Confession Of A Buddhist Atheist Stephen Batchelor | bb2ca6591c1fa9168e9a8c103f2b6f94

Religion as We Know It: An Origin Story
Why I Am Not a Buddhist
Fight God!
Living with the Devil
Mysticism and Meaning: Multidisciplinary Perspectives
Why Buddhism is True
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God Is Not Great
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Improvement
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Alien Impact
The Art of Solitude
Why Can't I Meditate?
The Art of Solitude
An Introduction to Buddhism
The Monk and the Philosopher

In this book, we have hand-picked the most sophisticated, unanticipated, absorbing (if not at times crackpot!), original and musing book reviews of "Confession of a Buddhist Atheist." Don't say we didn't warn you: these reviews are known to shock with their unconventionality or intimacy. Some may be startled by their biting sincerity; others may be spellbound by their unbridled flights of fantasy. Don't buy this book if: 1. You don't have nerves of steel. 2. You expect to get pregnant in the next five minutes. 3. You've heard it all.

The Buddha's teachings are not a philosophy or a religion; they are a call to action and invitation to revolution. Noah Levine, author of the national bestseller Dharma Punx and Against the Stream, is the leader of the youth movement for a new American Buddhism. In Heart of the Revolution, he offers a set of reflections, tools, and teachings to help readers unlock their own sense of empathy and compassion. Lama Surya Das, author of Awakening the Buddha Within, declares Levins to be "in the fore among Young Buddhists of America, a rebel with both a good cause and the noble heart and spiritual awareness to prove it," saying, I highly recommend this book to those who want to join us on this joyful path of mindfulness and awakening.

The volume investigates the question of meaning of mystical phenomena and, conversely, queries the concept of "meaning" itself, via insights afforded by mystical experiences. The collection brings together researchers from such disparate fields as philosophy, psychology, history of religion, cognitive poetics, and semiotics, in an effort to ascertain the question of mysticism's meaning through pertinent, up-to-date multidisciplinarity. The discussion commences with Editor's Introduction that probes persistent questions of complexity as well as perplexity of mysticism and the reasons why problematizing mysticism leads to even greater enigmas. One thread within the volume provides the contextual framework for continuing fascination of mysticism that includes a consideration of several historical traditions as well as personal accounts of mystical experiences: Two contributions showcase ancient Egyptian and ancient Israelite involvements with mystical alterations of consciousness and Christianity's origins being steeped in mystical praxis; and four essays highlight mysticism's formative presence in Chinese traditions and Tibetan Buddhism as well as medieval Judaism and Kabbalah mysticism. A second, more overarching strand within the volume is concerned with multidisciplinary investigations of the phenomenon of mysticism, including philosophical, psychological, cognitive, and semiotic analyses. To this effect, the volume explores the question of philosophy's relation to mysticism and vice versa, together with a Wittgensteinian nexus between mysticism, facticity, and truth; language mysticism and "supernormal meaning" engendered by certain mystical states; cognitive-poetic analysis of mystical poetry; and a semiotic scrutiny of some mystical experiences and their ineffability. Finally, the volume includes an assessment of the so-called New Age authors' contention of the convergence of scientific and mystical claims about reality. The above two tracks are appended with personal, contemporary accounts of mystical experiences, in the Prologue; and a futuristic envisioning, as a fictitious chronicle from the time-to-come, of life without things mystical, in the Postscript. The volume contains fourteen chapters; its international contributors are based in Canada, Israel, United Kingdom, and the United States.

