



Living with the Devil: A Meditation on Good and Evil

By Stephen Batchelor

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A bestselling Buddhist philosopher offers a personal meditation of extraordinary insight.

Whether we are religious or not, the Devil-evil incarnate-is a concept that can still strike fear in our hearts. What if he does exist? What if he is causing all our problems in his determination to keep us from reaching our full potential?

Stephen Batchelor takes the concept of the Devil out of literature and history and brings him to life in his many forms and guises: the flatterer, the playmate, the caring friend, the stranger who offers rest and solace, the person who knows you best and shows you your greatness in the world. And, most of all, as the great obstructor that blocks all paths to goodness and true humility.

For the first time, Batchelor fuses Western literature-Milton, Keats, Baudelaire-with Buddhism and the Judeo-Christian traditions in a poetic exploration of the struggle with the concept and reality of evil. *Living with the Devil* reveals the voice of a new poet and philosopher for our times.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The author of *Buddhism Without Beliefs* and a former monk in the Tibetan and Zen traditions, Batchelor works to reconcile the fears, desires, and compulsions of the ego (the devil or *Mara*) with the certainty of death. Drawing on a rich variety of literature, religious tradition and history, Batchelor demonstrates how the anguish associated with the transient nature of life has preoccupied humans for centuries: Job wrestles with his fate; Pascal's writings reflect his dread at being expelled from the universe when his existence would eventually come to a close. Surveying responses to this intractable problem, Batchelor concludes that mankind has always relied on the temptations of the devil to still anxiety and create an aura of permanence. Compulsive activities, lustful behavior and behaving violently and destructively to others are all evils that stem from *Mara*. Overcoming these feelings and pursuing the way of love and compassion, for Batchelor, rests on one's ability to make peace with the devil and nourish one's "Buddha nature." Although he explores a number of philosophies, Batchelor's focus is on the path to nirvana (a cessation of desires) forged by Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince and the historical Buddha, whose life and thinking are presented in some detail. Some of the references will be obscure to neophytes, but Batchelor's genuine concern and desire for a better world come through clearly.

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About the Author

Stephen Batchelor is a former monk in the Tibetan and Zen traditions. He has translated and written several books on Buddhism, including Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, *Alone with Others*, *The Faith to Doubt*, *The Tibet Guide* (winner of the 1988 Thomas Cook Award), and *The Awakening of the West* (joint winner of the 1994 Tricycle Award).

Users Review

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