

The Messenger
of Light

Lucifer

Lucifer[®]

For seekers of Truth

Current topics viewed in the light of the Ancient Wisdom or Theo-sophia — the common source of all great world religions, philosophies and sciences

**I.S.I.S.
Symposium
2015**

***Rāja-Yoga
education
of the
Reincarnating
Child***



Lucifer®

Colophon

Editors: Barend Voorham, Henk Bezemer, Rob Goor, Bianca Peeters, Astrid Kramer, Erwin Bomas, Bouke van den Noort.

Chief editor: Herman C. Vermeulen

Editorial office:
De Ruyterstraat 72-74,
2518 AV Den Haag,
tel. +31 (0) 70 346 15 45
e-mail: luciferred@isis-foundation.org

Reactions:
The Editorial Board reserves the right to make a selection and/or shorten incoming documents

Subscription:
This is the sixth free sample of *Lucifer, the Messenger of Light*. For subscription: mail the editorial office: luciferred@stichtingisis.org.
The price of our "paper" issues will be about € 4,60 and € 9,20 for a double issue, excluding postage.
Payment by Internet – creditcard (see website).

Publisher:
I.S.I.S. Foundation, Blavatskyhouse,
De Ruyterstraat 72-74,
2518 AV Den Haag,
tel. +31 (0) 70 346 15 45,
fax +31 (0) 345 24 67,
e-mail: luciferred@isis-foundation.org
internet: www.blavatskyhouse.org

© I.S.I.S. Foundation
No part of this publication may be reproduced or made public in any form or by any means: electronic, mechanical, by photocopies, recordings, or any other way, without prior permission of the Publisher.

The I.S.I.S. foundation is not responsible for any statement or opinion that is published in this magazine, unless an explicit reference is made.

I.S.I.S. Foundation

The name of the Foundation [Stichting] is 'Stichting International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth'. Its registered office is in The Hague, The Netherlands.

The object of the Foundation is to form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood by disseminating knowledge about the spiritual structure of human beings and the cosmos, free from dogma.

The Foundation endeavors to accomplish this object by giving courses, organizing public and other speeches and lectures, issuing books, brochures and other publications, and by drawing on all other resources available to it.

I.S.I.S. Foundation is a non-profit organization, which is recognized as such by the tax authorities in The Netherlands. For the purposes of the tax authorities, I.S.I.S. Foundation has what is called ANBI status.

ANBI stands for General Benefit Organisation (Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling). The most important requisites in obtaining this ANBI status are:

- It is a non-profit organization, so it has no earnings. Any profit earned from for example book sales, must be fully used for general beneficial activities. For I.S.I.S. Foundation, this is spreading the Theosophia. (We refer to the statutes, aims and principles for further information.)
- Board members must meet integrity requirements.
- The ANBI must have a separate property, whereby a director or policymaker cannot dictate over this property as though it were his own.
- The remuneration of board members may only consist of a reimbursement for expenses and attendance.

I.S.I.S. Foundation ANBI number is 50872.



Rāja-Yoga education of the Reincarnating Child

30th and 31st May 2015, The Hague

Rāja-Yoga education of the Reincarnating Child

	Introduction	3
Day 1	A new look on education: from “Nature/Nurture” to reincarnation	5
	<i>Barend Voorham</i>	
	How do you recognize the development phases in a reincarnating child?	10
	<i>Erwin Bomas</i>	
	Workshop results Saturday morning	16
	<i>Editors</i>	
	Why the first three years are so important in Rāja-Yoga education	19
	<i>Bouke van den Noort</i>	
	How the young child discovers his world and his conscience	24
	<i>Patricia van Lingen</i>	
	Workshop results Saturday afternoon	29
	<i>Editors</i>	
	Phases of the human incarnation	32
	<i>Editors</i>	
Day 2	Independent thinking awakes again	34
	<i>Anja de Jong</i>	
	Rāja-Yoga: inspiration for every school system	39
	<i>Johanna Vermeulen-Piket</i>	
	Workshop results Sunday morning	49
	<i>Editors</i>	
	Puberty: free will and helpless idealism	51
	<i>Jos Peeters</i>	
	Maturity: and now growing further by yourself!	55
	<i>Herman C. Vermeulen</i>	
	Plenary discussion	59
	<i>Editors</i>	
	Articles of Katherine Tingley and Gottfried de Purucker on Rāja-Yoga	63
	Lectures in English on the seven Jewels of Wisdom, and their practical value	66

Introduction I.S.I.S. Symposium 2015

Rāja-Yoga education of the Reincarnating Child

In this introduction we would like to present a few basic thoughts on Rāja-Yoga education, as a base for the rest of the symposium. We received a couple of times the remark: “Well, I do not have children and we are not the youngest.” But education can also involve yourself, so in that respect it is a very universal issue.

We have built up this symposium gradually from birth to adulthood. At the end of each shift, there is a workshop where you can taste for yourself what it is that we have brought you. So we can interact and debate with you and you can check what you have experienced as true and you can ask your questions: questions that can be addressed as the workshop leaders report.

This symposium is the result of many months of hard working by a team that came together every Saturday. And when we had finished the content, we came to the conclusion that there is a lot more to tell. So who knows what the future will bring us yet.

Royal union

What is Rāja-Yoga? This term has a very specific meaning, which is indeed quite different from what people usually think what yoga is. Their explanation is not ours, for our view is a piece of universal wisdom. The knowledge of Rāja-Yoga goes back to the mists of time. It was practiced and applied in all the ancient Mystery Schools. We know the Mystery Schools of

ancient Greece, but they were in fact all over the world. Rāja-Yoga means “Royal Union”. “Rāja” means “Royal” and “Yoga” means “Union”. What then must be united? It is about the unification of our lower abilities with the heart of our heart, that is our most spiritual knowledge, in such a way that the spiritual abilities can come out and can manifest. That means that our inner being – our Higher Self – gets a vehicle that is so transparent and useful that it can express itself. The basic idea is that we always can use this inner strength. In other words, you, I, everyone has these higher abilities. If we work on ourselves, we can bring them to expression.

Education of the reincarnating child

If we make a study in the light of Rāja-Yoga of education, we come, as you will see, to some very interesting conclusions. You will undoubtedly notice similarities with other educational systems, such as the Montessori and Krishnamurti schools. Yet there is this essential difference: we focus very strongly on the idea of reincarnation, combined with our inner faculties. Therefore, we see it as an important task of the educator to lead the divine attributes out. These inner faculties are already within us, so they are already in the child, which is an essential idea: we do not need to stimulate or train them.

The goal of Rāja-Yoga education is to try to get the entire human being with all his higher qualities active

in the outer world. To reach that goal a high degree of care and loving guidance is needed.

So we see education consistently in the light of reincarnation. Some people asked us: “We have already heard several of your lectures about reincarnation. Is the symposium again about reincarnation?” Yes, but about a particular aspect of it. The point is that if you are aware of the fact that reincarnation exists, you can never see a child as a blank sheet, which we may or must describe as we would like it. No, every human being reincarnates with a whole history.

And what then should you do as an educator? You must cooperate with the growth processes in nature, and that is only possible if we learn to know Nature’s laws and processes. About this issue our German members will give a very interesting contribution tonight. So these natural processes we must learn to recognize and act on them. Because then our children grow up in the most harmonious way, without major problems.

The objective of this symposium

What do we want to achieve with this symposium? We want to introduce to you the qualities and characteristics of the reincarnating, *lasting* part in humans, so that you as educator can recognize these characteristics in your children. In this way you will come

to a much better interaction with your child and a much more successful education. It is obviously not so that we can give any guarantee for a fully successful education because every reincarnating entity has its own history. As Gottfried de Purucker said: “The one material [this is not intended disrespectfully – HCV] is more suitable than the other material.” But you’re always able to give a very good impetus to the child and to make the effect of your education as large as possible, in order that in this and next incarnations it can be further elaborated. We are long-term workers and thinkers!

Editorial note

In this symposium issue we added two articles on Rāja-Yoga: “Theosophy for the Young” of Katherine Tingley and “Lomaland School and the Rāja-Yoga System of Education” of Gottfried de Purucker.



The team of speakers, from left to right: Jos Peeters, Bouke van den Noort, Patricia van Lingen, Erwin Bomas, Herman C. Vermeulen, Barend Voorham, Anja de Jong and Johanna Vermeulen-Piket.

A new look on education: from “Nature/Nurture” to reincarnation

The way you think determines the way you act. Your vision on life therefore determines also the way you raise children. If you believe that life is created at the moment of conception, when a male sperm cell fertilizes the female egg, then you assume that the multicolored character of a human being is created at conception, or that it will emerge later by environmental factors, or that a character is a combination of those two. More choices are not available. It is nature and/or nurture — DNA and/or environment.

However, if you assume that a human being is consciousness, that has existed before the conception and will not disappear when you die, then heredity and environment are never causes but the consequences of the already existing character. That character – the human being – was formed long before the female egg was fertilized and a woman became pregnant.

It is this vision that is the background of the Rāja-Yoga education. And if you want to understand well what we will tell you the next two days, then you should always take this premise – that you can take as a hypothesis – clearly in mind.

Starting point: consciousness

The premise of consciousness means, in short, that every phenomenon, from atom to star, from earthworm to human being, is an expression of in essence boundless consciousness. And we use consciousness in the sense of “living being”. Every entity acts, reacts,

experiences and grows. It becomes more and more aware of itself.

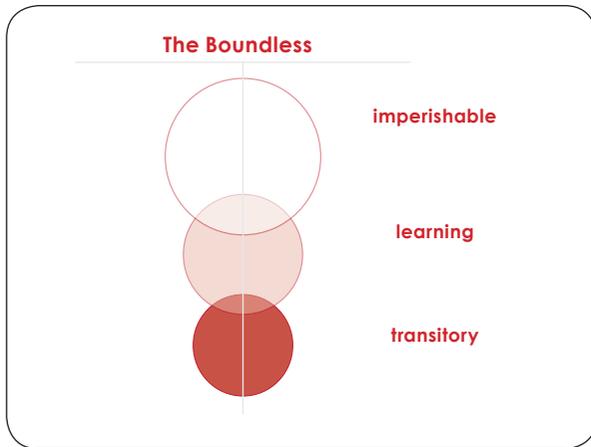
To get a good idea of what we mean by education, we should elaborate the idea of consciousness a little further. Each consciousness is in fact composed. That is to say that there are several layers in it, which are qualitatively different from each other.

Therefore, a man may change characteristically even during a single day. There are different selves within us; sometimes we are that self, then another. Sometimes we think selfishly, other times we are altruistic. Sometimes we are jealous, but maybe a little later generous. Sometimes we argue coldhearted, but we can also react very emotionally. All those different qualities are in our consciousness.

One can divide the human consciousness in different ways. In this lecture we assume a tripartite division: an *imperishable* part; an intermediate portion, the *learning* part, which is the consciousness that we have developed; and a *transitory* part.

The *imperishable* part within us is the core of our consciousness. In fact, it is identical to the boundless itself, just like a drop in the ocean contains everything of the ocean. It is the immutable and spiritual aspect within us. All abilities and qualities that exist in the cosmos, reside in it. The imperishable part within us is aware of the oneness of life. You can call it our inner god, the link with the boundless.

What we have brought into activity from all those



spiritual abilities, forms the intermediate part of our nature: the *learning* part. It is this part that life after life learns to express the inner potential of the imperishable part. That learning part is in fact our character. It is the consciousness that we have developed — i.e. we have unfolded it from the imperishable part of our consciousness. It is present in our daily life; we made it active. We can use it directly.

The learning part is not static, because the process of development and growth never stops. We learn again and again.

Finally, the *transitory* part is the instrument, the vehicle or the carrier of this total of consciousness.

The composition of our character

It is the learning part of the composite consciousness, which is the force behind the character that each human being has built up and builds up continuously. That character is dynamic: old characteristics die, new ones are born. The thoughts we think, are the foundation of our character. For thoughts underlie the actions we take. You cannot perform any action without thinking previously a thought or a series of thoughts. The total of actions forms the habits or the habit patterns. And the totality of all habits is our character. Therefore: you sow a thought and reap an act; you sow an act and reap a habit; you sow a habit and you reap a character.

Every time when we think a new thought, ponder a new idea, we affect our actions and habits and change also — perhaps only slightly — our character.

Every human being dies with a certain character. It is obvious that this character will manifest itself again in

a new reincarnation. Hence, you can expand the cycle of thought – action – habit – character by saying: you sow a character and reap a new life.

Building character

- thought >
- action >
- habit >
- character >
- reincarnation

The dual aspect of the intermediate part

It is the learning part of man that continually reincarnates and, at the end of life, detaches itself from the material world. Let's look at that cycle.

When a man is in his old age, there is a natural tendency to return to the world of the spirit. The consciousness separates from the body. The body, deprived of its source, decomposes.

But not all parts of the consciousness can enter the pure world of the spirit. The intermediate part of our consciousness leaves the inclinations and desires that are more focused on matter, behind, when during the dying process the higher parts are absorbed by the imperishable part. Only the higher ideals, the spiritual aspirations, the true compassionate thoughts are pure enough to be able to be absorbed by the imperishable part.

There is an infallible touchstone by which you can distinguish the more physical inclinations and desires and the spiritual aspirations. The thoughts that make you feel as if you live separated from others, belong to the transitory side of nature. Those thoughts are perishable. The ego always plays the main role. This kind of thoughts, feelings and desires belong to the *persona*. This Latin word means mask, and it shows exactly what role it plays in the composite human consciousness. It is a tool, a role in a play so to say. The real man plays that role in order to live and to gain experiences here on earth. If you completely identify yourself with that persona – that role – it will certainly lead to selfishness.

However, behind or above that persona is the real man. We can call it the reincarnating part. This type of consciousness is aware of its links with others, yes,

it is aware of the essential unity of life. It does not think in “I” but in “we”.

It is the reincarnating part that collects and binds together the elements of the persona into the new mask, with each new birth. In a similar way, it is the causal factor behind the growth of the physical body in the mother’s womb. Even when the child, once born, manifests his character again during his childhood and teenage years, the reincarnating part is always present in the background.

Let us describe this process in more detail.

