

Question and Commentary **Whether the Blessings Of Devachan Are Mayavic**



Question:

It is said, in “The Key to Theosophy” and other works of classical theosophy, that the Devachan, the long and blessed stage between two physical incarnations of the same soul, is mayavic or illusory.[1]

How can it be both blessed and mayavic?

Commentary:

The wisdom or problem in such statements is in the way we read them. One should beware of looking at them in one sense only, or as if they were not referring to a multidimensional reality.

The word “Maya” has been much abused since HPB lived, and its real meaning must be examined to begin with. Everything in the world is true in the sense that everything is subject to the One Law, and every mistake will be corrected in due time. But on the other hand each thing, object and experience is mayavic or illusory in the sense that it is impermanent in space-time. [2]

So the elevated and blessed Devachan is “maya” because, although taking a long time - from 1,000 to 4,000 years according to the Mahatma Letters - it is still impermanent.

On the other hand, the Devachan has two stages. In the first one, Rupa Devachan or Devachan with forms, the pure-spiritual version of one's personality is surrounded by "eternally pleasant" circumstances.

Rupa Devachan is mayavic, as the classical literature of Theosophy says. It is so from the point of view of the material and physical-senses reality. Rupa Devachan shares the nature of dreams. Yet it is much LESS mayavic than the so-called "waking" life, which is obviously a "dream" and often nightmarish. Few people are truly awake while their physical bodies are awake. It is easy to see that most of them follow inaccurate dreams in their so-called waking lives.

One should not think therefore that Helena Blavatsky meant to say Devachan is "more mayavic" than physical life. Rupa Devachan is in fact tremendously true in a deeper sense than the physical "maya" of life.

As to the Arupa Devachan - the Devachan with no images or forms - it is much harder to call it mayavic: it relates to our dreamless sleep.

So from what point of view is the Rupa Devachan mayavic?

It is mayavic for an advanced disciple who has attained a blessed (if also painful) consciousness of Life during his physical existence. Advanced disciples don't need the elementary-school blessings of Devachan. They can quickly reincarnate to help mankind again and again, as they expand their relation to the seeds of Nirvana.

Devachan is a sublime and spiritual truth for all human beings except advanced disciples and Mahatmas.

Devachan is as true as divine parables are, and metaphors, and symbolic teachings of sacred contents.

The images and "circumstances" present in Rupa Devachan should not be taken literally, therefore. As symbols of one's soul they are true enough to give us the blessings we deserve between one incarnation and the other. Rupa Devachan prepares the spiritual soul to the deeper, silent and non-visual blessings of Arupa Devachan.

(CCA)

NOTES:

[1] "The Key to Theosophy", H. P. Blavatsky, Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, see p. 146. Also, "The Mahatma Letters".

[2] See the article "Truth and 'Maya' in Theosophy", by Carlos Cardoso Aveline. It is published in our associated websites.

The Classic Text ‘Karma’, With Notes

The Seeds of Mabel Collins’ Failure Can Be Seen In Her Book “Light on the Path”



An Editorial Note:

Published under the title of “Karma”, the following essay by Ms. M. C. (Mabel Collins) closes the theosophical classic “Light on the Path”.

Its numerous occult mistakes help us understand why, soon after writing the book, M. C. betrayed the ethical principles that are at the foundation of philosophical wisdom. As a result, she miserably failed as a theosophist. Her essay “Karma” contains the living seeds of her defeat. To clearly identify the traps created by illusions and share such a knowledge with others is the duty of those who have any interest in the deeper aspects of esoteric philosophy.

M.C. tried to follow the path to wisdom.

Her failure remains as a source of lessons to the generations of students that came after her. Mabel Collins’ unfortunate experience belongs to the theosophical movement: sooner or later her spiritual soul will deserve another chance to learn.

The full text “Karma” is given in bold type: our commentaries are added between square brackets.

(CCA)

Karma

M.C.

Consider with me that the individual existence is a rope which stretches from the infinite to the infinite and has no end and no commencement, neither is it capable of being broken.

[A naïve statement. In fact, no individual existence can be considered infinite or eternal. Any individuality in the sense of a separate unit belongs to the world of illusion, and even the highest individualities dissolve at the end of a manvantara. In the Mahatma Letters the issue is clarified: "...*In our Brotherhood, all personalities sink into one idea - abstract right and absolute practical justice for all.*" ("The Mahatma Letters", TUP edition, Letter LXXXV, p. 401.)]

