



The Hidden Meaning of Christmas

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Introduction

Let us share something about the hidden, esoteric meaning of Christmas. Although this celebration has become primarily a reason for consumption and advertising, it is good to remember that its origin has to do with the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Christ. From the esoteric point of view, it goes much further than that: it constitutes a symbol of the spiritual awakening of which all of us will take part at some point in our journey towards the divine.

Christmas, within the Christian vision, is composed of three important moments. The first one, **Advent** (arrival), marks the four-week stage of preparation previous to the birth of the child Jesus. In the biblical account, this corresponds to the departure from Israel in difficult conditions. The **Nativity** (birth) is the moment when Jesus comes to life in a manger in Bethlehem. Finally, the **Epiphany** (appearance) refers to the arrival of the Three Wise Men to the manger and the presents they offer to the newborn child.

Scriptures such as the Bible for Christians often use symbolic language to express profound truths, mysteries. The value of this practice is that the symbols do not change, because they contain universal truths that can be interpreted by anyone who has enough

wisdom and intuition to do so, despite the passage of time.

The life of Jesus, which we read in the biblical gospels, is a compendium of mysteries that reveal to us that the Christ Consciousness has to be born inside each one of us. The authors of the gospels, disciples of Jesus, were enlightened men, and in their gospels they recorded eternal truths using allegories and symbols in order to lead those intuitively awake readers to occult knowledge. Geoffrey Hodson reminds us that

This story of the life of Jesus is a record of the experiences of the spirit in matter, of the Monad in man, and of the ascent of the spirit from the mortal clutches of matter toward the reconquest of that freedom that constitutes the natural state of the spirit and of the Monad in the world of Divine Reality. (*The Christ Life from Nativity to Ascension*)

Let us remember that we are multidimensional beings in continual evolution. The constitution of man and the universe, as indicated by theosophical literature, is septenary: there are seven planes of manifestation through which the divine spirit (the Monad) descends in order to gain experiences that lead it to reunite again with the divine, completely transformed and reinvigorated with the realization of the spiritual. Like Adam and Eve, or the prodigal



son, we must leave Paradise, we must abandon the Father's house and live the experiences of the world and taste the fruit of knowledge, to be able to go back to Him. Our divine essence, coming from the Monad, is covered by the veils of matter and it is necessary to gradually remove them until we reach the development of the divine nature that we potentially have.

It is clear that in our present evolutionary state we do not have vehicles to act consciously on all planes and we are primarily dominated by the vehicles of denser matter such as the physical, the emotional and the lower mental. Therefore, limiting the celebration of Christmas to the purely commercial and consumerist approach, is to limit it to the densest and most material parts, and leaving aside what it contains from the point of view of our spiritual realization.

A double birth

Our nature is both divine and human: "Jesus answered them: 'Is it not written in your Law, "I have said, you are gods"?' (John 10:34). "Do you not know that you are God's sanctuary and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). We must awaken that divine and immortal aspect in ourselves. That means the aspects of the higher triad: The Father or Will, the Son or Wisdom-Love, and the Holy Spirit or Creative Intelligence. One of these aspects, the Son, the wisdom-Love, manifested himself in Palestine. Christ came united with the nature of the Father to bring peace and love to men, and although he disappeared from the eyes of men, he is in intimate contact with humanity all the time, as a dynamic and always active Christ. Within us is that spark waiting to be born. The birth

of Christ represents the birth of this spiritual being.

The Christos state is therefore not something that is restricted solely to Jesus. That is why he is only called the Christ after his baptism. We are all potential Christs; the Christos state is a state of initiation, of illumination of the self. When the spark of the Christ is born in man, it is called the twice-born (the anointed one, dedicated to the divine), because he had a physical and a spiritual birth. Jesus and Christ are therefore not interchangeable; Jesus is not the only Christ who has lived.

Angelus Silesius, a Franciscan and German mystic of the 17th century, tells us that even if Christ is born a thousand times in Bethlehem, if he is not born in our hearts, we will remain sad. Jesus says to Nicodemus: "He who is not born of water and the Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God . . . you must be born again." (John 3: 5-7). In order to reach that double birth we must develop the higher qualities through the higher mind and use intuition.