The process of birth

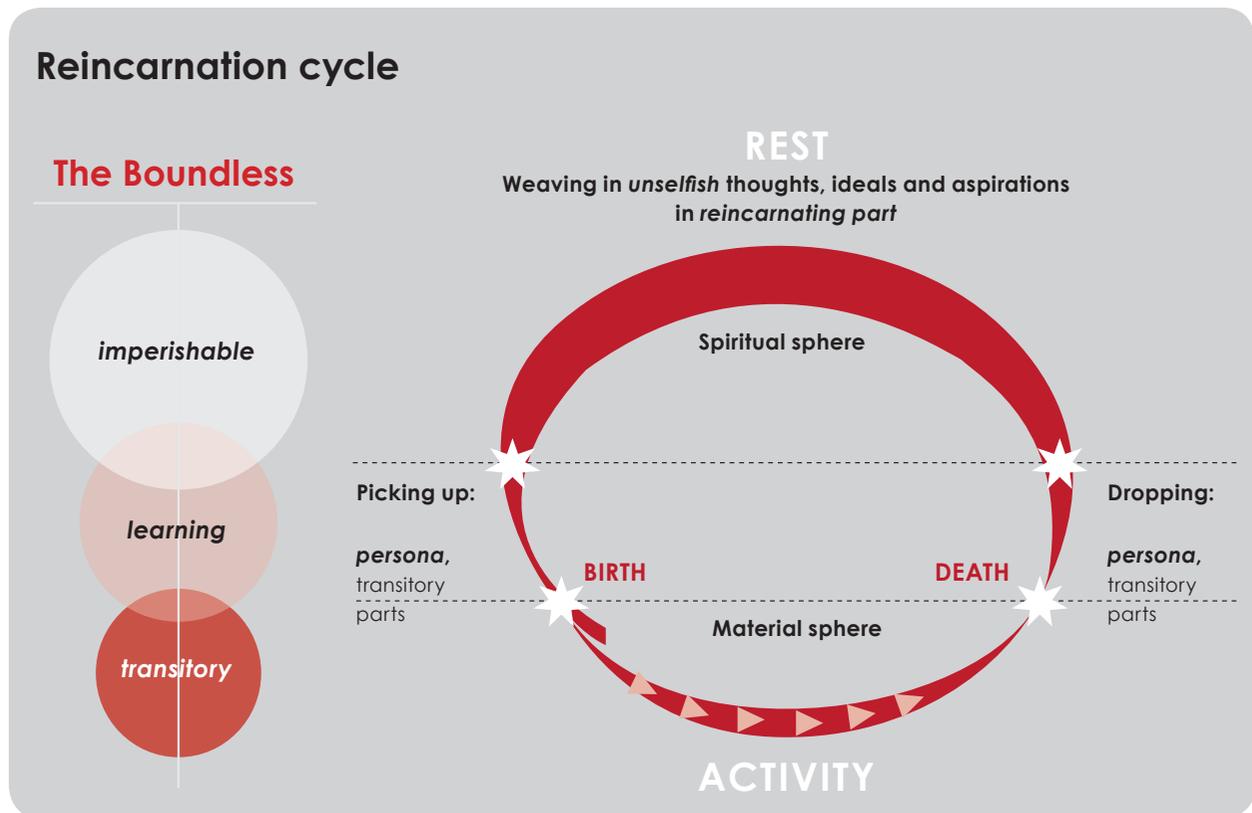
After a relatively long period of rest a thirst for embodied existence awakens in the reincarnating part that is resting in the imperishable part. That same thirst awakens you every morning after a good night’s sleep, even without your alarm clock. Then a grand process begins, where all the old building blocks, which in the previous life composed the intermediate part and the body, are recollected. In this context, the Buddhists speak of *skandhas*: bundles of attributes. The reincarnating part gathers them together again around itself.

The touchstone to distinguish transitory desires from imperishable aspirations:

- Persona (mask):
lives in the illusion of separateness
- Reincarnating part:
understands the coherence of all life

They have the same basic tenor, and like a magnet attracts iron, the reincarnating consciousness attracts the skandhas. It needs them to become itself again. The consciousness itself formed these skandhas in past lives. It were these attributes that built up its previous persona. There is no foreign element in it.

When you fall asleep tonight, you don’t take the skandhas with you either, at least if you sleep deeply and dreamlessly. If your consciousness recedes far enough to the more spiritual realms, the coarse bundles of attributes that belong more to the earth, cannot go with you. You leave them behind. When you wake up the next morning, you pick those properties up again. During the “great sleep”, or death, as the diagram shows, you also leave these building blocks behind.



These elements are simply too coarse to enter that subtle spiritual world. You leave them behind and therefore at birth – after the long rest of death, in which you assimilate the learned lessons – you pick them up again. This is the cycle of life and death. So at birth you gather around yourself your own building blocks. You inherit yourself. The properties you will manifest later in childhood or as an adult, do not come from your parents, or your environment. You have built them up yourself in past lives and the living elements that constitute those qualities, you pick up again.

The physical body is the last instrument of which the learning part recollects the building blocks and which it builds up again. It needs, however, the help of the parents, who assist in gathering the atoms that compose the physical body. But the parents do not lead the process, they assist.

So when the child is born, the birth process is already underway for some time. That process begins when the spiritual aspirations have been worked out that made a human being dream his blessed, post mortal dreams. Completely unselfconscious, man attracts all the building blocks he uses to build up his personal nature. Only then he touches the outer area and contacts the fertilized egg cell in the womb. He makes contact with exactly those parents, that city and country and era, that suit him and which he has chosen. That word “choose” you should not, however, take too literally. The reincarnating part does not choose when it is in that spiritual state of death, but it makes its choices in his previous incarnation, when it builds up, based on free will, all kinds of relations with people. Some of these relations are intensive, others superficial. But every bond that is forged in life, contributes in large or small extent to the circumstances in which a human finds itself in the new reincarnation. For during the process of birth the consciousness will be precisely drawn thither, where the attraction is the greatest.

Love, hate and free will

That attraction is nourished by love. We think of the things we love. We create a bond with it. Who loves sport, is attracted to sport. But love has its opposite: hatred or antipathy. Hate binds too. For hate makes us think likewise of the object of hatred and thus also

creates a bond. That is of course a negative bond, but it ties as well. So if you hate sports, you create a bond with sporty circumstances as well. It is this negative attraction that explains the “black sheep” in many a family.

So a man builds himself constantly. He inherits himself. The circumstances in which he is born, his parents, his body and his DNA — those are all consequences of what he has developed in his own consciousness. So no DNA, no environmental factors determine the human being; the reverse is true: the human being – that is his character – determines the DNA and the environment in which he lives.

Consciousness is essentially free. Man has free will. That free will comes from our imperishable core. It is the intermediate part however, which restricts the free will. Because by choosing we limit free will, especially if you continually choose for the persona and therefore for selfishness. Then, at a certain moment, you don't perceive the true nature of life anymore, and you tend constantly to repeat certain choices. Yet we always have an opportunity to give a twist to our lives. How limited it sometimes may be, a human being has always sufficient free will to choose for the imperishable part. This fact is very important. So it's no doom, there are no external forces by which we are born somewhere; the impulse comes from ourselves. In fact, the circumstances in which we are born, are the fulfillment of our deepest desires. Even if others – or perhaps we ourselves – do not find those circumstances optimal because there is a lack of everything, there is poverty, poor education and things like that, still those circumstances are the outright result of our own established relationships with various people and situations, based on free will. Only in these circumstances we can be ourselves. The state in which we live is a reflection of our character. This also means that the very circumstances in which we live, are also the best teacher for us. No single life is meaningless, but it always offers challenges and opportunities to develop more of our spiritual capacities.

Progressive evolution

These basic thoughts make us look very differently to birth and education. A child that is born is not a blank slate, but a centuries-old friend of ours, who

returns after a long journey to continue, in cooperation with us, with his task on earth. “Children” do not exist, at least not in the sense that they are a kind of miniature human beings, who have yet to become a full-fledged adult. No, a child is a complete human being, equipped with a higher spiritual nature, with understanding and insight and intellectual abilities. Recently it lingered in the spiritual realms and now, driven by an inner urge, it picks up his duties again. That it still lacks a keen intellect and a deep sense of responsibility, is not because these properties are not there, but because temporarily they do not function. The consciousness simply has to get used again to the earthly circumstances, just as a polar bear, who awakens from his hibernation, needs some time to function optimally again.

A newly born human being is like an old colleague. And parents, and others who have karmic relationships with this colleague, face the challenging task to train and coach him, so that he can continue his development.

For that is the point: the development of consciousness. For the character, acquired in previous lives, is not finished. Certainly not. The goal of education is that the character flows out harmoniously, while the educators provide the necessary elements, so that it can be further developed and refined.

You should not consider the cycle of reincarnation as spinning in circles meaninglessly. No, in a cycle you go in circles. But you go, like a spiral staircase, in circles up. There is an infinite reservoir of spiritual powers in the imperishable side of our nature, which the learning part must learn to develop. In each reincarnation we should develop – unfold out of ourselves – more of those inner, noble faculties. We call that progressive evolution.

Yoga

Eventually a human being will learn to concentrate fully on his origin, so that it is immersed in it and becomes one with it. That is the aim of true religion or yoga. Yoga means “yoke” and derived from this: discipline. But a yoke brings two oxen together. Hence, the word also means unification. That unifying process can begin as soon as the baby is on earth, or at least the conditions for it to take place can be created.

Inner growth as the fruit of reincarnation

- By the force of love and hate, our reincarnating part is drawn thither where it becomes *itself*
- The cycle of reincarnation leads to progressive evolution ...
- ... which has as its aim: yoga, the unification with the imperishable part

In the period of 21 years, as man learns to master again all the capabilities of previous lives, you can distinguish two lines of growth. The persona manifests itself more and more. That persona, as I said, is composed of the skandhas, bundles of personal and temporal properties, which were formed in previous lives. The growing child turns out to possess, just like any human being, its own typical characteristics, his likes and dislikes, which makes it different from others. That is one line of growth.

At the same time, however, the real Man is always present. And the real man, the reincarnating part, is the sum total of the unselfish experiences and insights of all previously lives he has lived. This is the universal man, who perceives the interrelationships of all beings and whose vision extends far beyond a single limited earthly life. What matters is to become that Man and to see the persona as an instrument, only useful when it enables the real Man to work here on earth. This is the great task for all of us. We can help each other. We can especially help the newly born. We can help to lead the reincarnating part out of them. That is the main subject of these two days of our Symposium. But first Erwin Bomas will zoom in on the human consciousness, and he will show you which aspects of consciousness we have already more or less developed in the past and which we now recapitulate in an accelerated way.



How do you recognize the development phases in a reincarnating child?

Introduction

In the previous lecture we have built up with you the idea of cyclical development. Humans are reincarnating beings that, with their free will, develop life after life more and more of their infinite consciousness, which they truly are in their essence. Hence, our character is built upon a foundation of many incarnations. Already for millions of years we are going through this process of evolving ourselves as human consciousnesses.

In this lecture we will show how this development process takes place on a large as well as on a smaller scale. Every new incarnation we repeat this process from birth until adulthood, so, during our childhood. We then go through the complete history of ourselves, which comprised many incarnations as a human being, but only accelerated. This is something we call the recapitulation of consciousness. And that is exactly the key to an understanding of Rāja-Yoga education, which we will give you at the end of this lecture.

Man as a seven-fold composite being

In the previous lecture we told you that, as human consciousness, we develop life after life by developing more and more of our imperishable, spiritual part. By doing so, we shall learn to control and improve the transitory part, our persona. To show in a bit more detail how this development process works, we shall split up the division of the imperishable part, the learning

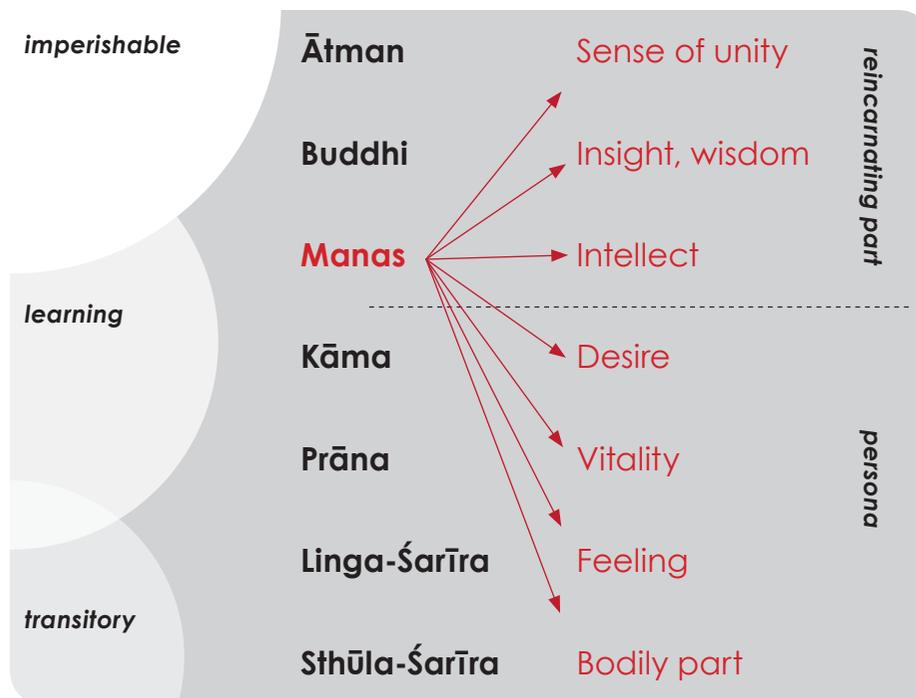
part and the transitory part in seven parts.

These are the seven universal principles of every being in their Sanskrit names, starting from below:

1. Sthūla Śarīra, the physical
2. Linga Śarīra, feeling, the astral
3. Prāna, the principle of life
4. Kāma, the desire principle
5. Manas, the thinking faculty
6. Buddhi, the spiritual principle or the principle of enlightenment
7. Ātman, the divine principle — the cosmic that we are in essence

Humanity is currently developing the fifth principle, Manas, or the faculty of thinking. Hence the word “man”. And also this manasic principle is in itself sevenfold. Thus, our thinking faculty enables us, via its seven subaspects, to recognize the seven universal principles:

1. We all recognize the physical aspect of our thinking when we are hungry or thirsty, when we are hot or cold, or when we are tired.
2. The emotional aspect of thinking we recognize when our feelings or emotions are evoked, which occurs when we rely on our senses: resulting in fear, anger, euphoria, et cetera.
3. The prānic aspect of thinking we can recognize as vitality: to act without thinking, not being able to sit still, or being in a hurry.



that there are parts which we leave behind, and parts that remain after death. The latter we call the real man or the reincarnating part.

According to the sevenfold division, the three highest aspects of thinking can be collectively pointed out as characteristic for the *reincarnating* part of man. It is those aspects which are focused on unity of life, and which have an unselfish and lasting nature. The lower four aspects belong to our *persona*, the temporary role which we play during life. They are more

4. The kāmīc aspect of thinking: the desire. The desire for status, achievements, fame, but also for wisdom, peace, unity.
5. The manasīc aspect of thinking: the intellect. Our intellect organizes all phenomena in “boxes”. It is our categorizing, defining, analyzing thinking.
6. The buddhīc aspect of thinking: our insight, our intuition, comprehension. It enables us directly to see the correlations between all things, and understand the relations between the individual parts with the totality. Compare it to viewing a painter’s canvas: we don’t see the individual brush strokes but see the whole composition of the painter.
7. And then at last, the ātmīc aspect of thinking: the notion of unity. These are the rare mystical experiences in which man identifies himself completely with the totality which he actually is. At such a moment, his personality dissolves in it. Realizing to be one with nature when you are inspired by a beautiful piece of nature or a starlit sky is just a hint of this.

When we look back to the illustration of the reincarnation process of the human consciousness that Barend Voorham explained to us (see page 7), you will see

focused on transitory things and are rather selfish in nature.

All aspects of thinking have their place and play their role. A human is in harmony when the higher aspects are leading the lower ones. Therefore the lower aspects should be serving the higher ones.

Involution and evolution

The seven principles play a key role in the development or evolution of humanity. And here we are not talking about the physical evolution from the biology classes. Because *e*-volution literally means *un*-folding or *de*-veloping, there also has to be something which previously folded itself *in*, *en*-veloped itself. And that is, like Barend Voorham already mentioned, consciousness. It is consciousness that clothes itself in matter, that constructs an instrument: the *persona*, by which consciousness can express its abilities.

Evolution and involution are two aspects of the same process. While the spiritual side *envelops*, roots in or enfolds, matter, the physical side, *evolves* or develops itself. And when the cycle reaches its climax, matter will start to *envelop* while the spirit starts to *evolve*. You can recognize this cycle of involution and evolution of the spiritual part and at the same time the evolution and involution of the physical part easily

throughout man's life. Roughly speaking, the first part of our lifetime is mainly focused on building up the exterior life. And here we don't only talk about the body, but also about studying to learn a profession, finding a job, a partner, buying a house and raising a family.

In a harmonious person, the second part of his life is more focused on the inner development: to be the best parent you can be, to become a good leader at work, handing over your knowledge to colleagues, handing over the lessons you learned in life to children and grandchildren, and after your retirement, fully working for your ideals.

