

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.” [2]

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.” [3]

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. In 1879 H.P.B. wrote an article on Christmas which remains fundamentally valid today, both as a historical account and as a philosophical reflection. She said:

“We are reaching the time of the year when the whole Christian world is preparing the most noted of its solemnities - the birth of the Founder of its religion. When this paper reaches its Western subscribers there will be festivity and rejoicing in every house. In North-Western Europe and in America the holly and ivy will decorate each home, and the churches be decked with evergreens; a custom derived from the ancient practices of the pagan Druids ‘that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remain unnipped by frost till a milder season’. In Roman Catholic countries large crowds flock during the whole evening and night of ‘Christmas Eve’ to the churches, to salute waxen images of the divine Infant, and his Virgin mother, in her garb of ‘Queen of Heaven’. To an analytical mind, this bravery of rich gold and lace, pearl-broidered satin and velvet, and the bejewelled cradle do seem rather paradoxical. When one thinks of the poor, worm-eaten, dirty manger of the Jewish country-inn, in which, if we must credit the Gospel, the future ‘Redeemer’ was placed at his birth for

lack of a better shelter, we cannot help suspecting that before the dazzled eyes of the unsophisticated devotee the Bethlehem stable vanishes altogether. To put it in the mildest terms, this gaudy display tallies ill with the democratic feelings and the truly divine contempt for riches of the 'Son of Man', who had 'not where to lay his head'."

HPB's critical analysis goes on, not without an irony:

"It makes it all the harder for the average Christian to regard the explicit statement that - 'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven,' as anything more than a rhetorical threat. The Roman Church acted wisely in severely forbidding her parishioners to either read or interpret the Gospels for themselves, and leaving the Book, as long as it was possible, to proclaim its truths in Latin - 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness'. In that, she but followed the wisdom of the ages - the wisdom of the old Aryans, which is also 'justified of her children'; for, as neither the modern Hindu devotee understands a word of Sanskrit, nor the modern Parsi one syllable of the Zend, so for the average Roman Catholic the Latin is no better than Hieroglyphics. The result is that all the three - Brahmanical High Priest, Zoroastrian Mobed, and Roman Catholic Pontiff, are allowed unlimited opportunities for evolving new religious dogmas out of the depths of their own fancy, for the benefit of their own churches." [4]

The reasons why December 25th is the day now set for the celebration of Jesus' birth are more related to old pagan customs than to any Christian tradition. As HPB explains, in the same text:

"Though now universally observed by Christian nations as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, the 25th of December was not originally so accepted. The most movable of the Christian feast days, during the early centuries, Christmas was often confounded with the Epiphany, and celebrated in the months of April and May. As there never was any authentic record, or proof of its identification, whether in secular or ecclesiastical history, the selection of that day long remained optional; and it was only during the fourth century that, urged by Cyril of Jerusalem, the Pope (Julius I) ordered the bishops to make an investigation and come finally to *some* agreement as to the *presumable* date of the nativity of Christ. Their choice fell upon the 25th day of December - and a most unfortunate it has since proved! It was Dupuis, followed by Volney, who aimed, the first shots at this natal anniversary. They proved that for incalculable periods before our era, upon very clear astronomical data, nearly all the ancient peoples had celebrated the births of their sun-gods on that very day. 'Dupuis says, that the celestial sign of the VIRGIN AND CHILD was in existence several thousand years before the birth of Christ' - remarks Higgins in his *Anacalypsis* [5]. As Dupuis, Volney and Higgins have all been passed over to posterity as infidels, and enemies to Christianity, it may be as *well* to quote, in this relation, the confessions of the Christian Bishop of Ratisbone, 'the most learned man that the Middle Ages produced' - the Dominican, Albertus Magnus. 'The sign of the celestial virgin rises above the horizon at the moment in *which we fix the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ*', he says [6]. So Adonis, Bacchus, Osiris, Apollo, etc., were all born on the 25th of December. Christmas comes just at the time of the winter solstice; the days then are the shortest, and *Darkness* is more upon the face of the earth than ever. All the sun-gods were believed to be annually born at that epoch; for from this time its Light dispels more and more darkness with each succeeding day, and the power of the *Sun* begins to increase."

