

Teshoo Lama's Quest for Nirvana in Rudyard Kipling's Kim

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Abstract: *This research article is based on the quest for Nirvana, the supreme state of bliss, of the main characters the Lama in Rudyard Kipling's Kim. The protagonist the Lama in the novel Kim is in the quest for Nirvana. Kim's quest is a journey to fulfill his worldly ambition and confined with the pursue of his identity in comparison with the quest of the Lama who is detached from the worldly attachments and indulged in the journey for finding out the 'river of arrow' in order to clean his sins and to transform him from ignorance into the 'fountain of wisdom'. The quest for the Nirvana and its achievement in Kim is particularly in order to get our body or life released from the sins. Lama in Kim believes and gets inclined to this mission of enlightening others too after attaining the Nirvana.*

Key words: Nirvana, quest for identity, enlightenment, Buddhism, imperialism, worldly ambition

INTRODUCING

Kim and the concept of "Nirvana": Kipling (1995) was a British novelist and poet. He was born in Bombay when India was under the British raj. Man of the varied experiences he is best known for his works of fiction *The Jungle Book* in 1894, *Kim* in 1901, many short stories, children books and poems. Kipling was one of the most popular writers in English, in both prose and verse, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1907, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, making him the first English Language writer to receive the prize and to date he remains its youngest recipient. Kipling's subsequent reputation has changed according to the political and social climate of the age and the resulting contrasting views about him continued for much of the 20th century. The first decade of the 20th century saw Kipling at the height of his popularity. In 1907 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The novel *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling is still relevant to the various kinds of literary discourses. The protagonist named from the title of the novel can be taken as one of the versatile characters for the intellectual discussions. Rudyard Kipling was one of the most popular writers of his era and his novel *Kim*, first published in 1901, has become one of his most well-known works.

The novel takes place at a time contemporary to the book's publication; its setting is India under the British Empire. The title character is a boy of Irish descent who is orphaned and grows up independently in the streets of India, taken care of by a "half-caste" woman, a keeper of an opium den. Kim, an energetic and playful character,

although full-blooded Irish, grows up as a native and acquires the ability to seamlessly blend into the many ethnic and religious groups of the Indian subcontinent. When he meets a wandering Tibetan lama who is in search of a sacred river, Kim becomes his follower and proceeds on a journey covering the whole of India. Kipling's account of Kim's travels throughout the subcontinent gave him opportunity to describe the many peoples and cultures that made up India and a significant portion of the novel is devoted to such descriptions which have been both lauded as magical and visionary and derided as stereotypical and imperialistic.

Kim eventually comes upon the army regiment that his father had belonged to and makes the acquaintance of the colonel. Colonel Creighton recognizes Kim's great talent for blending into the many diverse cultures of India and trains him to become a spy and a mapmaker for the British army. The adventures that Kim undergoes as a spy, his endearing relationship with the Lama and the skill and craftsmanship of Kipling's writing have all caused this adventurous and descriptive if controversial novel to persist as a minor classic of historical English literature.

Many myths and discourses are written about Buddha and Buddhism. Texts and met-texts have been created massively on Buddhist philosophy. The followers of Lord Buddha been increased globally. To quote Upadhyaya (1978), 'Buddhism declined in the land of its birth but it left behind a rich legacy of thought in the mediaeval ages' (Buddha Dharma Darsan, xxii) and now there is revival of the relevance of the Buddhist philosophy from centuries to the date. The knowledge of truth and enlightenment of Buddhism has been praised globally.

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Citation: Adhikary, R.P., 2020. Teshoo Lama's Quest for Nirvana in Rudyard Kipling's Kim. Artech J. Stud. English Lang. Lit., 1: 40-47.

Buddhism has not turned to be one of the most far-reaching religions in the world. As the philosophy of Buddhism has far-reaching impact, its one of the most important aspects of knowledge is Nirvana.

