

WORLD RELIGIONS

Buddhism and The Baha'i Faith

Lesson #23

Buddhism

Buddhism is a philosophic religion. Though very pervasive in some parts of the world it is less so in the United States. There are nineteen Buddhist temples in California, for instance, and they are all in or near larger cities. There are 31 states that have no Buddhist temple. Thus, you tend to see Buddhists in larger cities. Because there are many different belief systems within Buddhism, over 200 in Japan alone, it is impossible to cover all of them in this brief survey. Statements made about what Buddhists believe may only apply to some Buddhists. This lesson will give a very general overview of Buddhist beliefs accepted in some circles. As Buddhist teachings are considered, it will reveal how far Buddhism is from biblical Christianity. James P. Eckman has written concerning Buddhism:

From its beginnings, Buddhism differed from most other religions. Rather than focusing on moral evil, it concentrated on pain and suffering; unlike other religions, Buddhism did not ask for devotion to or ritual toward a supreme god or gods. Buddhism is essentially a philosophy rather than a religion, an Eastern form of spirituality. David Bentley Taylor characterizes Buddhism as “a non-theistic ethical discipline, a system of self-training ... stressing ethics and mind-culture to the exclusion of theology.”¹

I. GROWTH AND STATISTICS OF BUDDHISM

A. *The Truth About World Views* states, “Buddhism spread rapidly throughout Asia. Siddhartha strongly opposed India’s caste system, so closely tied to Hinduism. He taught that Nirvana was for everyone, regardless of caste. Hence Buddhism appealed to the lower castes of society. In addition, unlike the vague, often contradictory, ideas of Hinduism, Buddhism offered a precise definition of the human condition with an exact plan of “salvation.” Finally, Buddhist monks took their new religion along the trade routes of China, Japan, and Tibet. Today more

¹James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews: A Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives* (Wheaton Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 37.

than 300 million [written in 2004] Buddhists live in the areas from Sri Lanka to Japan because of these traveling monks.”²

- B. *Wikipedia* states: The Buddha lived and taught in the northeastern Indian subcontinent some time between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE. He is recognized by Buddhists as an awakened or enlightened teacher who shared his insights to help sentient beings end suffering (or dukkha), achieve nirvana, and escape what is seen as a cycle of suffering and rebirth.

Two major branches of Buddhism are recognized: Theravada ("The School of the Elders") and Mahayana ("The Great Vehicle"). Theravada—the oldest surviving branch—has a widespread following in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Mahayana is found throughout East Asia and includes the traditions of Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Shingon, Tendai and Shinnyo-en. In some classifications Vajrayana—a subcategory of Mahayana practiced in Tibet and Mongolia—is recognized as a third branch.

While Buddhism remains most popular within Asia, both branches are now found throughout the world. Estimates of Buddhists worldwide vary significantly depending on the way Buddhist adherence is defined. Lower estimates are between 350–500 million.³

- C. The major camps within Buddhism according to Ken Boa⁴ are:
1. *Pure Land Buddhism*, after starting in India, became popular in China, Japan, and Korea. Eventually it virtually disappeared from India and was absorbed into Hinduism.
 2. *Zen Buddhism* has many teachings that are exactly opposite of Pure Land Buddhism. Buddhists of this persuasion seek salvation (nirvana) through self-discipline, going beyond language and reason to encounter supernatural experiences of flash intuition

²James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews: A Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives* (Wheaton Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 39-40.

³<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism>

⁴Classifications summarized from Kenneth Boa, *Cults, World Religions, and You* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1981), 29-30.

during meditation known as *satori*. Zen Buddhism has had a profound effect on the Japanese culture, influencing landscaping, painting, gardening, flower arrangements, and tea ceremonies.

