

and nervous organisation which comes in contact with it in proportion to its dynamic intensity. The Buddhist calls this his 'Skandha', the Hindu gives it the name of 'Karma'; the Adept evolves these shapes consciously, other men throw them off unconsciously." [1]

Nothing can exist or take place outside the Law, indeed.

And the ripening of one's Karma, just as the ripening of a civilization's fate, has its own timing, which cannot be artificially accelerated or postponed.

If we look at our solar system as a School of Souls, Saturn has to be acknowledged as the local Teacher of Time and Equilibrium. He is the Lord of the Limits in space and time as far as our small galactic village is concerned. Each time Saturn enters its own zodiac sign of Capricorn an occasion comes for judging, evaluating and updating human Karma. The Lord of the Rings has just entered Capricorn on 19-21 December 2017. He will firmly advance to a conjunction with Pluto which culminates between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020.

For decades if not centuries our civilization has been undergoing a severe, ceaseless renewal, and the process unfolds in continuous acceleration. An article in our websites says:

"There is now in the astral light a subtle energy which is favourable to the destruction of false shells and of structures which resist truthfulness. This is especially perceptible since 2008 and will proceed until the year of 2023, because in this period the planet Pluto is in transit in the sign of Capricorn. The fact provokes a purification that paves the way to the renewed times of pure and clean mental consciousness, the wide, bright and elevated awareness of the Aquarius Age." [2]

In December 2020, a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in our sky will help redefine the new Karmic landscape. The dialogue of the two giants will make it easier to see the next steps in the journey, while Pluto will be getting ready to finish its Capricornian task by 2023. The always significant conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn occur every two decades, approximately, and Stephen Arroyo writes:

"Saturn and Jupiter may be interpreted usefully as a pair of complementary principles: Saturn represents effort, Jupiter represents grace. Effort without grace leaves one no joy or serenity, nor is one then able to accept the benefits of his effort. Grace without effort is generally not a constructive way to go through life; for, although one may have great faith and optimism, there is usually very little that gets done and the reliance on grace alone can become a hollow escape from immediate duties." [3]

Regarding the years ahead, there is no reason to fear too much. Helena Blavatsky must have had her reasons to write that Theosophy and Ethics will "win the day" before the end of the 21st century [4]. She also suggested that it shall not be an easy thing to achieve, and said almost nothing about the *size of the trouble* before the victory.

NOTES:

[1] "First Letter of K.H. to A.O. Hume" in "The Mahatma Letters", Chronological edition, TPH, Philippines, 1993, Appendix I, 600 pp., p. 472.

[2] From the article "[Pluto: A Struggle of Two Thousand Years](#)".

[3] "Astrology, Psychology, and the Four Elements", Stephen Arroyo, M.A., CRCS Publications, 1975, USA, 191 pp., see pp. 140-141.

the Inner, so is the Outer; as is the Great, so is the Small; as it is Above, so it is Below; there is but ONE LIFE AND LAW, and he that worketh it is ONE.” Then, paradoxically, the axiom proceeds, “Nothing is Inner, nothing is Outer; nothing is Great, nothing is Small; nothing is High and nothing is Low, in the Divine Economy”.

The other basic ideas which are summarized in this axiom are essentially, (a) “The Fundamental Unity of all Existence ...”; this states that “all existence is ONE THING”. (b) “There is no Dead Matter”; every atom is alive and, (c) “Man is the MICROCOSM”. If this is so, then all the Hierarchies of the Heavens exist within him.

Older students who have lived with the Doctrine for many years will know how illuminating these basic ideas are, particularly when they are expanded as in the Bowen notes. They begin to know how these words, essentially only symbols in themselves, relate to a reality of ever increasing significance.

We come across the words Inner and Outer many times in our reading. They are a pair from a whole series of dichotomies which include for example the Real and the Unreal, the Unmanifest and the Manifest, the Immortal and the Mortal, the Subjective and the Objective, the Permanent and the Impermanent, Noumena and Phenomena.