Involution and evolution of the seven principles in the history of human development

During life we go through multiple of these cycles, in which we can recognize all seven aspects (see the scheme "Evolution and Involution in 7 phases"). You can recognize cycles of 12, 10, 7, 3,5 and of 1 year, a season, or even of one day. These cycles are universal for the growth and development of all beings. Interesting to check these in your own life.

When we talk about education, one cycle is most important for us. It is the great cycle that we, as humans, go through from the start of reaching human consciousness until we eventually express our human consciousness in full perfection. It is the "school of

thinking", in which we develop Manas, the thinking faculty. As the result of all our previous incarnations, we have now reached a certain point in this evolution. Just like every school class, there are front-runners and laggards in this development. But on average, according to the Theosophia, we have reached the *fourth* grade of this school of thinking.

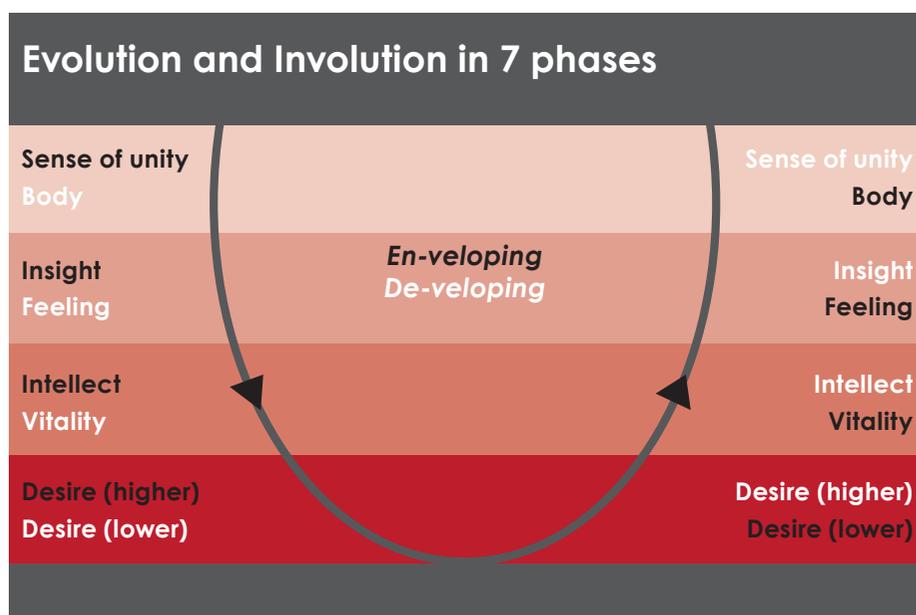
In this fourth grade, our thinking is dominated by *desire*, by *Kāma*. And roughly speaking, we have just reached the second half of the school year. The combination of desire and thinking can be easily recognized in technological innovations. As soon as something is invented, people look if and how they can make money with it.

As human consciousnesses we already passed the first, second and third class. In the first class, we had completed the involution or enveloping of the divine or ātmic aspect while our physical aspect evolved or developed. Subsequently, in the second class, the buddhic aspect enveloped, while our astral aspect, our feelings or Linga Śarīra evolved.

This was followed by the involution of the thinking faculty and the evolution of Prāna or vitality. And in this fourth class we already finished the first half: the involution of the higher desire and the evolution of lower desire (Kāma). We left the lowest point of material evolution, half way the fourth class, a few million years behind us. We then started to ascend the so-called ascending arc or spiritual arc by evolving the higher desire and

at the same time involving our lower desires. Within this phase of desire, we climbed up to the evolution of the intellect.

It is now the spiritual side that determines our development as consciousness. Or rather: that should determine our development, if we want to work in harmony with Nature and wish to evolve our intellectual abilities, our insights and our sense of unity as well.



Recapitulation of consciousness

Why is knowledge of this cycle so important? Because we go through our complete involution and evolution history on a smaller scale between birth and adulthood. Just like a school lesson, that we start by quickly repeating what was discussed in the previous lessons so that everything comes back to our mind — that is how we do that accordingly in every incarnation. And that is what we call the *recapitulation of consciousness*: the process in our youth in which we activate our past development, but highly accelerated. In this important process we can help children, our old colleagues, to a fair extent, when we have the right knowledge and suited methods!

The word recapitulation is also being used in biology, where we see that the embryonic development also goes through an accelerated process in which the bodily forms of the different kingdoms of nature can be recognized: from a primitive unicellular organism, through diverse animal forms till a complete human body. You understand that this is just the lowest, most physical side, which we observe here. And during this physical evolution, we now know that in the background, in the hidden parts, something happens as well.

In today's materialistic science the emphasis lies on what we can observe. But at the inner planes something involves, which is at least as interesting if we pay attention to it! It is even more interesting when you realize that the external part is a result of this. From an educational point of view, the spiritual side of consciousness is therefore essential, because the spiritual consciousness makes us who we truly are as a human. It entails those aspects, which belong to the reincarnating, lasting part in us.

We will therefore briefly explore this process of recapitulation. We will just give you a brief overview, because we will pay specific attention to all its important phases in the following lectures and workshops.

The cycle of recapitulation of consciousness

Since life is cyclic, there is, in a way, no start nor end. At the moment of the physical birth, the reincarnation process has already progressed for some time. Yet, we may view birth itself as the start of a cycle. In this lecture, we will take the physical birth as a starting point and adulthood as the end point, which forms a cycle

in which we can define the phases of involution and evolution on the basis of the seven principles.

1. At birth, we observe the fragile body of a baby: the bodily part of the being that evolves and already quickly expresses the physical desire for food, thirst and sleep. However, we can also detect the ātmic part of the being, which involves in the background. We can recognize it for instance in the divine atmosphere which surrounds the newborn baby and which appeals to the compassion of everyone in the surroundings. A baby does not yet know separateness and is unconsciously still united with the totality. There is not yet an “I”, not yet a duality. In the next article, of Bouke van den Noort, we will talk about this in more detail.

2. The young child further develops its senses and quickly becomes sensitive for moods. We heard of an example where a baby in its pram always started to cry at a specific point, when his parents walked along their usual route. Later it turned out that there was a slaughterhouse right next to that location. At a young age, children can also be still sensitive for influences from the astral sphere and quickly suffer from emotional tension or for instance nightmares. This is also the reason why some kids at this age come up with memories from their past lives. Memories that will automatically pass.

It is advised not to focus too much on the emotional side, but to stimulate the enveloping buddhic aspect of thinking, the faculty of comprehension, of the reincarnating part. That means that basic truths like reincarnation and karma, unity and equality of life will be understood directly by the young child, if of course they are explained in the language of the child. In fairy tales, based on these truths, kids feel directly the difference between good or bad and they can also apply this to themselves.

Another important stage in this phase is the first notion of “I”. As soon as a child starts talking about “I” we can teach this kid that “I” always has a place and function in the totality. This is also something the child is directly searching for: it wants to collaborate, and do these things himself. This is the natural moment to trigger compassion and the notion of interconnectedness in the child, as well as the child's

own responsibility. As the child grows up, slowly its conscience awakes: that ethical wisdom which has already consciously been brought to development in previous incarnations. With this, educators can give a child the possibility to directly control itself. In the fourth contribution, of Patricia van Lingem, this will be further discussed.

3. When the child goes to school we see that the capacity to think independently becomes active around the age of seven. The childish prānic vitality is clearly developing but can already be directed by the enveloping faculty of thinking. Children in this phase often say “I’m thinking so much lately”. The child wants to investigate everything. The higher knowledge of the reincarnating part becomes active. Anja de Jong will talk more about school kids, in her article “Independent thinking awakes again”.

4. The phase in which the desire of thinking “switches” from the lower transitory part which is focused on itself to the higher unselfish aspects, is puberty. Tensions are therefore strongest during this phase. Puberty is the repetition of the era in human history, which focused strongly on desire. In this era we have gone through the deepest point of material development and started the ascending development of spiritual development.

On the one side we see that a teenager is attracted to the lower aspects, that he is focused on himself and his own identity as well as his place in the group and on the other side we see him becoming aware of the unity in the world; his ideals awake, his desire to realize a better world. It is the first step in constructing an independent vision on life. In this phase too, we educators can stimulate the spiritual side and help the teenager to independently shape his own ideals. His own ideals will learn him to control his own personality. The extent to which a teenager has already learned the distinction between the higher and lower side of himself in his early youth, and has learned to control himself from a young age, contributes to the success of this. Jos Peeters will explain much more about this in the article “Puberty: free will and helpless idealism”.

5. During the last stage of youth till adulthood, we

see that thinking takes an ever-growing place and with this, starts to control desire. The young adolescent makes his own choices for his study or work, and takes more and more responsibility. Perhaps he leaves home to live on his own, making himself almost fully independent. Adulthood is the point at which we have all the abilities that we developed in previous incarnations fully available to us, and can continue to develop these further. This will be the topic of the last article, by Herman Vermeulen.

Rāja-Yoga and the role of the educator: instruction and education

What does this knowledge mean for you as an educator? The application of this knowledge is the essence of the Rāja-Yoga education. Where Yoga means unification, Rāja-Yoga, Kingly Union, stands for the unification through control of thought. This means that the higher aspects of thinking are in control, are king of, the lower aspects of thinking. Our statement is that man is in harmony when his temporary persona is serving his reincarnating part. We challenge you to study this independently and not just to assume this because we say so. During the workshop we will there-

Rāja-Yoga

- Unification by controlling the thinking process
- The higher aspects of thinking become “king” of the lower: the persona serving the reincarnating part

fore start to learn how to distinguish these aspects. We can only recognize and activate the higher aspects in children when these are also active in our own life. We have seen that the majority of mankind has only recently arrived at the development of these higher aspects of thinking. This explains also the disharmony in this world. Nevertheless, this knowledge offers us a chance to focus on the higher aspects of the child from the very first moment of our education – and in a way this is every moment – to awaken these kingly aspects in our “old colleague” as efficiently as possible. The idea is: during the recapitulation, in which the consciousness “goes” through the different levels of

involution and evolution, both sides of man can and should deserve attention. It is the two sides of education, which we presently will call “instruction” and “education”.

In-struction, which literally means “building up”, “constructing”, means handing or supplying *living building blocks*, ranging from physical to mental-spiritual; so from mashed carrots to the most noble ideals and fundamental principles. By doing so, you enable the child to construct its own persona again. Instruction also means to protect children from those building blocks, both physical and mental, which would obstruct the development. Just as strict as we are in the selection of food for our children, just as selective we should watch the atmosphere we expose them to, both on a mental as a spiritual level.

Parallel to instruction we work on *e*-ducation, which literally means “guiding or leading out”. In essence this means to reconnect with and lead out the higher aspects which are already present in the real man, the reincarnating part: the spiritual will, also called the free will focused on or guided by the spiritual side, the higher knowledge, the conscience and compassion or the practical sense of unity. As Socrates said, a good educator is therefore just a midwife. And to be more

Education and Instruction

- In-struction: building up, handing of the physical, mental and spiritual “building blocks” of the persona. Instruction should serve education.
- E-ducation: leading out, connecting with and guiding out of the reincarnating part: spiritual will, higher knowledge, conscience and compassion.

precise, a spiritual midwife.

In a way *in*-struction should therefore always serve *e*-ducation. We are handing those building blocks with which the reincarnating part can take control again and further develop itself.

In the coming contributions we will give you many examples how you, as educators, can apply this knowledge.



Workshop results Saturday morning

The participants exchanged many views, arguments and experiences about what was presented in the two preceding lectures. Three questions were the starting point. The summary below provides some characteristic, nice examples. It also shows how we can complement and stimulate each other in this way.

Do you think that a newborn baby is a blank slate? Please support your answer.

A few interesting observations supported the view that no one is born a blank slate. Some parents of identical twins observed a difference in the character of their newborn children from the very first breath. Another example: sometimes a child appears to possess a very distinct ability. One mother mentioned that her daughter, when returning from the daycare center, was able to tell which music her mother had been listening to earlier. Apparently there was some kind of wireless connection.

A medical professional at a neonatology section where forty premature children are cared for, said: "You look into their eyes and they are all different." Also the theme of the "old soul" was discussed: some children seem to have developed a certain wisdom in their former lives, which they display even when they are very young.

When a child has some very unique quality we speak of a prodigy or child genius, but we do so only be-

cause we do not know where those qualities originate. Reincarnation explains this. Someone suggested that we can consider a child as a package that is unwrapping itself, or as a book that has yet to be opened. During several of the workshops the same question arose, namely, how exactly do you recognize the re-incarnating, lasting part in a young child? For many qualities are still dormant at that age. This is a charming example: a man told that he was babysitting a baby girl who lived next-door. He was changing her diaper while the girl was standing on the commode table. But he forgot to get something he needed for the diaper change. At the same time he thought: if I walk away now, she might fall. For a moment he did not know what to do. Then the child looked at him from the depth of her little eyes as if to reassure him: "you can safely go and get what you forgot". And this is a kind of connection you would not expect.

One of the groups discussed the facts that are discovered by today's science about this subject. It was agreed that those facts are not conclusive; there is no hard evidence for the thesis that "everything follows from heredity" or that "everything is caused by education" or that "everything follows from a third factor". In fact, it's a pity that hardly any effort is made to compare these different perspectives in science, and to investigate whether reincarnation or "matter as the sole cause" provides the best explanation.

In some workshops thoughts were developed that

point to spiritual education. One group concluded that young children are not blank slates, but *universal* slates. And we as adults write all kinds of things on those slates that are not really useful to them. How can we preserve that purity that children possess?

Please give examples of the seven thinking aspects.

One workshop leader said: “I expected that it would be hard to answer this question, but it pointed out not to be true. Most participants recognized the seven aspects with ease, in themselves as well as in the expressions of children.”

Many times the two highest thinking aspects, the awareness of unity and insight, were the topic of intense discussion. They are more abstract and express themselves in a much more inner way than the other aspects, “in a *certain high quality* of connection”. One group paid attention to the difference between feeling and insight. For many people experience their feelings as insight, because: “My feelings proved to be right, didn’t they?” Yes, sometimes you can feel or sense something correctly, but you cannot tell what was going on exactly, while your insight can. Then you know *why* something happens, you see cause and effect, you see the connections and the coherence of things. In babies the ātmic connection, the experience of unity can be very strong, some people added. Newborn babies look into your eyes *as a soul*. It is a very direct kind of contact. It evokes a sense of unity in the people surrounding the baby as well. Somebody mentioned interesting scientific research from which can be concluded that “looking at” is a form of direct communication. Mothers were asked to look at their babies, attentively at first, and then while they were thinking of something else. As soon as they started with the second part the babies reacted anxiously, started crying and so on.

In your opinion, which aspects should the process of education focus on from the standpoint of reincarnation?

In all workshops the idea emerged that education, the leading out of the inner man, is essentially our primary goal. For every child has everything in it potentially. But instruction – offering a suitable en-

vironment and atmosphere, good learning material, good “feeding material” – is equally important. The two are intertwined. Education is the goal, instruction will automatically be involved.

A peculiar observation was mentioned; when the leading out of the reincarnating human is successful, you will see that children are able to correct themselves. This means you do not have to reinforce what they are allowed or are not allowed to do. Surely, you should guide this process carefully; it is not some kind of trick. Someone owns a nature garden where children can play. The children are in no way told what they can and can’t do. What is the result? They never climb higher than they are able to; they do everything precisely up to the limits they know in themselves. And everything proceeds harmoniously, without fights or struggle or whatever.

