

intentionally done, then, indeed, does one discover that within one's Self, and not without, is the real field of battle.

Memory, imagination, desire, thought, and feeling, are found to be no mere servants for the Soul's use, but usurpers, traitors, instinctive, rampant, quick with life of their own, which crucify him who is seeking entrance into the silence - the "Hall of Wisdom which lies beyond".

He who cannot command them with the sacramental phrase "peace, be still", must needs taste the bitterness of defeat and despair; must needs go, indeed, into the only silence known to ordinary man, the silence of sleep or death - from which there is no other issue than an unconscious one. Whatever Meditation may mean to the bewildered, this is certain, that it means a *conscious* entering of the silence.

Who can remain at attention while the outer and inner warfare of the Soul goes on - may hope, yet Hope itself but lures the Soul along one or another corridor whose only exit is once more upon the arena of that which is not Soul.

The conscious silence which is Meditation is that unknown world peopled by Soul alone - in which the Soul is a Spectator without a spectacle. Yet, this is a way of speaking of the Un-speakable, in opposed commitments, for silence is beyond any speech, as Soul is beyond all action.

To those whose heart is set on speech, to whom action of some kind is life, Silence is empty - a void. To him whose heart is set on the world's end, on the journey's end, Silence is the Soul's habitation. Who enters the silence returns to his own place. The Un-speakable Self there knows that Time, Space, and Causality are but triple names for Silence - the Silence in which is woven the triple thread of all three worlds. In that Silence the "Soul grows as does the holy flower upon the still lagoon".

[The above text was first published as an anonymous note at the December 1929 edition of "Theosophy" magazine, Los Angeles, p. 84. An analysis of its contents, style and historical context shows the author is John Garrigues.]

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R. Burnier, on the Value of a Crisis

Every crisis, whether individual, national or otherwise, is a test evolved by our karmic destiny which offers us the opportunity to make the spiritual part of ourselves shine forth in expressions of brotherhood and truth, untainted by darker influences which might impinge from without. We as Theosophists should stand by the principles to which we declare our affiliation, and we should actively promote attitudes of goodwill and warm brotherhood towards all Nations and peoples without any distinction whatsoever, however trying the circumstances may be.

[Radha Burnier, quoted in "Presidential Address", by N. Sri Ram, in "The Theosophist", Adyar, India, January 1966, p. 217.]

Awakening in 2015: Questions and Answers on the Event



1) What is the culminating point?

It is the practice, on 27 December 2014, of a creative visualization as expressed in the article “Meditation on the Awakening of Mankind”.

The text is published at: http://www.theosophyonline.com/ler.php?id=366#.VJNRhvl_uSo .

2) How can I participate?

Calmly do the visualization practice, wherever you are and whenever you find it correct. You can do that individually, with one more person, or in a group. Join the event on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/events/376488792514161> .

3) Can I help the initiative?

You can share this information with your friends and invite them to participate.

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The Wisdom of the Foolish

Lin Yutang

I have made a poem which sums up for me the message of Taoistic thought:

*There is the wisdom of the foolish,
The gracefulness of the slow,
The subtlety of stupidity,
The advantage of lying low.*

This must sound to Christian readers like the Sermon on the Mount, and perhaps seem equally ineffective to them. Lao-tzu gave the Beatitudes a cunning touch when he added: "Blessed are the idiots, for they are the happiest people on earth." Following Lao-tzu's famous dictum that "The greatest wisdom is like stupidity; the greatest eloquence like stuttering", Chuang-tzu says: "Spit forth intelligence."

Liu Chungyüan in the eight century called his neighborhood hill "the Stupid Hill" and the nearby river "the Stupid River". Cheng Panch'iao in the eighteenth century made the famous remark: "It is difficult to be muddle-headed. It is difficult to be clever, but still more difficult to graduate from cleverness into muddle-headedness."

The praise of folly has never been interrupted in Chinese literature. The wisdom of this attitude can at once be understood through the American slang expression: "Don't be too smart." The wisest man is often one who pretends to be a "damn fool".