There are various critiques on Nirvana as Doore (1979) writes, 'the term 'Nirvana' in early Buddhism is quite different from that state which the same term came to denote later a theory which is perhaps the most controversial feature of his overall interpretation of Buddhism' (65). Nirvana is the supreme state free from suffering and individual existence. It is a state Buddhists refer to as "Enlightenment". It is the ultimate goal of all Buddhists. The attainment of Nirvana breaks the otherwise endless rebirth cycle of reincarnation. Buddhists also consider Nirvana as freedom from all worldly concerns such as greed, hate and ignorance. It can only be experienced directly.

Most schools of Buddhism explain Nirvana as a state of bliss or peace and this state may be experienced in life, or it may be entered into at death. The word Nirvana means "to extinguish", such as extinguishing the flame of a candle. This "extinguishment" is not understood by Buddhists to mean annihilation, however. Rather, it is thought of as passing into another kind of existence. In the culture the historical Buddha lived and taught, it was understood that fire "burns" and becomes visible when it is attached to fuel and it stops burning and becomes invisible when it is "released" from fuel. The fire, it was thought, was not annihilated but transformed. In his book *Essence of the Heart Sutra*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama defined Nirvana as the "state beyond sorrows" or a "state of freedom from cyclic existence" (3). In Theravada Buddhism, Nirvana (spelled "nibbana" in Pali) is understood to be an "unbinding" of the mind from defilements, in particular the three poisons and the mental "effluents" of sensuality, views, becoming and ignorance. It is liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth and freedom from the effects of Karma.

In Mahayana Buddhism, Nirvana is also called as the extinguishing of dualities and a merging with Nirvana and 'samsara' into an absolute existence of the world. The various schools of Buddhism have diverse teachings about whether Nirvana can be attained before death or only after death. In Buddhism, Sidhartha Gautam, the Buddha, has stated Nirvana as metaphysical foundations of Truth, Karma or Interconnectedness. Buddha argues that the gift of truth excels all other gifts. According to him the world is continuous flux and is impermanent; transient are conditioned things and he affirms to try to accomplish our aim with diligence (Buddha's last words). To quote Welbon (1966):

Nirvana is the absence, the destruction, of suffering. It involves the eradication of ignorance through the attainment of wisdom...Yet more specifically, more positively than the absence of debilities, what is Nirvana?

In theory it is the ultimate aspiration of all Buddhists, the summum bonum. What is its essential nature? What does attainment to it involve for the existence of the previously suffering individual? One of the oldest in the history of ideas, that question, in its various modes, has been debated furiously by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike (321)

Here, he means, Nirvana is the state of being free from suffering, pains, 'dukkha', an attempt of blowing out the fires of greed, hatred and delusion for attaining the permanent peace and noble truth as the Buddha described Nirvana as the perfect peace of the state of mind that is free from craving, anger and other afflictive states.

The subject is at peace with the world, has compassion for all and gives up obsessions and fixations. This peace is achieved when the existing volitional formations are pacified and the conditions for the production of new ones are eradicated. In Nirvana, the root causes of craving and aversions have been extinguished, so that one is no longer subject to human suffering. In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha says of Nirvana that it is "the highest happiness". This happiness is an enduring, transcendental happiness integral to the calmness attained through enlightenment or bodhi, rather than the happiness derived from impermanent worldly things. The knowledge accompanying Nirvana is expressed through the word Bodhi. The Buddha described Nirvana as the ultimate goal and he reached that state during his enlightenment. At this point, he chose to teach others so that they might also experience this realisation and so when he died, 45 years later, he then passed through pariNirvana, meaning completed Nirvana.

One of the examples of using this ancient form of the quest for the Nirvana is Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim* published in 1901. The main theme of the novel is about the quest of Nirvana of the protagonists which can be compared with the quest of the Buddha in Ashwaghosa's *Buddhacharitam*. To quote Henning (1946), 'The very first works of English literature which I ever read were Gulliver's Travels and Kim. I found an illustrated edition of the former in the bookcase in our nursery; the latter I read at the age of ten, when I became a Boy Scout. Kim was regarded as more or less the Bible of Scoutism' (10). Similarly, according to Wegner (1993):

Kim (1901), Rudyard Kipling's celebrated portrait of India at the high watermark of British "formal" imperial domination, has long occupied a special place in the complex field of imperialist literature. Although its chauvinistic and racist overtones are now generally acknowledged, Kim still represents for many-to borrow the words of Abdul R. Jan Mohamed-a positive, detailed and non-stereotypic portrait of the colonized that is unique in colonialist literature' (97)

It means many of these same readers, however, are also quick to point out that the text contains not one, but two quite different reality? Kim still describes as “India’s exotic landscape” and the “uneasy presence of the British Raj. To quote further, “The work’s weakness according to this interpretation arises from Kipling’s inability to unify his divided narrative world”.