In a time of social distancing and isolation, a meditation on the beauty of solitude from renowned Buddhist writer Stephen Batchelor. Whatever a soul is, the author goes a long way toward soothing it. A very welcome instance of philosophy that can help readers live a good life. Kirkus Reviews
Elegant and formally ingenious. Geoff Wisner Wall Street Journal
When world renowned Buddhist writer Stephen Batchelor turned sixty, he took a sabbatical from his teaching and turned his attention to solitude, a practice integral to the meditative traditions he has long studied and taught. He aimed to venture more deeply into solitude, discovering its full extent and depth. This beautiful literary collage documents his multifaceted explorations. Spending time in remote places, appreciating and making art, practicing meditation and participating in retreats, drinking peyote and ayahuasca, and training himself to keep an open, questioning mind have all contributed to Batchelor's ability to be simultaneously alone and at ease. Mixed in with his personal narrative are inspiring stories from solitude's devoted practitioners, from the Buddha to Montaigne, from Vermeer to Agnes Martin. In a hyperconnected world that is at the same time plagued by social isolation, this book shows how to enjoy the inescapable solitude that is at the heart of human life.

Some twenty-five centuries after the Buddha started teaching, his message continues to influence people across the globe, including those living in predominantly secular societies. What does it mean to adapt religious practices to secular contexts? Stephen Batchelor, an internationally known author and teacher, is committed to a secularized version of the Buddha's teachings. The time has come, he feels, to articulate a coherent ethical, contemplative, and philosophical vision of Buddhism for our age. After Buddhism, the culmination of four decades of study and practice in the Tibetan, Zen, and Theravada traditions, is his attempt to set the record straight about who the Buddha was and what he was trying to teach. Combining critical readings of the earliest canonical texts with narrative accounts of five members of the Buddha's inner circle, Batchelor depicts the Buddha as a pragmatic ethicist rather than a dogmatic metaphysician. He envisions Buddhism as a constantly evolving culture of awakening whose long survival is due to its capacity to reinvent itself and interact creatively with each society it encounters. This original and provocative book presents a new framework for understanding the remarkable spread of Buddhism in today's globalized world. It also reminds us of what was so startling about the Buddha's vision of human flourishing.

The distinguished historian and author of The Medici Conspiracy examines atheism as a modern intellectual achievement that has motivated individuals to pursue invention and self-reliance, citing the accomplishments of secular philosophers, scientists and artists who have worked in the absence of religious belief.

Don Capit believes that a new and truly global religious consciousness has been quietly easing itself in around the world. It does not need any visible organization and does not make any non-rational doctrinal claims. It is the religion of life a secular, purely this-worldly, and radically-democratic affirmation of ordinary life. Where prescientific ages saw Heaven, he says, we see only sky. We have given up belief in a supernatural world, and we have felt compelled to break with the received ecclesiastical form of Christianity. But the Christian spirit of critical thinking, of systematic self-criticism and perpetual reform, has spread around the whole world in modern science, technology, critical
history, and liberal democracy. In Above Us Only Sky, in 27 brief slogans, he presents a systematic theology of this religion of ordinary life, setting it against its philosophical background, its spirituality and its relation to other faiths. It is, he says, the legacy and the long-awaited fulfillment of Christianity.

Stephen Batchelor's seminal work on humanity's struggle between good and evil In the national bestseller Living with the Devil, Batchelor traces the trajectory from the words of the Buddha and Christ, through the writings of Shantideva, Milton, and Pascal, to the poetry of Baudelaire, the fiction of Kafka, and the findings of modern physics and evolutionary biology to examine who we really are, and to rest in the uncertainty that we may never know. Like his previous bestseller, Buddhism without Beliefs, Living with the Devil is also an introduction to Buddhism that encourages readers to nourish their "buddha nature" and make peace with the devils that haunt human life. He tells a poetic and provocative tale about living with life's contradictions that will challenge you to live your life as an existence imbued with purpose, freedom, and compassion/rather than habitual self-interest and fear.

The understanding of the nature of reality is the insight upon which the Buddha was able to achieve his own enlightenment. This vision of the sublime is the source of all that is enigmatic and paradoxical about Buddhism. In Verses from the Center, Stephen Batchelor explores the history of this concept and provides readers with translations of the most important poems ever written on the subject, the poems of 2nd century philosopher Nagarjuna.