[The above paragraphs are reproduced from the book "The Importance of Living", by Lin Yutang, The John Day Company, New York, 1937, 460 pp., see p. 109.]

Anthony de Mello: The Story of the Duckling

The Sufi saint Shams of Tabriz tells the following story about himself:

I have been considered a misfit since my childhood. No one seemed to understand me. My own father once said to me, "You are not mad enough to be put in a madhouse, and not withdrawn enough to be put in a monastery. I don't know what to do with you."

I replied, "A duck's egg was once put under a hen. When the egg hatched the duckling walked about with the mother hen until they came to a pond. The duckling went straight into the water. The hen stayed clucking anxiously on land. Now, dear father, I have walked into the ocean and find in it my home. You can hardly blame me if you choose to stay on the shore."

[From the book "The Song of the Bird", by Anthony de Mello, copyright 1982, Image Books-Doubleday, New York, 172 pp., see p. 97.]

The Source of Harmony Transcending the False Dilemma Between Hypocrisy and Violence



Protecting error and fraud under noble excuses invisibly begets violence.

It is easy to detect the relation between pious frauds and organized hatred as one looks at the religious wars and devotional intolerance during the last 2,000 years in human history.

Truthfulness is the source of peace, and this is something theosophists can understand with no great effort.

Hypocrites will try to convince you that the only alternative to hypocrisy is fanaticism. They try to convince themselves that kindness is a matter of diplomacy and that there is no brotherhood higher than falsehood. They see no difference between sincerity and fanaticism, and they are wrong.

A heart-felt sincerity is the Middle Way between sweet lies and utter brutality. Frankness is the alternative to the bipolar disease of “saintly fraud”, on one hand, and sheer violence, whether emotional or physical, on the other hand. In order to be honest, however, one must have a stable courage and an enduring love for peace. Patience and creativeness are decisive tools in the building of a lasting harmony.

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Theosophy in the Ancient World: Twelve Fragments from Musonius



Hard work is not a bad thing, says the neo-stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus

An Editorial Note:

The following fragments were selected and translated from the volume “Tabla de Cebes - Musonio Rufo, Disertaciones, Fragmentos Menores, Epicteto, Manual, Fragmentos”, Editorial Gredos, Madrid, 1995, 250 pp. We indicate the page number at the end of each quotation. Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus lived from 28 C.E. through 100 C.E. (C.C.A.)

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- 1) To be a philosopher is the same as to be good. (p. 60)
- 2) Philosophy consists in dedicating oneself to perfect honesty and nothing else. (p. 59)
- 3) Virtue is not a theoretical science, only. It is also practical, just like Medicine and Music are. (p. 59)
- 4) Why should men research and investigate how to live better, which is the aim of philosophy, and not women? Is it perchance convenient that men should be good, and women should not? (p. 77)
- 5) It is not possible to live today in a correct manner unless we live it as if it were our last day alive. (p. 149)

This sentence by Musonius Rufus got famous since it was adopted by Marcus Aurelius, the emperor-philosopher of Ancient Rome, in his "Meditations". In fact, Musonius taught Epictetus (55 C.E.-135 C.E.), and Epictetus taught Marcus Aurelius (121 C.E.-180 C.E.). In the 20th century, Carlos Castaneda adopted the same idea in his own books.

6) Why do we complain about politicians, if we are often worse than them? We have similar impulses to theirs, in different contexts. (p. 149)

7) You will deserve the respect of all, if you start by having respect for yourself in the first place. (p. 151)

8) If you want to stay above all within that which is correct, don't get sad or irritated by circumstances. Think of the many things that have happened to you not according to your wishes, but according to what is correct. (p. 150)

9) That pleasure is not good in itself is not easily perceived at once, because pleasure stimulates desire as if it were a good thing. But if we adopt as a main and known premise the idea that every good thing is preferable, and if we add to it a second, known premise, which says that some pleasures are not preferable, we will have demonstrated then that pleasure is not good in itself. (p. 72)