The main characters of the text Kim is in the quest of Nirvana though the novel Kim was published thousands of years after the Buddha was born. He is in the quest of Nirvana; his journey or odyssey is the voyage of Nirvana. How Kipling played with the Buddhist philosophy mixed with the Western Christian ideologies is interesting mode of the study on which the concerns has not been given much. This study tries to reveal Lama’s search for Nirvana in Kipling’s novel Kim.

THE QUEST FOR NIRVANA IN KIM

The novel takes place in British India in the 1880’s and 1890’s. The novel opens with the introduction of the title character: Kim is a 13 years old boy of Irish heritage who has been orphaned in India and raised by an opium den keeper in the city of Lahore, amid the myriad cultures of India. Because of the ability he has developed to blend in seamlessly among many different cultures through language and his broad knowledge of customs, Kim is known to his acquaintances as Friend of All the World.

Kim learns that the Lama is traveling alone, as his chela or follower and servant, died in the previous city. Seeing that the Lama is an old man in need of assistance, Kim, dressed in the manner of a Hindu beggar child, agrees to be the Lama’s new chela and accompany the Lama on his quest. He informs his friend and sometime guardian, Mahbub Ali, a wellknown Afghan horse trader, that he will be leaving Lahore with the Lama and he agrees to carry some vague documents from Ali to an Englishman in Umballa as a favor. However, later that night Kim observes two sinister strangers searching Ali’s belongings. Realizing that his favor to Ali smacks of danger, he and the Lama, who remains ignorant of Kim’s secret dealings, depart early for the road.

On the train to Umballa, Kim and the Lama meet a Hindu farmer and several other characters all representing an array of customs, languages and religions from all over India, illustrating as Kipling will often make a point of doing the diversity of peoples that make up India’s native population. Upon arriving in Umballa, Kim secretly seeks out the home of the Englishman whom he discovers to be a colonel in the army and delivers Ali’s documents. He overhears word of an impending war on the border and realizes that Ali’s documents were directly related to this development.

The next day, Kim and the Lama proceed to the outskirts of Umballa in search of the River, where they

accidentally trespass in a farmer’s garden. He curses them until he realizes that the Lama is a holy man. Kim is angry at the farmer’s abuses, but the Lama teaches him not to be judgmental, saying, ‘There is no pride among such who follow the Middle Way’. In the evening they are entertained by the headmaster and priest of a village. Kim, who loves to play jokes and games, pretends he is a prophet and ‘forsees’ a great war with eight thousand troops heading to the northern border, drawing on what he had heard in Umballa. An old Indian soldier, who had fought on the British side in the Great Mutiny of 1857, calls Kim’s claims to question until Kim makes an accurate description of the colonel which convinces the soldier of his authenticity.

The old soldier, with renewed respect, accompanies Kim and the Lama the next morning to the Grand Trunk Road. During their journey, the Lama preaches to the soldier the virtues of maintaining detachment from worldly items, emotions and actions in order to attain Enlightenment; however, when the Lama goes out of his way to entertain a small child with a song, the soldier teases him for showing affection. It is the first evidence of the Lama’s truly human struggle with maintaining distance from his human emotions.

Eventually, the small party comes upon the Grand Trunk Road, a 1500 mile long route constructed by the East India Company that connected east Calcutta, East Bengal and Agra. A vivid, detailed description of the masses of travelers is given including descriptions of several different religious sects including Sansis, Akali Sihks, Hindus, Muslims and Jains, as well as the various wedding and funeral processions marching along the road. This section provides yet another instance of Kipling’s travelogue-type digressions to paint a vivid picture of India for his British and American readership. Kim is utterly delighted by the masses of people traveling before his eyes. The Lama, however, remains deep in meditation and does not acknowledge the spectacle of life surrounding him.