"Elegant and formally ingenious,"--Geoff Wisner, Wall Street Journal

A meditation on the beauty of solitude from renowned Buddhist writer Stephen Batchelor When world renowned Buddhist writer Stephen Batchelor turned sixty, he took a sabbatical from his teaching and turned his attention to solitude, a practice integral to the meditative traditions he has long studied and taught. He aimed to venture more deeply into solitude, discovering its full extent and depth. This beautiful literary collage documents his multifaceted explorations. Spending time in remote places, appreciating and making art, practicing meditation and participating in retreats, drinking peyote and ayahuasca, and training himself to keep an open, questioning mind have all contributed to Batchelor's ability to be simultaneously alone and at ease. Mixed in with his personal narrative are inspiring stories from solitude's devoted practitioners, from the Buddha to Montaigne, from Vermeer to Agnes Martin. In a hyperconnected world that is at the same time plagued by social isolation, this book shows how to enjoy the inescapable solitude that is at the heart of human life.

These hilarious essays on life inside and outside a Zen monastery make up the spiritual memoir of Shzoian Jack Haubner, a Zen monk who didn't really start out to be one. Raised in a conservative Catholic family, Shzoan went on to study philosophy (becoming de-Catholicized in the process) and to pursue a career as a screenwriter and stand-up comic in the clubs of L.A. How he went from life in the fast lane to life on the stationary meditation cushion is the subject of this laugh-out-loud funny account of his experiences. Whether he's dealing with the pranks of a juvenile delinquent assistant in the monastery kitchen or defending himself against claims that he appeared in a porno movie under the name "Daniel Reed" (he didn't, really) or being surprised in the midst of it all by the compassion he experiences in the presence of his teacher, Haubner's voice is one you'll be compelled to listen to. Not only because it's highly entertaining, but because of its remarkable insight into the human condition.

Though raised Catholic, in the early 1950s Jack Kerouac became fascinated with Buddhism, an interest that would have a profound impact on his ideas of spirituality and their expression in his writing from Mexico City Blues to The Dharma Bums. Published for the first time in book form, Wake Up is Kerouac's retelling of the story of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who as a young man abandoned his wealthy family and comfortable home for a lifelong search for Enlightenment. As a compendium of the teachings of the Buddha, Wake Up is an incisive and deeply personal account of the story of Keroauc's evolving beliefs. It is the work of a devoted spiritual follower of the Buddha who also happened to be one of the twentieth century's most influential novelists. Wake Up: A Life of the Buddha will be essential reading for the legions of Jack Kerouac fans and for anyone who is curious about the spiritual principles of one of the world's great religions.

Jeremy Kroeker is a Mennonite with a motorcycle. He doesn't have a funny beard and he's never even driven a buggy, but his family hails from the same Mennonite community that Miriam Toews fictionalized in A Complicated Kindness. From childhood through college, Kroeker attended Christian schools where he learned to think critically back to predetermined conclusions. Years later, when his faith begins to unravel, Kroeker stops short of tossing it all aside, choosing instead to leave every unanswered question hanging there on the edge of his mind. He might have gotten away with it, too, except for a drunken resolution that forces the issue of God back into his life. In the fall of 2007, Kroeker decides to ride his motorcycle across Europe and into the theocratic nation of Iran a nation ruled by God. In the end, Kroeker finds himself on a forbidden visit to the holiest Muslim shrine in all of Iran. Once inside, invisible hands reach into Kroeker's chest and rip from his heart a sincere prayer, his first in many years. And God hears that prayer. For before Kroeker can escape Mashhad, God steals into his hotel room one night to threaten him with death. At least, that's one way to look at it. Throughout the narrative, Kroeker swings from dogmatic belief in God to overwhelming doubt before finally deciding that the key to approaching God is humility. He understands that uncertainty is not only an acceptable state of mind when considering the Divine, but it is necessary. He will always fear God. But who knows? Perhaps if he keeps riding, one of these days God will speak clearly. And that frightens him, too.