3. *Nichiren Buddhism* was a form of Buddhism developed by Nichiren (1222-1282) who decried all other forms of Buddhism but his own. Salvation is found only in the *Lotus Sutra* (oral traditions of Buddha) and is the most nationalistic, militant and emotional sect within Buddhism.
4. *Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism)* was formed around the seventh century AD. When Buddhism arrived in Tibet, it combined with occult and magical practices of the ancient Tibetan religions. The priests of this religion are called Lamas, the head priest being the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama is worshiped as an incarnation of Bodhisattvas (an enlightened being of wisdom). Other Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and demons are also worshiped in this branch of Buddhism. Prayer wheels, mills and secret formulas and rituals are used in this sect of Buddhism.

- D. It seems that the attraction of Buddhism is the depravity of man—the desire to earn one’s salvation; the desire to deny the truth of God, both general revelation (what can be learned about God in creation and what is made), and special revelation (what can be learned in the Word of God); the desire for peace, apart from being reconciled to God. Buddhism is man seeking to better himself through self discipline and man-made standards of morality.
- E. Another attraction of Buddhism is that Buddhists often affirm that Buddha’s and Jesus’ teachings are basically the same. The reality is most are antithetical. Those who believe Jesus is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” are considered to be potential murderers. Buddhists have tried to say that happy, content Christians are actually Buddhists. When specific key doctrines of Christianity are brought to the table, Buddhists reinterpret them to conform to the teachings of Buddhism. Soon, Christianity is no longer Christianity but has been morphed into the false religion of Buddhism. Buddhists actually believe that doctrines cannot adequately explain reality, which argument they use to ignore the claims of Christianity, and then contradict themselves by trusting in their own writings. Buddhism fits in with the “tolerance of everything” mindset, except tolerance of Christianity.

II. HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

- A. *Religions A-Z* summarizes Buddhist history: “Buddhism has probably the best image of any world religion. This arises in general because of Buddhists’ emphasis on peace, serenity and compassion. More specifically, Buddhism has great appeal because of the singular impact of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, renowned for his great character, humility and humor. Buddhism goes back to an Indian reformer named Gautama, who is now known to us as the Buddha.”⁵
- B. A Buddhist website summarizes the beginning history of Buddhism: “The history of Buddhism religion dates back to the year 580 BC, which started with the birth of Buddha Siddhartha Gautama. Born in the Lumbini, Southern Nepal, Siddhartha left his home at a young age of 29 years, in search of enlightenment. After going through a life of self-denial, discipline and meditation, he attained enlightenment, which resulted in the alleviation of all his pain and suffering. He then set on a journey of teaching people the path to enlightenment that would liberate them from the cycle of life and death.

Gradually, Buddhism spread to numerous countries of the world, which resulted in development of the religion. The original Indian foundation was expanded by the inclusion of Hellenistic as well as Central Asian, East Asian and Southeast Asian cultural elements. The history of Buddhism also witnessed the development of numerous movements and divisions, such as Theravada, Mahayana, etc.”⁶

III. TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM

- A. *The Truth About World Views* states: “Conceived in Asia, Buddhism is an historic expression of a universal human ideal. It offers any individual or society a voluntary way of thought and conduct, based upon an analysis

⁵James A. Beverley, *Religions A-Z* (Nashville, Tenn.: T. Nelson, 2005), 32.

⁶<http://www.buddhist-temples.com/history-of-buddhism.html>

of conditioned existence, dependent upon supreme human effort, and directed toward the realization of freedom in perfect existence.”⁷

B. *Religions A-Z* summarizes the basic chronology of Buddha’s life:

The different traditions in Buddhism do not agree on the details about his life and teachings. In fact, there is no uniformity among Buddhists or among scholars of Buddhism even about when he lived. However, his life is often captured in twelve crucial acts, the first having to do with his preincarnate state.