In the late evening, Kim, utilizing his sharp wit and cunning, procures the aid of a rich old widow from Kulu, herself of a sharp and salty tongue, who is traveling in a royal procession from the northern lands to her daughter in the south. She offers food, shelter and care for the Lama in exchange for the holy man’s charms and prayers interceding for the birth of many future grandsons for her.

While resting along the Grand Trunk Road, Kim comes upon an English army regiment which bears a green flag with a red bull on it. Since he was a young child, Kim had been told by his guardian that his father a former soldier had said that a red bull in a green field would be Kim’s salvation. With excitement at having found the sign of the bull, he sneaks into the barracks to find out more information, only to be captured by the Protestant chaplain, Mr. Bennett. Together with Father

Victor, the Catholic chaplain, he discovers the personal documents that Kim carries with him everywhere, which reveal him to be not a Hindu beggar but an Irish boy and the son of Kimball O'Hara, who himself had been a member of this same regiment.

The two companions become interdependent, Kim's association with the Lama providing him with an excuse to travel around India and an ideal cover (later in the story) for his role as a spy, while the Lama often relies on Kim to do their begging and find them shelter, often physically leaning on Kim's shoulder as they travel. Kim defines his identity during his adventures by being open to influences; responding positively to people he can look up to, while warding off influences which he finds abrasive.

When the story opens the influences on him have been almost exclusively Indian. His white skin, his identity papers and his in-built tendency to own and rule will prove to be central to the identity he is seeking to build, but neither at the beginning nor the end does he think of himself as a 'sahib' and his encounter with the white man's world is at first a traumatic experience.

When Kim finally finds the prophesied 'Nine hundred first-class devils, whose God was a Red Bull on a green field', (his father's old regiment), he is captured by the soldiers and his instinct is to escape back to the Lama. This is the first close encounter with a group of white men Kim has had in his life and Kipling uses it to show a clash of native and British mentality, with Kim and the Lama showing the native side and the members of the regiment showing aspects of British mentality.

Kim is effectively imprisoned by the soldiers, forced to wear for the first time 'a horrible stiff suit that rasped his arms and legs' and told that the bazaar is 'out o' bounds'. And his torments grow worse as Kipling continues to subject him to the worst that the British have to offer. The schoolmaster is a brutal insensitive man from whom Kim scents 'evil' and the drummer boy who guards Kim, representing the average young British soldier, is shown as an ignorant fool who calls the natives 'niggers'.

In Colonel Creighton Kim finds a white man he can respect; a father-figure, a European counterpart of the Lama. Creighton is wise, educated, experienced and compassionate; the opposite end of the spectrum to Reverend Bennett, the drummer boy and the schoolmaster. He recognizes Kim's intelligence and special skills and although he plays a small part in the story he is, as the highest-ranking representative of the British Government and the person to whom Kim is responsible, a pillar of the whole novel and one of the most important influences on Kim in his quest to define himself.

When his schooling is complete Kim's training as a spy under Creighton's associates continues, one of his

teachers being the 'shaib' Lurgan. Lurgan, in his house adorned with ritual devil-dance masks and his ability to heal sick jewels, seems to be a practitioner of the occult. Kim takes to the 'Great Game' of spying like a duck to water. It suits his independent, inquisitive, adventurous personality perfectly, being a natural development for the child who loved the 'game' of running secret missions across the rooftops of Lahore.

During his schooling and training Kim and the Lama have to part, although Kim insists on joining the Lama in his holidays and rejoin him permanently when his schooling is complete, though now using him partly as a cover for his spying operations. At the climax of the novel Kim is sent on a mission to intercept two foreign spies, one Russian, one French man, who is operating in the Himalayas. High in the Himalayas Kim and the Lama reach the road's end and both of their journeys reach a crisis point. Kim is instrumental, along with the Babu, in thwarting the foreign spies, their mission being particularly successful because the foreign spies never realize that Kim and the Babu are secret agents.