Understanding the allegory to remove the veils

To access the hidden meaning of this birth, let's examine the symbols and go beyond the literal interpretation. All the characters of Christmas represent something that is inside us.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that the angel Gabriel presents himself to Mary, a young woman who was betrothed to Joseph, a descendant of King David, and announces that she will conceive a son by the grace of the Holy Spirit:

You are going to get pregnant and have a son who you will name Jesus. This child will become very



important, God will make him king, and his reign will never end . . . The Holy Spirit will draw near to you; the most high God will cover you with his power. That is why the child will live completely dedicated to God, and will be called "Son of God" (Lk. 1: 31-35).

The annunciation is a profound change that occurs within each being. It represents the interaction of the spirit, the angel Gabriel, with matter, Mary. The Virgin Mary is the vehicle through which spiritual intelligence is to be manifested. The conception is immaculate because it is not a physical birth but one of the spirit. Mary, the soul of man, the higher mind, must develop in order to be able to tread firmly the path back to the Father's house. Only when the soul is united with the life-giving force of the Holy Spirit (Creative Intelligence), can the Son be born, the Wisdom-Love that resides in each one of us. What we designate in Theosophy as concrete mind cannot, by itself, lead the individual to realize the union with his higher nature. Joseph represents that specific mind and, therefore, can only be the putative, or apparent, father, because the Son is only born when the soul is united with the spirit: the true father is God, the divine nature.

It is clear that the intellect plays a role in the fulfilment of the individual. That is why it must be an eager intellect, as the Gospel of Matthew shows us:

While Mary was betrothed to Joseph, it was found that she had conceived of the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, wanted to leave her secretly. And thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and said to him: Joseph, do not be afraid to receive Mary your wife, because what is begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to

a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins (1: 18-23).

Although there is a first impulse to flee because the mind also resists giving way to the gifts of the spirit, when it (Joseph) is ready to understand the need for that birth, it hears the voice of intuition (in dreams comes the angel) and gives way to the higher. An eager intellect is fit enough to turn away from the tendencies of the material world. For this reason, Joseph protects his family from Herod, who represents our lower nature, who wants to kill the child (the spiritual) because it constitutes a hindrance to give free rein to the pleasures and impulses of the senses.

Once Jesus is born, Joseph takes his family to Egypt to stay safe from Herod. The East is known as the source of wisdom, it represents the lessons from the knowledge of the world, essential for the development of the soul. Only when the aspirant is firmly grounded not to fear Herod, can he return to Israel in peace: the lower nature no longer has power over that being.

Isis Unveiled mentions the miraculous conception and compares it to the legend of Perictione (Plato's mother) who had immaculately conceived her child. All religions drink from each other. For example, in the tradition of India there is also the twice-born (the anointed one), *âchârya*, Shankaracharya, who consolidated the Vedanta doctrine, in which it is mentioned that at the beginning of the Kali Yuga a virgin would be born who will conceive the son of God. This evidences universal symbolism and the truth that we must all prepare for the second birth, the birth of the Christ in us.

As for the birth of Jesus, it took place in



difficult and very humble circumstances. The intention is to show that spiritual enlightenment is equally possible for all men regardless of their material circumstances. He is born in a manger surrounded by shepherds, sheep, and animals. In *Isis Unveiled*, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) speaks of the birth of Jesus in a cave; it is the cave of the heart where our Christic principle has to be born: the manger is the etheric cave of the heart.

In the manger, the child is the centre; next to him are Mary, the soul that mediates between the divine and the worldly, and his father, the mind that has been subjugated by the commands of the spirit. The shepherds are the first called, they were in the field shepherding, and the angels, the energies of heaven, manifested to them to inform the birth of the son of God.

The shepherds represent those beings that are one step ahead of the mass of humanity on the path to spiritual realization, and they are delighted each time a Christ is born. They take care of the sheep, the men and women who wander through life from one place to another without yet knowing the true purpose of the walk.