So what are the Inner and the Outer, or the Within and the Without as we sometimes say, in the sense that we are now trying to discover, and what, if anything, is their relationship? In letter 22 of *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* there is the following, which is very valuable for the insight it gives us into the ultimate nature of matter:

“There is a moment in the existence of every molecule and atom of matter when, for one cause or another, the last spark of spirit or motion or life (call it by whatever name) is withdrawn, and in the same instant with the swiftness which surpasses that of the lightning glance of thought the atom or molecule or an aggregation of molecules is annihilated to return to its pristine purity of intra-cosmic matter. It is drawn to the mother fount with the velocity of a globule of quicksilver to the central mass. Matter, force, and motion are the trinity of physical objective nature, as the trinitarian unity of spirit-matter is that of the spiritual or subjective nature. Motion is eternal because spirit is eternal. But no modes of motion can ever be conceived unless they be in connection with matter.” [1]

Apart from whatever else is said in that extract, including a brief glimpse of “That” from which all comes and to which all returns, we see the sense in which the Master uses the words, Objective and Subjective. Our thought is given a direction. The Outer or the Without is our objective physical world, of which we, regarded as physical beings, are a part. Because most of us wholly identify with this objective “self” it becomes our very self in our ordinary environment. This objective physical world is the whole sphere of our sensual experience. It is the world that we know through our senses, the world of colour, sound, taste, smell and of movement or activity, of physical forces and relationships, all at the material level. The Inner or the Within is the realm of the “spirit” in whatever sense we use that word (apart from its physical connotations). The Within then is the great invisible world, largely unknown to us directly, but certainly known by its effects. It is the world of abstracts, of qualities, which manifest in our physical world in the characteristics of things. These qualities pervade the cosmos in what are referred to in the Doctrine as the Elements. They have their correspondences in our qualities such as those of perseverance, patience, affection, likes and dislikes. The Inner world is also that of emotions, of hopes, of fears, of happy expectancy or

foreboding. As well as these it is the world of motives, of ambition, of greed, of lust and so on. It is also the realm of devotion, aspiration, loyalty and courage. The Within is the world of thought with its various modes of analysis and comparison; it is the home of aesthetics, of apperception and of judgement, the recognition of truth and of what we call religious or mystical experience, thence of conscience. All these are interior activities arising in the depths of the inner man. Lastly in the inmost recesses resides the Spiritual Will, the internal Supreme Ruler, the ultimate arbiter of our personal fate.

We learn in theosophical literature that none of these qualities or modes of activity, whether they be Inner or Outer, could exist or well up within us had they not their counterpart in the cosmic whole from which man can in no way separate himself. This is a tremendous truth which may take many years to appreciate. Here we could remind ourselves of the words often used in esoteric literature: the cosmos is worked from within outwards.

So this is the internal, the Within, in the cosmic sense. This is particularly the area of theosophical teaching which tells us of a multi-regional area of life activity operating at various interior levels, and reflecting into the physical. They are, on the one hand pre-physical or pre-material in the evolutionary time scale and on the other post-human. For us these inner levels are necessarily subjective ones. They are the realms of the Elementals, the Devas, etc. at one end of the scale and of the Dhyani Chohans at the other. The Dhyani Chohans are the rulers of Nature's complex being and functions, whilst the Elementals and Devas are their servants, the workmen.

The second basic idea in the Bowen notes, that there is no dead matter, means that the constituents of the various levels in the cosmic being, whatever they may be, are all living entities. Each such entity, whether it is very high in the scheme or very low, has its characteristic qualities, and its essential nature. This nature determines the role that it fulfils in that scheme. Everything plays a part for which it is especially fitted. What we are saying here is that the inner realms of being, as well as the outer, are not only inhabited by living beings but are composed of them, and herein lies another important key to our understanding of the cosmic process, particularly as it relates to our inner activities. According to the theosophical teaching, every entity is sevenfold. Every being has its seven principles, whether it be a solar system or an atom. This interlinks it to every other being in the cosmos, and connects it with the Within and the Without of the whole manifested cosmos. Our external and our internal being and activities are thereby linked to the beings which comprise the levels wherein these characteristic qualities and activities originate. If we see that this is so, we understand why the Master in his letter says that "no modes of motion can ever be conceived unless they be in connection with matter". It is only through matter that anything can "be" or be effective, but matter must not be taken here to mean only physical matter. The student of the Doctrine will have learned of the nature of the "primeval stuff" of which, by differentiation and aggregation, the whole cosmos is composed, both in its inner and outer states. It is the primeval Substance Principle in its two aspects of Spirit and Matter. This however is in the beginning a pre-manifestation state of affairs. In manifestation, Spirit can only operate in, or manifest through, Matter. This means that no being, however lofty, can be "pure" Spirit.