1. Waits in Tushita (the eternal realm)
2. Grows in the womb of Queen Mayadevi, his mother
3. Is born out of her side
4. Attains intellectual and physical skills
5. Marries Yashodhara and birth of son (Rahula)
6. Renounces royal life and departure from palace
7. Chooses ascetic path of extreme denial
8. Seeks enlightenment at the bodhi tree
9. Defeats Mara (the lord of Samsara)
10. Attains enlightenment
11. Teaches Buddhist dharma
12. Enters Nirvana

Buddha’s life story includes alleged supernatural elements. When he was in his mother’s womb, his father could see him sitting in a meditation posture inside a wonderful box. After Gautama was born, he took seven steps and proclaimed, “I alone in the world am the Honored One.” When Gautama’s mother died, she became a goddess and her womb is preserved in the heavens. Gautama escaped from the royal palace on his horse Kanthaka. The horse died of a broken heart when Gautama had to leave him, but Kanthaka became a god. When Gautama defeated Mara, he did so, in part, by turning demons into flowers.⁸

⁷James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews: A Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives* (Wheaton Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 37, quoting Richard A. Gard, *Buddhism* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961), 13.

⁸James A. Beverley, *Religions A-Z* (Nashville, Tenn.: T. Nelson, 2005), 32.

C. **Source of Authority**

1. Buddhists don't have anything like the Bible that they rely on that has ancient history and reliability. The earliest documents they have about Buddha were written about four to five centuries after his death and their historical authenticity is questioned by some Buddhist scholars.
2. The key writings of Buddhism are the Pali cannon and other Buddhist Scripture like the Nichiren Daishonin's writings (Gosho). In many instances personal experience, especially in meditation, is one's source of authority.
3. Western forms of Buddhism often appear to be more scientific, mixing in science and rational thought with their beliefs to gain credit in the eyes of Westerners, contrary to Buddhism in the Asian countries which has much to say about miracles and the supernatural.
4. Truth is obtained from various Buddhas from one generation to the next. Buddhas are enlightened beings that pass on information from one generation to the next. Buddha is the primary source of authority for Buddhists today. They also have sacred writings which various groups within Buddhism follow to varying degrees.
5. The Buddha taught Four Noble Truths that all Buddhists are to strive for:
 - a. First, to understand that suffering is real.
 - b. Second, to understand that suffering is caused by selfish desire.
 - c. Third, to understand that suffering will cease when selfish desire is eliminated.
 - d. Fourth and finally, to understand that selfish desire will cease through following the Noble Eightfold Path leading to nirvana:
 - (1) To obtain the right view
 - (2) To obtain the right resolve

- (3) To obtain the right speech
- (4) To obtain the right actions
- (5) To obtain the right livelihood
- (6) To obtain the right effort
- (7) To obtain the right mindfulness
- (8) To obtain the right concentration

6. *Truth About Worldviews* quotes a Buddhist teacher, Subhadra Bhikshu, as saying:

No, there are no divine revelations. It is a groundless assumption, utterly rejected by Buddhism, that the truth should be revealed by God or an angel, to a few inspired favorites. The only revelation we have ever received is from the mouth of those sublime teachers of mankind, who themselves have worked out their own perfection and deliverance, having shown others the way to do it. . .⁹

D. **God**

1. There is no God or supreme Creator as in Christianity. The universe is not real, but empty or only temporarily real and in a continual state of flux.
2. *Truth About World Views* says, “Despite the manifold divisions within Buddhism, there is a basic metaphysical worldview underlying the entire Buddhist framework. Although in many ways Buddhism is non-theistic (as evidenced by no definable belief in a supreme being or god), it promotes pantheism. Pantheism is the belief that God (ultimate reality) is the world, and the world is ultimate reality (i.e., God); God is all and all is God. However, within Buddhism any religious devotion or piety is not directed to this pantheistic “god.” There are no prayers or sacrifices to deities in

⁹James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews: A Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives* (Wheaton Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 42.

Buddha's teachings. For Buddha, the universe abounded in gods, goddesses, demons, and other nonhuman powers and agencies, but all were without exception finite and subject to death and rebirth. So Buddhism is foundationally pantheistic but practically non-theistic."¹⁰

3. Buddhism, depending on what sect is considered, either believes in many gods (polytheism in later Buddhism), believes everything is God (pantheistic), or that there is no God (atheism in early Buddhism).