The Lama is involved in bringing about the climax, because it is one of the spies tearing the Lama's diagram of the Buddhist universe, then striking him in the face that provokes Kim into fighting him, which in turn leads to a mutiny of the foreign spies' coolies, which enables Kim to get hold of the spies' secret documents. The fight also seems to precipitate the end of the Lama's quest, by making him aware of all his remaining attachments. Both are weakened and suffer as a result of the battles. Kim develops a worrying cough and the Lama is so weak that he needs to be carried down the mountains on a stretcher. Back on the plains their missions are completed. Kim passes on the secret documents, which have been weighing on his mind, to the Babu and the Lama, finds his River of the Arrow and comes face to face with the 'Great Soul'.

One theme which might be felt to be running under the surface of 'Kim', is Kim's search for parents. At the beginning it is emphasized that Kim is an orphan, who never knew his mother and that his deceased father was a drunkard. Perhaps he is looking for new parents and finds a combined father figure in the Lama, who in the closing scene calls him 'Son of my Soul' and Colonel Creighton, who has been a father-figure since his time at St. Xavier's. As a mother figure, Kim finds the woman from Kulu, who, in the final chapter of the novel, heals and restores him. 'She looks upon him as her son', says the Lama. Kim calls her 'Mother' and tells her, 'I had no mother, my mother... died, they tell me, when I was young (Kim 293)'.

This need for mothering comes to a head in the final chapter, but throughout the novel the orphan Kim has seemed to get along perfectly well without real parents, with surrogate mother and father figures being available

when he needs them. The novel ends at the point where, on the brink of adulthood and secure in his career with the Secret Service, Kim no longer needs parents.

As previously noted, he has grown up dressing like an Indian, thinking like an Indian, his skin burned as brown as an Indian's and feeling entirely happy and at home among the poor people of Lahore. But even at this stage he cannot think of himself as a native. He remembers his father and his prophecy, carries his identity papers in a leather amulet case around his neck and of course his skin is white. And inwardly his attitudes are already at least partly those of a white ruler.

The opening paragraph showing him sitting astride the cannon shows that he feels it natural to claim the position of power, a position he asserts with a game of 'king-of-the-castle' in which he prevents the native boys, both Moslem and Hindu, from taking his place. And, as we have seen, this inherited assumption that he is entitled to the position of power over his native peers is matched by his assumption of 'ownership' of the Lama. "The Lama was his trove and he proposed to take possession (Kim 15)".

As Kim grows up in the streets of the Indian city of Lahore and adapts to the culture and languages of India so well, in fact, that he can pass himself off as a member of almost any religious or cultural group of India. He is at once a Sahib and, by virtue of his upbringing, a part of the colonized society. Kim, who is known as "Friend of All the World" and includes "this great and beautiful land" as all his people, begins to undergo a crisis of identity when he is first made to go to school to become a Sahib. This question of identity and belonging plagues Kim throughout the novel, leaving him with a feeling of loneliness.

To examine Kim's quest in the novel one should approach it as an adventure story probably aimed primarily at adolescent boys, in which Kim is seeking to find his place in the country in which he was born, while at the same time struggling to find or create, an identity for himself. 'Who is Kim?' 'What is Kim?' Kim asks himself at several points in the novel and although the plot has a loose picaresque structure, being held together by a journey, making it a kind of 'road novel', the theme of Kim's need to find himself seems to be the backbone of the story. By birth Kim is a white, Irish boy, Kimball O'Hara, whose father was a soldier in an Irish regiment. But, as seen in the opening Chapter, he has grown up as an orphan on the streets of Lahore, 'a poor white of the very poorest', looked after by a half-cast woman, probably a prostitute; 'she smoked opium and pretended to keep a second-hand furniture shop by the square where the cheap cabs wait'. With his skin 'burned black as any native' he looks and lives like a low-caste Hindu street-urchin, unable to read or write, or speak English very well. So right from the start he is neither wholly

British nor wholly Indian and his being neither wholly one nor the other, but a unique 'mixture of things' remains a constant in his quest for his identity.