This rope is formed of innumerable fine threads, which, lying closely together, form its thickness. These threads are colourless, are perfect in their qualities of straightness, strength and levelness. This rope, passing as it does through all places, suffers strange accidents. Very often a thread is caught and becomes attached, or perhaps is only violently pulled away from its even way. Then for a great time it is disordered, and it disorders the whole. Sometimes one is stained with dirt or with colour; and not only does the stain run on further than the spot of contact, but it discolours other of the threads. And remember that the threads are living - are like electric wires, more, are like quivering nerves. How far, then, must the stain, the drag awry, be communicated! But eventually the long strands, the living threads which in their unbroken continuity form the individual, pass out of the shadow into the shine. Then the threads are no longer colourless, but golden; once more they lie together, level. Once more harmony is established between them; and from that harmony within the greater harmony is perceived.

This illustration presents but a small portion - a single side of the truth: it is less than a fragment. Yet, dwell on it; by its aid you may be led to perceive more. What it is necessary first to understand is, not that the future is arbitrarily formed by any separate acts of the present, but that the whole of the future is in unbroken continuity with the present as the present is with the past. On one plane, from one point of view, the illustration of the rope is correct.

It is said that a little attention to occultism produces great Karmic results.

[Occultism is the philosophical science which studies the invisible aspects of life, bringing them to the plane of Reason and of conscious, ethically responsible understanding. The first rule for the student of real Occultism is to renounce the search for any personal advantage.]

That is because it is impossible to give any attention to occultism without making a definite choice between what are familiarly called good and evil. The first step in occultism brings the student to the tree of knowledge. He must pluck and eat; he must choose. No longer is he capable of the indecision of ignorance. He goes on either on the

good or on the evil path. And to step definitely and knowingly even but one step on either path produces great Karmic results.

[One more mistake by M.C. There are not “two paths” in Occultism. There is only the path of goodness and of the ethical Law. The path of selfishness is false and constitutes a “no-path”, a trap, a blind alley. H.P. Blavatsky wrote on the true path: *“There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind - but yet a road; and it leads to the heart of the Universe. I can tell you how to find Those who will show you the secret gateway that leads inward only...”* (“The Real H.P. Blavatsky”, William Kingsland, London, 1928, Kessinger Publishing, USA, p. V)]

The mass of men walk waveringly, uncertain as to the goal they aim at; their standard of life is indefinite; consequently their Karma operates in a confused manner. But when once the threshold of knowledge is reached, the confusion begins to lessen, and consequently the Karmic results increase enormously, because all are acting in the same direction on all the different planes for the occultist cannot be half-hearted, nor can he return when he has passed the threshold.

These things are as impossible as that the man should become the child again. The individuality has approached the state of responsibility by reason of growth; it cannot recede from it.

He who would escape from the bondage of Karma must raise his individuality out of the shadow into the shine; must so elevate his existence that these threads do not come in contact with soiling substances, do not become so attached as to be pulled away. He simply lifts himself out of the region in which Karma operates.

[The idea that a sage liberates himself from the law of karma is false. Wise men get rid of the lower levels of Karma, only. The Law is omnipresent. Every degree of liberation attained by a great soul occurs in strict accordance with the Law and constitutes an expression of the Law. H. P. Blavatsky wrote in her article “Chelas and Lay Chelas”: *“The Mahatmas are the servants, not the arbiters of the Law of Karma.”* And a Master of the Wisdom wrote in “The Mahatma Letters” (TUP Edition, Letter XXIX, p. 225): *“..... so am I likely always to be - the slave of my duty to the Lodge and mankind ...”*]

He does not leave the existence which he is experiencing because of that. The ground may be rough and dirty, or full of rich flowers whose pollen stains and of sweet substances that cling and become attachments - but overhead there is always the free sky.

He who desires to be Karma-less must look to the air for a home; and after that to the ether.

[The word “karma-less” can only be used in the sense of being free from denser karma, since even pralayas and manvantaras are strictly regulated by the Law of Karma and Equilibrium.]

He who desires to form good Karma will meet with many confusions, and in the effort to sow rich seed for his own harvesting may plant a thousand weeds, and among them the giant.