10) ... And the fact that hard work is not an evil thing does not seem to be acceptable at first; the opposite seems to be more convincing; that to work is a bad thing. But if we adopt a major and self-evident premise, that one ought to avoid every evil, and we add to it another and even more evident premise, that many forms of work must not be avoided, then we come to the conclusion that hard work is not a bad thing. (p. 72)

11) It is not necessary for the master of a philosopher to teach a great amount of reasonings and demonstrations; but he should talk about each topic in the right time. He must adjust his speech to the discernment of the students. He must use effective ideas that cannot be easily refuted, and above all, he must talk about that which is most useful, and act in accordance with what he talks. This is the way to lead his hearers. (p. 74)

12) ... As to the student, he must concentrate on what is said to him [by the teacher]. On one hand his goal must be not to allow a mistake to remain unseen, and to admit his own mistakes; and on the other hand - by Zeus! -, he must not wish to listen to long demonstrations regarding truth, but clear demonstrations instead. (p. 74)

"Not to allow a mistake to remain unseen". That must include mistakes made by the teacher. The student is not supposed to renounce his own discernment (limited as it may be). True teachers respect that; and they never pose as perfect.

The Middle East plays a central role in the karma and dharma of present civilization, and theosophy holds one or two keys to its dilemmas. Inter-religious harmony is of the essence. And there is no future for anti-Semitism or disrespect regarding the Jewish nation, in the future civilization of universal brotherhood.

When China Learns From Its Past

Ancient Traditions Are Helping the Re-Birth of an Ecological Civilization

Joaquim Soares

Present-day civilization is becoming increasingly unsustainable due to its materialism. As the planetary transition intensifies, nations face deep challenges. At the same time a silent regenerative process is on the way, and although many of its external aspects are not pleasant, they are necessary.

A new approach to life is the goal of many citizens around the world. Among the signs of disorientation, healthy trends are shaping the civilization of the future.

China is a central actor in the world scenario. With a population of 1.3 billion people, the country is facing an unprecedented ecological crisis, with the destruction of huge areas of natural landscapes and record levels of pollution. However, Chinese government is determined to face the problem. Recently, China and the US reached an historical agreement to cut carbon emissions. This was no isolated decision. One of the Chinese strategies to tackle environmental issues has been stimulating a revival of ancient philosophies as Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. A video report at PBS's website says:

“China’s massive environmental crisis has its traditionally secular state looking to religion to encourage deeper values, more compassion towards nature, and the creation of what some governmental officials are calling ‘an ecological civilization’.”[1]

A Chinese diplomat said in the interview:

“What we think in our hearts and minds will determine the state of the environment. Traditional Chinese culture promotes harmony between man and nature and encourages limited consumption and a simple way of life. We support this. We don’t oppose taking from nature. We do oppose over-exploitation. We want gold mountain, but we also want clear water and green mountain.”

As the planet enters a new cycle, citizens of good-will are being called to accept their co-responsibility for the future of the planet.[2] They will do what must be done. It should be no surprise if in the next decades the karmic acceleration leads entire nations to adopt theosophical and ancient philosophical concepts as guiding principles to an ethical, social and ecological regeneration. China should not be an exception.

NOTES:

[1] See “China, Buddhism, and the Environment” at:
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2014/10/24/october-24-2014-china-buddhism-environment/24431/>

[2] See the texts “The Coming of The New Cycle” and “Helena Blavatsky’s Self-Criticism”, both by Carlos Cardoso Aveline. They are available at www.TheosophyOnline.com and its associated websites.

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Kahlil Gibran: A Few Untitled Verses



What Death takes away
No man can restore;
What Heaven has blessed
No man can punish;
What Love has joined
No man can divide;
What Eternity has willed
No man can alter.

[The above verses are reproduced from p. 58 of “Tears and Laughter”, by Kahlil Gibran, The Wisdom Library / The Philosophical Library, New York, 1949, 94 pages.]