HPB dismantles the collective fancy according to which Christianity has its own independent source of inspiration, as a religion. She describes the pagan roots of Christ birth celebrations:

“However it may be, the Christmas festivities that were held by the Christians for nearly fifteen centuries were of a particular pagan character. Nay, we are afraid that even the present ceremonies of the Church can hardly escape the reproach of being almost literally copied from the mysteries of Egypt and Greece, held in honor of Osiris and Horus, Apollo and Bacchus. Both Isis and Ceres were called “Holy Virgins”, and a DIVINE BABE may be found in every ‘heathen’ religion.” [7]

So what happens if a modern esotericist looks at the Christmas celebrations taking place around him? Perhaps he will be able to see under the surface. Behind the Christian mask of present day, he may feel the strength of sun-god celebrations made since the dawn of time in the different religious traditions, eastern and western.

So, HPB says:

“Let us, by all means, exchange wishes and gifts (*étrennes*), but let us not be ungrateful, Theosophists! Let us not forget that these customs come to us from paganism; and that felicitations and gifts also came to us from the same source. As a matter of fact, gifts (*étrennes*) are but the *strenae*, the presents exchanged by the Latins on the first of January.” [8]

In a footnote, HPB explains that the word “*January*” comes from “*Janua*”, which means “door” or any kind of entrance; “the door that opens up the year”.

Doors happen to have two faces. And that leads us to another example, for Saint Peter, the doorkeeper of heaven, is in fact a baptized and christianized version of the old pagan god Janus, the double-faced janitor who opens the gates of heaven so that the Sun can appear every morning, and who also opens its gates every new year, while closing the doors for the old days and years. HPB writes:

“Neither a false nose nor a mask could prevent an old pagan from recognizing his double-faced Janus in the Apostle who denied his Master. The two are identical, and everybody has the right to take what is his own, wherever he finds it. Saint Peter is the *coeli Janitor* merely because Janus was that too. The old doorkeeper of heaven, who pulled the door cord at the palace of the Sun, and closed it again when ushering them out, is but too easily recognizable in his new role. (...) Solomon has said: ‘There is nothing new under the sun’; and he was right.” [9]

The fact that we recognize Christianity as a pagan religion in its core is certainly not a reason for us to reject it. Probably the opposite. We do not have to go to Mass to see this western religion as it is, an *amalgam* of ignorance and tradition with some wisdom inside which can still be rescued from its curtain of ritualistic blind-belief. Besides, we ourselves are probably not so far distant from spiritual blindness that we must feed in ourselves a purified sense of intellectual contempt for such popular beliefs. And sages do not feel contempt for ignorance. They experience compassion.

Once we get free from automatic and instinctive rejection or adherence, we can see that Christmas’ time does have an inner side. It is a celebration of universal brotherhood, a sun-celebration, a homage to the spiritual light within and outside our hearts. As we know, human heart identifies itself with the sun and with the Christ within, *Chrestos*. And as we change

ourselves and accept the expansion of our consciousness, we also help change the atmosphere around us.

Thinking of New Years, the main expounder of modern esoteric philosophy wrote:

“Thoreau pointed out that there are artists in life, persons who can change the colour of a day and make it beautiful to those with whom they come in contact. We claim that there are adepts, masters in life who make it divine, as in all other arts. Is it not the greatest art of all, this which affects the very atmosphere in which we live? That it is the most important is seen at once, when we remember that every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to colour the day for those about him.”

In the same text, H. P. Blavatsky said that Epictetus the Stoic became sublime because he “recognized his own absolute responsibility and did not try to evade it”. And she added: “The occultist fully recognizes the responsibility and claims his title by having both tried and acquired knowledge of his own possibilities.” For her, man’s life is in his own hands, his fate is ordered by himself, and there is no reason why each new year must not be a year of greater spiritual development “than any we have lived through”. It depends on ourselves to make it so:

“This is an actual fact, not a religious sentiment. In a garden of sunflowers every flower turns towards the light. Why not so with us?” [10]

We do possess a center of eternal peace and love in our hearts, and since we have some unavoidable responsibilities as students of the esoteric philosophy, we may choose to send good wishes to all sentient beings, all the more so in some special occasions. Blavatsky wrote:

“A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL! This seems easy enough to say, and everyone expects some such greeting. Yet, whether the wish, though it may proceed from a sincere heart, is likely to be realized - is more difficult to decide. According to our theosophical tenets, every man or woman is endowed, more or less, with a magnetic potentiality, which when helped by a sincere, and especially by a intense and indomitable *will* - is the most effective of magic levers placed by Nature in human hands - for woe as for weal. Let us then, Theosophists, use that will to send a sincere greeting and a wish of good luck for the New Year to every creature under the sun - enemies and relentless traducers as well.” [11]

When should we do that? From the esoteric viewpoint, perhaps the best day to make such a celebration is not January the first., says H.P.B. January 3rd, for instance, was in the old times dedicated to Minerva-Athênê, the goddess of wisdom. [12] And then we have the special date of January 4th:

“To be brief, it is January the 4th which ought to be selected by the Theosophists - the esotericists especially - as their New Year. January is under the sign of Capricornus, the mysterious *Makara* of the hindu mystics - the ‘Kumaras’, it being stated, having being incarnated in mankind under the tenth sign of the Zodiac. For ages the 4th of January has been sacred to Mercury-Budha, or Thot-Hermes. Thus everything combines to make of it a festival to be held by those who study ancient Wisdom. Whether called Budh or *Budhi* by its Aryan name, *Mercurios*, the son of *Caelus* and *Hecate* truly, or of the *divine* (white) and infernal (black) magic, by its Hellenic, or again Hermes or Thot, its Greco-Egyptian name, the

day seems in every way more appropriate for us than January 1, the day of Janus, the double-faced ‘god of the time’-*servers*.” [13]

Regardless of its exact day, esoteric or exoteric, each New Year is born under the sign of Capricorn, whose regent is Saturn. This is the planet of karma, the master of time, the builder, destroyer and rebuilder of structures both subtle and material, the lord of the rings, the co-regent of the now dawning Aquarius Age.

NOTES:

[1] “A Year of Theosophy”, H. P. B., in “Collected Writings”, TPH, vol. III, 1995, p. 01.

[2] H.P. Blavatsky, in the article “1888”, published in the pamphlet “Theosophical Objects, Program and Organization”, The Theosophy Company, L. 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).

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

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

[5] Boris de Zirkoff, editor of “H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings”, adds: “Book I, p. 313”.

[6] Boriz de Zirkoff adds: “This passage is from Godfrey Higgins’ Anacalypsis, Vol I, p. 314, where he ascribes these words to Albertus Magnus and gives as reference ‘Lib de Univers’.”

[7] “The Theosophist”, Bombay, India, December, 1879, pp. 58-59. “H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings”, TPH, Volume II, pp. 163-165.

[8] “H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings”, TPH, volume XII, 1987, text entitled “Thoughts on the New Year”, see p. 98.

[9] “H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings”, TPH, volume XII, 1987, text entitled “Thoughts on the New Year”, see p. 99.

[10] H.P. Blavatsky, in the pamphlet “Theosophical Objects, Program and Organization”, Theosophy Company, L. Angeles, USA, 37 pp., see pp. 8-9, text entitled “1888”. See also “H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings”, volume IX, pp. 3-5.

[11] “Collected Writings”, TPH, H.P. Blavatsky, volume XII, TPH, p. 67.

[12] “Collected Writings”, H.P. Blavatsky, volume XII, TPH, p. 75.

[13] “Collected Writings”, H.P. Blavatsky, volume XII, TPH, p. 76.

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The Practice and the Training

Two Lectures by Musonius, The Stoic Sage of Ancient Rome

Musonius Rufus

An Editorial Commentary:

One of the great philosophers of ancient Rome, Musonius Rufus, the Stoic, belongs in the personal library of any theosophist. He concentrated his attention on ethics, or “right living”, which sets the sole enduring foundation for any real knowledge of esoteric philosophy.

The following transcriptions of two of his talks - numbers V and VI - are available online.[1] Other versions of the same transcriptions are available in a little known book. [2] The original titles of the translations and transcriptions are given below.