[The giant weed is selfishness, which often presents itself under the appearance of the sweetest spirituality.]

Desire to sow no seed for your own harvesting; desire only to sow that seed the fruit of which shall feed the world. You are a part of the world; in giving it food you feed yourself. Yet in even this thought there lurks a great danger which starts forward and faces the disciple, who has for long thought himself working for good, while in his inmost soul he has perceived only evil; that is, he has thought himself to be intending great benefit to the world while all the time he has unconsciously embraced the thought of Karma, and the great benefit he works for is for himself.

A man may refuse to allow himself to think of reward. But in that very refusal is seen the fact that reward is desired. And it is useless for the disciple to strive to learn by means of checking himself. The soul must be unfettered, the desires free.

[Free and purified desires are at the source of that higher creativity which is necessary along the road. The point is examined by Nicolas Berdyaev: see for instance the chapter “The Ethics of Creativeness” in his book “The Destiny of Man”, which is available in www.TheosophyOnline.com and its associated websites.]

But until they are fixed only on that state wherein there is neither reward nor punishment, good nor evil, it is in vain that he endeavours.

[To say “it is in vain that he endeavours” constitutes another resounding mistake, since no effort is useless. Every effort generates lessons. In mentioning “good” and “evil”, this sentence remains limited to the superficial aspect of what is conventionally seen as good and evil. In fact, Good is that which is in harmonious syntony with the Law of Karma and Equilibrium. “Evil” is but the ignorance which resists for some time the invincible force of Wisdom. As the whole universe is made of action and movement, or Karma, nobody can act without harvesting due results. Seen from a superficial point of view, the effects of action can be called “reward” and “punishment”.]

He may seem to make great progress, but some day he will come face to face with his own soul, and will recognize that when he came to the tree of knowledge he chose the bitter fruit and not the sweet; and then the veil will fall utterly, and he will give up his freedom and become a slave of desire. Therefore be warned, you who are but turning towards the life of occultism. Learn now that there is no cure for desire, no cure for the love of reward, no cure for the misery of longing, save in the fixing of the sight and hearing upon that which is invisible and soundless. Begin even now to practise it, and so a thousand serpents will be kept from your path. Live in the eternal.

The operations of the actual laws of Karma are not to be studied until the disciple has reached the point at which they no longer affect himself.

[“No longer affect him” is, again, a childish mistake. The high levels of action transcend only lower levels of karma, not the Law. All divine intelligences act and move according to the One Law. In the famous Letter Ten of the Mahatma Letters, a Master of the Wisdom defines theosophy as “*preeminently the science of effects by their causes and of causes by their effects*”. (“The Mahatma Letters”, TUP, p. 52.)]

The initiate has a right to demand the secrets of nature and to know the rules which govern human life. He obtains this right by having escaped from the limits of nature (...)

[In fact, no one escapes from Nature. As Letter 10 and others in “The Mahatma Letters” clarify, nature includes in itself many levels of manifestation and occult life. There is nothing and nobody outside the limits of Universal Nature, or beyond the reach of its Law.]

(...) and by having freed himself from the rules which govern human life.

[The above words tend to suggest the same wrong idea we have discussed above. The sentence is not totally wrong if referring only to the outer and blind aspects of human life.]

He has become a recognized portion of the divine element, and is no longer affected by that which is temporary. He then obtains a knowledge of the laws which govern temporary conditions. Therefore you who desire to understand the laws of Karma, attempt first to free yourself from these laws; and this can only be done by fixing your attention on that which is unaffected by those laws.

[To “attempt to free oneself from the laws” is the useless dream of dugpas and other selfish individuals. By self-purification the student of theosophy can change his karma for the better according to law. This he attains by fixating his attention in that which is most universal, elevated and noble, and by acting accordingly.]

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On the contrast between eternal wisdom and dangerous illusions which one finds in “**Light on the Path**”, see the article “**Finding the Light on the Path**”, which is available at our websites.

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The Hidden Aspect of Manifestation

The idea of “manifesting” something, or making anything become visible, means also and always to “hide” and leave aside its unutterable essence. The inner nature of things must be perceived in unworded silence, on the basis of the hints given through words and other evidences one may have gathered.[1] Such aspect of the occult Law operates in the manifestation of worlds, in the appearance of globes and the reincarnation of spiritual souls. It is present in the daily sunrise and regulates every cycle of life across the universe.