Thoughts Along the Road

Observing the Sacredness of Daily Life



- * One's will is strengthened by facing obstacles.
- * Detachment makes it possible to attain stability.
- * Goodwill, discernment and persistence are three factors in the formula for victory.
- * One for all, and all for one. And the law of reciprocity must be lived in the territory of a profound ethics and sincerity.
- * Love is the perception of a dynamic and creative unity, among whose practical results inner peace is central.
- * The secrets of life and death are the same, and one needs to learn how to die, in order to know how to live. [1]
- * Short term effectiveness is less important than the long-term one. True efficiency is often invisible because of one basic factor: it is not superficial.
- * Freedom from personal expectations is essential to the art of Right Action. Expectations are a key factor in distorting reality and destroying the balance in human relationships.
- * One cannot make progress towards truth by protecting error and falsehood. Illusions must be fought and this is often an ugly thing to see, outwardly. For its beauty is hidden.
- * The life of a student of theosophy makes it necessary to develop a degree of impersonality. He must concentrate his consciousness on its noblest possible point - situated in the heart - and act from this point. [2]

* Every single thought generates karma, and its consequences may be conducive to happiness or otherwise. Therefore the practice of right thinking is necessary for the student of theosophy to attain liberation from the causes of pain.

* The only true temple exists in the mind and the heart of each individual. It is correct therefore to develop the will necessary to strengthen our relation to this inner sanctuary along the 24 hours of every day.

* No one can avoid the law of karma using the self-deluding trick of not thinking about it, or by the use of elegant words. Whether one likes it or not, the way to happiness includes a conscious self-responsibility in every situation of life, both short-term and long-term.

* A calm concentration of mind must be obtained while one develops his duties in daily life. Everything manifested is subject to the tidal waves of karma. Outer oscillation adds extra strength to inner one-pointedness.

* Every authentic learning is an autonomous process, along which we must abandon our pet-illusions in order to obtain new and better points of view. And even these wider views of truth will be partial, and will have to be constantly re-examined in the future. [3]

* Total flexibility, and absolute firmness; unlimited renunciation, and a decision to victoriously defend that which must be defended; deep silence within, and the power to make the right mantra sound; these are a few qualities necessary to the Pilgrim along the road.

* The first step to freedom is understanding. Before one can get rid of any form of ignorance, it is necessary to comprehend how it works and observe with detachment the cyclic, recurrent ways it expresses itself in daily life.

* If one lives in a society whose citizens are constantly misled by anxiety, it may be a good idea to keep calm on one's own merit, to listen to one's heart and avoid automatic forms of behavior. Self-responsibility and an ability to make proper decisions in life are necessary in order to be better able to learn.

* A kind attitude to all beings is essential to Chinese philosophy and theosophy as well. It does not include hypocrisy, as Confucius taught in ancient times and Lin Yutang clarified in the 20th century. A severe and kind frankness preserves respect; it helps prepare and maintain peace. Hypocrisy, on the other hand, tends to destroy mutual respect and tolerance and constitutes a central factor in the preparation of a foolish war, whether physical or not.

* One has to know oneself, in order to forget oneself. And one must forget oneself, in order to make progress in the search for eternal truth. "To forget oneself" means to be able to practice self-observation with the eyes of an impersonal love for truth. Once this takes place, one easily concentrates mind and soul on the study of universal laws.

* When the students of esoteric philosophy think they are suffering in an intense way, they must observe what level or sector of their consciousness feels pain. Is the pain situated on a noble level of perception, as in the uncomfortable feeling of having done something wrong? Of causing pain to an innocent, or of not being able to do something sacred he should have done? From such a pain good lessons emerge. Egotistic forms of pain, on the other hand,

should not make the student cry too much in self-pity. Emotional selfishness is not included in the teachings of theosophy. Compassion is the law of the universe.

NOTES:

[1] The same idea will be found at “The Mahatma Letters”, TUP edition, Letter LXV, p. 365.

[2] Translated from the article “A Chave do Discernimento” (“The Key to Discernment”), in “O Teosofista”, December 2014, p. 2.

[3] From the article “David Bohm, o Brasil e Krishnamurti”, by Carlos Cardoso Aveline, which is available at www.FilosofiaEsoterica.com and its associated websites.