(C. C. A.)

NOTES:

[1] Link: https://sites.google.com/site/thestoiclifethe_teachers/musonius-rufus. See Lectures 5 and 6.

[2] “Musonius Rufus”, translated by Cynthia King, with a preface by William B. Ervine, CreateSpace, Lexington, KY, USA, 2011, copyright 2010, 101 pp., see pp. 38-39. Another significant book is “Musonius Rufus and Education in the Good Life”, J. T. Dillon, University Press of America, Dallas, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford, 2004, 101 pp.

1. Which is More Effective, Theory or Practice?

(.....) The problem arose among us whether for the acquisition of virtue practice or theory is more effective, understanding that theory teaches what is right conduct, while practice represents the habit of those accustomed to act in accordance with such theory. To Musonius, practice seemed to be more effective, and speaking in support of his opinion, he asked one of those present the following question:

“Suppose that there are two physicians, one able to discourse very brilliantly about the art of medicine but having no experience in taking care of the sick, and the other quite incapable of speaking but experienced in treating his patients according to correct medical theory. Which one,” he asked, “would you choose to attend you if you were ill?” He replied that he would choose the doctor who had experience in healing.

Musonius then continued, “Well, then, let us take another example of two men. One has sailed a great deal and served as pilot on many boats, the other one has sailed very little and has never acted as pilot. If the one who had never piloted a ship should speak most ably on the methods of navigation, and the other very poorly and ineffectively, which one would you

employ as pilot if you were going on a voyage?" The man said he would take the experienced pilot.

Again Musonius said, "Take the case of two musicians. One knows the theory of music and discourses on it most convincingly but is unable to sing or play the harp or the lyre; the other is inferior in theory but is proficient in playing the harp and the lyre and in singing as well. To which one would you give a position as musician, or which one would you like to have as teacher for a child who does not know music?" The man answered that he would choose the one who was skilled in practice.

"Well, then," said Musonius, "that being the case, in the matter of temperance and self-control, is it not much better to be self-controlled and temperate in all one's actions than to be able to say what one ought to do?" Here too the young man agreed that it is of less significance and importance to speak well about self-control than to practice self-control.

Thereupon Musonius, drawing together what had been said, asked, "How, now, in view of these conclusions, could knowledge of the theory of anything be better than becoming accustomed to act according to the principles of the theory, if we understand that application enables one to act, but theory makes one capable of speaking about it? Theory which teaches how one should act is related to application, and comes first, since it is not possible to do anything really well unless its practical execution be in harmony with theory. In effectiveness, however, practice takes precedence over theory as being more influential in leading men to action."

2. On Training

[...Musonius] was always earnestly urging those who were associated with him to make practical application of his teachings, using some such arguments as the following. Virtue, he said, is not simply theoretical knowledge, but it is practical application as well, just like the arts of medicine and music. Therefore, as the physician and the musician not only must master the theoretical side of their respective arts but must also train themselves to act according to their principles, so a man who wishes to become good not only must be thoroughly familiar with the precepts which are conducive to virtue but must also be earnest and zealous in applying these principles.

How, indeed, could a person immediately become temperate if he only knew that one must not be overcome by pleasures, but was quite unpracticed in withstanding pleasures? How could one become just when he had learned that one must love fairness but had never exercised himself in avoidance of selfishness and greed? How could we acquire courage if we had merely learned that the things which seem dreadful to the average person are not to be feared, but had no experience in showing courage in the face of such things? How could we become prudent if we had come to recognize what things are truly good and what evil, but had never had practice in despising things which only seem good?

Therefore upon the learning of the lessons appropriate to each and every excellence, practical training must follow invariably, if indeed from the lessons we have learned we hope to derive any benefit. And moreover such practical exercise is the more important for the student of philosophy than for the student of medicine or any similar art, the more philosophy claims to be a greater and more difficult discipline than any other study. The reason for this is that men

who enter the other professions have not had their souls corrupted beforehand and have not learned the opposite of what they are going to be taught, but the ones who start out to study philosophy have been born and reared in an environment filled with corruption and evil, and therefore turn to virtue in such a state that they need a longer and more thorough training.