Those who realize that a child has a reincarnating part can discover exceptional things. A woman mentioned her daughter who often used to say: “I experienced this before.” In other words, young children are still transparent for the memories of their reincarnating core. Another nice example: a son had cried during the first three years of his life. After that, things improved. When the child was ten years old, the father dared to ask a question, even though reincarnation was never discussed before in this family. He asked: “How do you feel about being reincarnated again?” The boy answered in the following way: “Well, when I started out I felt like being in a bubble; I couldn’t do anything and nothing happened. After that I could do nice things, I could do things by myself, and now I like it.” If other people are wondering “why is my child crying?”, we can keep this exceptional story in mind. In some workshops the thought emerged that we should not focus only on the child’s reincarnating part, we should help to express the *entire* human being, in a balanced way.

Some parents dreaded the notion of their responsibility somewhat. How can we do this alone? Parents are not perfect, are they? Someone commented: “If you rely on the fact that all abilities are already present in your child, and if you are aware of this, and if you actively search for your own deeper layers as well, then you are taking an important step to help your children develop further.” Another reaction: “Isn’t the

entire environment the educator?” This means the entire family, the neighborhood, the school, and so on. We all educate each other. It is a collective process in which the parents are primarily responsible, but to which many others contribute.

We end this summary with the contribution of a young father anticipating the future: “In fact you are investing. It doesn’t have to generate immediate results, after twenty or thirty years it may point out that the education has led to a certain goal.”



Why the first three years are so important in Rāja-Yoga education

The universal vision of Rāja-Yoga education was put into practice around 1900 by Katherine Tingley, the third leader of the Theosophical Society. In California she led a community at Point Loma, San Diego where children were educated according to the principles of Rāja-Yoga. Once she was asked what her secret was, and she replied: “My secret is building the right atmosphere. If you can do that, everything else will come.”⁽¹⁾

The atmosphere of which she speaks plays an important role in education in general, so in all ages, but it is crucial in those first few years. In order to understand this, we will first look at what is meant precisely by atmosphere.

What is atmosphere?

Do you recognize the situation of being attracted to people that seem to radiate a particular characteristic and who make you feel comfortable? Someone is then radiating a certain atmosphere, which instantly seems familiar. You could also think about a sphere of influence to which you are drawn. If you make the comparison with a solar system that is in the sphere of influence of the sun, you could imagine every human being as a sun with his own area of influence to which other people react. We build on the inner regions of our composite constitution an atmosphere or dynamic field around us that we, with our inner antennas so to speak, can pick up. And this atmosphere is mainly

determined by our thinking.

It is not tangible with our external senses, but the same applies to our modern means of communication. Just as radio waves are transmitted and received on planes invisible to the naked eye, you could say that we as humans are both transmitter and receiver. At different frequencies, spiritual, mental and emotional, we send out signals that we also pick up from others. Depending on the degree with which we resonate with the sphere of influence of others, we are in sympathy with them or not. If this is the case, we say: we are on the same wavelength.

What is an atmosphere?

- Zone of influence
- Mainly created by our thinking
- Dynamic field that we build ourselves on inner planes (spiritual, mental, emotional)

Atmosphere and resonance are crucial during the first few years in education

As previously mentioned, the concepts of resonance and atmosphere play a very important role in the first few years of education. This will become clear if we examine in which state of consciousness the child is in, what is involving or rooting in and what is evolving or being expressed at this stage.

State of consciousness of a newborn

If we look at a newborn baby, we see a helpless little body on the outside, but now we know there is much more to it than that. The reincarnating part is present in the background on the inner spheres, building up his instrument. It is our most spiritual phase, albeit unselfconscious. The reincarnating man has just emerged from the spiritual realms, and that's why he still is in a corresponding state; the gate is still open to these realms so to speak. Since we have barely developed these highest aspects in our present evolutionary stage, it is difficult to describe and imagine this state of being.

Yet, you probably understand what a father meant when he said to me recently that the birth of his child was a sacred moment to him. Another parent mentioned her child being in a heavenly state. It is – as H.P. Blavatsky, founder of The Theosophical Society, said – more soul than body and the eyes of a newborn seem to look right through you.

The child is still in an unselfconscious dream state, with a universal character, where it experiences no distinction and is still one with the whole. The higher nature is present, but still passive in the background; but nonetheless noticeable by the environment. A serene atmosphere surrounds a newborn child – and think again about the resonance – which also produces a corresponding vibration in us, appealing to our higher nature. For example, parents experience an immediate unconditional love for the child and often forget themselves while caring for it.

Recapitulation of early humanity

In the viewpoint of recapitulation, the going through our early evolutionary stages, the child is now in the phase of the beginning humanity in which we were still in an *unself-conscious* dreamlike state, but of a spiritual, universal characteristic. We had yet to develop language. Communication was at this stage without words, directly from soul to soul. And it is this form of communication, by means of picking up the atmosphere as I have just described, to which the child is extremely sensitive in the first three years.

The Ātman involves, the body evolves

This phase in which the newborn is very receptive to

impressions on the inner planes is very important, because now the most spiritual characteristic, the ātmic part of the reincarnating man envelops or roots in his instrument (see the scheme “Evolution and Involution in seven phases” on page 12).

State of consciousness newborn

- Most universal, spiritual phase, but unconscious
- Reincarnating part passive, present on background
- Dreamy, spiritual state
- Communication directly from soul to soul

Now, the foundation is laid for the present life, the basis of the character that is being rebuilt. And if we recall that resonance principle, you will also understand the importance of the sphere of influence of the parents in this receptive period. Depending on the frequency to which the parents are tuned, the reincarnating child is to a more or lesser degree able to give expression to the in-volving higher nature through his instrument. Katherine Tingley therefore said:

A child should be nourished with spiritual food and care, as much as with material food and care.⁽²⁾

Keeping the atmosphere pure

It is therefore essential that educators keep the atmosphere pure. And with pure we mean a mindset that is attuned to the universal, pure state of the child. An atmosphere of inner calm and confidence, focusing on the higher nature with thoughts like sense of unity, harmony and equality. The like-minded attract one another, and by resonating with the higher nature of the child, it can be brought out.

During this first period, the child is still strongly linked with his parents on an emotional level, and the mental image, the inner atmosphere they construct is a living energy that literally feeds the child's reincarnating part in that sphere. The parents act as a “channel” through which these inner building blocks are passed on to the child. It is the parents who, by means of their higher ideals, provide these building blocks for the reincarnating part to construct its in-

strument, through which this higher nature can later express itself. The more universal the ideal, the more universal the expression of it by the persona. Another quote from Katherine Tingley is from a text in which she paints a picture of an ideal situation of parents who build this atmosphere and she uses the metaphor of a home being built:

This ideal woman and ideal man are not building their home just for the community, not just for the state, not just for the country; they are building for all humanity. ⁽³⁾

You can imagine that by creating such an atmosphere, the impression that is left on the child leaves no room for the development of a sense of separateness. Hereby, for example, a tendency to discriminate is nipped in the bud.

In Point Loma, the community I mentioned earlier, this principle of resonance was not only used by the educators: children from the age of 18 months already joined the classroom with the older children who were being taught. They were not having lessons as the older children, but by being present in an atmosphere of concentration and attention, they resonated with these characteristics, and by doing so, the first foundations were laid for the ability to concentrate.

This resonance principle works both ways, not just from the environment to the child, but also the other way around, as we have seen by parents on which the appeal was made of unconditional love. The program

Keeping the sphere pure

- Task educator: create a pure “above-personal” mental atmosphere, and leading out higher nature of child
- The parents' atmosphere is the nourishment for the child on inner planes
- Our higher ideals are building blocks for reincarnating child to build up its instrument
- The more universal the ideals, the better the higher nature of the child can express itself

Roots of Empathy⁽⁴⁾ is a good example of how the pure atmosphere of a baby also clearly has an impact on its environment. In this experiment, a few months old baby is laid in a classroom, with the aim to cultivate empathy within the pupils. Among the children who have participated in the program up till now, there was a significant increase in social skills and a strong decrease in bullying behavior.

In addition to the parents ensuring a pure atmosphere, providing rhythm and regularity is a second important factor in this phase. By providing the child a regularity, according to the natural cycles, the cosmic rhythm, the universal principle that is now in-volving can optimally strike root. Rhythm and regularity are the first tools needed in order to attain a certain self-control which is the essence of Rāja-Yoga education. By allowing the lower nature to follow the rhythm of the higher, the first patterns are set in place which allow the higher nature to lead and be in control over the physical body that is now developing.

Next stage: involution of the buddhi and evolution of emotions

After the first few months of a baby's life, a new phase begins. According to child development psychology, an around nine months old baby becomes aware that he is not an inseparable part of others. At the same time, the first feelings are felt: suddenly the child experiences itself as a separate entity from its guardians, and it is often in this phase that separation anxiety can arise. When viewed from the in- and evolutionary process, we could say that the most universal, ātmic phase is now completed. The next phase begins where the buddhi or insight, the accumulated wisdom of past lives roots in or ingrains, and feeling, the emotions begin to unfold.

This state of consciousness is still of a spiritual nature, but with the first discernment, the first sense of relationship that awakens: it is the subtle phase in which the child realizes that it is not the other, but there is also no real awareness of “I or me.” This is the period when a child does refer to himself by his own name but does not say “I or me.” He still experiences the interconnectedness of life and being a part of the whole. I have another example of this sense of belonging, from my little niece that I have already used a bit as an ob-

ject of study in preparation for this symposium. She recently turned two, but had already learned around her first birthday to give a “high five”. And every time someone gave her a high five she then went on, without exception, and gave everyone present a high five. One day there was a six week old baby in a crib present, and after everyone had had a “high five”, she reached her arm out to the baby in the crib. From her perception of connectedness, the baby was just as important a part of the whole as the rest and she just couldn’t understand yet that she wouldn’t get back a little high five.

Recognizing and encouraging the reincarnating part

This period is also characterized by the absolute confidence that the child has in his parents. The buddhic nature also begins to express itself in the unconscious, spontaneous urge to share. Scientific research also confirms that very young children show, to a great degree, altruistic behavior. The desire to share and comfort one other is already present even before the educators have taught them these concepts.⁽⁵⁾

The experience of being part of the whole is also characterized at this stage by the desire to help; wanting to help mom and dad with anything and everything ...

Recognizing the reincarnating part

- Unconditional trust
- Natural tendency to share and to comfort
- Supporting! Devotion to a greater whole

This is the inner urge of the reincarnating part, which in this phase wants to be part of and contribute to the whole. This development is, therefore, an opportunity for parents to address with seriousness. Even though this often results in being more of a nuisance than actual help, it is all about the child’s intention and dedication to the group that we should cultivate. The attitude of a parent along the lines of “forget it, because you can’t do that anyway”, could quell this very important dedication. Therefore, give the child small tasks and responsibilities at his level. Let him participate, right from the beginning, no matter how

simple the activity is. For by responding to this natural tendency to help, you are reinforcing the higher nature of the child to express itself. And the reward is great because here good habits are formed that lead to a social and helpful character (thought > behavior > habit > *character*).

Self-control, the key to Rāja-Yoga

It is in this phase that the baby develops feelings. It not only cries because it is hungry or has cramps, but also because it feels sad or anxious. During this phase, the influential atmosphere is still of great importance. The sensitivity to the atmosphere may even appear to increase. On several occasions I have heard parents say that in this phase their child is like an emotional sponge and immediately reacts to their mood.

In this phase of the Rāja-Yoga education, the emphasis lies on the *controlling* of emotions of the persona through the higher nature. Since this higher nature is still passive, it is the parents’ task for it to be stimulated. In fact, the parent functions as the higher nature of the child who does not yet have the capacity to “call its persona to control”.

However, it would be incorrect to state that the parent directly steers the higher nature of the child. The essence of the Rāja-Yoga education, and this is important to realize, is to stimulate the higher nature of the child in such a manner that he controls his persona by *himself*. As parent you can stimulate the higher nature of the child through resonating with higher thoughts, so that the child *self* is in a position to control his lower nature as a result of which his character is constructed.

Tune in to the reincarnating part

We can do so by *always* tuning in to the reincarnating part of the child. Never just tell a child in a prohibitive manner that something is not allowed, since in doing so only the lower nature is triggered to precisely do that which is prohibited. Rather, always explain in a calm manner how you would like the child to behave or how something could be done better.

If a child loses itself in its emotions, focus on its higher nature, not only in words, but always by being an example with the right, calm mood. By giving the child confidence and through radiating a loving presence, you can say more than you could achieve with only

words. Again, think of the atmosphere which the child will pick up; through confidence in its higher nature and an inner conviction in what you wish to transmit, you will be in direct contact with that part of the child which will once again have to take the lead. You can make it resonate at the right frequency so that he will be able to resume control himself. It should be clear that a counterproductive effect will be achieved if the parent loses his temper, thereby lowering himself to the same frequency of the frustrated child, which is then only worsened. Therefore, it is important to always remain patient, with a clear motive and a strong intention to call upon the child's higher nature.

Developing strength of character

As a parent, to focus on the higher nature also implies that you do not just give in to all of the persona's wishes. By spoiling a child or giving in to his lower desires and impulses, the influence of the higher Self is weakened. Often, with the best of intentions, parents give in to the personal desires of their children, not realizing that this habit will become a part of the child's persona, with all adverse consequences associated herewith, which will become apparent at a later age. Setting clear limits for the persona may seem strict, but in fact it is the most loving thing you can do for a child. By enabling the child to learn to control itself and to be balanced, it will be empowered to be in control at a later age under the most difficult of circumstances. In this context, Katherine Tingley speaks illustratively of giving the child a shining armor through which it is equipped to deal with the battle of life. By stimulating this self-control, the higher nature of the child will become the leader, through which in this period the basis is formed for true strength of character.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that what now takes root will be easier to further develop at a later stage. Just like a plant in fertile ground will be able to blossom to its fullest, by providing a harmonious atmosphere of higher thoughts and ideals, parents provide a fertile ground for the reincarnating part, the true human being, to reach its full potential.

I will conclude with the same words of Katherine Tin-

gley with which I started this lecture, and hope that you will now see and understand the deeper meaning behind the words and what she meant when she said:

My secret is building up a right atmosphere. If you can do that, everything else will come.

Building strength of character

- Giving in to personal desires weakens the influence of the higher nature
- Self-control is the armor to cope with all difficulties in life
- Right atmosphere is the basis for the child to develop strength of character

References

1. *Vade mecum* (part 2, Maria). K.T. was once asked: "Madam Tingley, what is your secret?" And she replied: "My secret is building up a right atmosphere. If you can do that, everything else will come."
2. K. Tingley, *The Voice of the Soul*. Woman's International Theosophical League, Point Loma 1928, p. 6. Source: <http://www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature>.
3. K. Tingley, *The Travail Of The Soul*. Woman's International Theosophical League, Point Loma 1927, p. 37. Source: <http://www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature>.
4. Website: www.rootsofempathy.org
5. Matthieu Ricard. *Altruïsme. De kracht van compassie*. ["Altruism. The force of compassion."]. Ten Have, Utrecht 2015.



How the young child discovers his world and his conscience

Heroes

Recently an article was published in *de Volkskrant*, a Dutch newspaper, about heroes in our society.⁽¹⁾ The article mentioned people who gave their lives for others. Psychologists had done research on 400 people to find out how people became heroes. What became clear was that there were many similarities in upbringing. Most heroes came from so called talk-families. When as a child they did something wrong, their parents would explain to them the effect of their behavior on others, and how things could have been done better. Furthermore, it became clear that the later heroes were brought up in an environment with people of different ethnicity, religion and class, and their parents were often involved in voluntary work within the community. Those circumstances made sure that the children at a young age related with the bigger community and felt responsibility in regard to this community.

This survey exactly shows the content of this lecture: how the young child discovers his world and his conscience. It is a beautiful example of education aimed at waking up the compassion in the young child.

Bouke van den Noort has shown us that a harmonious atmosphere is a fertile breeding ground for the young child to rediscover and to waken his consciousness.

What are we to discover alongside the young child?