NOTE:

[1] The right kind of silence is produced by a complementary harmony among the different viewpoints, once they are all at least partially true. Every illusion must be destroyed by good law of karma before one’s heart attains to a lasting glimpse of truth.

Inner Transmutation as a Journey: The Path Leading From Desire to Bliss



Personal desire is an anesthetic for Dukkha, pain, discomfort, the first noble truth of Buddhist philosophy.

And the anesthetic is scarcely effective in itself.

Desire on the personal level brings with it the fancy of its satisfaction. It is a mirage in the desert and often misguides more than helps. However, this illusion is enough for one to leave aside for a moment the vision of his personal pain.

Seen from a higher perspective, the fight of desire against pain is the struggle of one illusion against the other. In the long run the two factors gladly strengthen, sustain and stimulate one another.

Personal desire has the same substance as pain. One suffers for having not attained something yet, and then one suffers in anticipation or fear of losing what one has conquered. Pain and pleasure of a personal nature are both passing things and have no real existence. Through impersonal desire or compassion one attains to bliss.

From altruistic desire, bliss may come to one's lower self. Then one's "personal" being loses itself in perfect happiness while preserving a sharp discernment with regard to obstacles, both visible and invisible.

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Jonathan Sacks: Avoiding the Clash of Civilizations



“For too long, the pages of history have been stained by blood shed in the name of God. Allied to weapons of mass destruction, extremist religious attitudes threaten the very security of life on earth. In our interconnected world, we must learn to feel enlarged, not threatened, by difference.”

[Jonathan Sacks, in his book “The Dignity of Difference - How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations”, Bloomsbury, 2003, Preface to the Second Edition.]

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Beyond the Paralysis of the Soul

Although popular in some “esoteric” circles, the “mystical paralysis of the soul” brought about by quietism is worse than useless.

The practice of false or “choiceless” contemplation strengthens spiritual ignorance and expands the lack of ethics. Every student of theosophy must test his spiritual will in daily altruistic action.

One needs to observe the practical results, identify the lessons to learn, and try again keeping a long-term perspective.

The Good Karma of Pure Light



There is no reason to be too naive.

Let's not deceive ourselves, if we see an apparently solid wall blocking our path ahead and upwards.

When we look at difficulties from the right angle, they open the magic door to transmutation. Then the fire of probation gradually provokes the alchemy of spiritual soul. Such an inner revolution transforms the dense karma of ignorance in the plastic and creative karma of that learning which takes place in the direction of light.

From Sickness to Health: Healing the Souls of Politicians

As to the phenomenon of corruption in public life, putting criminals into prison is probably not enough.

One should also develop rehabilitation programs for corrupt politicians and similar felons, so that they can recover a sense of ethics. Community service is a good idea.

And it is necessary to stimulate an affinity with right action in every aspect of social and economical life.

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The Seven-Day Cycle:

Our Week and The Solar System



The solar system is a Wheel of Life. It consists of a conglomeration of many different rhythms. Every planet has its own timing. Inside the small terrestrial community, living species have their specific cycles and ways to look at time.

In our present calendar, the Sunday is dedicated to the center of the magic circle of planetary orbits. The first day in the week is the day of Light and of Strength, both physical and spiritual.

1. The Day of the Star Sets a Pattern for the Week

The Sun is associated to the orange-yellow colour and symbolizes our true Self. It stands for our heart and the ultimate center of life. Gold is its corresponding metal, and it relates to the higher self or immortal soul.

The regent of the zodiacal sign of Leo, the local star is a source of courage, confidence and harmony.

As it opens the week, the Sun defines the main vibration patterns in the seven-day cycle. An individual who pays due attention to life inaugurates his week with a correct attitude. He visualizes the period as a whole.

There are various kinds of rest, and idleness must be avoided: on Sunday, one should take in consideration the six days that follow and calmly prepare them.

2. The Moon Indicates Life's Vulnerability



The second day of the week is dedicated to the Moon and has a special relation with the emotional plane.

Esoterically, the Moon guides Linga Sharira, the “subtle body” of human beings. This is the third among the seven principles of consciousness, and includes the DNA, the hereditary trends and the karmic inheritance from past lives regarding physical body.