In the final chapter, as well as receiving 'mothering', Kim comes as close as he ever does to feeling he has discovered his identity: "I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim? His soul repeated it again and again... tears trickled down his nose and with an almost audible click he felt the wheels of his being lock up anew on the world without (Kim 299)".

So, what is the identity which Kim has forged for himself? Who is Kim? There is no definitive statement, however, at the end he seems to have arrived at a sense of self towards which he has been struggling and which he has been defining cumulatively through his experiences. He seems to have found an adult role in which he can be true to himself as he really is, a 'mixture o' things' (Kim 119), neither wholly Indian nor wholly British and in which he can maintain the detachment from everyday life and commitments which united him to the Lama. As a secret agent his being a mixture of Indian and British will be an advantage and he can devote his life to helping to preserve the stability of the British-Indian world he grew up in, which nurtured him like parents. He can remain true to his emotional and spiritual roots, which are mainly native and does not have to betray them by becoming a Sahib. "I am not a Sahib" he insists in the final chapter (Kim 286).

Kim has accepted and developed the European component of his character as much as he wants to, but he does not have to become a white ruler himself. There is too much of the native in him for him to do that. He refused to become a soldier and it suits him to serve the sahibs discreetly, tangentially, in a way that makes use of his native instincts and experience, through his role in the Secret Service. He has found an adult role in which he is special, above the rest and in which he can work on his own initiative, just as he did as a child on secret missions across the rooftops of Lahore. 'I am Kim' he states at the end, but there is still a question there, 'What is Kim?' There is no answer to that question, but perhaps the important thing is that he has remembered to ask it. Perhaps in his heart the Kim he has finally found is and always had been, the Kim who remembers to ask that question, even though there is no answer.

Despite being in a company of the wise Lama for a long time, the personal characteristics of Kim remain the same. While the Lama advises Kim to abstain from "Doing" except to acquire merit towards Enlightenment, Kim responds that "to abstain from action is unbecoming a Sahib". Kim cannot abstain himself from doing secret services to his white masters. Even he never let the Lama, his company and the father figure, know what he is doing. That is why Kim's mind is always limited and he cannot think esoteric things. At the end, his achievements are also accordingly.

The story begins when Kim teams up with a Tibetan Lama, Teshoo Lama, who wanders into Lahore to look at the Buddhist relics in 'The Wonder House' (Lahore museum) with the 'Keeper of the images' (the curator). From then on the plot develops two strands which run in parallel and to a large extent overlap. One strand concerns Kim's discipleship to the Lama, who is an abbot in his own country and now, in old age, on a Buddhist quest, following 'The Way' to free himself from the 'Wheel of Things' and merge his soul with the 'Great Soul'. He is looking for the 'River of the Arrow', a river which, legend has it, sprang from an arrow shot by Buddha. Anyone who bathes in this river shall be cleansed of 'all taint and speckle of sin'. The location of this river is unknown, having never been identified by scholars of Buddhism of East or West. Kim is fascinated by the wandering stranger and when the Lama assumes that Kim has been sent to him as his 'chela' (disciple) Kim readily accepts the role and joins him on his journey, with the intention of also following his own quest, to find the meaning of a prophecy that was made by his father, that 'Nine hundred first-class devils, whose God was a Red Bull on a green field, would attend to Kim'. This prophecy eventually gives rise to the second strand of the plot Kim's recruitment as a spy in the British Secret Service. Kim and the Lama begin their journey together, with the cunning street-wise Kim taking on the role of the Lama's protector and guide in the complicated hustle and bustle of Indian life, with which the ethereal, nave Lama is unfamiliar and it is this journey which gives structure to the story and enables Kipling to display his abundant knowledge of India. Starting at Lahore, in what is now Pakistan, they traverse the plains as far south as Benares, then in the closing chapters make a spectacular excursion into the Himalayas, to the very edge of India, where their quests reach a climax, before returning to the plains for the resolution. The journey takes about four years, taking Kim from the age of thirteen to about seventeen.