In this lecture we shall talk about the period in which

the young child will discover itself: his true character, the reincarnating part.

His consciousness extends and he discovers a bigger world. The external side of the world is his working ground in which he will experience that there is a dichotomy in his character: good Tommy and not so good Tommy. Because of this he can learn to differentiate between good and bad. These are the first signs of his conscience.

The conscience is the highest part of his character, in which all spiritual and ethical lessons are stored that were learned in former lives. He gained this wisdom through all earlier experiences.

Conscience

- Highest part of character
- Total sum of all the spiritual ethical lessons of previous lives

Through education this wisdom can gradually be brought out. The young child gets to know his inner world. Parents and educators can help him with that. If his thinking faculty is completely developed, he will be able to deliberately make contact with his conscience.

It is the foundation on which he himself will be able to build his ideal: the changes he wishes to see brought about in the world he lives in. But you will hear more about this tomorrow.

The young child

Before we take a closer look at the most sensitive phase of the young child, the phase in which we can help to bring out his inner powers, we will first shortly repeat what the young child in fact is, and what his inner powers are.

When we talk about the young child, we talk about the nursery and toddler years. Those are the years before the child redevelops his capacity to think independently, which is roughly around the seventh year. It is the phase in which man starts to recognize himself, and says “I” to himself. This is a gradual process: from an unconscious dream state as a baby, he becomes aware to be separated from his environment, after which the phase starts that he becomes self-conscious. He sees a difference between himself and the other. This is an important moment for the educator, because the toddler starts to recognize his character, and we as educators can help him to uncover and awaken his true character — the reincarnating part.

Involution of insight, evolution of feeling

What then are the aspects of the reincarnating part that are present in the background? And which instruments will the young child develop further, to express this reincarnating part?

We already learned from Bouke van den Noort that first the *ātmic* aspect rooted in, through which the body – the instrument – could be formed. Next *buddhi* rooted in, the power of insight, through which the feeling or emotional aspect could be developed. So, insight and the emotional aspect are active in this stage of a young child, but the intellectual aspect hardly at all.

This I recognized in a small boy, about six years old, who saw images on TV of a land in poverty. He saw that the people were hungry, and he wondered how this could be. He decided to do something about it and made parcels of bread. Then he asked his mother if she could send them to the people. Of course much more thinking power is needed to resolve the food shortage, but he followed his intuitive heart and he intervened.

The intellectual aspect will start to work when his faculty of thinking becomes active, you will read more about this in the article of Anja de Jong.

Aspects of Buddhi

We will list the buddhic characteristics of a young child for you, so you will be able to recognize them. Because when you want to stimulate them, you must of course first be able to recognize them.

- His fantasy and *imagination*: everything is life, and we therefore see the young child talk to everything and take care of everything — little insects, flowers and even his toys.
- His *altruism* and empathy: wishing to serve others. At first his own perception will be at the center, but later on he will be able to identify with others.
- His *power of discernment*: he learns to see the difference between good and bad.
- And his “*why*” questions indicate that his exploration of his inner world has begun. He is confronted with all sorts of external phenomena, and he tries to find the inner cause of them. He follows his natural drive to develop himself.

At this stage it is vital for a harmonious development that the buddhic characteristics that must involve, envelop or root in, are stimulated, so the child can control the simultaneously developing emotional aspects and feelings.

Characteristics of buddhi

- Phantasy and imagination
- Altruism and empathy
- Discrimination
- Why questions

The reincarnating part meets the persona

When the young child says “I” to itself, the reincarnating part starts to cooperate with the persona. The more the persona becomes a fit instrument for the higher part of his character, the better this higher part can express itself.

So from this moment on the struggle between the higher self and the lower self begins. It is a struggle between the “I am me”, that thinks it is separated from other life, and the “I am one with the other” or “I am part of everything and everyone”. Then the young child realizes that he is an inseparable part from totality.

The young child starts to further build his persona and develops at the same time his character. Now which of the two, the “I am me” or the altruistic, reincarnating

part takes charge?⁽²⁾

We should be able to recognize this for example when a young child is playing with his toys and a friend joins him. Will he keep the toys to himself or will he share the toys and will he play together with his friend?

This is a chance for the educators to feed the altruistic forces. If the young child finds it difficult to share, we can guide him by talking about it and show him what the effect on his friend will be if he doesn't share his toys, but also what it means if he shares and they can play together. An ex-student of Point Loma, Ingrid van Mater, described that they learnt already from a young age: "helping and sharing is what brotherhood means". In this phase the young child will start to realize what is right and what is wrong. He will develop the distinction between good and bad. It is possible that he wants to satisfy his own desires and wishes. Saying "no" and "I want" can sometimes be on the foreground, combined with the temper to get what he wants. This can sometimes end in tantrums or crying fits.

These are clumsy expressions of the persona, which can be apparent when the reincarnating part does not yet have the abilities to express itself. For it is the reincarnating part that must control the persona, that is to say: master it.

In this phase we can guide the child to control his persona. And self-control does not mean that something has to be oppressed, for example by punishment, but to help the child to focus his consciousness on the reincarnating part. In other words, you have to offer the child other thoughts and stimulate him to think those thoughts.

If we react quietly and patiently to the toddler's anger, then the young child will be able to tune in to our mental atmosphere, because he is still very sensitive to that. By doing so he is able to regain his ease and self-control. And we can talk about it afterwards.

These are also important lessons and opportunities for us, educators, because most of us will surely recognize this phase as a test to create patience.

Developing discernment

A good way to get the child into contact with his conscience during this period and to assist him to rebuild his character again, is to tell universal fairy tales and stories – in your own words if you can – in which the

difference between good and bad is being shown in order to let the child identify with the unselfish heroes. In doing this we are stimulating the child's discernment. The child gets the opportunity to learn about itself, but to identify with others as well.

A nice example of a child's identifying capability is this case of girl twins. When these children were still very young and one of them was crying, the sister gave her favorite pet to comfort her. But some months later, when her capacity of identifying had been developed further on, she did not hand over her own favorite pet, to comfort her, but the one of her sister.

So, from the moment the young child speaks of "I", the parents have the opportunity to help and assist the reincarnating part to come forward. Then the unselfish part of consciousness can take the lead over the selfishness of the personality.

How the young child discovers the outer world

When the moment comes the toddler attends school and friends, he will be able to develop his character further on.

He is getting more independent and will be exploring – supervised by his parents – the outer world. His environment will become his field of education, his working place. One important factor at this point is our faith we have in the young child. Showing our interests in his world and allowing him to explore things, is like a wake-up call to him. By exploring he learns to relate to his reincarnating part, which enables him to follow his heart and to resist future temptations when he is getting older.

During the Rāja-Yoga education of Katherine Tingley at Point Loma, the first three words being taught were: *attention*, *concentration* and *perseverance*. Quite rightly one can trust children to comprehend the meaning of these three words.⁽³⁾

Understanding coherence

Teaching the child to focus on his own reincarnating part will offer protection to all sorts of negative influences as well. He becomes less receptive to these influences; his attention is less focused on negative matters. We can stimulate this for example by viewing back at night before bedtime, on the past day, in

order to draw some lessons of life. What happened today, what went well and how can we do better. Discover together what the effects of actions were, and investigate how to improve those actions — by giving the example of viewing back yourself, as educator! We can start doing this when children are still very young, of course by staying close to the child's own scope of comprehension. The next morning we recollect our intentions again. By doing so, the child will resound to his inner qualities, his reincarnating part, which will brighten his daytime period. If you do this on a regular basis, you will surely experience the most positive effects.

Recalling all days' events before bedtime also leads to understanding the coherence between all events in a much wider sense. You learn to see the relation between cause and effect. We can deepen this by enlarging their world, by discovering life at a much larger range as well. We can visit museums or for instance go to the Astronomical Observatory where you can teach the child that the universe is full of life. Or by exploring Nature together, enabling him to rediscover the many processes of life by glancing at a flower's beauty hidden within, its many colors, the honeybee picking up its nourishments, and the tiny little seed containing all capabilities in becoming a flower in its total splendor. But also the cyclic processes of life by looking at the caterpillar becoming a butterfly again, and so on, and so on ... The young child will be able to re-call his very own insights, gained in former lives. He will learn the "language" of his reincarnating part again.

The encounter of the reincarnating part with the outer world

During his explorations and discoveries in the world around him, many "why-questions" will rapidly occur. The young child's days are filled by it. Surely this will sound familiar to you: "Why is it getting dark? Why do I have to go to bed? Why don't the stars fall from heaven or why must animals live outside when it rains?" Parents sometimes wonder where these strange questions come from. There is a deeper meaning behind this occurrence.

"Why-questions" are the start of a search for a greater truth; a truth which is able to manifest itself out of the reincarnating part through the just developing

thinking faculty. Asking buddhic "why-questions" means that the child longs for understanding life. They arise from a natural urge wishing to learn more. This is very energetic in the young child, and switching to all subjects. Yet it stimulates to get to know his inner world better.

The "why-questions" do not only offer the possibility to get the child into contact with his reincarnating part, but also to get himself exploring his reincarnating part. That is the reason we ask you to consider these questions very seriously and cherish them. Often one short hint towards the child is enough to make him do his own further research.

Sometimes ideas will disappear for a while in the child's mind but will incarnate later on and new questions will spontaneously arise again. Always respond to them! Nothing is as bad as no response, but if you really can't find any answer, there is always the possibility of finding it out together.

Research

By offering arts, music and all sorts of creativities, we are also stimulating the child to regain the contact with the reincarnating part. Pedagogue and philosopher Loris Malaguzzi said that children are true researchers. They only need some extra help in order to give meaning to their new discoveries; he contracted artists in order to construct the children's ideas, thoughts and experiences.⁽⁴⁾ This way of thinking was copied by several schools and children day-care centers afterwards.

This way of teaching suits very well to the young child's development. His imaginative faculty and memory are thus being trained.

Leading up to conscience

Parents and educators are thus able to help to accompany the child's character into the open. And, as mentioned before, the highest part of that character is his *conscience*. This are the ethical lessons learned in the past. When the young child has re-discovered his conscience, then this will be a nice leading-up to the next phase in which he will regain his thinking faculty. Then he will be able to remember more consciously and independently the wisdom of his conscience and make proper use of it.

Learning to love all that is alive is the key to awaken the child's altruism and conscience. Each educator – and we all are one – must be aware that there is a hero in each and every child; a hero who feels united with the world in which he lives and who prefers the well-being of his fellowmen as well as the well-being of all life, above all.

Stimulate the reincarnating part of the young child:

- Who in the child will gain leadership: the persona or the reincarnating part?
- Universal fairy tales help to develop discrimination and empathy
- Have confidence in the reincarnating part of the child and the child also learns to trust it
- Evaluate the day together before and after sleep
- Discover the world, explore nature together
- Respond to *why* questions with small hints so the child can continue its search

The Rāja-Yoga educational vision offers educators the opportunity to gradually and harmoniously guide out these inner qualities of the young child, so he may become a compassionate power in the world.

References

1. Tonie Mudde, “De agent die weigerde te schieten.” [“The policeman that refused to shoot”] Article in the newspaper *de Volkskrant*, 25 April 2015, annex “Sir Edmund”, p. 4.
2. K. Tingley, *The Travail of The Soul*. “The sacredness of marriage”, Woman’s International Theosophical League, Point Loma 1927, p. 242.
3. E.A. Greenwalt, *California Utopia*. Point Loma Publications, San Diego 1978, p. 81.
4. See also: *de Correspondent*, “Cito-toetsen voor peuters van 2 moeten we dat willen?” [“Cito-tests for 2 years old toddlers: should we want that?”] 17 September 2014, <https://decorrespondent.nl/1507/Cito-toetsen-voor-peuters-vantwee-moeten-we-dat-willen-/51880307512-eff82d9d>; and M. Vroom, “Vernieuwende pedagogen”. [“Innovating pedagogues”] Article in the journal *Kinderopvang*, September 2003, no. 9, p. 45.



Workshop results Saturday afternoon

The afternoon workshops yielded many questions and ideas as well. The following two questions served as a starting point.

Which thoughts should parents surround a young child with?

This question was a subject of intense exchange of ideas in all groups. Everything revolved around the question “What is the *character* of the thoughts we transmit as parents?” With our thoughts we can create an atmosphere of affection in which everyone has the feeling of belonging; an atmosphere of humor, openness and mutual respect. Let’s treat children as equals, and give them the opportunity to think and try things out independently, to make mistakes as well, which can be discussed openly. Our own life, our own example is crucial of course. In this way we can teach our child to handle disappointments, to keep their inner calm amidst turmoil, and never to judge others. And this is all based on an atmosphere of unconditional loyalty, love.

One group emphasized the importance of accessibility. When a child has something to say or ask that is very important to it, this contact must be possible – no matter how busy we think we are. Even the busiest parents can follow up on Patricia van Lingen’s suggestion and take time to discuss the day every morning and evening. Someone suggested that parents should look at the grandparents for inspiration; even though

parents are not in that stage of life, yet they can take an example from their calm openness.

It doesn’t always have to involve words by the way. Someone explained that her father was a baker and had to start work very early in the morning. And then she was allowed to help. Not much was said, but they were working together and those were the happiest moments! In that way you take along a child in your own life, whatever life that may be, and your child will be aware of its own growth, its inner growth.

When you stimulate its own thinking and wonderment you stimulate your child’s inner powers. When two children fight, it is better not to “give the solution”, but to search for solutions in an atmosphere of equality, to give them the chance to in a way regain those solutions.

To give room to a child can be hard for very protective parents. But what is protection really? It does not only involve boundaries, but mainly building a certain atmosphere. An atmosphere of nervousness, of “something may go wrong any moment”, will rather evoke accidents. An atmosphere of trust and responsibility, in which the deeper confidence of the child can evolve, is in fact the true spiritual and mental protection. An urgent question is; how do I deal with the many, and sometimes negative influences from outside? Should I create an isolated atmosphere? No, in that way you will cast out all dynamics, growth and experiences. But you will have to guide and support

this process very actively and carefully. For example by, as Patricia van Lingen suggested, looking back in the evening and gaining understanding about the things that happened that day.

During this symposium a number of parents came to the realization: something could be said about the limited way I raised my children. Even so, if we take reincarnation seriously, there is a lot of future (nearby or further ahead) in which we have every opportunity to even out things. Because what is such a perception of failure in reality? You have experienced some light, and you discovered that you can do something with it. You have *grown*. You have taken a step forward. So look ahead; you can put your experiences into something constructive.

In this context another key thought emerged. Sometimes parents make serious mistakes – looking back – but they made them with selfless intentions. And in the end it is this attitude of dedication that defines the atmosphere at home. And this atmosphere is the basis for the inner connection with the child.

Finally, a nice example to show how you can evoke a team-experience. Someone drew a mandala with her grandchildren, in the shape of a big circle. Each child drew and colored a small part. After a while she said: And now we shift places. At first the children protested fiercely. But when places were shifted a few times, all children were proud of the joint result, without any of them claiming a piece. That is how you turn them into *team players*.

Which examples of the awakening of the conscience of a child can you give? And how can you stimulate this awakening?

In what ways do children express their conscience? In fact this is a difficult question, because it is not always easy to fathom inner motives. That is why, someone said, you should observe your children at all times. One and the same conduct can have an entirely different background in different children. Know your children! Aside from this, some good examples of conscientious behavior were mentioned; the care for brothers and sisters, for animals. And: protesting against an unjust decision about another pupil made by a teacher, or daring to accept the consequences of one's own actions.

