

*The Christ of India*

In his 2016 book, *The Christ of India: The Story of Original Christianity*, Abbot George Burk, writing as Swami Nirmalananda, presents a compelling view of the life and works of Jesus. Nirmalananda asserts that original Christianity, as taught by Jesus and Thomas, is “nothing but Sanatana Dharma,” and that “Jesus learned his wisdom from the sages of India.” In this view he claims to follow in the work of Paramahansa Yogananda who interpreted the Gospel teachings through the lens of Hinduism.

Burke states that Jesus and John the Baptist came from an Essenian sect of Jews, as were most of his followers, including the twelve Apostles, which had been established by Moses as a “secret fraternity within Judaism.” Interpreting the Torah spiritually, symbolically, and metaphysically, they believed in reincarnation, the law of karma, and the “ultimate reunion of the soul with God.”

Burke describes Isha (Issa/Jesus) as petitioning the Essenes for initiation at twelve years of age, before journeying to the Himis monastery in India “on a spiritual pilgrimage that would end at the feet of the three masters who would transform Jesus the Nazarene into Isha the Teacher of Dharma. Nicholas Roerich agreed that Isha was thirteen when he left for India, studying in Benares, and Jagannath Puri, where Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri had also written about Jesus as a teacher of Sanatana Dharma. Burke explains that Jesus did not ascend spiritually at the end of the Gospel story but departed to India where “he lived with the Himalayan yogis for many years.” His book closes with a list of Hindu yogis who considered Jesus to be one of their own.

1. Burke, George. *The Christ of India*. Light of the Spirit Press, 22 July 2016.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0998599840>.