The issue of Nirvana regarding the quest of the Lama in the novel by Rudyard Kipling Kim is interesting to talk here. To quote a statement from the novel is relevant here; "There is no sin as great as ignorance" (Kim 127).

Teshoo Lama, the second most important character of the novel, is Kim's master, guardian, father figure and companion throughout most of the novel, who both cares for Kim and is cared for by Kim. A Buddhist abbot from Tibet, he has come to India in search of the Holy River that sprang from the arrow of the Lord Buddha. Kim accompanies him as his servant throughout the whole of India. While Kim is constantly enchanted by the myriad of people they encounter in their travels, the Lama remains fixedly detached from any interest in humanity or the machinations of human life. He spends his time in meditation and he interacts with his fellow travelers only to preach the ways of Buddhism to them: specifically, that

all souls are equal, that all souls are trapped in the cycle of life and that the only way to escape the cycle of life is through detachment from all things worldly.

The Lama follows his search alone for some time. Kim joins him after the completion of his study. The Lama carries with him an intricately drawn chart mapping of the Wheel of Life a symbolic representation of the cycle of life that, according to Buddhist teaching, all souls strive to escape from in order to be reunited with the Great Soul. However, the Lama struggles throughout his pilgrimage to remain on the path to Enlightenment and to let go of the attachments of the world, specifically his emotions and bodily desires.

The climax of the novel and the situation which propels Lama further closer to his quest is reached when a Russian spy, desiring the Lama's Wheel of Life, rips it from his hands and incites the Lama to violence. These actions lead the Lama to the absolute realization that he is not free of the emotions of pride and desire. Through this realization, he attains the Enlightenment he has been so strenuously seeking. In a twist of spiritual irony, his love for Kim leads him not to escape to the Great Soul but to selflessly remain with Kim until his well-being is assured.

During the journey, the Lama, usually, remains deep in meditation and does not acknowledge the spectacle of life surrounding him. Once, the Lama preaches to a soldier the virtues of maintaining detachment from worldly items, emotions and actions in order to attain Enlightenment; however, when the Lama goes out of his way to entertain a small child with a song, the soldier teases him for showing affection. It is the first evidence of the Lama's truly human struggle with maintaining distance from his human emotions.

Once the Lama advises Kim to abstain from "Doing" except to acquire merit towards Enlightenment, Kim responds that "to abstain from action is unbecoming a Sahib". The Lama answers him saying, "There is neither black nor white... We be all souls seeking to escape". The Lama has already surpassed the human discriminations so far.

In the course of their journey, they reach the northern lands, Kim finds the cold, wet weather and the dramatically hilly landscape difficult to travel; however, the Lama is happy to be back in a region and environment familiar to him. All the while, Kim has to face two enemy spies, who turn out to be a Frenchman and a Russian. The Lama is expounding on his Wheel of Life. One of the spies demands that the Lama sell him his drawing of the Wheel. When the Lama refuses, the spy reaches out to grab the paper and rips it, much to the chagrin of the Lama, who in anger rises and threatens the spy with his lead pence case inciting the Russian spy to punch him full in the face. Kim immediately tackles the Russian spy and beats him, while the spies' servants who are Buddhists and therefore enraged at the attack on a holy man drive away the French spy and run off with the luggage.

Kim, leaving the spies aside, convinces the servants that the luggage, being the possession of two evil men, is cursed. He obtains the package with the secret documents and heads to Shamlegh-under-the-snow for shelter, where they stay with the Woman of Shamlegh. The Lama, meanwhile, is shaken at his inability to resist his passions and at his gross display of attachment to his artwork and to his emotions. The excitement and worry have made him ill. In his illness he spends much time in meditation and, after a few days, informs Kim that he has seen "The Cause of Things": his bodily desire to return to the hills caused him to abandon his search for the River; his act of giving into his desire led him to further give in to his passions and attack the spy thus moving farther and farther from his quest on the Way to Enlightenment. Having come to this conclusion, the Lama demands that he be taken back to the lowlands of India to continue his search for the holy river. Kim and the Lama, both are now ill, continue on the road.