How, then, and in what manner should they receive such training? Since it so happens that the human being is not soul alone, nor body alone, but a kind of synthesis of the two, the person in training must take care of both, the better part, the soul, more zealously, as is fitting, but also of the other, if he shall not be found lacking in any part that constitutes man. For obviously the philosopher's body should be well prepared for physical activity, because often the virtues make use of this as a necessary instrument for the affairs of life.

Now there are two kinds of training, one which is appropriate for the soul alone, and the other which is common to both soul and body. We use the training common to both when we discipline ourselves to cold, heat, thirst, hunger, meager rations, hard beds, avoidance of pleasures, and patience under suffering. For by these things and others like them the body is strengthened and becomes capable of enduring hardship, sturdy and ready for any task; the soul too is strengthened since it is trained for courage by patience under hardship and for self-control by abstinence from pleasures.

Training which is peculiar to the soul consists first of all in seeing that the proofs pertaining to apparent goods as not being real goods are always ready at hand and likewise those pertaining to apparent evils as not being real evils, and in learning to recognize the things which are truly good and in becoming accustomed to distinguish them from what are not truly good. In the next place it consists of practice in not avoiding any of the things which only seem evil, and in not pursuing any of the things which only seem good; in shunning by every means those which are truly evil and in pursuing by every means those which are truly good.

In summary, then, I have tried to tell what the nature of each type of training is. I shall not, however, endeavor to discuss how the training should be carried out in detail, by analyzing and distinguishing what is appropriate for the soul and the body in common and what is appropriate for the soul alone, but by presenting without fixed order what is proper for each. It is true that all of us who have participated in philosophic discussion have heard and apprehended that neither pain nor death nor poverty nor anything else which is free from wrong is an evil, and again that wealth, life, pleasure, or anything else which does not partake of virtue is not a good. And yet, in spite of understanding this, because of the depravity which has become implanted in us straight from childhood and because of evil habits engendered by this depravity, when hardship comes we think an evil has come upon us, and when pleasure comes our way we think that a good has befallen us; we dread death as the most extreme misfortune; we cling to life as the greatest blessing, and when we give away money we grieve as if we were injured, but upon receiving it we rejoice as if a benefit had been conferred.

Similarly with the majority of other things, we do not meet circumstances in accordance with right principles, but rather we follow wretched habit. Since all this is the case, the person who is in training [to be a philosopher] must strive to habituate himself not to love pleasure, not to avoid hardship, not to be infatuated with living, not to fear death, and in the case of goods or money not to place receiving above giving.

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Just Above the Line of the Horizon

A New Day Noiselessly Announces Itself.
There is no Hurry, But Everyone Can Help.



A Sunrise on Earth, and a composite Cassini image of Planet Jupiter. The dark spot is the shadow of the moon Europa.

As the December 2012 “**The Aquarian**” starts to circulate, the Sun has just left Sagittarius and the timing is correct to think of Jupiter.

For anyone who got to the year 2000 with some perspective of the theosophical effort during the last quarter of the 20th century, and who could also see some of the main events of the movement’s history during the 2000-2012 cycle of **Jupiter**, it is not too difficult to realize that there are now various signs indicating an awakening. Yet they are still mostly silent, and almost imperceptible at first sight.

These factors and seeds can be found across the “political” spectrum. They permeate the whole movement and are fundamentally inter-organizational. The undoubtedly numerous Theosophical Chiefs, Clairvoyant Seers, Professional Channellers, UFO experts and Esoteric Popes are not living their best moment now. Their future is uncertain. Neo-Theosophical pseudo-academics are facing a less than brilliant phase of the cycle and start to lose faith in their own skepticism.

Moderate people who have respect for Ethics and the Classics get more visible. Quietly, a few major obstacles to a popularization of the original teachings of Theosophy get dissolved in the astral air. Younger people start to work along lines compatible with the great classics. Small steps can lead through long journeys, and positive thought stimulates cooperation. Just above the distant line of the horizon, the new day noiselessly announces itself. There is no hurry, and everyone can help. Jupiter, the great protector, inspires philosophy, optimism, and a healthy view of the future. Saturn, the rather severe Lord of the Rings, wants to see hard work done in the right direction. From the sky of our planet, these two solar Masters are silent and effective teachers of the theosophical movement.