Certainly children can express their conscience, independent of what kind of circumstances or atmosphere surrounds them. It can really be an independent, inner choice (what in essence is our conscience). Somebody mentioned the example of a two year old who knew that one should not topple a plant basket; someone else referred to a child who refused to eat meat, because it didn't want to kill animals. In both cases these topics had not been discussed with the children before. Children's ability to empathize was demonstrated when a child was asked about his view on a lethal shooting incident at his school. Other children, who had been interviewed earlier, all expressed their sympathy for the victim's parents. But this child said: "I entirely agree, but it is awful for the parents of the child who committed the crime as well, and for that child himself." Here we see a broader perception of good and bad.

As a parent you can stimulate all these things by creating a suitable atmosphere, by being an example continuously. And this connects closely to the first question in this workshop. Never miss a chance when your child asks "why", especially when it concerns ethical questions.

An important question was: can you stimulate the conscience of children who rarely express it? This discussion gave rise to the following view: in the spiritual part of the child there is the reincarnating part that has already gathered all wisdom. The conscience is not absent, but there is a lack of *listening* to the conscience. Even when children are from an anti-social background, they can be lead inward by asking them at every choice they have to or want to make: what is your conscience telling you now? And if you do this often enough, they learn to recognize that again. This does not apply to children only, but to grown-ups as well; think of the rehabilitation of criminals for instance, another important subject.

An interesting question was: is it beneficial to give compliments? Or do they weaken the inner judgment of children? No clear answer was given (yet). Think about it yourself! Of course it is beneficial to react in a positive way when a child shows something of its conscience, of its universal views.

Another question that was raised was: will children not be shocked once they enter society, if their sense of justice has been stimulated all the time? Because

society doesn't always seem fair or just. The conclusion was reached that we never need to become the plaything of others, or on the other hand, to escalate things through fierce protests. We can teach our children to deal with the behavior of our fellow human beings wisely. That's an expression of our conscience as well ...

One of the groups paid a lot of attention to bullying and how to prevent it. In some children you can clearly see the influence of the voice of the conscience, for example when they stand up for a child that is bullied. It is possible to stimulate empathy in even the youngest children: someone witnessed a teacher who asked his pupils to write down their experiences and to share them with each other. Another idea was to discuss with children that everyone has certain vulnerabilities. So, everybody could be bullied for some reason. But why would you do that, because are we not all the same, and do we not all want the same?

What is good and what is bad really? This was discussed in some groups as well. Shouldn't you rather talk about justice with children, because what is good to someone may be bad to someone else. A well-known, but solid touchstone has always been and still is: do not do to others what you do not want to be done to you. Can fairytales stimulate the sense of good and bad in children? Many thought they can. But you should not read out a fairytale "because the education manuals tell me to". That will not get through. The key thought behind the fairytale has to be alive inside of you. A parent shared a surprising experience: in a story the bad ("the wolf") was punished and the good was rewarded. The child was offended by this idea; how about the wolf, do we just give him up? Shouldn't he be helped as well? The child was much more compassionate than the fairytale itself was aiming for ... this may leave you lost for words for a while, as a parent. In one group the question "what precisely is the conscience" was investigated thoroughly. Is the conscience an individual matter? Is it dynamic? Can I add to my conscience in between lives? What is the connection between the conscience and ethics and morality? And how do I relate to humans with different ethics and morality, who claim to act on their conscience as well? This gave rise to a dynamic and engaging discussion. With thoughts that, as it was rightly put, are in fact

fertile soils for the next symposium by the I.S.I.S. Foundation about *The universal rights of the reincarnating human being*. So, the bridge to next year's symposium is already built!



Phases of the human incarnation

Saturday evening, Sieglinde Plocki and Ralph Kammer provided us with further insight in the presentations given earlier that day. In an interactive lecture, attention was paid to the different cyclical phases of the human incarnation. Below you can read a summary of this lecture.

The lecture started with the question “what is a *life wave*?”, a term that formed an important part of the reading. A life wave is a group of beings, in different stages of development, evolving simultaneously. These beings are periodically in close cooperation, in interaction with each other and go through an evolutionary phase together. This was visualized in the image of a big wave in the ocean of consciousness, consisting of innumerable droplets; each droplet at its turn full of swarming micro-organisms. This wave rolls out itself cyclically, before retreating into the depth of the ocean. In this analogy, humanity could be seen as a droplet in such a wave of consciousness. Incarnating again and again, together with the other kingdoms of nature when this wave rolls out, followed by a period of rest when the wave retreats to the inner planes at the end of an evolution phase.

All beings in this life wave collaborate and need each other, from the most sublime one till the most primitive being. Everything is inter-connected and has, as a part of that ocean, in essence all potencies. As an example of this, the stem cell was mentioned, which

has the ability to specialize into every random cell of the body.

As above so below

The process of re-embodiment follows the same generic laws which we see everywhere in Nature, on a small and on a larger scale: in humans, humanity in general or even in planets or solar systems.

Since Nature works according to the same patterns or laws on each plane, the development of one single human being during one incarnation therefore also resembles the general development of humanity; the phases which we, as humanity, have gone through until now, we repeat in an accelerated way from our birth, until we become adult again and proceed from the point where we were in our previous life.

The phases we have already gone through as humanity, and the aspects we still have to develop, can be linked to the composite constitution of planet earth. During the life of the planet all of humanity runs through seven large phases, seven stages on which it should complete its cycles of reincarnation. According to the composite nature of man, discussed earlier in this symposium, each of these stages or spheres is especially suitable to awaken or develop one particular aspect of our consciousness. Humanity has just come halfway, in the fourth large phase, in which we have just passed the most materialistic phase in evolution, and now we find ourselves on the ascending arc.

From an unconscious divine spark to a fully conscious being

Additionally the term “monad” was introduced: our most spiritual core, indivisible and eternal and of which we, as human beings, are a “child”. The monad always stays on its own spiritual plane but projects in every incarnation a ray or sphere of influence to a lower plane of consciousness, in which we have our existence here on earth. Also in relation to this, the meaning of life was discussed: the grand journey that we humans make to activate the dormant, divine powers of the monad which we are in essence, as to evolve from an unconscious divine spark at the start of the large cycle into a fully self-conscious human being. We have to pass each class of the human school until we have developed the complete set of *human* abilities of the monad. The addition “human” is of importance because this distinguishes us humans from the other beings in the life wave, who are all developing their own specific qualities. The development of the inner powers of the monad is only possible during the manifested life on earth after a period of rest on the inner planes.

What causes the impulse for manifestation? Besides the law of re-embodiment, the law of cause and effect was introduced: it is the attraction to external life caused by karmic factors, driving us to return to external life over and over again.

We create this inner impulse ourselves, through the numerous connections we have established during our life on earth. The role of thinking was emphasized here — the direction of our focus determines which attractions we construct, in a positive and a negative way: we become what we think.

What happens before birth?

Subsequently, a closer look was taken on the return to the external planes, prior to the physical birth. Before man incarnates and becomes active, he finds himself in a spiritual state on the inner planes: the monad has retracted its ray. It is a state of bliss, in which the spiritual experiences of the last incarnation, consisting of higher thoughts and ideals, are assimilated and processed.

By the time these experiences have been fully assimilated and processed, gradually the desire for renewed

activity, the thirst for the external life or *Tanhā* arises. When leaving the inner planes the reincarnating part oversees the previously created causes and accompanying effects, which will need to be elaborated in the upcoming life. Based on the karmic principles it will automatically be attracted to the environment and the couple of parents, where and with whom these causes can be elaborated in the best way. The monad sends another ray from itself to the lower planes or spheres. It reconstructs its vehicles again on the different planes of our composition, until eventually the physical body is being formed in the uterus, alike the model of the astral body which has established just before. During this whole process all old tendencies and habits are being picked up just like they were released at death. On the physical plane, the stages that we have developed as mankind during millions of years are being run through in a fast pace. We can observe the stages of mineral, vegetative and animal development very clearly in the embryo.

The physical birth

The reincarnating part has now put on “new clothes” and is ready for collecting new experiences and learning its lessons. But with the physical birth we are not at the point where we left at the end of the previous life. It is just an intermediate point in the cycle of life and death.

After birth the phase starts in which we have to actively express all our innate powers that we have picked up during our journey to the external world. As the embryo shows an accelerated repetition of the external forms of the former phases of evolution, so passes the baby, toddler, the young child and later the young adolescent the *inner* development which he has behind him in an accelerated way.

It is not until adulthood that we arrive at the point where we have ended in our previous life, and where we can talk about a completed birth.



Independent thinking awakes again

Yesterday we have presented to you perhaps a rather unusual approach on kids and their development. We don't consider a child as a blank slate, but since we take *reincarnation* as a starting point we can consider children as our former colleagues, each with their own constructed character and developed qualities. They just have not completed their training for this new job yet, in this new incarnation. Everything this colleague has developed in his past lives will be repeated and expressed during the period we know as youth. We call this process *recapitulation*.

This is a cyclic process that is also happening on a larger scale; as humanity we learn to express the divine core, which we are in essence, each time a little better by repeatedly using physical instruments. We see that consciousness *envelopes*, roots in, involves itself in the instrument, it gets familiar with its vehicle. And by gaining experience and processing these experiences, it *develops* or evolves. During this last process the instrument involves and moves to the background. These are two aspects of the exact same process.

The reincarnating part of every human being wraps itself – starting from birth – in the *persona*, the temporary role or the vehicle in this specific life, as to come to the point where it can start developing again. It is one process in which you can distinguish two aspects. Recapitulation, the repeated enveloping and developing of characteristics during youth, proceeds in certain cycles or phases, with each their own

possibilities and sensitivities.

In the former articles we have presented these principles and the first phases of the youth. At first the phase in which the highest aspect, the sense of unity, sort of expresses itself in the physical body; this is the birth and the period thereafter. Then the phase in which the conscience, the notion of harmony and interconnectedness roots in the feeling, the emotion and instinctive reactions: the astral part of the human constitution. Roughly speaking this is when they are of the age that they go to kindergarten. Basically, there is a lot of overlap between the different phases, and of course for every individual child it deviates a little. We have mentioned that we human beings, with our current focus on the external world, often only notice the instrument, the persona, and we are less aware of the consciousness of the reincarnating part behind it. We see a cute baby, with his first smile and later the first words and steps, but we often do not realize that we are dealing with a complete human being. In essence a divine being, just not yet able to fully express itself.

This lecture is about the phase of the child going to elementary school. We take up on the following questions:

- Which qualities are being recapitulated in this phase?
- How can we recognize these in children?
- How can educators guide their child?

During the phase of the child at the age of elementary school two elements come forward stronger: thinking and vitality. In Sanskrit *Manas* and *Prāna*. Thinking involves, envelops itself and vitality evolves, develops itself.

The thinking consciousness (mind)

What is thinking by the way? If consciousness consists of perceiving, of being conscious, then thinking is some sort of observation: observing thoughts. Thinking distinguishes us humans from the lower kingdoms in nature. Even though we can surely detect a certain form of intelligence in these kingdoms, it is not the ability to think as human beings do: being able to reflect on something consciously, look at a situation from a distance and therefore also be aware of ourselves as a thinker. We can define concepts, reason, analyze and we can draw logical conclusions based on assumptions.

Every living being has free will to some extent, but for thinking, self-conscious beings the free will gets a whole new dimension. Thinking creates the ability to oversee actions and the possible consequences of these actions and also the ability to direct the consciousness. And obviously this freedom comes with a much larger responsibility.

Since a thought precedes an action, repeated actions form a habit and joint habits form a character, the nature of our thoughts means everything for the nature of our character.

What is thinking?

- To perceive thoughts
- Self-consciousness: being able to reflect, being aware of oneself
- Free will, which includes responsibility
- Thought > act > habit > character

How we think is the foundation for our actions and also for how we feel. It influences our choices and what we regard as being true. In that sense it even determines what we perceive and what not.

All the thinking individuals together and their orientation determine how a family, a group, a class, society or the world looks like.

Higher thinking as a divine fire – Mānasaputras

As mentioned, a human beings' youth is a recapitulation of the constructed qualities in previous lives. At the same time you can recognize the recapitulation of all humanity's development. And our humanity is, how else is it possible in the boundlessness, just a phase, a class or step in the larger school of development.

There has been a phase in humanity's development in which mankind was helped to activate the faculty of thinking. Our older brothers, like older students in a high school – in Eastern traditions they are called Mānasaputras or Sons of Mind – then lighted the fire of our thinking in us. Like you light one candle with another. These, for us, divine beings did this because thinking and therefore self-consciousness gives humanity the ability to accelerate its own evolution: the development and expression of its divine core. It goes beyond intellect alone; thinking is the gate to self-consciousness, to experience self-consciously (instead of instinctive) the inner man, the inner god.⁽¹⁾ So we can see thinking as a divine fire. In essence this is the higher Manas, the higher thinking, which is focused to see beyond the external transitory world and see the *what*, *why* and *how* behind it.

What is higher thinking?

- The higher, imperishable thinking aspects
- Experience the higher nature, the inner god, self-consciously
- Educators should help to light the fire of higher thought in their children

So we're not talking about the "cold" calculating intellect but about the intellect that is inspired by *Buddhi*, the notion of connections and correlations, and *Ātman*, the sense of unity. Like the Mānasaputras helped us to awake our thinking, so should we, as parents, educators, teachers, actually everyone in society, help children to awake and use this inner ability, the higher thinking.

Wonderment

How can we recognize this higher, independent think-

ing awakening in children?

Children make attempts to address what lives inside them in their thoughts. The notion of unity and harmony and the ability to distinguish, which were cherished in previous phases, appear in their consciousness in the form of *wonderment*. They will start to ask questions. Questions about good or bad, about how nature works, what life is or if things you cannot see exist. Exactly in those questions and the kid's reasoning, we recognize independent thinking. A kid can ask for example: who is the real me? The person I am at school or the one I am at home? What exactly is nature? Does something exist that is not nature? Can something exist if we cannot see, hear, smell or taste it? Besides the "why" questions all sorts of "how" questions arise as well: some sort of scientific mentality appears, a new sort of interest in the surrounding world, complete with experiments and *research*: how does it all work? What is out there?

There is a lot of interest in nature, items are being collected, categorized, hobbies are created and interests develop. Microscopes and telescopes reveal undiscovered worlds. Another thing that arises is: to measure is to know. The child realizes that by doing his own research, things can be discovered and new knowledge can be gained.

Vitality

Simultaneously with the *involution* of the independent, intellectual thinking the vitality aspect *develops* itself in this phase. By this we mean the life force or energy that is necessary for activities. Activities, on every level, require a certain amount of vitality. Whether it is about physical movement or about thinking; the latter can also be (too) vital or rather slow. We can recognize vitality in daily life when it predominates: doing something for the sake of doing something, without thinking about it.

On an average schoolyard we see an abundance of vitality: kids are running, climbing, jumping rope or playing tag. With younger children playing does not have that much structure yet, but as they get older you will see that the physical vitality becomes more focused and more structured. The rules of their games become more complicated; tactics and strategy become more and more important.

Due to the collaboration of thinking and vitality, a whole new world opens up for the child. Because the child becomes gradually more capable of fulfilling what he, often with others, thinks of and imagines. He is going to build huts, creates his own worlds, in-

Recognize higher thinking in the child

- Wonderment
Asking questions on the what, why and how of things
- Investigation
Scientific mentality: actively researching by yourself

cluding treasures. Adventures are elaborated in detail. Every time we see here the thinking and imagination anticipating: when we do this now, then we can ... you can fill in the blanks. Thinking about possibilities and being able to carry them out gives a sense of freedom. The vitality, controlled by thinking, makes gymnastics, sports and dance possible, as well as learning how to play an instrument. And it is not without a reason why this is the phase in which children learn how to read and write. The vitality is then being used to do something with an aim; it is being channeled by the mind.