Regent of the zodiacal sign of Cancer, the Moon places in our agenda the vulnerable aspect of existence. Its influence stimulates self-forgetfulness and devotion. It reveals our suffering, and the need to transcend emotional attachment and indulgence.

Its corresponding metal is silver, and the colour, violet. Moon-day is the right time to think of our health and emotions. It gives us an opportunity to observe and strengthen the sources of vital energy and well-being.

3. Mars Makes a Call to Courage and Action

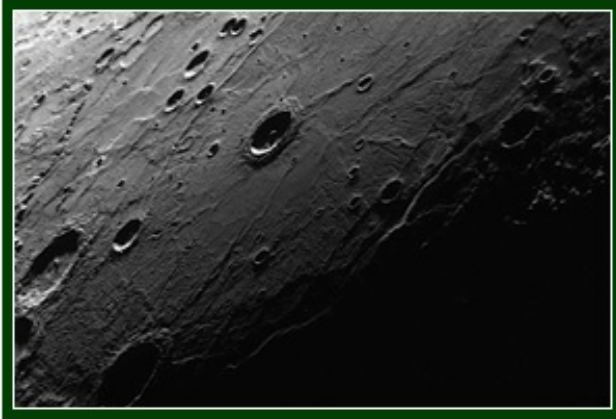


Tuesday is the day of Mars. The third day invites us to be direct in words, to act as pioneers and destroy blind routines.

The corresponding colour is red, and iron, the metal. Mars inspires the sign of Aries. Its related level of consciousness is Kama-rupa, the fourth principle, the center for the personal feelings and thoughts regarding practical action in the external world.

In theosophy, emotions deserve deep respect, but they must be willingly submitted to a larger and altruistic life-purpose. Tuesday is a special time for persons of good will to act with courage and generosity.

4. Mercury Activates Communication



Wednesday, the fourth day of the week, is the day of Mercury, the god-messenger.

Mercury is the planet-regent of two zodiacal signs: Gemini and Virgo. Its corresponding colour is Yellow, for it is the Sun-messenger, never being far-away from it. The related metal is mercury.

The level of consciousness which most resonates with Mercury is Buddhi, the sixth principle or spiritual soul. The planet is esoterically associated to Buddha. Wednesday evokes wisdom, flexibility, transcendence, compassion, and healing. In the day of Mercury, as in every mental activity, we must try to prevent our thoughts from being led or *kidnapped* by lower feelings. It is correct to make them work as messengers of the “little Sun”, one’s heart and true self.

5. Jupiter Stimulates a Decisive Effort



Thursday is the day of Thor, Jovis (or Jove), the king of gods.

The fifth day of the week is dedicated to the planet Jupiter, the regent of Sagittarius and co-regent of Pisces, together with Neptune. Universal love, deep philosophy and other expansive feelings and attitudes usually find a stimulating atmosphere on Thursday.

The “auric envelope” of individual consciousness (the higher level of one’s aura) has a special relationship to this planet and day.

Its colour is blue. Its metal, tin. It is a “yang” day like Tuesday and Sunday. Decisive action is often appropriate on Thursdays, when one’s purpose tends to be clearer and more universal. One must make sure the goal is ethically right and that which expands is good.

6. Venus, the Elder Sister, Connects Dream to Reality



Friday is the sixth day in the week. It relates to Venus, the brilliant “morning star” which is also the “evening star” and the “elder sister” of Earth.

The regent of Libra and Taurus, Venus teaches inner beauty and perseverance. It helps us live our ideals in daily life. From it we learn to accurately connect dream and reality: its influence stimulates the higher aspect of human mind. Helena P. Blavatsky opens her article on Venus with these words:

“No star, among the countless myriads that twinkle over the sidereal fields of the night sky, shines so dazzlingly as the planet Venus - not even Sirius-Sothis, the dog-star, beloved by Isis. Venus is the queen among our planets, the crown jewel of our solar system. She is the inspirer of the poet, the guardian and companion of the lonely shepherd, the lovely morning and the evening star.” [1]

Copper is the metal which corresponds to Venus. Indigo, or dark blue, is the colour most resonating with it. Being the penultimate day of the week, Friday gives us a chance to be more effective and to make our efforts culminate before Saturday.