In spite of Spirit by itself being "mere abstraction", as the Master says, we do refer to spirits as entities. For example, we refer to the Spirits of the Planets and relate them to the Seven Spirits first emanated from the Logos who set the keynotes of all qualities of kind, variety, characteristic form, colour, and so on of everything in the cosmos or at least in our solar system. There is nothing that does not partake of their nature. All that we human beings are,

in our essence, and in all aspects of our manifest beings, reflects the qualities of these great Spirits or Beings. In their aggregate they represent the Macrocosm as we, miniature reflections of them, are the Microcosm. All the elements or principles of our being derive either from them, *i.e.* the higher Hierarchies or the Elementals. The Elementals comprise the inner principles of the atoms of all beings and they also ensoul the living components of our physical bodies. Our human form and constitution is modelled on the Dhyān Chohanīc one. In this sense we are made in “the image and likeness of God”. Our constitution and our essential nature are now beginning to be seen to be complex indeed with the inner worlds playing a very important part in our make-up.

It is so with our spiritual nature, our Ego, the three principles of which correspond to the three higher aspects of the great cosmic beings. It is at these levels that we too, as individuals, are “Spirits” of the Dhyān Chohanīc order; here is the seat of our divine, immortal nature. As man advances on his evolutionary journey, on the ascending arc as it is called, the objective physical or outer side of his nature diminishes in relative importance, while the subjective, inner side of his nature increases; it begins to occupy his attention more and more at the expense of the lower aspects of his nature. It is in the light of this expanding spiritual awareness that he comes to the realization that there is in fact but “One Life and Law”. The sentence in the Axiom following this is, “he that worketh it is ONE”. For the now awakening man this is seen to have considerable meaning. However, the picture is still very complex. All beings in nature are composite. Their beings are made up of lesser beings. This is a rule that applies throughout. It means that even the Dhyān Chohans and the Planetary Spirits are themselves composite. These greater beings are collective as units. They have a correspondence in the kingdom of Nature, and in this sense humanity can be seen to be a collective entity. This constituent nature of all things has another aspect, that these collective beings, functioning at ever higher and higher levels, operate the Law. They know the mind of “god” and, at their level of being, play their part in the operation of the whole scheme, each hierarchy doing the “will” of the one above it. At the higher level, of course, there is only the ONE: and in the ONE, the Law and its operation are the same thing.

This introduces us to a whole new field of exploration which is set out in the second part of the Hermetic Axiom as follows: “Nothing is Inner, nothing is Outer; nothing is Great, nothing is Small; nothing is High, nothing is Low, in the Divine Economy.” This appears to contradict the first part of the Axiom wherein the Inner and Outer and the Great and the Small and the Above and the Below are seen as aspects of being. The second half of the Axiom introduces us to the most difficult aspects of the theosophical Doctrine. It can be approached, however, through such statements as, in the inner worlds space and time do not exist, or, subjective space is dimensionless.

We are almost wholly conditioned to think of “things” in terms of time, magnitude and degree. If, however, we would get a true insight of the nature of the spiritual, inner realm, we have somehow or other completely to reorientate our thinking or our viewpoint. We have to abandon many of the concepts which so far we have used to understand the nature of the cosmos. H.P.B. refers to this conceptualization process as picturemaking, and says that our pictures have continually to change. At the end it seems we have to abandon them altogether. We have to find another way. The last half of the Hermetic Axiom may perhaps be understood in terms of potentiality; as an abstraction this takes up no space, neither objective nor subjective. The idea of potentiality is obviously dimensionless; having got it we can then start to apply particulars to it. We can think of it in terms of the characteristics of the beings which comprise the cosmos. Again these characteristics can be considered as abstracts. It is in

these terms that they can be thought of as timeless, dimensionless and ubiquitous. They are in this wise ever present, everywhere. They are not only ever present in terms of location wherever we may happen to be in the cosmos, but they are also ever present in terms of time. They never cease to be. They have no magnitude. This gives us a clue then to the statement that nothing is Great, nothing is Small. If space is dimensionless, nothing can be distant from any other “thing”, There cannot be a distinction between Inner and Outer; nor in matters of degree can there be a Higher or a Lower, not only in terms of altitude but in terms of degree, say, of excellence. It is ultimately the totality of these abstractions which comprise the unity of nonmanifest existence. Everything, however, is contained therein. This is the ultimate subjective state. This is the very essence of Spirit and it is also the totality of the Divine Economy in the inmost centre. It is the Centre, the Fount and Origin of everything, the point within the Circle, the Germ. It is this that the meditator knows in his deepest contemplation.