Two Precepts from Helena Blavatsky

* **H**e who wished to reach Buddhahood, and aspires to the knowledge of the Self-born, must honor those who keep this doctrine.

* The wheel of sacrifice has Love for its nave, Action for its tire, and Brotherhood for its spokes.

[Reproduced from the article “Precepts and Axioms from the East - 2”, by Helena P. Blavatsky, which is available at our associated websites.]

Questions and Answers: Karma, Unity and Friendship

1. On Finding Oneness

A friendly reader asked the editors of “The Aquarian Theosophist”:

“Why do you not find ONENESS with the Theosophical Society, Adyar?”

That was an indirect, polite reference to some of the articles in our associated websites which discuss the mistakes of the theosophical movement. They need to be corrected for the theosophical associations to move ahead and fulfill their duty towards mankind. One of the editors answered:

“Thanks. I find Oneness with the Theosophical Society, as I find all in Oneness with my Self. I also know that Oneness includes Contrast, Frankness, and liberty of thought.”

In true friendship, frankness as to mistakes must be included. Otherwise what we have is politics, not true friendship.

2. Wise Men Obey the Law

Another friend asked whether great sages do not create karma and therefore get rid of the Law of Equilibrium.

The answer is that nothing, nobody, and no wise person is, or can ever be, above the law of karma.

Besides, trying to avoid the Law of Karma and Justice is a central factor in anti-ethical magic. It has to do with the end of civilizations, as shown in the legends available on Atlantis. Nothing in the universe is lawless or out-of-law. Masters abstain from creating lower-self-karma because they do not have lower-selves as such. But the whole work of masters and the celestial hierarchies above them is subject to, and in harmony with, the Law of Karma. They all act, which is the same as to create karma. And they create Good Karma. Such is the vital cycle of the universe.

The Balance Between Sowing and Harvesting



As we say “what one plants, one harvests”, we are talking about a symmetrical process. There is an invisible symmetry between being born and dying, between childhood and old age, the sky and the earth, the spiritual and the material. The love between a man and a woman constitutes a symmetrical whole: this is why it can produce another life. In any given situation, we need to find the axis of symmetry in order to attain to plenitude and peace.

In the circle of the Zodiac, each sign has its symmetrical opposite. The virtues and lessons of every sign exist in proportion and in symmetry to the lessons and virtues of the sign directly opposite. Pisces teaches the perception of life as a whole, while Virgo develops our critical vision and perception of details. In Aries we learn about courage, struggle, and pioneer action; in Libra we seek for peace, justice, and equilibrium. Taurus transmits stability, and Scorpio inspires transmutation. Gemini teaches about mental flexibility, and Sagittarius gives us lessons about one-pointedness. Cancer gives us the love and sensibility of the Moon, while Capricorn transmits the rigour and discipline of Master Saturn. Leo shows us how to gather things together and how to gather strength; Aquarius teaches us about liberation, independence and self-reliance.

We need all of the lessons. This is why human soul makes a peregrination around the zodiac, successively inhabiting each Celestial House. It must learn from them all, until it knows the center of the wheel of universal life and dwells in a soul-dialogue with it.

Besides human body, the bodies of plants and animals also possess axes of symmetry. What is on the left side of a living body is proportional to what is on the right side, and each being is a summary of the planet and of the solar system.

The axis of the Earth is an axis of symmetry. The daily movement of the Earth around its axis constantly renews the contact of the planet with the moral and spiritual forces that govern the solar system.

The annual peregrination of the Earth around the Sun obeys to an axis of symmetry which is reflected, as we saw, in the opposite Houses of the Zodiac. Everything that exists in the universe develops creatively and in accordance with the Law of Equilibrium, whose popular name is law of karma. The emotional world of humans is far from being an exception.

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Reproduced from the article “**The Law of Symmetry**”, by C.C. Aveline, which can be found at www.TheosophyOnline.com and its associated websites.