The Wise Men represent the wisdom and their gifts symbolize the three forces in us that are capable of transforming everything: will, wisdom, and holiness. Let us remember that Herod asks them for information about the child but they are imprecise in order to protect him, because those qualities safeguard the true spiritual nature. The Wise Men personify the ministers of the Solar Logos. In all religions, the East is the side from which divine gifts come to men: gold, the true

spiritual wisdom whose value is unalterable; frankincense, the soft fragrance of aspiration to higher levels that burns, thanks to the will represented by fire, and myrrh, the natural aroma of holiness (Gerald Tranter, *Wisdom and Christianity*).

These are all qualities of the spiritual nature, of the soul after that second birth. Once the Wise Men offer the gifts to the child, they have committed themselves to the higher and so they return by a different path in order to avoid Herod: they have left the empire of the lower nature.

Victory of light over darkness

On 25 December of each year the Christian world celebrates the birth of the child Jesus. It is, as we see, a celebration of the utmost importance once it is understood from the point of view of the internal development of all human beings. Undoubtedly, it is also a historical fact of which the exact date is not known. Most likely, the date on which Christmas is celebrated does not coincide with the actual date of the birth of the historical Jesus the Christ. However, the choice of this particular date also has a meaning that is worth highlighting, since it goes back even to pre-Christian times.

On 25 December, pagans celebrated the day of the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, the birthday of the Invincible Sun. The pre-Christian feast was a feast of rebirth, the cosmic event that enlivens Nature with its light and warmth. After a cold autumn in the northern hemisphere, winter arrives, the moment when Nature hides itself and then produces the birth of its entrails in a splendid spring (*Esoteric Christianity*). The winter solstice is the time of the year when



the day begins to gain ground over the night: after experiencing the shortest day of the year, the sun begins to shine more light on the world; there is more clarity and more light.

According to *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, on 25 December the ancient Egyptians celebrated, the birth of several of their most important divinities, especially Osiris (son of Seb and Neith) and later the birth of his son Horus, who is the "Christos", symbol of the sun. In her *Collected Writings* HPB quotes the London Egyptologist Gerald Massey, who talks about the historical Jesus and the mystical Christ. What he says is that the Messiah corresponds to the Horus of the Egyptians. In addition, it shows that in the Egyptian tradition the child born is represented in what corresponds to the hieroglyph of the birth of the sun. In other cultures, this festival used to be related to the birth of solar gods (Apollo or Helios, among others). The universality of symbols is evident.

So we see that, from the mythical point of view, this legend of Christ, was found thousands of years before the Christian era. It was only in 325 AD, with the Council of Nicea, when the Church decided that on 25 December the birth of Jesus would be celebrated. This is also because at the beginning of the winter solstice there is also a greater intensity of the vibratory presence of the Cosmic Christ, a fact that in Christianity has been applied to Jesus, corresponding to what has been called the Spirit of Christmas. It is an energy that comes from the centre of our star system year after year to distribute more than material things, that which human beings cannot do without: peace, love, harmony, and joy. In our life it is the symbol

that Christ is reborn in us: it is an interior renewal.

Conclusion

What is relevant on this date is not whether it is a proven historical fact or not, whether the conception was immaculate or not in physical terms. What really matters, once we unveil the hidden teachings behind this celebration, is the recognition that every human being has an inherent Christ nature that must be awakened: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27)

The figure of the Christ is there to show us what is to come in terms of our spiritual journey. There are beings who are ahead of us, one of these beings is Jesus and every year we celebrate his birth. True Christianity must therefore be creative, transformative. Once we understand the hidden teachings, it is our duty to become architects of our own destiny and rebuild our lives.

We are called to be vehicles of resistance against the trivialization of the spiritual and to give Christmas the true dimension that it has: to resist the consumerism in which it has become entangled, and, instead of turning to the external as advertising suggests, look within to begin the path of the Christ in our hearts. It is also about living the Christmas spirit from sharing and bringing a true sense of community in which solidarity, camaraderie, and fraternal union become possible from the real celebration of love.

So let us invite the true Christ who is love, compassion, service, and transformation to take part in our Christmas celebrations from now on. A merry Christmas to all and may the essence of Christ be born and quickened in the hearts of all humanity.