The Ethos of Global Citizenship

Online World Provides the Astral Agora of Our Planetary Village



The Agora or meeting place in a city of ancient Greece, and the planetary Agora of today

“Ethos”, says the Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, is the fundamental character and spirit of a culture, or society.

Each nation has an *ethos* of its own. It possesses a common karma, a collective heritage which is shared by its citizens. The esoteric movement is a cross-national community which has its own sort of identity or “character”. Theosophical associations exist in some 70 or 75 countries, while there are more than 180 member-states in the United Nations. Theosophists are still poor in cultural and national diversity, therefore. But they already exist in a number of nations, and the *ethos* of many a country has been interacting with some of the most fundamental tenets of esoteric philosophy for over a century now.

The Internet is also cross-national and in recent years it has put each individual in potential contact with everyone else around the globe. In the international theosophical debate, people from many cultures add distinct flavors and viewpoints to the original teachings of theosophy. New places around the planet - some of them situated in non-geographical locations - emerge as active centers for the renewal of the movement. This brings about a variety of styles in action, in leadership, and in approaches to the duty and dharma of the theosophical effort.

The theosophical effort is cross-cultural, inter-linguistic, multi-cultural. It ignores national limits. It includes people of different social classes, ages, and intellectual skills. As more and more of life gets transferred every year to the subtle online world that is part of the astral light, the democratic sharing of information and responsibility becomes more immediate and powerful. The Internet is emerging as an efficient vehicle for buddhi-manasic dialogue. The online world is the great abstract Agora, the market-place of ideas and meeting-place for people. On it world-citizens of all kinds share views, thoughts, viewpoints, perplexities and experiential testimonies.

A global *ethos* is in the making, and theosophy is part of the *glue* that holds it together and gives it its *inner substance*.

Ethics relates to *ethos*: it is a feeling of duty towards the collectivity we belong to; and by now everyone can see that our collectivity is - the whole planet. Even our solar system cannot be seen as much more than the **local village**.

The theosophical movement can understand that, and it must make a stronger buddhi-manasic contribution to the building of a planetary *ethos*. Esoteric philosophy has a silent, invisible, but effective role to play in the global awakening. To the perception of this role the theosophical movement is awakening already. However, the awakening also follows the rule and the karma of each local *Ethos*. Some countries are more open to change than others. Some - and a few theosophical groups - seem to think they know already too much to learn anything from life. In other places, however, life is new and must still be invented. Things always happen according to Law, and they occur in the timing that best serves Law. There is no way to accelerate or slow down the dawning of the new day. The spirit and the people of each place and nation have much to contribute to the new global *Ethos* and its planetary *Ethics*. Some places teach prudence: others, courage. We need both.

Theosophy and Vigilance

Do the Masters Work for the Future?

There is a notion in more than one “traditional” circle of theosophists according to which theosophy is about remaining attached to the past.

Theosophy is about the past, indeed. It is also about the present, and - above all - it is about the future. Theosophical action is a conservative effort. It is also deeply revolutionary. In order to preserve the essence of life, theosophy must change it all. But theosophy also does nothing, and quietly dwells in contemplation. Esoteric Philosophy includes all kinds of temperaments and situations. The choice regarding right action depends on understanding the various tides of karma, and on reading the landscape formed by outer and inner circumstances. This, however, must be made from the point of view of our own motives and strength, actual and potential. It therefore it depends on self-knowledge and self-control.

The priority is always to sow good karma, that is, to prepare a better future. In “**The Key to Theosophy**”, H.P.B. writes that the Masters of the Wisdom work for better times to come:

“The Masters look at the future, not at the present, and every mistake is so much more accumulated wisdom for days to come.” [1]

Theosophy teaches vigilance. From it, one learns to be ready for anything and for everything. It teaches us to be self-confident, to be confident in the Law, and thus, confident in Life.

NOTE:

[1] “The Key to Theosophy”, Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, p. 299.

A Question on Blavatsky-Judge Letters

Reader Asks About the Chronology of the Correspondence

Question:

“Why is it that the recent sequence of Chapters in “**Letters Between Blavatsky and Judge**” [1] does not present the letters in Chronological Order?”