E. Jesus Christ

1. *Religions A-Z* says: "Buddhist teachers in Southeast Asia, Japan, Tibet, and other areas of the world where Buddhism is dominant often have little interest in Jesus Christ. Buddhist teachers who have come to the West, however, have frequently incorporated an appreciation of Jesus into their own teachings about Buddhism. This is particularly true of the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hahn. Thich Nhat Hahn was born in Vietnam in 1926 but was forced to leave in 1966. He now lives in exile in France. He contends that Jesus and Buddha are spiritual brothers."¹¹
2. Buddhists do not believe Jesus is the only Son of God or Savior or Redeemer. Such thoughts are considered dangerous.

F. Salvation

1. The Christian view of salvation is ignorant and not true. There is no supreme deity, need for a Savior, atonement, or justification before God. The need to be saved from the consequences of one's sins is not only a false concept, but spiritually dangerous.
2. Salvation is by works, through self-instruction and personal self-discipline, by seeking refuge in Buddha, his teachings, and the Buddhist community.

¹⁰James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews: A Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives* (Wheaton Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 40-41.

¹¹James A. Beverley, *Religions A-Z* (Nashville, Tenn.: T. Nelson, 2005), 34.

3. Every living thing is subject to the law of karma, the principle of cause and effect. Karma controls the cycle of reincarnation.
4. *Truth About World Views* states:

Concerning the law of karma (the law of cause and effect), Buddha viewed it as operating remorselessly and without recompense in the life of unchecked desire. The desires and lusts that caused so much suffering would act in determining the next cycle's destiny for the human. But if the person got control of his desires through the Middle Path that Buddha taught, the cycle of rebirth could be broken. . .

Nirvana to the Buddhist is a state of perfect, painless peace and joy, a self-achieved freedom from misery of any kind. Nirvana is an eternal state of neither being nor nonbeing; it is the end of all finite states.¹²

G. **Miscellaneous Views**

1. Buddhism has a kind of reincarnation/retribution theology concerning those who die tragic deaths in this life. They believe that tragic deaths in this life are the result of misdeeds done in the previous life. James Beverly even points out that, "Some Buddhist teachers have even contended that those who died in the 2004 tsunami disaster were victims of their misdeeds in previous reincarnations."¹³
2. The Buddhist is required to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual immorality, lying, and the use of illicit drugs and liquor.
3. The current universe has evolved through natural law.
4. *The Truth About World Views* states: "Buddha's teaching about the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path was extremely general, ready made to fit with other moral codes of behavior. Buddha spent

¹²James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews: A Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives* (Wheaton Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 41.

¹³James A. Beverley, *Religions A-Z* (Nashville, Tenn.: T. Nelson, 2005), 33.

his life trying to explain them. According to John Noss, Buddha's rules were simple. All followers were to wear a yellow robe, shave their heads, carry a begging bowl, take part in daily meditation, and subscribe to the Buddhist confession: "I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in the Dharma (the Law); I take refuge in the Order." Buddhists were also to obey the Ten Precepts: Refrain from destroying life, don't take what is not given, be chaste, be honest, do not drink intoxicants, do not eat after noon, do not watch dancing or singing or drama, do not wear ornaments or scents or garlands, do not have a high or broad bed, and do not possess any silver or gold."¹⁴

H. Buddhist Quotes

1. "We live in illusion and the appearance of things. There is a reality. We are that reality. When you understand this, you see that you are nothing, and being nothing, you are everything. That is all."¹⁵
2. "There is nothing in Christianity or Buddhism that quite matches the sympathetic unselfishness of an oyster."¹⁶
3. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage. All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him."¹⁷
4. "Rely upon yourself: Do not depend upon anyone else. Make my teachings your light. Rely upon them: do not depend upon any other teaching."