Jean Francois-Revel, a pillar of French intellectual life in our time, became world famous for his challenges to both Communism and Christianity. Twenty-seven years ago, his son, Matthieu Ricard, gave up a promising career as a scientist to study Tibetan Buddhism -- not as a detached observer but by immersing himself in its practice under the guidance of its greatest living masters. Meeting in an inn overlooking Katmandu, these two profoundly thoughtful men explored the questions that have occupied humankind throughout its history. Does life have meaning? What is consciousness? Is man free? What is the value of scientific and material progress? Why is there suffering, war, and hatred? Their conversation is not merely abstract: they ask each other questions about ethics, rights, and responsibilities, about knowledge and belief, and they discuss frankly the differences in the way each has tried to make sense of his life. Utterly absorbing, inspiring, and accessible, this remarkable dialogue engages East with West, ideas with life, and science with the humanities, providing wisdom on how to enrich the way we live our lives.

A brief, beautiful invitation to the study of religion from a Pulitzer Prize winner. How did our forebears begin to think about religion as a distinct domain, separate from other activities that were once inseparable from it? Starting at the birth of Christianity religion inextricably bound to Western thought!Jack Miles reveals how the West's commonsense understanding of religion emerged and then changed as insular Europe discovered the rest of the world. In a moving postscript, he shows how this story continues today in the hearts of individual religious or irreligious men and women.

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historical Buddhism told from the author's unique perspective as a former Buddhist monk and modern seeker. Drawing from the original Pali Canon, the seminal collection of Buddhist discourses compiled after the Buddha's death by his followers, Batchelor shows us the Buddha as a flesh-and-blood man who looked at life in a radically new way. Batchelor also reveals the everyday challenges and doubts of his own devotional journey—from meeting the Dalai Lama in India, to training as a Zen monk in Korea, to finding his path as a lay teacher of Buddhism living in France. Both controversial and deeply personal, Stephen Batchelor's refreshingly doctrine-free, life-informed account is essential reading for anyone interested in Buddhism.

From one of America's most brilliant writers, a New York Times bestselling journey through psychology, philosophy, and lots of meditation to show how Buddhism holds the key to moral clarity and enduring happiness. At the heart of Buddhism is a simple claim: The reason we suffer and the reason we make other people suffer is that we don't see the world clearly. At the heart of Buddhist meditative practice is a radical promise: We can learn to see the world, including ourselves, more clearly and so gain a deep and morally valid happiness. In this sublime (The New Yorker), pathbreaking book, Robert Wright shows how taking this promise seriously can change your life: how it can loosen the grip of anxiety, regret, and hatred, and how it can deepen your appreciation of beauty and of other people. He also shows why this transformation works, drawing on the latest in neuroscience and psychology, and armed with an acute understanding of human evolution. This book is the culmination of a personal journey that began with Wright's landmark book on evolutionary psychology, The Moral Animal, and deepened as he immersed himself in meditative practice and conversed with some of the world's most skilled meditators. The result is a story that is provocative, informative and deeply rewarding (The New York Times Book Review), and as entertaining as it is illuminating.

Written with the wit, clarity, and grace for which Wright is famous, Why Buddhism Is True lays the foundation for a spiritual life in a secular age and shows how, in a time of technological distraction and social division, we can save ourselves from ourselves, both as individuals and as a species.

Many people with a post-modern perspective are sincerely seeking their personal truth. In their search, they have rightly opened the door into personal, subjective experience as a legitimate way for humans to discover personal truth. For me, this means Our Present Time is a time to return to the experiences, beyond words, pointed to in the original writings of the first followers of Jesus. I describe in this book some personal, subjective experiences of my own. Those authors frequently describe their experiences of Jesus as just that, experiences beyond words. Ironically, they used words to point to experiences that are beyond words to describe. This book of words is for all of us who are seeking for more than just words.