Has all this speculation and possible insight any practical application? Does it help us in our life’s journey? For many it will have no meaning, but for some it will become a guiding light. H.P.B. refers to it as a beacon. In its light a man comes to realize the potentialities that lie latent within him. He also sees something of his responsibilities. He has of necessity a part to play as a constituent member of that composite entity, the human brotherhood. He comes to see himself as part of the cosmic evolutionary process, and as a conscious part he cannot evade fulfilling his destiny by playing his proper part in it. To do this effectively he has to grow in all departments of his being, but particularly has he to grow in knowledge and wisdom. He must become an aspirant after truth. He seeks, finds and appreciates the books that give him guidance. One such book mentioned by H.P.B. is, apart from our great classics, *Light on the Path*, and therein he finds the instruction: “Seek out the way. Seek the way by retreating within. Seek the way by advancing boldly without.” (Verses 17, 18 and 19.) We now know that the “within” is our subjective, inner nature, the realm of free, pure consciousness and will. The “without” is the realm of conditioned existence, which can be our psychological and our sensual world. Eventually all is to be brought under the dominion of the inmost, sovereign, spiritual Will.

NOTE:

[1] “The Mahatma Letters”, A. Trevor Barker (ed.), 1926 edition, published by T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., in London, UK, 493 pages: see p. 142. The book is available in PDF at our websites. The pages are the same in the TUP edition. (The Editors of “The Aquarian”)

000

A Note on Skandhas and Karma

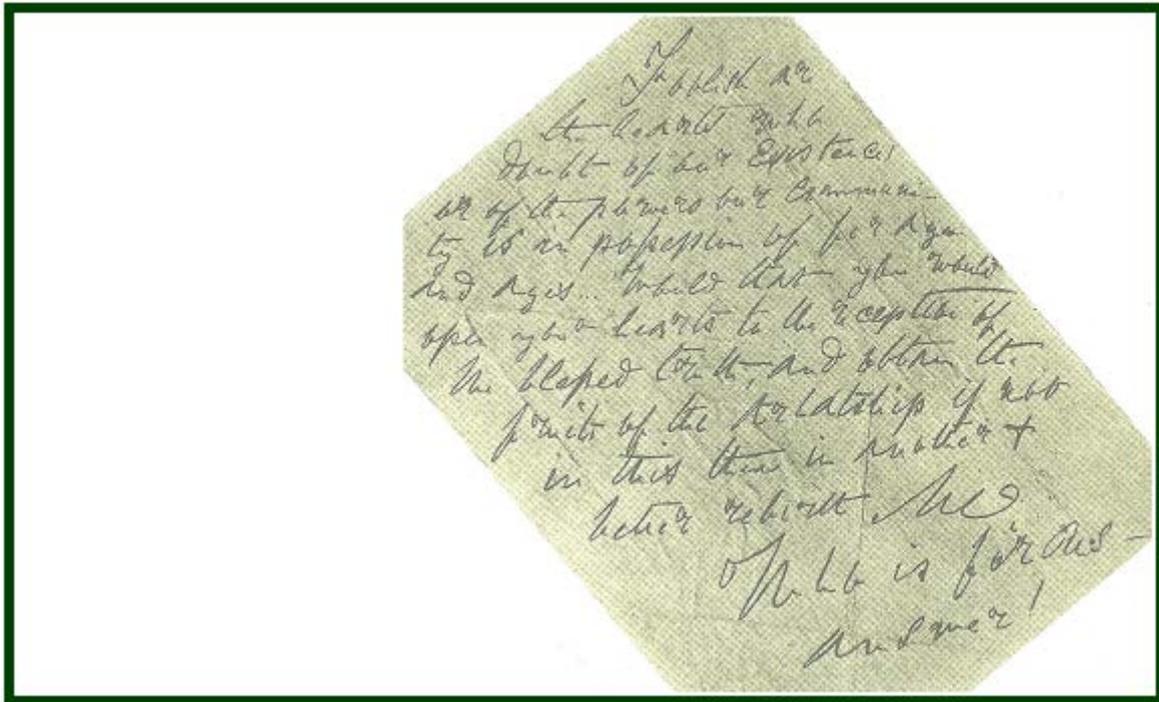
Skandhas are the energetic units of accumulated Karma in one’s aura. *Law of Karma* is a much wider concept. What to do regarding undesirable skandhas? In the first place, they must not be stimulated. Other skandhas, opposite to them and friendly to one’s higher self, have to be stimulated. These will in due time replace the unhelpful accumulated karma. One’s higher purpose and *creative will* are always decisive factors.

In astrology as in life, everything is cyclic and undergoes constant revision and remaking. One might say the end and the beginning of times are fully represented in the small universe of a 24 hours’ cycle.

