

IF CHRIST RETURNED

Lakshmi Devi (Gertrude A. Wolff)

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There are many questions in the minds of Christians relating to the subject of Christ's heralded "Second Coming." Here is an attempt to answer some of them.

Question: Some say Jesus did not actually exist. Is this true? How, then could He ever "return"?

Answer: The Bible is our main source of knowledge of Jesus, but He is also mentioned by the early historian, Josephus. It is certain that a great Teacher existed around that time, as is brought to light in the Dead Sea Scrolls, for one. It appears a possibility that the date of His birth may be in error as much as over one hundred years.

Some feel the story of His life is but symbology, and indeed the Bible is a heavily veiled book where much that was meant only as symbology has been taken literally, and much is taken symbolically that was meant literally. But we can assume that the life of Jesus is meant both literally and symbolically.

Man is a seven-principled being, but for our immediate purpose we may omit the finer gradations and classify him into three: physical man, mental and spirit man. The physical man does not reincarnate but the higher principles would tend to gather together much the same skandhas that make up the physical man, and would be apt to bear a strong resemblance to the old form. A Christ is not held by the bonds of Karma to incarnations, but comes of His own volition.

Question: Some say He has already come, as Apollonius of Tyana. What hope then, if this be true, have we of knowing Him in this life?

Answer: If He came a second time, could He not come again a third time, and a fourth, and so on? Perhaps He has walked among men innumerable times unrecognized, silently helping humanity. He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth."

Question: How can we know when or where He will appear?

Answer: To answer these it is necessary to know, among other things, why He would reappear. Would he be apt to make Himself known to a world that felt it did not need Him, one where the people "never had it so good"? How effective would He be then? We could aptly apply Krishna's words from the Bhagavad Gita:

Whensoever there is the fading of the Dharma and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I loose myself forth into birth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evildoers, for the enthroning of the Right, I am born from age to age.

When the need is great enough, He will manifest.

Question: How could we know Him?

Answer: Perhaps mainly by His teachings. He would surely possess great wisdom and understanding and certain other qualities of true greatness such as Jesus had, but it is conceivable He could come in an entirely different role, as a tester. There are few who can know the true from the false, and for these few there remains only to discriminate between the Christ and other great Illuminati who may also walk the earth. Yet, if these others so closely approach the Christ in their teachings and Good Works, can they not also have the Christ awakened within them and merit similar attention?

Question: What would be Christ's message? Would He offer anything new or simply re-state the old teachings?

Answer: If He brought a re-statement of old truths it would be of those now buried or distorted, and they would be adapted to our age, for much that made sense to men 2000 years ago would be meaningless to us today. But more, there would be an unfolding of profounder truths and messages than the modern world has yet known--providing mankind is ready to receive these teachings.

Question: What of the miracles?

Answer: In an age presumed to be enlightened, what would be the general effect of miracle-making? The skeptics would not be convinced of their genuineness even though they witnessed them; the superstitious would only become more superstitious, thus defeating the purpose Christ intended, of showing to humanity the possibilities that lie latent within man, bringing new hope and showing them the worlds that lie ahead. Perhaps He intended them to be a spur to new effort on the part of individuals, for He said of them: "These things I do ye can do also, and more too."

"Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?"

John 10: 34

At the same time, we prefer to call these happenings "phenomena," for "miracle" suggests something contrary to the laws of Nature. In reality, we have little knowledge of nature's laws, and were we to learn them to a high degree, we too could produce similar phenomena, as it is intended we should. There are copious records of similar phenomena being produced by others, much of which is genuine, much fraudulent. We can only say it can be done.

Question: Religion teaches us to suppress negative thought and action, or emotions. How is this compatible with modern psychology which warns us not to bottle up emotions, but to express ourselves for the good of our health and general well-being?

Answer: They are not compatible. Neither view is quite correct. We have learned through experience that it is not wise to give way to every emotion, as certain psychology suggests. We only begin self-mastery, so necessary to growth, when we begin to discipline our emotions, and until we learn that discipline we are but irresponsible children.

However, neither is suppression the answer. To push something back into the unconscious is to see it erupt later with violent explosive force, and in this respect Christianity has failed. Wars among Christian nations have proved to be as cruel and violent as ancient ones; greed and lust prevail as ever. This is as true of highly cultured nations as with primitive ones, as we saw among the Nazis.

Two avenues of technique may be applied, the first of which is admittedly difficult. That is to recognize and isolate the "Witness," that Higher Self which is able to look down on the little personality with detachment and see it for what it is, directing and correcting it. Such ability may come only with many years of concentration and practice, however. For the time being, while we work to recognize the "Witness" within ourselves, we can seek not to suppress, but to transform, negative thought, emotion or action. We can turn hatred to love through trying to understand the object of our hatred. And it may help in understanding to know that we are all learning, that none is perfect here. If we could know the danger of harboring negative thought, we would certainly seek to transform it. Dwelling on dark thoughts only serves to develop them further. The more time and energy we put on these thoughts, the less we have for the constructive life, hence we can only deteriorate, in proportion to our general line of thought and the time and energy expended on it.