"A provocative essay challenging the idea of Buddhist exceptionalism, from one of the world's most widely respected philosophers and writers on Buddhism and science. Buddhism has become a uniquely valued religion in our modern age. A burgeoning number of books extol the scientifically proven benefits of meditation and mindfulness for everything ranging from business to romance. There are conferences, courses, and celebrities promoting the notion that Buddhism is spirituality for the rational; compatible with cutting-edge science; indeed, "a science of the mind." In this provocative book, Evan Thompson argues that this representation of Buddhism is false. In lucid and entertaining prose, Thompson dives deep into both Western and Buddhist philosophy to explain how the goals of science and religion are fundamentally different. Efforts to seek their unification are wrong-headed and promote mistaken ideas of both. He suggests cosmopolitanism instead, a worldview with deep roots in both Eastern and Western traditions. Smart, sympathetic, and intellectually ambitious, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in Buddhism's place in our world today."--Provided by publisher.

The author of Buddhism Without Beliefs bridges the gap between Western and Eastern philosophy with this humanist approach to Buddhism. This uniquely contemporary guide to understanding the timeless message of Buddhism, and in particular its relevance in actual human relations, was inspired by Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way Of Life, which the author translated into English, the oral instructions of living Buddhist masters, Heidegger's classic Being and Time, and the writings of the Christian theologians Paul Tillich and John Macquarrie. The text is written with unusual clarity of style, making difficult matters readily accessible. It fills a serious gap in the dialogue between East and West, and does so in the most sensitive, most intelligent, and most careful way. Batchelor's strategy to use the Western disciplines in order to make Buddhism accessible to the Westerner is, I think, highly successful. The book makes a fine introduction. David Michael Levin, Department of Philosophy, Northwestern University Magnificent-inspiring! This excellent book has come to me personally as an illuminating text, despite my close on sixty years' concern with Buddhism. [Batchelor] approach is likely to appeal to many categories of readers who have hitherto never considered Buddhism as having great relevance to themselves.

Christopher Hitchens, described in the London Observer as "one of the most prolific, as well as brilliant, journalists of our time" takes on his biggest subject yet—the increasingly dangerous role of religion in the world. In the tradition of Bertrand Russell's Why I Am Not a Christian and Sam Harris's recent bestseller, The End Of Faith, Christopher Hitchens makes the ultimate case against religion. With a close and erudite reading of the major religious texts, he documents the ways in which religion is a man-made wish, a cause of dangerous sexual repression, and a distortion of our origins in the cosmos. With eloquent clarity, Hitchens frames the argument for a more secular life based on
science and reason, in which hell is replaced by the Hubble Telescope's awesome view of the universe, and Moses and the burning bush give way to the beauty and symmetry of the double helix.

The Awakening of the West is an insightful and elegantly written history chronicling the developing relationship between Buddhism and Western culture. As anyone familiar with the work of Stephen Batchelor (best-selling author of Buddhism Without Beliefs) would expect, The Awakening of the West is presented in a fresh and lively way and backed by thorough research. Using the innovative approach of starting with the present and working back in time, Batchelor makes it easy to connect familiar contemporary Buddhist teachers to their historical roots. He breathes life into history by capturing the personalities and times of famous and lesser-known but important Buddhist figures.

After absorbing these stories and their context, readers will not only have a greater appreciation of Buddhism as a religion but can gain insights that can help them develop their own discerning wisdom. The Awakening of the West is a unique, engaging and important book for anyone seeking a greater understanding of Buddhism.

Everything is here to help those who are already atheists better understand the logic of their lives and see Atheism's social and political implications. Those who are not yet atheists will be helped by this scientist's common-sense analysis of the so-called 'proofs of God' to see the irrationality, indeed, the meaninglessness of god-beliefs. What is belief? What is knowledge? As Pilate is alleged to have asked, "What is truth?" Understandable and clear answers to all these questions are given by a seasoned anthropologist who has been able to see around the blinders imposed by Judeo-Christian cultures.