000

The Writings of an Eastern Master - 08

Transcriptions from the Letters of Blavatsky's Teacher



Editorial Note:

This is number eight in the series of articles reproducing letters written by the master of Helena Blavatsky. As Saturn in the sky enters the zodiac sign of Capricorn, we reproduce the short text of Letter 76 from the book "Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom - Second Series", TPH, India, 1925 edition, p. 147. The "Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom" were published in two volumes or "series" by the TPH and are available in our associated websites, in PDF. (CCA)

[On Unreasoned Skepticism]

To all those whom this may concern - to the honourable and doubting company.

Foolish are the hearts who doubt of our existence! or of the powers our community is in possession of for ages and ages. Would that you would open your hearts to the reception of the blessed truth, and obtain the fruits of the Arhatship if not in this then in another and better rebirth.

M.:

Who is for us - answer!

000

The Writings of an Eastern Master - 09

Courage is Needed to Defend Helena P. Blavatsky

Editorial Note:

This is the text of Letter XLI, or 41, in “The Mahatma Letters” (non-chronological editions).

As we have seen earlier in the present series, the amount of sacrifice made by the masters is significant. The lack of moral courage on the part of theosophists to defend their teacher H.P. Blavatsky from the unjust attacks of an ethically blind society was extreme.

Few defended her, or truth, from obvious falsehoods. The Masters had to organize the defense themselves. The following letter is one more demonstration of that, and of the humbleness with which they try to protect her work.

Yet before the present-day student of theosophy feels he is much wiser than the 19th century theosophists, he might submit a few questions to the voice of his conscience:

- * If I were privileged enough to be in direct contact with the Masters’ work for mankind, would I have the courage to defend HPB’s mission from her detractors, who are in some cases infiltrated in the very theosophical movement? [1]
- * Would I be able to recognize the work, in spite of its unavoidable outward imperfection?
- * Or - would I rather follow the easier and more popular path of institutionalized comfort, studying but the dead-letter of HPB’s writings, or worshipping fake images of false masters under the kind orders of a “spiritual bureaucracy”?
- * Perhaps I would postpone the search for wisdom and unknowingly dedicate my life to personal mediocrities, to petty ambitions and the imaginary sufferings of members of urban middle class. Or would I not?
- * Do I actually share the feeling of universal compassion and practical altruism?
- * Can I see that the spiritual ignorance of the 19th century theosophists is essentially my own, and can I defeat it in my life?
- * Will I elevate myself?
- * And do I know that, before desiring a noble goal, one must deserve it?

(CCA)

Letter No. XLI (41)

Received about February, 1882.

I believe verily I am unfit to express my ideas clearly in your language. I never thought of giving any importance to the *circular letter* - I had asked you to draft for them - appearing in the *Pioneer*, or ever meant to imply that it *should* so appear. I had asked you to compose it for them, send your drafted copy to Bombay and make them issue it as a *circular letter*; which, once out, and on its round in India might be copied in your journal as other papers would be sure to copy it. Her letter B.G. [2] was foolish, childish and silly. I have overlooked it. But you must not so labour under the impression that it will *undo* all the good yours has done. There are a few sensitive persons on whose nerves it will jar, but the rest will never appreciate its true spirit; nor is it in any way libellous - only vulgar and foolish. I will force her to stop.

At the same time I must say she suffers acutely and I am unable to help her for all this is effect from causes which *cannot* be *undone* - occultism in theosophy. She has now to either conquer or die. When the hour comes she will be taken back to Tibet. Do not blame the poor woman, blame me. She is but a "shell" at times and I, often careless in watching her. If the laugh is not turned on the *Statesman* the ball will be caught up by other papers and flung at her again.

Do not feel despondent. Courage my good friend and remember you are working off by helping her your own law of retribution for more than one cruel fling she receives is due to K.H.'s friendship for you, for his using her as the means of communication. But - Courage.

I saw the lawyer's papers and perceive he is averse to taking up the case. But for the little he is needed for, he will do. No law suit will help - but publicity in the matter of vindication as much as in the question of accusation - 10,000 *circular letters* sent throughout to prove the accusations false.

Yours till the morrow.

M.

NOTES:

[1] See in our associated websites the article "Defending the Old Lady". (CCA)

[2] *Bombay Gazette*, as the Chronological Edition informs. (CCA)

000

The above text transcribes Letter XLI in "The Mahatma Letters", A. Trevor Barker (ed.), 1926 edition, published by T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., in London, UK, 493 pages: see pp. 256-257. The whole book is available in PDF at our websites. The pages are the same in the TUP edition. In the Chronological edition of the compilation, this is letter 35.