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The Daily Battle

“There is nothing like one day after the other”, says a proverb. And there isn’t, indeed. One can have more information, or less, on the art of living and the road to wisdom. Such information may be reliable or not. In any case, the great battle one has to face is the single battle of each new day in life. The struggle for right action is simultaneously physical, emotional and mental. One must establish better habits. It is necessary to reduce or eliminate wrong patterns of vibration. By preparing himself through correct actions (...) an individual purifies his instrument - the lower self - and gets gradually rid of unnecessary illusion and pain.

[From the article “The Daily Battle”, which is available at www.HelenaBlavatsky.Org .]

Knocking at the Door of 2015: Christmas Eve and the New Year



Christmas and New Year's season may have a strong inner meaning for those who have eyes to see. The 12 months' round corresponds to a whole cycle in our existence. A page is turned in the book of life, and some people get tempted to make the time-honoured Pythagorean examination:

“What good have I done? What mistakes? Will I renew and keep my vows to act in the best way I can in the next year?”

Indeed, the end of any cycle and the beginning of a new one is always a good occasion to evaluate our progress in learning and to make new resolutions. H.P.B. wrote: “And let no one imagine that it is a mere fancy, the attaching of importance to the birth of the year.”

She added:

“The earth passes through its definite phases and man with it; and as a day can be coloured so can a year. The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now [*id est*, in December-January] will have added strength to fulfill them consistently.” [1]

Our perception of time expands at every end of a cycle. It seems we get face to face with other similar moments, past and future. While you turn over a leaf in the book of your life, you get a sense of what were the previous pages, and you have a dialogue with the seeds of future. Christmas' time leads you into a different dimension in time. In some cases a repetition of the same old celebrations around us cause a strange sense of *déjà vu* which expands our perception. It brings us recollections of the past and perhaps some feelings about times yet-to-be.

It is true that any attachment to past things is dangerous, and H.P.B. made a warning, while writing about an ending year:

“Let it go, with its joys and triumphs, its badness and bitterness, if it but leave behind for our instruction the memory of our experience and the lesson of our mistakes. Wise is he who lets ‘the dead Past bury its dead’, and turns with courage to meet the fresher duties of the New Year; only the weak and foolish bemoan the irrevocable.” [2]

A thoughtful examination of the past can give us valuable lessons and clues as to future patterns of vibrations, in a much bigger dimension of time - and perhaps a glimpse of eternity itself.

NOTES:

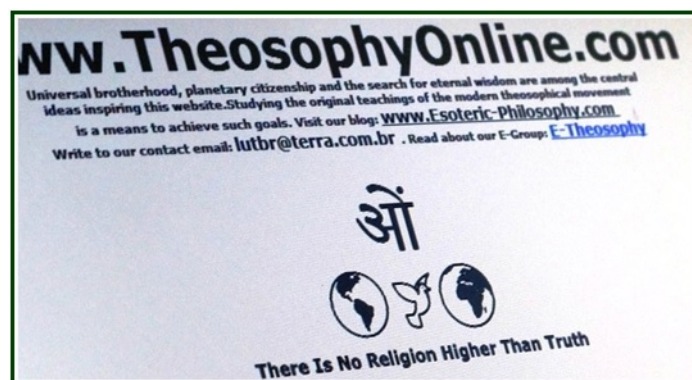
[1] H.P. Blavatsky, in the article “1888”, published in the pamphlet “Theosophical Objects, Program and Organization”, The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, USA, 37 pp., see p. 9. The article “1888” was also published in the “H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings”, TPH, volume IX, pp. 3-5 (see p. 5).

[2] “H. P. B. Collected Writings”, TPH, vol. III, 1995, p. 01.

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The above paragraphs open the article “On Christmas Eve and the New Year”, which can be found in the List of Texts in Alphabetical Order at www.TheosophyOnline.com and its associated websites.

The New Texts in Our Websites



This is the monthly report of www.TheosophyOnline.com and its associated websites, valid for December 22nd.

There are four items in French: three books and one text. In Italian, we have thirteen items, including twelve articles and one book. In Spanish, there are 43 items, which include 40 texts and three books. [1]