A national bestseller and acclaimed guide to Buddhism for beginners and practitioners alike, Stephen Batchelor reminds us that the Buddha was not a mystic who claimed privileged, esoteric knowledge of the universe, but a man who challenged us to understand the nature of anguish, let go of its origins, and bring into being a way of life that is available to us all. The concepts and practices of Buddhism, says Batchelor, are not something to believe in but something to do, as he explains clearly and compellingly, it is a practice that we can engage in, regardless of our background or beliefs, as we live every day on the path to spiritual enlightenment.

Fighting God is a firebrand manifesto from one of the most recognizable faces of atheism. In his book, Silverman—a walking, talking atheist billboard known for his appearances on Fox News—discusses the effectiveness, ethics and impact of the in-your-face-atheist who refuses to be silent. Silverman argues that religion is more than just wrong: it is malevolent and does not deserve our respect. It is our duty to be outspoken and do what we can to bring religion down. Examining the mentality, methods and issues facing the firebrand atheist, Silverman presents an overwhelming argument for firebrand atheism and reveals: - All religion is cafeteria religion and almost all agnostics are atheists. - American society grants religion a privileged status, despite the intentions of the Founding Fathers. - Christian politicians have adversely (and un-Constitutionally) affected our society with regard to science, health, women's rights, and gay rights. - The notion of "atheist Jews" is a lie forced on us by religion. - It is not "Islamophobia" to observe dangerous teachings and disproportionate violence in Islam. - Atheists are slowly but surely winning the battle. Fighting God is a provocative, unapologetic book that takes religion to task and will give inspiration to non-believers and serve as the ultimate answer to apologists.

Announcing a smart, daring, original new take on the Torah. Imagine: 54 leading young Jewish writers, artists, photographers, screenwriters, architects, actors, musicians, and graphic artists grappling with the first five books of the Bible and giving new meaning to the 54 Torah portions that are traditionally read over the course of a year. From the foundational stories of Genesis and Exodus to the legalistic minutiae of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, Unscrolled is a reinterpretting, a reimagining, a creative and eclectic celebration of the Jewish Bible. Here's a graphic-novel version of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, by Rebecca Odes and Sam Lipsyte. Lost creator Damon Lindelof writing about Abraham's decision to sacrifice his son. Here's Sloane Crosley bringing Pharaoh into the 21st century, where he's checking out "Obols, Ôölce, O and Oflague of frogsÓ on WebMD. Plus there's Joshua Foer, Aimee Bender, A. J. Jacobs, David Auburn, Jill Soloway, Ben Greenman, Josh Radnor, Adam Mansbach, and more. Edited by Roger Bennett, a founder of Reboot, a network of young Jewish creatives and intellectuals, Unscrolled is a gathering of brilliant, diverse voices that will speak to anyone interested in Jewish thought and identity, with its singular design and use of color throughout, the perfect bar and bat mitzvah gift. First it presents a synopsis of the Torah portion, written by Bennett and then the story is reinterpreted, in forms that range from the aforementioned graphic novel to transcripts, stories, poems, memoirs, letters, plays, infographics, monologues: "Unscrolled is designed to give the reader a fresh new take on some of the oldest, wisest, and occasionally weirdest stories of the Western world, while inspiring new ideas about the Bible and its meaning, value, and place in our lives."

We often view emptiness as a negative condition, a symptom of depression, despair, or grief. An assessment furthered by authors like Franz Kafka or the existentialists, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Offering an alternative view, A Philosophy of Emptiness reclaims these hollow feelings as a positive and even empowering state, an antidote to the modern obsession with substance and foundation. Digging through early and non-Western philosophy, Gay Watson uncovers a rich history of emptiness. She travels from Buddhism, Taoism, and religious mysticism to the contemporary world of philosophy, science, and art practice. Though most Western philosophies are concerned with substance and foundation, she finds that the twentieth century has seen a resurgence of emptiness and offers reasons why such an apparently unappealing concept has attracted modern musicians, artists, and scientists, as well as preeminent thinkers throughout the ages. Probing the idea of how a life without foundation might be lived—and why a person might choose this path—A Philosophy of Emptiness links these concepts to contemporary ideas of meditation and the mind, presenting a rich and intriguing take on the concept of emptiness and the history of thought.
Munro, a master of the compression and dilution of time, what time and nothing else can reveal to people about themselves.” —Washington Post