¹⁴James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews: A Biblical Understanding of Worldview Alternatives* (Wheaton Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004), 39.

¹⁵Hindu Prince Gautama Siddharta, the founder of Buddhism, 563-483 B.C.

¹⁶Japanese peace activist and Buddhist leader of Buddhist organization Soka Gakkai International, b.1928.

¹⁷Dhammapada, V. 1-2.

Baha'i

I. GROWTH AND STATISTICS OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

- A. According to *Wikipedia*: “The Bahá'í Faith is a monotheistic religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh in nineteenth-century Persia, emphasizing the spiritual unity of all humankind. There are an estimated five to six million Bahá'ís around the world in more than 200 countries and territories.”¹⁸
- B. The Baha'i faith is attractive to people because it promotes world peace, the uniting of all world religions and proclaims religious tolerance. All gods, all holy books, all teachings are supposedly tolerated. In practice, however, they are all reinterpreted to conform to Baha'i beliefs. Baha'i presents itself as a religion of renewal, restoring all other religions which have been corrupted, to the one true religion, the Baha'i faith.

II. HISTORY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

- A. *Religions A-Z* explains the Islamic roots of the Baha'i faith, how the movement got started and continued until recent times:

The Baha'i faith. . . cannot be understood apart from its connections to an Iranian sectarian movement of Shia Islam known as the Babi movement. Shia Islam has a core doctrinal position that the world awaits the return of a mahdi, or messiah figure, at the end of time. In 1844 a Muslim by the name of Siyyid Ali Muhammad (1819–50), building on this apocalyptic notion, proclaimed that he was the “Bab,” or gate to God.

The Bab was executed in 1850, but his followers continued to experience persecution under orthodox Shia leaders. In 1852 many Babis were arrested, including Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri. Husayn 'Ali, born in Persia (now Iran) in 1817, became the founder of the Baha'i faith. He is now known to history as Bahá'u'lláh (a name meaning “the glory of God”). Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to Baghdad in 1853. In 1863 he proclaimed that he was the mahdi promised by the Bab

¹⁸<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baha%27i>

and by all religions. In 1868 he was exiled to Acre, on the coast of Syria. He died there in 1892.

After the founder's death, leadership in the movement passed to Abdu-Bahá, the son of Baha'u'lláh. Under Abdu-Bahá (b. 1844), the Baha'i faith became a world movement, and he helped formulate official teaching on many theological and ethical topics. He was also successful at warding off attacks from his stepbrother, though Baha'is experienced a decade of internal conflict over the competing heirs. Abdu-Bahá died in 1921. He was succeeded by his grandson Shoghi Effendi, who led the movement until his death in 1957.

Shoghi Effendi's death created a crisis in the movement since there was no heir to follow as the One Guardian. Leadership was eventually given to those known as the Hands of the Cause of God and then to the members of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel. In 1960 Charles Remey, who had designed several Baha'i temples, proclaimed that he was the Guardian. Very few chose to follow him. In the early 1960s Remey taught that there would be an impending catastrophe on the planet, leading to the deaths of two-thirds of the world's population. He died in Italy in 1974.¹⁹

B. *What The Cults Believe* summarizes the history of the Baha'i faith saying:

The first recognized founder was known as The Bab, or "Gate," and lived in Persia. In 1844 he proclaimed himself the messenger whose coming had been foretold by Muhammad. His successor was known as Baha'u'llah, "The Glory of God." He declared, "plainly and repeatedly, that he was the long-expected educator and teacher of all peoples, the channel of a wondrous Grace that would transcend all previous outpourings, in which all previous forms of religion would be merged, as rivers merge in the ocean." He was to bring about the inauguration of the glorious age of peace on earth foretold by prophets of old. It would be characterized by unity of mankind, religions, races, nations; equality of men and women; unification of languages; one international tribunal for judgment of all. The Baha'i World Faith is named after Baha'u'llah.