Duality in thinking

The awakening of the ability to think independently also has a downside. Thought, the accompanying self-consciousness, the expanded freedom and discernment can also result in a sense of *separateness*. The discrimination between "I" and "the other" is going to play a role. In combination with the developed vitality and predilection for measuring things, this may lead to the desire to excel and *competing with each other* or even the wish to be better than the other. The persona, the instrument, wants to leave its mark, make itself known, finds itself more important than others and cannot empathize. Consciousness then identifies itself with the external, with the role it plays in this life instead of with the actor behind this temporary role. This may lead to a fight, the will to dominate, the use of force and exclusion. The consequences of such a mentality are found everywhere in the world.

The focus on the own personality can also lead to insecurity or self-pity.

Our consciousness can focus on the external, transitory world apparently consisting of separate parts but also on the inner interconnected reality, by using thought. It can identify with the temporary persona or with the force behind it, which is boundless in essence, by using thought. In our thinking we can, as mentioned before, recognize an imperishable aspect, the higher Manas, but also a *transitory* aspect, the lower or personal Manas.

Just like it is self-evident in Nature that the higher helps the lower, and that nothing can even manifest, let alone develop without the collaboration with other beings, it is evident that a child needs other people to awaken the higher thinking. Society, the school and in the first place of course the parents or educators help the child by stimulating the higher thinking and how it can be used.

We have seen yesterday that in a Rāja-Yoga education attention is paid to the duality in human beings as from the very first start. The child learns playfully that inner subjects such as compassion, equality, cooperation and unity are far more important and more real than personal, external differences. The sense of unity and the intuitive sense of harmony are addressed by the educators while the instrumental side (the body, the feelings and instincts) is constructed accordingly, as we saw. Also when the independent thinking becomes active again, educators can address the imperishable aspect, bringing it to expression, while the aspect of the vehicle, in this case vitality, is being formed and constructed in harmony with it. So that children gain as much benefit when they further develop their thinking faculty in puberty and young adulthood. How can we do this?

By exploring in nature, going to museums, seeing plays, questions arise as well as new things to think about. Things may look completely different when you look at them in another way, for instance through a magnifying glass. And becoming acquainted with other habits, cultures or religions further expands the child's horizon. Stories about heroes, experiencing adventures and overcoming difficulties often result in much food for thought. For young children this can also be fairytales or stories about animals. The story

of the life of Gautama the Buddha can be used very well to trigger the higher thought.

Rāja-Yoga education

- bringing out the reincarnating, imperishable part
- helping to build up the temporary persona, the instrument

Stimulating the higher aspects of thinking: education

In fact, the child has everything in himself. He has sense of unity, is aware of cohesion and connection, has discernment. He only has to learn to convert this into thoughts, so to speak. This is why we quote Plato here and say: learning is remembering.⁽²⁾ Often, a question arises through something, which is experienced as a problem. There is for instance a difference between the inner wisdom and what the senses tell us. If we assume that the highest is present in every human being, we can address this and for every question start with a universal and noble vision, as wide as possible. This is also known as the deductive or Platonic method. In the form of a conversation or dialogue we can try to bring the widest and most noble vision forward and approach the dilemma from this.

For example, the girl that asked her mother who she really is, the girl at school or the girl at home, asked this question because she had a certain experience: she noticed that she behaves differently at home than at school. Because she knows that she really is the same human being in those situations, the question arises: "Who am I really?" It is therefore a very good question, which deserves further study.

You can start to investigate this *together*. You will make the question more universal and search for the core of the question: what is a human being actually? You will stimulate your child to create the most noble or universal image of a human being. From that point you go and start to search what the child has experienced. For different possible answers you will try to find the assumptions the answer is based on and compare these with the most universal image.

The child now gets a chance to search for answers to his question in himself; you only have to ask the

questions and perhaps summarize something or make a suggestion. Everything in words and at the level that the child can understand of course. And you do not have to expect a final and comprehensive answer, as there will always be more insight possible. But the child will experience that he or she is seen as an equal collocator, and that he has the freedom to try and formulate the inner knowledge. He will learn to reason logically based on assumptions, think *why* he or she has an opinion about something. This is how an independent, investigative approach is developed. For a fruitful conversation the educators need to have activated these higher aspects of thinking to a certain extent; and, of course, a lot of love, understanding, patience and self-knowledge is needed to guide a child in this process. A good guideline here is the insight of Socrates, that you should not *believe* you know something when you do not know, for after all, we are dealing here with the core of the matter. An *open mind* as well as courage is needed to explore one's own opinion.

It is certainly not true that thinking independently can only be stimulated by conversations. Also from practicing a sport a child can learn a lot. Not only through the insight and discipline which are part of the sport, but also through cooperation with the team members, whether these are your friends or not, and taking responsibility in the sport club. And this of course applies also for playing an instrument in a band or an orchestra or for acting in a play. Also at home it is important that a child gets a chance to take his responsibility in a larger group.

A good conversation often comes up when you are *doing* something together: cycling, going for a walk, doing chores in the garden and preparing food. At the same time you will get to know your child better, find out where his interests or qualities lie and you can comply with these wishes (perhaps by asking help, like from a music teacher) or adjust if necessary. When both the child and the educator realize that the child carries everything in him, when the child knows that everything is part of the Boundlessness, if he learns to reason logically, than he cannot conclude anything else from that thought of unity than the equality of each being, and that another human being is therefore afflicted with the same possibilities

and problems. Compassion, empathy and helpfulness are then logic traits.

In other words, by addressing the higher thoughts in the reincarnating part as an educator, children will learn to trust their own higher Self and they will gain Self-esteem. They experience that they have inner touchstones. This makes them independent researchers with a strong character, who will always be capable to wonder and therefore to discover.

Rāja-Yoga education

Stimulating the higher thinking aspects, bring out the true character

- Start from inner wisdom in the child
- Deductive reasoning: from the highest vision
- Learn to cooperate
- Enable to take responsibility

References

1. G. de Purucker, "The Child mirrors the Race", included in *Studies in Occult Philosophy*. Theosophical University Press, Pasadena 1973, p. 125-128.
2. Plato, *Menon*, 81a – 86c, in which Socrates demonstrates that an uneducated slave has geometrical knowledge in himself.



Rāja-Yoga: inspiration for every school system

Dear friends, in this second presentation about the schoolchild we want to elaborate on an aspect of this subject that is close to our hearts. Anja de Jong highlighted mainly the home situation during this period in the life of a child. The subtitle of this lecture speaks for itself: helping teachers in *any* school system.

For several years now we have been lecturing on Rāja-Yoga education, in the United States as well. We noticed that teachers are having a hard time there. We observed this in the poorer neighbourhoods in the United States, but the same goes for the Netherlands. Especially for teachers in public schools, who have the least resources, the least support and who teach students who are not admitted elsewhere.

This pressure on teachers to let children grow into human beings made us think, and this is one of the reasons why we initiated this symposium.

What is the situation for teachers at the moment, especially for teachers with pupils between the ages of six and twelve years old, pupils who are just starting to think for themselves? These teachers are presented with a set of governmental demands, goals to be achieved and mandatory tests to make the children perform better (like mandatory math tests). Also, the amount of pupils per class is kept high artificially, so high that individual support is hardly possible.

Furthermore, the board of the school demands of teachers that as many children as possible pass their

exams. Because the higher the percentage of graduated pupils, the higher the school will be rated and the more parents will enroll their children, and therefore, the more governmental support the school will receive. We learned that the total amount of school children in the Netherlands is decreasing, so schools are competing with each other for pupils.

And finally, there is the administrative pressure that has been put on teachers. Due to many educational innovations in recent years, teachers have to spend a lot of their time on additional administrative work such as the writing of reports, on top of their work in the classroom.

But it is not the teacher's job to make the children comply with the sometimes rigid demands of government and school boards. It is their job to help them grow into *human beings*, to help them become *themselves*: independent thinkers, investigators, who can verify a given situation or knowledge presented to them against their own higher insights, which they are "remembering" during their school years, as Plato stated ("to learn is to remember").

As a teacher, how do you react to this increased workload?

Often, teachers feel they are victims of the system, and this makes them lose their ideals. They give up complying with all demands, and are not able anymore to teach children the most important thing they have to

offer, which is “*love for learning*”. This is an attitude we do not applaud from the principles of Rāja-Yoga. For there is no need to choose this position. Because no one is a victim of life, absolutely no one. We all have the inner strength to do something about a situation.

As a teacher you can do that in three ways. First, you have to shake off the role of the victim, to get to know yourself, to get acquainted with your own strength. It is also the purpose of this symposium, to learn to discover your own talents and powers and depth.

Secondly, you can apply this new view of yourself, of children, of parents, of education, in your classroom. The members of our symposium workgroup who work in education reacted somewhat reluctantly to this idea. “What if you teach at a conventional school? The board will not welcome your introduction of reincarnation in the classroom.”

But that is not how it works. You shouldn’t *talk* about this new view of the child as a reincarnating human being; you should embed your view in what you are already doing, in a natural way, without the urge to convince anyone of reincarnation. In *any* educational system, at any school it is possible to appeal to the inner part of the child, its sense of unity, its conscience, its grand ideas that are present just below the surface, attempting to find their way out.

Working from this view point brings back the joy in teaching, strengthens your bonds with the children and their parents, and pushes all governmental pressure into the background.

And then there is a third way. It is a principle from which we, in our theosophical organization, always work: “Obey the law until you have changed it yourself”. If you do not agree with the ways the government works, with its laws, with the demands and obligations you are submitted to, you should dedicate a part of your life to changing those laws. You should go for it. You should actually contact the government, individually or group wise, or in whatever form.

If you work in education and the ideas presented to you during this symposium appeal to you, we invite you to work with us to present this view to governments and educational institutes. In a form that can be used in *any* educational system, and which does not require that anyone become a Theosophist.

At this time the Dutch government welcomes new ideas on education, and recently Assistant Secretary Dekker even sent out a letter to the general public with an invitation to give one’s input.⁽¹⁾

But first, please get acquainted with this new Rāja-Yoga view on education during our workshops, and we will welcome your involvement afterwards.

Three basic thoughts

Which are the three main principles that underlie this new view on education? Three basic thoughts to take home and ponder, to enable you to find yourself again as an educator.

The first basic thought is that *everything lives*. According to Marcus Aurelius the universe is one great living organism. Everything lives, dead matter does not exist. I will never forget my chemistry classes, where a line was drawn between inorganic chemistry and organic chemistry. The one concentrates on dead matter, the other is occupied with living matter. What a deplorable way to narrow the consciousness of a child. As if crystals were not alive! Anyone who processes metals, minerals and gems knows better than that.

And, we are searching for life in the universe for years now. We are looking for carbon compounds, which are called “the basis of life”. As if the other elements were not alive. When you look at the planets and stars, you are observing the vehicles, the bodies, of living consciousnesses.

No, everything, literally every thing, lives. Everything you encounter, lives. The Earth, the stars, the atoms in your body. If you teach the children in your class to look at things this way, they will be more likely to feel responsible for their environment.

The next basic thought is that *each* living being, without exception, has all possibilities of the kosmos within itself. A dog has them, a god has them, a grain of sand has them — everything has everything within itself. No being is inferior to another being. A student or pupil has all possibilities within himself as well, however clumsy he may appear to be. All possibilities within every pupil. If you think through this thought and you ponder it for a few years, it will become easier and easier to inspire your pupils.

The third basic thought is *duality*. Within the unity of life all is twofold: everything has an exterior form

or shape and an inner consciousness side. Every living being is constituted this way. And the inner consciousness is the cause and guide of the outer form. This third basic thought was elaborated on extensively yesterday. In the workshops we practiced how to recognize the inner part of the child. And this recognition of the inner part is the basis of all self-knowledge and thereby of insight into the human nature.

It is the best education you can give your pupils: to learn to see through and behind the appearance of things. To learn to discern what is *really* important in life.

Three basic thoughts that can give your work as a teacher a totally different dimension.

Three theosophical basic thoughts

- Everything lives
- All living beings possess all possibilities of the kosmos
- All living beings have an inner and an exterior aspect, and the inner aspect guides the outer aspect

A new view, a new school year

A new school year begins, a new group, with thirty new little faces: children at the age of six or seven years old. Are you now capable of seeing through the exterior form, and ready to meet thirty former colleagues from previous incarnations? Old friends, who look up to you for support and guidance, to help them recapitulate in short what they have learned in previous lives, and to develop themselves further?

Where can we position the schoolchild in this process of recapitulation of consciousness? You heard it already in our previous presentations. The new instrument, the new personality is growing phase after phase from the moment of conception. The reincarnating part, the true human being, is taking root in this personality phase after phase.

During the first months and years the highest, divine aspect of the reincarnating human connects with the tender physical body. The sense of unity, the seat of compassion, connects with it at that time, in order to be able to develop actively in later stages of life.

During the toddler and preschool phases the spiritual,

buddhic or wisdom aspect of the reincarnating human connects with the still tender, still instinctively reacting personality. And this wisdom aspect is what we call the conscience.

In this phase of the school child, the third aspect of the reincarnating human connects with the growing personality. All universal, timeless, higher thoughts and ideals, which we have thought and cherished in our previous incarnations, re-connect. We took them with us after death, and now they find the opportunity once again to break through the young personality and find their way to the outside. And these universal thoughts should take the lead over the everyday thoughts the child is already thinking.

We describe this period as the phase in which the child starts to think *independently*. Independent thinking is the ability to verify all knowledge you encounter in life against your own universal ideas, which developed in earlier incarnations.

And this is exactly what is your responsibility as a teacher. To place all smaller and larger facts a child is supposed to learn (like national borders, tables of multiplication, and so on) in a larger perspective (living together peacefully, sharing, and so on). You have to awaken once again those universal ideas, which the child already has within himself.

How can we distinguish between those two kinds of thoughts? That is easy. Roughly, everyday thoughts are thoughts that possess a form, a shape (like house, car, moon, rose, and fish). And, as the Buddha said, all compound things are perishable, belong to your perishable part, and are left behind at death.

Universal thoughts are thoughts that do not have a form or shape. Take the notion of friendship for example. Can you describe friendship in shapes or forms? No, any form you attribute to it narrows the actual notion. Friendship is always more. The same with notions like love, honesty, justice. These notions are rather insights than forms. And those insights you take with you when you die. Children bring back those views from their former lives, and you have to awaken them in the children.

Exactly because the schoolchild can think independently, the education of CHARACTER is emphasized in this phase.

EDUCATION

How the character growth of the school child was stimulated at Point Loma.

Rāja-Yoga education, as applied by Katherine Tingley and Gottfried de Purucker in Point Loma, knew many ways to stimulate character growth. In order to help you we collected five of them. Five suggestions to upgrade your lessons in a subtle way. And these suggestions don't mean much by themselves; it is the reason behind these suggestions that will show you the way.

1. In Point Loma neither reward nor punishment was used

Why not? Because in the Point Loma community it was a natural axiom that everyone, young and old, including parents and teachers, did the best they could. And something that is normal doesn't need to be rewarded. As if one would expect a reward for waking up every morning. It is the personality who wishes to be rewarded, while the reincarnating part simply acts because that is the natural thing to do.

What happens if a pupil cannot live up to certain standards? Will punishment be useful? There can be two reasons why a child doesn't meet requirements. First, it can try and do its best, but fail nonetheless. Such a child is not helped at all by punishments or letting it fail; it needs support, additional attention to gain understanding of things. For understanding is the key to independent thinking.

And how about the pupils that have the capacities but simply do not try their best? They will also not benefit from punishment and failing. For they are missing something as well, one of the most important things in Rāja-Yoga education: the *love for learning*, the love of developing yourself *from the inside out*, and the force of concentration that flows forth from that. They have to be inspired by *your* own love for learning, *your* joy in ever expanding your knowledge.