Meanwhile, during Kim's illness, the lama, having foregone food for 2 days and nights in the pursuit of meditation, has attained the Enlightenment he has been seeking. He relates to Kim how his soul released itself from his body, how he flew up to the Great Soul to meditate upon The Cause of Things as:

Yea, my soul went free, and, wheeling like an eagle, saw indeed that there was neither Teshoo Lama nor any other soul. As a drop draws to water, so my soul drew near to the great soul which is beyond all things. At that point, exalted in contemplation, I saw all Hind, from Ceylon in the sea to the Hills and my own Painted Rocks, at Such-zen; I saw every camp and village to the least, where we have ever rested. I saw them at one time and in one place; for they were within the soul. By this I knew the soul had passed beyond the illusion of Time and Space and of Things. By this I knew that I was free (Kim 305)

Here, the concern came to him, he heard from somewhere, "What shall come to the boy if you are dead (Kim 305)?" Suddenly regarding Kim's well-being and so, for Kim's sake, his soul returned to his body and landed, headlong, in the holy river of his seeking. He declares his search is over and that he has attained deliverance from sin for both himself and his beloved chela. The following Chapter will discuss how Buddha gets disillusioned with the worldly pleasures, how he escapes from the palace in the quest of Nirvana and how he finally attains the state of supreme bliss that is Nirvana.

CONCLUSION

The text, Kipling's Kim deals with the quest for Nirvana. In Kim during the two quests, the Lama's for the 'Great Soul' and Kim's to discover his identity, Kim goes

on playing the 'Great Game' of spying and we can see difference between them regarding their quests. One could hardly imagine that two such contrasting ambitions could be yoked together. And yet the author of the novel, Kipling brings them together and makes them compatible in a way which is central to the unique quality of Kim the novel and the unique identity of Kim, the main character.

Kim and the Lama have in common that neither has any real family ties or sense of belonging and their quests have in common that both are esoteric, beyond the reach of ordinary people and both require the renunciation of normal life. As a Buddhist it is central to the Lama's quest that he frees himself from all forms of attachment, including attachment to worldly goods, worldly ambitions, worldly relationships and even attachment to his own emotions and the idea of a self. As a spy, Kim will also have to renounce ordinary life. He will lead a life of disguise and deception, never able to reveal his true motives to anyone. Any attachments he makes to other people will have to be subordinate to his esoteric mission, his secret commitment to an ideal.

And just as the Lama's mission will only be understood by a select few among Buddhist holy men, Kim's mission will only be understood by a select few among the British Secret Service. But the two companions are in many ways very different. Kim is young, the Lama is old. Kim is knowledgeable and streetwise; the Lama is naive and inexperienced. The adolescent Kim is mature beyond his years, while the aged Lama is childlike. And in some ways the tactics they employ to achieve their aims are opposite too. The Lama adopts an attitude of honesty and openness, while Kim adopts an attitude of deception, manipulation and lies. And yet the two become interdependent, Kim's association with the Lama providing him with an excuse to travel around India and an ideal cover for his true role as a spy, while the Lama often relies on Kim to do their begging and find them shelter, often physically leaning on Kim's shoulder as they travel. They sustain each other, the Lama providing Kim with emotional and spiritual support, while sustaining himself by drawing on Kim's youthful energy.

Kim's major plotline is the quest for Enlightenment undertaken by Teshoo Lama. While the Lama faces both external and internal obstacles to fulfilling his quest, the novel culminates with his triumphant attainment of his goal. The novel has been threaded throughout with the Lama's Buddhist spirituality and teachings and while many of the characters including Kim, question and are mystified by his philosophies, the Lama's success at attaining Enlightenment at the end of the novel serves to validate the authenticity and truth of his messages. Kim's quest is just to fulfill his worldly ambitions and very limited in nature in comparison to the quest of Lama while the quest of Buddha is quite wider in the sense that with the attainment of Nirvana Buddha deems to liberate

the whole humankind from the sufferings of old age, disease, death and pain and experience the supreme bliss of existing as a human being.

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