000

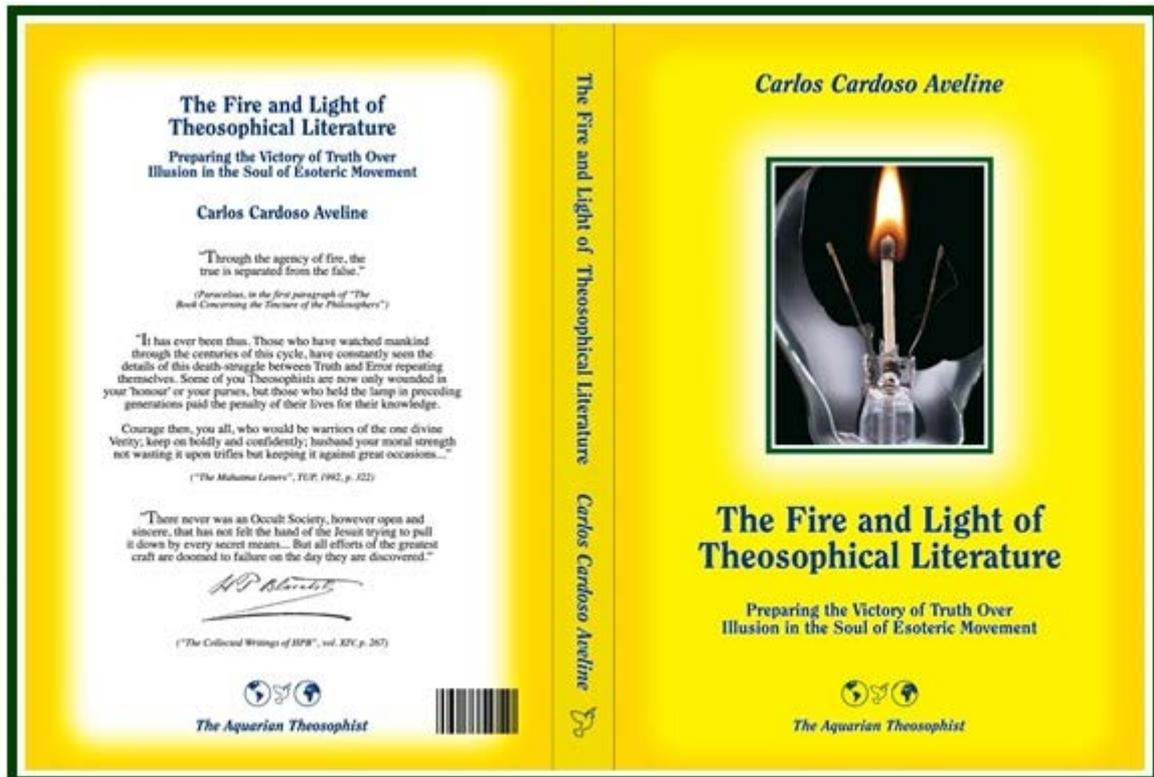
See the article "[The Origin of Christmas Tree](#)".

000

*** Grant your Copy Now ***

The Fire and Light of Theosophical Literature

Preparing the Victory of Truth Over Illusion in the Soul of Esoteric Movement



With 255 pages, 28 chapters, 16 illustrations, published in 2013 by the “Aquarian Theosophist”, also available at Amazon Books and elsewhere

[Click Here to Buy:](#)
[A Story of Loyalty, Treason and Learning](#)

If you are buying the book from Brazil or South America, write to bhlivros@gmail.com

000

On “The Fire and Light”:

“This is an important book for Theosophists and lovers of truth trying to separate the wheat from the chaff in Theosophy.” (Robert Kitto in “[A Timely Book for the New Age](#)”)

The Heavenly Christmas Tree

A Classic Short Story Examines the Relation Between Pain and Transcendence

Feodor Dostoevsky [1]



A 2017 Editorial Note:

Born in 1821, Feodor Dostoevsky is one of the greatest writers of all time. He suffered from a lack of optimism, and studied the roots of human psychological pain. His anguished art teaches universal *togetherness* and compassion.

