāyāna: a Bodhisattva might look at such problems in such a way.
I submit that ground prepared by Visākhā was ready for Kisa Gotami, the idea passing from West to East. Democritus' philosophy sharpened mourners' appreciation of their situation. Buddhism installed repeated deaths as the pivot of its teaching. Nirvāṇa is deathlessness, whereupon consolation becomes a problem. One avoids mourning by denying attachment to living beings. Such is Buddha’s reasoning, not the Greeks’. The story of Kisa Gotami is in fact superfluous, but illustrates how the West, adding nothing to Buddhism doctrinally, has provided an intriguing embellishment.

The lame and the blind

The maxim 'the lame and the blind' could remind a rabbinical scholar of a Jewish joke. Two egregious males, one lame the other blind, invented a means of doing mischief with impunity. Alas, they were caught. The story is almost unknown to Western folklore, missing from phrase and fable. One may object that they occur in Greek epigrams and in Epiphanius, but in both they are exotic. The particularity betrays the rogues’ provenance.

The maxim of the lame and the blind (Skt. paṅgavandha-nyāya) arose in India. Once the lame man had mounted the shoulders of the blind the beggars could maximize their effectiveness. The maxim figures as a technique of applying Vedic scripture, in ritual or secular contexts. Two texts, ineffective independently, may become viable in conjunction. Two testimonies which fail, separately, to prove anything, may be cogent jointly. So says the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the Indian science of exegesis. Furthermore the Indian school of philosophy called Sāṃkhya (one of the Buddha’s teachers, Āḷāra, seems to have been an adherent) used the maxim to explain the uneasy relationship between the soul or spirit (purusa) and the bodily nature (prakṛti). It is uncertain how old this use is, but it can hardly be later than early centuries A.D. The upshot is this: purusa and prakṛti are distinct, engaged in a dance. Mutually antagonistic, the soul or qualitiless consciousness on the one hand and the non-intelligent physical nature on the other are mutually dependent. Surely this Sāṃkhya image, or the maxim it used, was available to Buddhists during the long period during which Graeco-Indian intellectual exchange occurred?

Buddhaghosa, using traditional material, tells a tale at Visuddhimagga 18.35.76

‘Name’ and ‘Form’ are each without power on its own. Mentality lacks

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efficient power, it requires the support of materiality. A man born blind and a cripple wanted to go somewhere. The blind man said to the cripple, 
‘Look, I can do what should be done by legs, but I have no eyes to see 
what is rough or smooth’. The cripple said, ‘Look, I can do what should 
be done by eyes, but I have no legs with which to go and come’. The blind 
man made the cripple climb up on his shoulders. Sitting on the blind man’s shoulders the cripple ordered, ‘Leave the left, take the right ...’. The blind 
man has no efficient power ... The cripple has no efficient power ... But 
there is nothing to prevent their going when they support each other.

The story is analogous to the drum without bandsman; or the boat without rowers. Mentality and materiality require each other to be effective—yet they remain distinct.

The maxim is at home and reflects the use made of it in the Sāṃkhya. Buddhaghosa relied on the notoriety of the image. The Greek anthology takes for granted an educated acquaintance with the maxim.\(^{77}\)

**Leonidas of Alexandria** (mid-first century A.D.).
The blind beggar supported the lame one in respect of feet, and gained in exchange eyes not his own. Both half-complete persons were fitted together in the nature of a unit, providing reciprocally what was lacking to each other.

**Plato the Younger** (date unknown).
A blind man took on his back a man maimed in his limbs, lending feet and borrowing eyes.

**Antiphilus of Byzantium** (mid-first century A.D.).
Both maimed beggars, one in respect of his eyes, the other of his steps: each serves the other. For the blind, taking the weight of the lame man on his back, treads out his path with foreign eyes. One nature suffices for both, for in each case what was wanting to each they combined to make a whole for each other.

The apocryphal rogues are luxuriously exploited in Judaism. There the pair (ḥiğêr and sâmấ) is notorious. The fourth–fifth century writer against heretics, Epiphanius, gives a long excerpt from an ancient author named Ezekiel,\(^{78}\) who tells how a king disdained a lame man and a blind man, and they meditated revenge. The lame said to the blind, ‘Carry me’ (v. 10), and so the former moved under the direction of the latter. They laid waste the king’s garden. One pair of footprints could be traced. The king placed the lame on the blind and punished both. Just so God is ignorant of nothing, the culprit’s excuses are brushed aside; soul and body are condemned together.

Rabbis relate a colloquy on the subject between ‘Antoninus’ (Marcus Aurelius?) and a Jewish sage. The Tannaitic midrash *Mekilta de R. Ishmael* (third century A.D.)\(^{79}\) not only knew this story\(^{80}\) but expected its readers to do

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\(^{79}\) I take all such dates from H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: Beck, 1982).

so, for it gives the introduction only. Midrash Rabbah Leviticus IV. 4–5 (fifth century) has the story at length.81 The Mekilta de R. Sime'on b. Yochai (fourth century) gives a succinct version.82 The Babylonian Talmud, Sanh. 91a–b (perhaps sixth century) is usually cited on the point. The lame and the blind were, strangely, appointed Watchmen of the king’s orchard. They proceeded to rob the orchard. The lame protested, ‘How can I move about? ’ and the blind, ‘Obviously I cannot see!’ The king put the lame on top of the blind and judged them concurrently.83 Just so the soul and body will be joined after the resurrection and such excuses will be ignored. The popular parable figures in a string of references84 compiled by B. Young in association with D. Flusser.85 It must have been from Jews that writers on the resurrection adopted the idea86 and Athenagoras (On the Resurrection 15, 18, 20–25) seems, in the second century, to have derived his argument from a similar source, and this is certainly the case with Epiphanius.87

From the Śāmkhya to the Talmud the theme remains the same: soul and body, distinct, are jointly responsible for acts, and have a joint fate. G. F. Moore, well advised,88 opined that the Jewish parable was derived from India.