7. Master Saturn Closes the Cycle



The seventh day is dedicated to the Lord of the Rings. Saturn, the Master of Time, represents the Law of Karma and Justice. It is also the regent of Capricorn and co-regent of Aquarius.[2] Its corresponding metal is lead, and the colour, green.

Saturday is therefore not exactly a day of rest. It is not the right occasion to waste time: just the opposite. The day of Saturn invites us to an internal evaluation and to find the balance in the experience gathered during the previous days. It is an opportunity to plan the activities of the next week. The way we close a cycle helps establish the way we will live the next one. Saturn is the master of responsibility, and its day can be a journey of inner effort and reflection.

(CCA)

NOTES:

[1] Read the article “The History of a Planet: Venus”, by H. P. Blavatsky, which is available at our associated websites.

[2] See in our websites the text “The Bright Side of Saturn”, by Carlos Cardoso Aveline.

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Schopenhauer, On Thanking One's Stars

If you feel irritated by the absurd remarks of two people whose conversation you happen to overhear, you should imagine that you are listening to the dialogue of two fools in a comedy. *Probatum est*. The man who comes into the world with the notion that he is really going to instruct it in matters of the highest importance, may thank his stars if he escapes with a whole skin.

[Arthur Schopenhauer, in “**The Wisdom of Life and Counsels and Maxims**”, Prometheus Books, New York, 1995, Part II, “Counsels...”, p. 78.]

Thoughts Along the Road

Observing the Sacredness of Daily Life



- * **D**etachment and wisdom come from a long-term view of time.
- * Right contemplation paves the way to effective action.
- * Daily moments of silence and quietness are essential to the strengthening of one's inner peace.
- * A thorough understanding produces detachment, and leads affinity to higher levels.
- * Since Life is synonymous to movement, an open mind must examine facts from various points of view before making a decision.
- * Keeping one's inner peace in daily life is an act of will which requires a firm decision.
- * The world of the soul has its own atmosphere. In it, only the selfless heart and mind can see with clarity.
- * Think the best, do the best, and never cease to listen to the most beautiful voice anyone can hear: the voice of the silence.
- * We are co-responsible for what will come to us. The correct way to live the present moment takes into consideration both medium-term and long-term future, and accepts its responsibility for them.
- * It is not enough to develop a universal view of the world. One must bring transcendence into daily existence, and gradually liberate human life from all forms of attachment to ignorance.

* By keeping in mind the most elevated in ourselves, we attain an accurate sense of direction. Time and energy are used correctly as long as we maintain a self-responsible, wordless contact with our highest sources of inspiration.

* We must start by adopting an ideal that is noble and challenging enough to liberate us from organized mediocrity or spiritual death. We then have to struggle with the painful distance between noble intentions and clumsy actions. It is enough to make a gradual progress. One should not be deceived by difficulties that present themselves as insurmountable.

* Do your best and don't worry about short term results. The working of the Law cannot be hurried up. Springtime, or a new day, will not come sooner just because someone is personally anxious.

* The mind works in multidimensional unity with the heart. Except on a superficial level, no divorce is possible between them. However, their cooperation can always be improved, by knowledge and by wisdom.

* Compassion means "co-feeling", feeling together, feeling the same as the other. It is the ultimate origin of solidary actions. One who has compassion sees human suffering, understands its causes and still preserves peace in his heart, because he knows of much larger cycles of Karma or space-time, where bliss is correctly seen as the ultimate Law of life.

* An effective way to help the world attain peace is to live in peace yourself under whatever circumstances. The world around will then silently learn from you. But remember: peace is no paralysis. Living peace implies being active, creative, humble, and at times severe.

* In any time in history, the amount of external peace reflects the level of peace in human hearts. A small number of actively altruistic persons makes a big difference in the collective karma. [1] Even today, the peace in the heart of those who search for wisdom can effectively avoid the worst aspects of military conflicts and other forms of ignorance.

NOTE:

[1] See Genesis, 18: 20-33, and Genesis, 19.

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Austerity is Bliss

"Good" is not the same as "comfortable", as Musonius Rufus and every authentic sage clarify. And "bad" is not a synonym to "uncomfortable".

Bliss is challenging.

Theosophy cannot be separated from a degree of stoicism, or "tapah" - austerity. The hardest and most unpleasant duty is a source of eternal happiness, as long as one is connected to his own spiritual soul.