Does Buddhism require faith? Can an atheist or agnostic follow the Buddha's teachings without believing in reincarnation or organized religion? This is one man's confession. In his classic Buddhism Without Beliefs, Stephen Batchelor offered a profound, secular approach to the teachings of the Buddha that struck an emotional chord with Western readers. Now, with the same brilliance and boldness of thought, he paints a groundbreaking portrait of the historical Buddha, told from the author's unique perspective as a former Buddhist monk and modern seeker. Drawing from the original Pali Canon, the seminal collection of Buddhist discourses compiled after the Buddha's death by his followers, Batchelor shows us the Buddha as a flesh-and-blood man who looked at life in a radically new way. Batchelor also reveals the everyday challenges and doubts of his own devotional journey—from meeting the Dalai Lama in India, to training as a Zen monk in Korea, to finding his path as a lay teacher of Buddhism living in France. Both controversial and deeply personal, Stephen Batchelor's refreshing doctrine-free, life-informed account is essential reading for anyone interested in Buddhism.

This is a completely new translation of Nagarjuna's major work, the Mulamadhyamakakarika, accompanied by a detailed annotation of each of the verses. The annotation identifies the metaphysical theories of the scholastics criticized by Nagarjuna, and traces the source material and the arguments utilized in his refutation back to the early discourses of the Buddha. The Introduction presents a completely new hypothesis of the nature of the treatise. The work is a grand commentary on the Buddha's "Discourse to Katayana" (Kaccayanaqutta-sutta). The concluding part of the Introduction compares the teachings of the Buddha and Nagarjuna in regard to epistemology, ontology, ethics and philosophy of language indicating how the latter was making a determined attempt to reconstruct the Buddha's teachings in a very faithful manner, avoiding the substantialist metaphysics of the scholastics. The book shows that Nagarjuna's ideas are neither original nor are they an advancement from the early Buddhist period. Nagarjuna is not a Mahayanist.

An essential collection of Stephen Batchelor's most probing and important work on secular Buddhism As the practice of mindfulness permeates mainstream Western culture, more and more people are engaging in a traditional form of Buddhist meditation. However, many of these people have little interest in the religious aspects of Buddhism, and the practice occurs within secular contexts such as hospitals, schools, and the workplace. Is it possible to recover from the Buddha's teachings a vision of human flourishing that is secular rather than religious without compromising the integrity of the tradition? Is there an ethical framework that can underpin and contextualize these practices in a rapidly changing world? In this collected volume of Stephen Batchelor's writings on these themes, the author explores the complex implications of Buddhism's secularization. Ranging widely—from reincarnation, religious belief, and agnosticism to the role of the arts in Buddhist practice—he offers a detailed picture of contemporary Buddhism and its attempt to find a voice in the modern world.

Buddhism Plain and Simple offers a clear, straightforward treatise on Buddhism in general and on awareness in particular. When Buddha was asked to sum up his teaching in a single word, he said, “Awareness.” The Buddha taught how to see directly into the nature of experience. His observations and insights are plain, practical, and down-to-earth, and they deal exclusively with the present. Longtime teacher of Buddhism Steve Hagan presents the Buddha's uncluttered, original teachings in everyday, accessible language unencumbered by religious ritual, tradition, or belief.

Written with the same brilliance and boldness that made "Buddhism Without Beliefs" a classic, "Confession of a Buddhist Atheist" is Batchelor's account of his journey through Buddhism, which culminates in a groundbreaking new portrait of the historical Buddha.