Answer:

As a general trend the **Letters Between Blavatsky and Judge** (LBBJ) go in chronological sequence; but not always, indeed. There are various factors involved, and the project is extremely multidimensional to say the least. We do not have a too linear conception of time. We think time is continuous and HPB's trajectory from 1831 through 1891 has to be seen as a whole. It is a single piece whose chronological line is, all of it, in the present time. Thus we consider the lack of a perfectly mechanical progression in the chronology of the letters a relatively minor limitation of the work, but we do acknowledge it as a limitation.

NOTE:

[1] See “**Letters Between Blavatsky and Judge**” in the List of Texts in Alphabetical Order at www.TheosophyOnline.com and www.Esoteric-Philosophy.com , or at the Lista de Textos por Ordem Alfabética at www.FilosofiaEsoterica.com .

The Next Humanity of Brotherhood

And How It Can Be Anticipated From Now

There is a fragment of a text by Sri Aurobindo in the text “**The Future of Mankind is Bright**”[1]. The lines describe the citizen of the future in these words:

“All his existence would be fused in oneness with the transcendent and universal Self and Spirit; all his action would originate from and obey to the supreme Self and Spirit’s divine governance of Nature. All life would have for him the sense of the Conscious Being, the Purusha within, finding its self-expression in Nature; his life and all his thoughts, feelings, acts would be filled for him with that significance and built upon that foundation of its reality. He would feel the presence of the Divine in every center of his consciousness, in every vibration of his life-force, in every cell of his body.”

The enlightened humanity foreseen by Sri Aurobindo and described in his poems belongs to the same future as taught in “The Secret Doctrine”. It refers in fact to the sixth and seventh sub-races of the present fifth root-race mankind, and also to the sixth root-race mankind. The two root-races will have a certain degree of co-existence in time among them.

The future always casts its shadow and its influence over present events. Long term, “large” realities mirror themselves in short term or “little” facts. The vision of better times should be enough to bring relief to those who study theosophy, and indirectly to those who are influenced by them. Yet there are other good news, which are much nearer to us. We have

small anticipations of those distant Futures even now in the Devachanic states where we live after each incarnation.

What Are Those People Complaining About?

The Devachan is much longer than the “painful” physical plane life (15 to 40 times longer in an average). Since the Devachan has the very substance of spiritual happiness, it is rather hard to understand what are those people complaining about life, who style themselves as unfortunate victims of circumstances. And this is not all.

Every human being has its own sixth principle technically available to him any time during his awakening life. It is but a question of examining the actual state of that useful device, the Antahkarana.

(In some cases a repair might be badly needed.)

If one’s antahkarana works well, one can have a glimpse or two of a truly devachanic bliss even during an intense life, as one gets conscious of the surprising unity of all living things on this planet, and sees that everything is alive, too.

Routine beliefs and blind faith are mind-extinguishers. On the other hand, unconditional love for truth and ethics is a practical tool for repairing Antahkarana and cleaning the lens through which we look at the future.

There is no reason to exaggerate problems, if we only know that humanity's future is good, and understand that the deep happiness of a fulfilled duty can be achieved at the end of each new cycle of 24 hours.

Each night of sound sleep contains something of a Devachan, in its deep sleep cycle. And each new day of life is a privilege which contains the seed of a Devachan - and of a better rebirth.

NOTE:

[1] Easy to find in www.TheosophyOnline.com, www.Esoteric-Philosophy.com or www.FilosofiaEsoterica.com .

Where Can a Real Christmas Take Place?

“The real Christmas can come to us in our hearts. We can realize that there has come once more the season we can rise with. If we make up our minds to do it, we can follow the Path of our great Predecessors - the great Saviors of the World, the great Saviors of all times, for They all come from the same Body whether we call them Buddha, Jesus, or any other name. They are all Beings of the same nature who come among us, and, as was said of Jesus, in all things become like unto us that They may impart to us something of Their great knowledge and point us to the Path They followed.”

[**Robert Crosbie**, in “**Theosophy**” magazine, Los Angeles, December 1920, p, 36.]