The maxim of the lame and the blind later played a role in the exegesis of Exodus 15: 1, the commencement of the Song of Moses, echoed by Miriam at 15: 21. The rabbis, uninterested in ancient armament, took the words literally: ‘The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea’. Since the horses are not mentioned at Exodus 14: 17, 28, 26, 28, mention of them at 14: 23; 15: 1 and Deuteronomy 11: 4 raised an ethical problem.89 What harm had the horses done? Moralizing exegesis occurs in the Neofiti and Fragment Targums:90 Both horses and riders were proud (!) and exultant and deserved their fate. Haggag 2: 22 illustrates the idea. But Philo (first century), detecting an allegory here, saw in the horses our physical nature and in the riders the Mind.91 Elsewhere the riders have been identified as demons92 (hence the fate of the Gadarene Swine, Mark 5: 12–13).93 Rashi (1040–1105) explains that each horse and his

83 Sanh. 91a–b is copied by Young (n. 85 below) at p. 65 and quoted by Moore (n. 11 above) at vol. 1, 487–8; also Urbach, The Sages, vol. 1, 223; vol. 2, 786. The passage is translated by H. Freedman, in Seder Neziqin III Sanhedrin (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 610–11.
85 Brad H. Young, Jesus and his Jewish parables. Rediscovery of the roots of Jesus’ teaching (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 64–6, 113.
86 A ‘ghost’ reference to Tertullian, de resurrectione is not verified at present.
87 See n. 78.
88 Moore, Judaism, vol. 1, 487 n. 1; vol. 3, 148 n. 206. Apart from Garbe, Die Sāmkhya-Philosophie (n. 75 above) he was probably advised by E. W. Hopkins, an expert of his period (1930).
90 Targum Neofiti, Exodus 15: 1; Fragment Targum ibid. (as indicated at Exodus 15: 9 dy ‘rjyn wrd‘af—their pursuit was the result of their self-exaltation. M. L. Klein, Fragment-Targums, ed. F. W. De Vries Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 129.
91 Philo, Legum allegoriae ii, 101–2, 103; Aprod. 82–3; 88–9; Somn. ii, 269–70; Ebr. 111.
92 St Jerome on Psalm 75. The rider is the demon who bears the spurs.
rider were thrown together, each attached to the other (š'nēyhem q'šārım), like conspirators. The maxim is a natural illustration of this idea.

Meanwhile in India herself, rather than during his studious peregrinations, the seventeenth-century Sufi sage Sheikh Ahmed Faruqi of Sirhind (Punjab) acquired the parable of the lame and the blind for Sufis' use. Contrasted with that pair, a deaf man and a dumb man were unable to help each other since they had no third party to help them—no wisdom such as would enable them to attend, as invited guests, the (Sultan's) banquet.94

Conclusion

Regarding Consolation, a specifically Greek idea has been attributed to the Buddha Gotama. There is an increase of vividness in his teaching. Regarding the lame and the blind, an Indian idea, most probably mediated by Buddhists, was received with interest in the West. It debouched finally in Jewish stories, as vital as those of the remote Indian parent, the Sāmkhya. The gain in vividness is accompanied by a gain in substance: there is the joint liability of soul and body to divine judgement. The period when this cultural contact took place can be conjectured to have been when 'Ezekiel' wrote, the centuries before and after the common era.

No single individual can have mediated Greek witticisms to Indians or sent Indian wit home. Favourable conditions existed during several centuries, from before Alexander the Great to the close of the Parthian empire.95 Clearchus of Soli, a Peripatetic philosopher, stayed in Ai Khanum in the far north of Afghanistan, and was intimate with Sogdia and Bactria, the latter a distribution centre for Indian culture. About 310 B.C. he put up a verse inscription at Ai Khanum attesting the hero-cult of Cineas, founder of the colony.96 Then there is the Heliodorus Pillar at Besnagar of two centuries later.97 Both Clearchus and Heliodorus will have had knowledge of Asian 'wisdom'; and Indians' interest in Yavana (Greek) sciences is beyond doubt (D'Alviella).

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95 Doubts as to the availability of mythology regarding the birth of Apollo to authors describing the birth of the Buddha (descendant of the Sun) (Har Dayal, The Bodhisattva doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit literature (London: Kegan Paul, 1932), 298) are unjustified. That such Greek mythology did reach India was seen by E. Senart (1882) and cf. J. D. M. Derrett, 'Homer in India; the birth of the Buddha.', JRAS, 3rd series, 2/1, 1992, 47–57. For the range of hellenistic material in the relevant areas see R. Lane Fox, Alexander the Great (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), 559.
97 For Heliodorus' pillar see Derrett, Bible, 95, n. 57.