An accessible guide from an expert on Mindfulness on how to get the most out of meditation—and make the practice a permanent part of your daily life. Meditation is supposed to be a practice that's relaxing and beneficially why is it so hard to commit to? While many people have taken workshops in meditation, a significant number don't maintain their practice for long after the class is finished. Mindfulness can help us relax and is great for coming to grips with thoughts that make us depressed or anxious, but it can also bring us into a more intimate relationship with ourselves—a prospect that can make some feel uncomfortable. Yes, lots of good things come out of meditation practice, but keeping it up is challenging. This is where Why Can't I Meditate? comes in. Full of practical ways to help our mindfulness practice flourish, it also features guidance from a wide spectrum of secular and Buddhist mindfulness teachers, and personal accounts by new meditators on what they find difficult and what helps them overcome those blocks. It takes what is boring, painful, or downright scary about meditating and shows how these struggles can become an invaluable part of our path. If you have been considering meditating but doubted your ability, if you are having a hard time continuing, or if you’ve reluctantly stopped, Why Can't I Meditate? will help you get your mindfulness practice back on track.

Kierkegaard said that faith without doubt is simply credulity, the will to believe too readily, especially without adequate evidence, and that “in Doubt can Faith begin.” All people involved in spiritual practice, of whatever persuasion, must confront doubt at one time or another, and find a way beyond it to belief, however temporary. But “faith is not equivalent to mere belief. Faith is the condition of ultimate confidence that we have the capacity to follow the path of doubt to its end. And courage.” In this engaging spiritual memoir, Stephen Batchelor describes his own training, first as a Tibetan Buddhist and then as a Zen practitioner, and his own direct struggles along his path. “It is most uncanny that we are able to ask questions, for to question means to acknowledge that we do not know something. But it is more than an acknowledgement: it includes a yearning to confront an unknown and illuminate it through understanding. Questioning is a quest.” Batchelor is a contemporary Buddhist teacher and writer, best known for his secular or agnostic approach to Buddhism. He considers Buddhism to be a constantly evolving culture of awakening rather than a religious system based on immutable dogmas and beliefs. Buddhism has survived for the past 2,500 years because of its capacity to reinvent itself in accord with the needs of the different Asian societies with which it has creatively interacted throughout its history. As Buddhism encounters modernity, it enters a vital new phase of its development. Through his writings, translations and teaching, Stephen engages in a critical exploration of Buddhism's role in the modern world, which has earned him both condemnation as a heretic and praise as a reformer.

In an America obsessed with quickie enlightenment and wisdom-acquisition, Ptolemy Tompkins is a seeker who has been there and done that. From Black Elk to the Dalai Lama -- from Hun Tun and mescaline to motorcycle Zen and mind at large -- the acclaimed author of Paradise Fever has followed many roads in pursuit of a universal truth. And he has survived to tell the tale. The Beaten Path Ptolemy Tompkins came of age in the '70s -- before Americans began spending uplifting Tuesdays with Morrie or perusing Little Instruction Books. In the wake of a quintessentially New Age childhood as the son of the radical freethinker Peter Tompkins, author of the bestselling The Secret Life of Plants, Ptolemy began a personal quest for enlightenment decades before it became trendy to do so. He gained much valuable insight as he careened from Buddha to the Bhagavad-Gita, from Krishna to Carlos Castaneda. But how much actual "wisdom" he accrued is a matter the author himself admits is up for debate. The Beaten Path is a work of great intelligence that is profound, moving, and hilariously entertaining. In his funny and touching account of a
spiritual journey that went wildly off course, the author bares his soul even as he knocks down the gaudy signposts that guide eager pilgrims through today's pop-wisdom landscape. Yet he never loses sight of what is valuable and true in the literature of the spirit. Part gripping personal memoir, part merciless-yet-affectionate critique, and part genuine prescription for the good life, The Beaten Path is a provocative gift from a man who left no page unturned, no odyssey uncompleted, in his determination to find direction and meaning in the cosmos. In exploring what it is that makes so many of his contemporaries actively seek the light of peace and transformation in its most convenient and palatable form, he offers readers a unique, idiosyncratic insight into our modern world. And he has great fun while doing so.