In 1889, some eight years after his death, Helena Blavatsky wrote:

“What the European world now needs is a dozen writers such as Dostoevsky, the Russian author, whose works, though *terra incognita* for most, are still well known on the Continent, as also in England and America among the cultured classes. And what the Russian novelist has done is this: - he spoke boldly and fearlessly the most unwelcome truths to the higher and *even to the official classes* - the latter a far more dangerous proceeding than the former. And yet, behold, most of the administrative reforms during the last twenty years [2] are due to the silent and *unwelcome* influence of his pen. As one of his critics remarks, the great truths

uttered by him were felt by all classes so vividly and so strongly that people whose views were most diametrically opposed to his own could not but feel the warmest sympathy for this bold writer and even expressed it to him.” [3]

The following narrative is reproduced from the volume “Short Stories”, by Fiodor Dostoievski, The World’s Popular Classics, Books Inc. Publishers, New York / Boston, 1900, 248 pp., see pp. 151-155.

(CCA)

000

The Heavenly Christmas Tree

Feodor Dostoevsky

I am a novelist, and I suppose I have made up this story. I write “I suppose”, though I know for a fact that I have made it up, but yet I keep fancying that it must have happened somewhere at some time, that it must have happened on Christmas Eve in some great town in a time of terrible frost.

I have a vision of a boy, a little boy, six years old or even younger. This boy woke up that morning in a cold damp cellar. He was dressed in a sort of little dressing-gown and was shivering with cold. There was a cloud of white steam from his breath, and sitting on a box in the corner, he blew the steam out of his mouth and amused himself in his dullness watching it float away. But he was terribly hungry. Several times that morning he went up to the plank bed where his sick mother was lying on a mattress as thin as a pancake, with some sort of bundle under her head for a pillow. How had she come here? She must have come with her boy from some other town and suddenly fallen ill. The landlady who let the “corners” had been taken two days before to the police station, the lodgers were out and about as the holiday was so near, and the only one left had been lying for the last twenty-four hours dead drunk, not having waited for Christmas. In another corner of the room a wretched old woman of eighty, who had once been a children’s nurse but was now left to die friendless, was moaning and groaning with rheumatism, scolding and grumbling at the boy so that he was afraid to go near her corner. He had got a drink of water in the outer room, but could not find a crust anywhere, and had been on the point of waking his mother a dozen times. He felt frightened at last in the darkness: it had long been dusk, but no light was kindled. Touching his mother’s face, he was surprised that she did not move at all, and that she was as cold as the wall. “It is very cold here”, he thought. He stood a little, unconsciously letting his hands rest on the dead woman’s shoulders, then he breathed on his fingers to warm them, and then quietly fumbling for his cap on the bed, he went out of the cellar. He would have gone earlier, but was afraid of the big dog which had been howling all day at the neighbour’s door at the top of the stairs. But the dog was not there now, and he went out into the street.

Mercy on us, what a town! He had never seen anything like it before. In the town from which he had come, it was always such black darkness at night. There was one lamp for the whole street, the little, low-pitched, wooden houses were closed up with shutters, there was no one to be seen in the street after dusk, all the people shut themselves up in their houses, and there

was nothing but the howling of packs of dogs, hundreds and thousands of them barking and howling all night. But there it was so warm and he was given food, while here - oh, dear, if he only had something to eat! And what a noise and rattle here, what light and what people, horses and carriages, and what a frost! The frozen steam hung in clouds over the horses, over their warmly breathing mouths; their hoofs clanged against the stones through the powdery snow, and everyone pushed so, and - oh, dear, how he longed for some morsel to eat, and how wretched he suddenly felt. A policeman walked by and turned away to avoid seeing the boy.

