

THE WORD

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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

Does Christmas have any particular meaning to a theosophist, and if so, what?

The meaning which Christmas has to a theosophist depends a great deal on his racial or religious beliefs. Theosophists are not exempt from prejudices, they are still mortal. Theosophists, that is to say, members of the Theosophical Society, are of every nation, race and creed. It would therefore depend somewhat as to what the prejudices of the particular theosophist might be. There are few people, however, whose opinions are not broadened by an understanding of theosophical doctrines. The Hebrew understands Christ and Christmas in a much different light than before he became a theosophist. So does the Christian, and all others of every race and creed. The particular meaning attached to Christmas by a theosophist is that Christ is a principle rather than a person, a principle which frees the mind from the great illusion of separateness, brings man closer in touch with the souls of men and unites him to the principle of divine love and wisdom. The sun is the symbol of true light. The sun passes into the sign of capricorn on the 21st day of December at the end of his southern course. Then there are three days when there is no increase of their length and then on the 25th day of December the sun begins his northern course and is therefore said to be born. The ancients celebrated this occasion by festivals and rejoicing, knowing that with the advent of the sun the winter would pass, the seeds be fructified by the rays of Light and that the earth under the influence of the sun would bring forth fruit. A theosophist regards Christmas from many standpoints: as the birth of the sun in the sign capricorn, which would apply to the physical world; on the other hand and in the truer sense it is the birth of the invisible sun of light, the Christ Principle. The Christ, as a principle, should be born *within* man, in which case man is saved from the sin of ignorance which brings death, and should begin the period of life leading to his immortality.

Is it probable that Jesus was an actual person, and that he was born on Christmas Day?

It is more than probable that some one appeared, whether his name was Jesus or Apollonius, or any other name. The fact of the presence in the world of millions of people who call themselves Christians testifies to the fact, that there must have been someone who taught the great truths—such for instance, those in the Sermon on the Mount—and which are called Christian doctrine.

If Jesus was an actual man why is it that we have no more historical record of the birth or life of such a man than the bible statement?

It is true that we have no historical record either of the birth of Jesus or of his life. Even the reference in Josephus to Jesus is said by authorities to have been an interpolation. The absence of such record is of minor importance as compared with the fact that a set of teachings have been grouped around a character, whether or not it is a fanciful or actual character. The teachings exist and one of the greatest religions of the world bear testimony to the character. The actual year in which Jesus was born, not even the most bigoted theologian can name with certainty. The “authorities” are disagreed. Some say it was prior to A. D. 1; others claim it was as late as A. D. 6. Notwithstanding the authorities the people continue to hold to the time now recognized by the Julian calendar. Jesus may have been an actual man and still unknown to the people as a whole, during his life. The probability is that Jesus was a teacher who instructed a number of those who became his pupils, which pupils received his teaching and preached his doctrines. Teachers often come among men, but they are seldom known to the world. They select such as are most suited to receive the new-old doctrines and instruct them, but do not themselves go into the world and instruct. If such was the case with Jesus it will account for the historians of the time not having known of him.

Why do they call this, the 25th of December, Christmas instead of Jesusmass or Jesusday, or by some other name?

Not until the fourth or fifth century was the title Christmas given to the ceremonies which were performed on the 25th of December. A Christmas means Christ’s mass, a mass held for, of, or to Christ. Therefore the more appropriate word would be Jesus-mass, because the services which were held and the ceremonies called “mass” which were performed on the morning of the 25th of December were to Jesus, the infant who was born. This was followed by the great

rejoicings of the people, who burned the Yule log in honor of the source of fire and light; who are plum pudding, betokening the spices and gifts which the wise men from the East brought to Jesus; who passed around the wassail bowl (and who often became disgustingly intoxicated thereby) as a symbol of the life-giving principle from the sun, which promised the breaking up of ice, the flowing of rivers, and the starting of the sap in the trees in spring. The Christmas tree and evergreens were used as the promise of the renewal of vegetation, and presents were generally exchanged, betokening the good feeling present among all.

Is there an esoteric way of understanding the birth and life of Jesus?

There is, and it will appear as the most reasonable to any who will consider it without prejudice. The birth, the life, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus represent the process through which every soul must pass who comes into life and who in that life attains to immortality. The teachings of the church concerning the history of Jesus lead away from the truth concerning him. A theosophical interpretation of the biblical story is here given. Mary is the physical body. The word Mary is the same in many of the great religious systems, who have claimed divine beings as their founders. The word comes from Mara, Mare, Mari, and all of which mean bitterness, sea, chaos, the great illusion. Such is every human body. The tradition amongst the Jews at that time, and some still hold it to the present day, was that a Messiah was to come. It was said that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin in an immaculate manner. This is absurd from the standpoint of the beings of sex, but in perfect keeping with esoteric truths. The facts are that when the human body is properly trained and developed it becomes pure, virgin, chaste, immaculate. When the human body has reached the point of purity and is chaste, it is then said to be Mary, the virgin, and is ready to conceive immaculately. The immaculate conception means that one's own god, the divine ego, fructifies the body which has become virgin. This fructification or conception consists of an illumination of the mind, which is its first real conception of immortality and divinity. This is not metaphorical, but literal. It is literally true. The purity of the body maintained, there begins a new life within that human form. This new life develops gradually, and a new form is called into being. was conceived by the Holy Ghost, the light of the ego, and born of the virgin Mary, its physical body. As

Jesus passed his early years in obscurity, so must such a being be obscure. This is the Jesus body, or he who comes to save. This body, the Jesus body, is the immortal body. Jesus is said to have come to save the world. So he does. The Jesus body does not die as does the physical, and that which was conscious as a physical being is now transferred to the new body, the Jesus body, which saves from death. The Jesus body is immortal and one who has found Jesus, or for whom Jesus has come, no longer has breaks or gaps in memory, as he is then continually conscious under all circumstances and conditions whatever. He is without lapses in memory through day, through night, through death, and future life.