¹⁹James A. Beverley, *Religions A-Z* (Nashville, Tenn.: T. Nelson, 2005), 21-22.

With him it was claimed, "The Prophetic Cycle hath verily ended.
The Eternal Truth is now come."²⁰

- C. John Ankerberg and John Weldon have a section in *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions* which addresses many of the problems with Baha'i history. In summary, experts in early Baha'i history have shown that the Bab predicted that the next manifestation of God would not appear for another 1511 to 2001 years! This means that Baha'u-llah, one of Baha'i's great holy men and self-proclaimed manifestations of God, was an imposter and that his teachings are false. The authors also show how Baha'ism has purposefully altered their history in an attempt to remove contradictions caused by what later "prophets" wrote.²¹

III. TEACHINGS OF THE BAHA'I FAITH

- A. *Religions A-Z*, after discussing the historical roots of the Baha'i faith, says: "In spite of its complex Islamic past, the central beliefs of the Baha'i religion are straightforward. The most important ones are the following: (1) all religions are one; (2) religion must conform to science and reason; (3) all humans are one; (4) Baha'u'llah is the manifestation of God for the present age; (5) women and men are equal; and (6) there should be one universal language. Baha'is also believe that there have been previous manifestations of God, including Moses, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Muhammad, Jesus, and the Bab."²²

B. Concerning Baha'i Source of Authority

1. The Bible is just one of many holy books.
2. "The Most Holy Book" (*Al-Kitab-Al-Aqdas*), written by Baha'-u'llah, is their primary holy book.
3. With each of the manifestations of God, more revelation is given.

²⁰Irvine Robertson, *What the Cults Believe* (Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1991), 197.

²¹John Ankerber and John Weldon, *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1999), 8-11.

²²James A. Beverley, *Religions A-Z* (Nashville, Tenn.: T. Nelson, 2005), 22.

4. Speaking of discrepancies in Baha'ism, *The Apologetics Study Bible* says, "They claim that religious truth is relative to historical periods. This argument fails because it makes God unable to reveal even the most basic divine truths consistently. Moreover, if God is unknowable, as Baha'is claim, then there is no basis for any divine revelation (knowledge), Baha'i or otherwise."²³

C. Concerning God

1. **The Trinity** is a false concept and a distortion of Baha'i teachings. It is an assault on the oneness of God.
2. *Wikipedia* states: "The Bahá'í writings describe a single, personal, inaccessible, omniscient, omnipresent, imperishable, and almighty God who is the creator of all things in the universe. The existence of God and the universe is thought to be eternal, without a beginning or end. Though inaccessible directly, God is nevertheless seen as conscious of creation, with a will and purpose that is expressed through messengers termed Manifestations of God."²⁴

D. Concerning Jesus

1. Reject the historical reality of Jesus' miracles.
2. Affirm Jesus' crucifixion, but deny His resurrection.
3. Jesus was a prophet and one of nine or more manifestations of God, but He was not God incarnate.
4. Baha'u'llah represents the Second Coming of Christ.
5. Jesus did not atone for our sins to save us in dying on the cross.

E. Holy Spirit is an impersonal force or power of God.

²³Ted Cabal, Chad Owen Brand, E. Ray Clendenen et al., *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), 1103.

²⁴<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baha%27i>

- F. **Salvation** is attained through faith in the nine or more manifestations of God and good works. You must save yourself, God does not save you by perfecting yourself.

- G. **Man**
 - 1. Men are born sinless, there is no original sin. Original sin was a corrupt doctrine taught by the Apostle Paul.
 - 2. The Fall of man, as recorded in Genesis, is an allegory.
 - 3. Man has a pure and sinless spiritual nature. Though men are imperfect in their actions they can all, through good works, attain to perfection.

- H. **Satan** is a Christian myth.

- I. **Heaven and Hell** are conditions, not literal places where people go. Death, in general, is something to look forward to, an improved state of existence to be anticipated.