Here was another street - oh, what a wide one, here he would be run over for certain; how everyone was shouting, racing and driving along, and the light, the light! And what was this? A huge glass window, and through the window a tree reaching up to the ceiling; it was a fir tree, and on it were ever so many lights, gold papers and apples and little dolls and horses; and there were children clean and dressed in their best running about the room, laughing and playing and eating and drinking something. And then a little girl began dancing with one of the boys, what a pretty little girl! And he could hear the music through the window. The boy looked and wondered and laughed, though his toes were aching with the cold and his fingers were red and stiff so that it hurt him to move them. And all at once the boy remembered how his toes and fingers hurt him, and began crying, and ran on; and again through another window-pane he saw another Christmas tree, and on a table cakes of all sorts - almond cakes, red cakes and yellow cakes, and three grand young ladies were sitting there, and they gave the cakes to any one who went up to them, and the door kept opening, lots of gentlemen and ladies went in from the street. The boy crept up, suddenly opened the door and went in. Oh, how they shouted at him and waved him back! One lady went up to him hurriedly and slipped a kopeck [4] into his hand, and with her own hands opened the door into the street for him! How frightened he was. And the kopeck rolled away and clinked upon the steps; he could not bend his red fingers to hold it tight. The boy ran away and went on, where he did not know. He was ready to cry again but he was afraid, and ran on and on and blew his fingers. And he was miserable because he felt suddenly so lonely and terrified, and all at once, mercy on us! What was this again? People were standing in a crowd admiring. Behind a glass window there were three little dolls, dressed in red and green dresses, and exactly, exactly as though they were alive. One was a little old man sitting and playing a big violin, the two others were standing close by and playing little violins and nodding in time, and looking at one another, and their lips moved, they were speaking, actually speaking, only one couldn't hear through the glass. And at first the boy thought they were alive, and when he grasped that they were dolls he laughed. He had never seen such dolls before, and had no idea there were such dolls! And he wanted to cry, but he felt amused, amused by the dolls. All at once he fancied that some one caught at his smock behind: a wicked big boy was standing beside him and suddenly hit him on the head, snatched off his cap and tripped him up. The boy fell down on the ground, at once there was a shout, he was numb with fright, he jumped up and ran away. He ran, and not knowing where he was going, ran in at the gate of some one's courtyard, and sat down behind a stack of wood: "They won't find me here, besides it's dark!"

He sat huddled up and was breathless from fright, and all at once, quite suddenly, he felt so happy: his hands and feet suddenly left off aching and grew so warm, as warm as though he were on a stove; then he shivered all over, then he gave a start, why, he must have been asleep. How nice to have a sleep here! "I'll sit here a little and go and look at the dolls again", said the boy, and smiled thinking of them. "Just as though they were alive! ..." And suddenly he heard his mother singing over him. "Mammy, I am asleep; how nice it is to sleep here!"

"Come to my Christmas tree, little one", a soft voice suddenly whispered over his head.

He thought that this was still his mother, but no, it was not she. Who it was calling him, he could not see, but some one bent over and embraced him in the darkness; and he stretched out his hands to him, and ... and all at once - oh, what a bright light! Oh, what a Christmas tree! And yet it was not a fir tree, he had never seen a tree like that! Where was he now? Everything was bright and shining, and all round him were dolls; but no, they were not dolls, they were little boys and girls, only so bright and shining. They all came flying round him, they all kissed him, took him and carried him along with them, and he was flying himself, and he saw that his mother was looking at him and laughing joyfully. "Mammy, Mammy; oh, how nice it is here, Mammy!" And again he kissed the children and wanted to tell them at once of those dolls in the shop window. "Who are you, boys? Who are you, girls?" he asked, laughing and admiring them.

"This is Christ's Christmas tree", they answered. "Christ always has a Christmas tree on this day, for the little children who have no tree of their own..." And he found out that all these little boys and girls were children just like himself; that some had been frozen in the baskets in which they had as babies been laid on the doorsteps of well-to-do Petersburg people, others had been boarded out with Finnish women by the Foundling and had been suffocated, others had died at their starved mother's breasts (in the Samara famine), others had died in the third-class railway carriages from the foul air; and yet they were all here, they were all like angels about Christ, and He was in the midst of them and held out His hands to them and blessed them and their sinful mothers.... And the mothers of these children stood on one side weeping; each one knew her boy or girl, and the children flew up to them and kissed them and wiped away their tears with their little hands, and begged them not to weep because they were so happy.

And down below in the morning the porter found the little dead body of the frozen child on the wood stack; they sought out his mother too.... She had died before him. They met before the Lord God in heaven.

Why have I made up such a story, so out of keeping with an ordinary diary, and a writer's above all? And I promised two stories dealing with real events! But that is just it, I keep fancying that all this may have happened really - that is, what took place in the cellar and on the wood stack; but as for Christ's Christmas tree, I cannot tell you whether that could have happened or not.

NOTES:

[1] His name is spelled in various ways in Western languages, including "Fiodor Dostoievski". (CCA)

[2] After a few preparatory measures, the serfdom of peasants was abolished in 1861 under Alexander II. This was the most important liberal reform of that epoch. There was also an educational reform, with the creation of many new schools; a judicial reform, which established the independence of Judges; and the freedom of thought started to be officially promoted. (CCA)

[3] Reproduced from the article "The Tidal Wave", published at "Collected Writings", H.P. Blavatsky, TPH, USA, volume XII, see pp. 6-7. (CCA)

[4] Kopeck - a coin of small value. (CCA)