You spoke of Christ as a principle. Do you make a distinction between Jesus, and Christ?

There is a difference between the two words and that which they are intended to represent. The word "Jesus" was often used as a title of honor and to be conferred on him who deserved it. We have shown what the Esoteric meaning of Jesus is. Now as to the word "Christ," it comes from the Greek "Chrestos," or "Christos." There is a difference between Chrestos and Christos. Chrestos was a neophyte or disciple who was on probation, and while on probation, preparatory to his symbolical crucifixion, he was called a Chrestos. After initiation he was anointed and called Christos, the anointed. So that one who had passed through all trials and initiations and attained knowledge of or union with God was called "a" or "the Christos." This applies to an individual attaining to the principle Christ; but Christ or Christos without the definite article is the Christ principle and not any individual being. As related to the title Jesus, the Christ, it means that the principle Christ had operated through or taken up its abode with the Jesus body, and the Jesus body was then called Jesus the Christ to show that the one who had become immortal by having the Jesus body was not only immortal as an individual, but that he was also compassionate, godlike, divine. As to the historical Jesus, we will remember that Jesus was not called the Christ until he had been baptized. As he was coming up from the river Jordan it is said the spirit descended on him and a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Then and thereafter Jesus was called Jesus the Christ, or Christ Jesus, thereby meaning the man-god or the god-man. Any human being may become a Christ by uniting himself to the Christ principle, but before the union can take place he must have had a second birth. To use the words of Jesus,

“Ye must be born again before ye can inherit the kingdom of heaven.” This is to say, his physical body was not to rebecome an infant, but that he, as a human being, must be born as an immortal being from or through his physical body, and that such birth would be the birth of Jesus, his Jesus. Then only would it be possible for him to inherit the kingdom of heaven, for though it is possible for Jesus to be formed within a virgin body, it is not possible for the Christ principle to be so formed, as it is too far removed from the flesh and needs a more highly evolved or developed body to manifest through. It is therefore necessary to have the immortal body called Jesus or by any other name developed before Christ as the Logos, The Word, can manifest to man. It will be remembered that Paul exhorted his colleagues or disciples to work and pray until Christ should be formed within them.

What particular reason is there for celebrating the 25th day of December as being that of the birth of Jesus?

The reason is that it is the natural season and can be celebrated at no other time; for whether taken from an astronomical standpoint, or as the birth of an historical human physical body, or as the birth of an immortal body, the date must be on the 25th day of December, or when the sun passes into the sign capricorn. The ancients well knew this, and celebrated the birthdays of their saviours on or about the 25th of December. The Egyptians celebrated the birthday of their Horus on the 25th day of December; the Persians celebrated the birthday of their Mithras on the 25th day of December; the Romans celebrated their Saturnalia, or golden age, on the 25th day of December, and on this date the sun was born and was the son of the invisible sun; or, as they said, “dies natalis, invicti, solis.” or the birthday of the invincible sun. The relation of Jesus to Christ is known by his alleged history and the solar phenomenon, because he, Jesus, is born on the 25th of December, which is the day on which the sun begins his northern journey in the sign of capricorn, the beginning of the winter solstices; but it is not until he has passed the vernal equinox in the sign of aries that he is said to have attained his strength and power. Then the nations of antiquity would sing their songs of rejoicing and praise. It is at this time that Jesus becomes the Christ. He is resurrected from the dead and is united with his god. This is the reason why we celebrate the birthday of Jesus, and why the “pagans” celebrated the birthday of their respective deities on the 25th day of December.

If it is possible for a human being to become a Christ, how is it accomplished and how is it connected with the 25th day of December?

To one brought up in the orthodox Christian home such a statement might seem sacrilegious; to the student acquainted with religion and philosophy it will not seem impossible; and Scientists, least of all, should consider it impossible, because it is a matter of evolution. The birth of Jesus, the second birth, is connected with the 25th of December for many reasons, among which are that a human body is built on the same principle as the earth and conforms to the same laws. Both the earth and the body conform to the laws of the sun. On the 25th day of December, or when the sun enters the sign of capricorn, the human body, providing it has passed through all previous training and development, is best suited for such a ceremony to take place. The previous preparations necessary are that a life of absolute chastity should be lived, and that the mind should be well trained and skilled, and be able to continue any line of work for any length of time. The chaste life, the sound body, the controlled desires and the strong mind enable that which was called the seed of Christ to take root in the virgin soil of the body, and within the physical body to build up an inner ethereal body of a semi-divine nature. Where this was done the processes necessary were passed through. The time arrived, the ceremony took place, and for the first time the immortal body which had for a long period of time been developing within the physical body at last passed out of the physical body and was born through it. This body, called the Jesus body, is not the astral body or *linga sharira* spoken of by theosophists, nor is it any of the bodies which manifest at seances or which mediums use. There are many reasons for this, among which are that the *linga sharira* or astral body is connected with the physical body, by a thread or umbilical cord, whereas the immortal or Jesus body is not so connected. The *linga sharira* or astral body of the medium is non-intelligent, whereas the Jesus or immortal body is not only separate and distinct from the physical body, but it is wise and powerful and is quite conscious and intelligent. It never ceases to lose consciousness, nor has it any break in life or from life to life or gap in memory. The processes necessary for having the life and attaining the second birth are along the lines and principles of the zodiac, but the details are too long and cannot be given here.

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