Let us give an example. Our organization organizes lectures and studies. As a speaker, how do you inspire your audience? Not by presenting what you already know. What you have learned last year does not inspire today. You can never take a lecture from three years ago and think: "well, this one I will do again." People visiting this lecture, will not return, because such lectures do not *inspire* at all, however *interesting*

they may be. Giving theosophical lectures, you will inspire only by what you yourself have learned with great effort in the last few months. That is what inspires others, for those thoughts are ensouled.

It works the same way for teachers. If you think: "Okay, third grade again this year. What was it I did last year? Let's just repeat that", you will not inspire. Because you did not add to what you already knew. This is an advice from Rāja-Yoga education when performances are ill and your pupils do not make enough effort. And it works without fail. You, as a teacher, feed your pupils with your own life-blood, while a routine teacher has no food to offer.

2. In Point Loma there was no competition

Why no competition? Because the pupil must learn to understand that he is as good as he is at that moment, and that it doesn't matter whether someone else is better or worse. In the group, everyone is equally valuable. Competition in a group of pupils is not a good way to teach children to maintain a balanced position in life. Many burnt-out or depressed adults got their condition by constantly comparing themselves with others.

No, the child has to become aware of its *inner* strength: what am I capable of, did I accomplish this, or, how can I do better tomorrow? You have to lead the child *inward*, and not to everyone around it who is better or worse than he is.

You can introduce this mentality change in your classroom in a subtle way. Again, a suggestion from Rāja-Yoga education. The principle of "no punishment, no reward" emphasizes the pupils responsibility for his *own* work. The principle of "no competition" puts *group* responsibility in the center of attention.

How can you stimulate group awareness in the character of your students? For instance by committing the group at the start of the new school year to the following: "this group will pass the exams as a unity this year, no one will stay behind, and we will all make effort to achieve this. In this we all take pride." This entails, not only that the stronger pupils support the weaker, like is done in the Montessori school system, but that *all* pupils, including the mediocre and the weaker ones, will contribute to this goal of passing to the next grade as a unity. Group responsibility

instead of competition, it is the fundamental exercise to let compassion flower in your pupils. This will make them pillars of society – no matter what place in society they hold – instead of leaning on others later on in life.

Maybe now you will understand why I repeatedly criticized those seemingly innocent competitive game shows on television. Because, whether it concerns cooking, singing or dancing, there are always people who have to leave the game. Winners and losers most emotionally hug each other goodbye, and one week later they have forgotten all about each other and the fight continues. Awful, the way this affects the character of both contestants *and* viewers. In terms of compassion it is anti-humane. No, in Rāja-Yoga education the group takes pride in reaching the finish line *together*, and to continue growing together. Can you see that you can upgrade your teaching without compromising the school system in which you work?

3. No emphasis on the strong aspects, but working on the weaker aspects of the child

Katherine Tingley used to give her pupils assignments where they had to use skills they were *not* good at. Rāja-Yoga education is a harmonious education, in which all faculties of the child can develop in a balanced way. In schools nowadays the opposite is practiced. A child is supposed to choose a curriculum composed of subjects it excels in. If you struggle with French, you drop the subject. If you excel at math, you choose a beta curriculum.

In Point Loma subjects were not dropped, but *all* courses were attended, and there was always extra support for the subjects one struggled with. Why? If you reason from the principle of reincarnation this is a self-evident method. For if you don't work at the things you are weak at now, you will have an even weaker start in a next life. In this way this misbalance increases with each life.

Katherine Tingley applied this principle not only for school subjects, but for character traits in general. That is why the shy ones often played the lead parts in stage plays, and the inconspicuous ones were often allocated important responsibilities. And everybody sang in the choir, including the ones who in our Dutch schools do not have to because they sing “out of key”. She saw

a well-balanced development of the child's character as an investment in its future incarnations. She raised *universal* human beings, not specialists.

4. Not students, but investigators

The years at school are not meant to stuff a certain amount of knowledge in children: facts about exterior life, for earning their exterior living later in life. However, that's what it is mainly about in current education. No, in this schoolchild phase the child has the ability to reason, to observe, to reach inwards to see whether something is true or not, the ability to use the touchstones from former lives; universal thoughts, ideals.

The task of a teacher is to make *investigators, researchers* out of pupils, train them to investigate independently whether the knowledge offered is true or not.

It takes a lot of effort from the teacher, to present what has to be learned as research. Instead of saying “this is how it is”, say “test whether it is correct, and if so, *why* it is correct.” And to present well-known scientific facts as “this is the outcome of investigations up till now, but it is *your* task, as scientists of the future, to investigate further and discover more.”

Let them discover gravity just like Newton, by dropping apples, and find out Archimedes' law by using a bath tub. It requires some resourcefulness, but it will be worth it.

Teach them, in approaching a problem, to rise above themselves and to think through this problem, get to the *essence* of the problem, and then, step by step seeing through the deceptive outward appearances of opinions and prejudices, to find lasting solutions of this problem, based on real insight. In this way the old abstract views from former lives are re-awakened. Challenge them to ask questions. Preferably not to you, the teacher, but to themselves, or better yet, *in* themselves. Year after year you will see the old free thinkers return from past lives. And free thinkers are not afraid to test seemingly proven facts themselves. Joop Smits, one of our speakers, asked the famous physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking the question: “Is the speed of light always constant?” Hawking was clearly embarrassed by this question, because his entire theory is based on the assumption that the speed of light is constant. After pondering over it for some time his answer to Joop was: “By definition”, in

other words: we agreed that it is the case, but there is no certainty. And then it is up to today's youth, the scientists of tomorrow, to find truths that are greater than the now accepted theories which are based on human agreements.

My physics teacher was someone who taught physics *and* did ground breaking research in the higher layers of the atmosphere, with the aid of balloons. Later on he moved to the United States and became an important pioneer in radio astronomy. I know one thing: physics was great fun, it was an adventure, because it was taught by a teacher who always looked further and wanted to discover more himself. If you are able to pass *that* on to your pupils, that is invaluable.

5. Learning “in natura”, in real life

Finally, the fifth suggestion to stimulate character growth in your pupils. Nowadays pupils are offered their lessons through books, or via Internet. But real learning takes place in direct contact with living beings. In Point Loma mornings were reserved for lessons from books, and in the afternoons the pupils learned in and from nature: growing vegetables, going into the desert to discover plants and animals. And in the evenings they looked at the starry sky with telescopes which they themselves had built.

You can do this too. Every town has a park and a pond, which is crawling with life. There are museums everywhere, about history and other peoples and religions, concert halls with concerts for children. And you only need to look up to the sky to let children discover the planets, Jupiter and Venus, and to see the stars and nebulae, Orion, Sirius, the North star towards which the axis of our Earth is directed. Only then will the lessons become alive for them and will become a part of their lives.

Poor examples are my chemistry teacher, who took us advanced pupils on a field trip to the local Coca-Cola factory. After six years of Plato we were staring at a conveyor belt with soda bottles. And a Dutch secondary school that took its pupils to a factory where bullet proof vests are made.

More inspiring examples are recent initiatives of schools to invite scientific pioneers in their field to give a lesson or even a practical lesson to primary school pupils. And for example ESA, the European

Space Agency in Noordwijk, that challenges pupils to use the information the ESA satellites are producing for protection of the environment.

These were some suggestions from Rāja-Yoga education to awaken and strengthen your pupils' thinking and especially their character. Now some instruction suggestions will follow: ways to turn the mandatory curriculum, which you are *obliged* to teach, into living and inspired lessons.

EDUCATION = stimulating character strength

- In Point Loma neither reward nor punishment was used
- In Point Loma there was no competition
- No emphasis on the strong aspects, but working on the weaker aspects of pupil
- Not students, but investigators
- Learning “in natura”, in real life

INSTRUCTION

A new view on old teaching material

At the start of this presentation I divided the thoughts one thinks into two kinds: the universal thoughts that a human being takes with them after death; and the everyday, concrete thoughts that have forms (house, tree, et cetera) and that are left behind when one dies. Rāja-Yoga *education* aims to lead those form-less, universal ideas within the child once again outward.

Rāja-Yoga *instruction* aims to lead the concrete thoughts that were left behind at death to the child again. Children are obligated to “take in” these concrete thoughts, because it will enable them to make a living for themselves later in life.

How can you enliven, ensoul, this teaching material in a way that makes teaching a joy for you and the child, a joy that will protect you from any burn-out? Inspired teaching is a matter of insight, of vision. That is why I presented to you three theosophical insights, which I will repeat here:

- *Everything lives*
- *All living beings possess all possibilities of the kosmos*
- *All living beings have an inner and an exterior aspect, and the inner aspect guides the outer aspect*

If you as a teacher look at the world from this concept or vision, you will see an infinity of life, of living beings, who have all developed *their* specific combination of cosmic characteristics, and because of that they seemingly differ from each other. But that is only the appearance; at their core they are all equal.

Together all those innumerable living beings form a ladder or chain of life, and each being is at a certain step on this ladder. When this being, in a series of incarnations, will have developed yet another cosmic characteristic, it rises one step on this ladder. And a group of living beings that are on the same step, we call a kingdom of nature.

In this grand picture of the Ladder of Life, you can see the beings perfected in the vegetable kingdom ascend to the animal kingdom, and the beings that have perfected themselves in the animal kingdom, rise a step to the human kingdom, and so on. You see this beautiful image of one continuous parade of ever evolving, ever higher ascending living beings.

Our planet Earth knows ten of such kingdoms. Four of them are taught in schools: the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human kingdom. But below them are three more kingdoms: the elemental kingdoms. The medieval alchemists already referred to them. We would like to call them “energy” kingdoms; beings that are not so much solid in form yet, they are rather to be observed as energies, forces.

And above the human kingdom there are three more kingdoms, which we for lack of a better word call the kingdom of the gods. Because the word “god” is abused so often, we had better describe them as beings whose consciousness is developed much further than us humans. They have outgrown the stage of “thinkers”. The word “Buddha’s” may be more apt.

Your lessons and the kingdoms of nature

When you look at your mandatory curriculum from this view on life, a totally new insight in your task as a teacher will emerge. Your entire curriculum will turn out to be just describing the characteristics and habits of the beings in these ten kingdoms of nature. From this unique view on life you can teach your pupils responsibility for all those beings, for these beings will all become human beings in a far distant future, and

therefore they need the chance to develop themselves harmoniously. Let’s discuss them one by one.

In your physics classes you deal with the elemental kingdoms; energies and forces, the laws of mechanics, electricity, light, et cetera.

Chemistry deals with the mineral kingdom. From sulphur to gold, from quartzite to diamond. In fact it is the science of the living beings that are now forming crystals, or are emerging to the surface of the earth through volcanos. Organize a field trip to Iceland, and you will see the birth of the mineral kingdom right before your eyes. Breathtaking. A National Geographic documentary about Iceland will suffice as well, of course.

Biology deals with the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Do you see the old misconception here? “Bios” means “life”. Plants and animals were considered to be alive, minerals were not.

From your new view of the ladder of life your biology lessons will not emphasize the classification of both kingdoms in forms or shapes: trees with five-lobed leaves, the arthropoids, the amphibians, and so on. Their shape is less important than their character, their social behavior. It is more important to teach children their own responsibility in these matters. For example, to enable a living being that reincarnates in the form of a tree now, to perfect its “tree-characteristic” in a series of future incarnations. To not carelessly extinct entire animal species by human doing, but to give them the opportunity to reach animal perfection. How else can they grow into the human kingdom? That is the deeper argument behind animal protection: to allow the animal be an *animal*: a cow not in a stable but in the heard *with* her calf; canaries in trees instead of in cages. Children understand this immediately, in a natural way.

Your lessons and the human kingdom

Your new view on life will give an entirely different interpretation to lessons that deal with humans. First of all geography and history. If you depart from the fact that civilizations, cultures, are constituted by groups of reincarnating humans, who incarnate together time and time again somewhere on this globe, your lessons will be an adventure. You follow the early civilizations in Asia Minor and around the Mediter-

anean Sea to current Western Europe and especially the East Coast of the United States. You follow the Buddhist civilization to the West 2,000 years ago to the Essenes, and today to Western Europe and especially the West Coast of the United States. And in the current conflicts between Islam and Christianity you recognize the many, many wars between the Greek and the Persian empires.

But in your lessons, the topography, the conquerors and battlefields will not prevail; rather the contributions of those cultures to the awakening of the consciousness of mankind will be emphasized. More Plato and less Alexander the Great, more Echnaton and less Ramses II and III, more William the Silent and less Piet Hein, more Goethe and less Napoleon. In Point Loma Kenneth Morris wrote textbooks from this perspective, which can be a source of inspiration for you. Secondly, your lessons not about human beings, but about the “children” of human beings, namely ideas and thoughts. I have mentioned them before: the concrete thoughts you can recognize in the subjects language, arithmetic and technology. The universal, abstract thoughts you will find in literature, mathematics and philosophy. Please note that Rāja-Yoga education strengthens *both* sides, concrete and abstract thinking, in all children. The clarity of this classification needs no further explanation.

Your lessons and the three kingdoms higher than the human kingdom

Spiritual instruction

How do beings that are more developed than man-

kind fit into your lessons?

First of all, there are those *beings themselves*, those great consciousnesses in which we humans develop ourselves. According to many ancient religions, we are part of the earth; we are “sons of the sun”, “children of the stars”. We “live, move and have our being” within the sphere of the Milky Way, and all beings in this Milky Way are described in all religions. Whether we call them Zeus or Apollo, Vishnu or Brahma, Odin or Freya, Buddhas or Dhyāni-Chohans, they all belong to those higher kingdoms. All stories about these beings, which can be found in all religions, have a deeper meaning.

Then, there is the *wisdom* that was handed down to us by these highly evolved beings. This is difficult to talk about in a society in which everyone has their own opinion about life. What is the universal, the overarching idea? It is that every religion, every philosophy is an expression of the same — of universal, divine knowledge.

And finally, there are the *human representatives* of these highly evolved beings, who are the Sages, the founders of religions, the great founders of Schools: Plato, Lau Tzu, Gautama the Buddha, Krishna, Jesus. *Plus* their written legacy.

The wisdom from all these religions is part of your “spiritual instruction” of your class. So they can read and – at their level – understand naturally, with the greatest of ease, at least fragments of the *New Testament*, the *Heart Sutra*, the *Tao Te Ching*, et cetera. After all, they have already read it before, in former incarnations. Together with your pupils you will distill the same universal truths from these texts. And the

Lessons per kingdom of nature

Three elemental kingdoms	Physics
Mineral kingdom	Chemistry
Plant kingdom	Biology
Animal kingdom	
Human kingdom	History
	Geography
	Concrete thoughts: Languages, Arithmetic, Technology
	Abstract thoughts: Literature, Mathematics, Philosophy
Three divine kingdoms	“Spiritual” education and instruction

same *ethical* truths as well. For instance by comparing Moses' Ten Commandments with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and the seven Exalted Virtues or Paramita's given by the Buddha. And don't expect your pupils to find it difficult. If you present it in a relaxed way, they will take it in, in the same way. That is how you raise your pupils to be *universal* humans, without causing them to worship any one of these beings.

If this seems a difficult project to you as a teacher, there is always The Theosophical Society to help you to find your way. The study of the great religions and philosophies is one of our objectives. We have been doing this for over a century. So please, benefit from our experiences.

And besides the wisdom in all religions there are the *expressions* of that wisdom, which we call the arts: architecture, figurative arts, music, poetry et cetera. In the now so much neglected subject of art history the child learns to discover the divine proportion, the *proportio divina*, in all true artistic expressions.

And more importantly, the children take part in these art forms: they write poetry, paint and compose themselves. Although this appeal to the divine *within the child* rather belongs to spiritual education.

Spiritual education

In contrast with spiritual instruction – the passing down of the world-Wisdom known to us – spiritual education is appealing to the divine within the child itself. This cannot be captured in a separate subject. It is the atmosphere in which you teach all your subjects. Katherine Tingley said that Rāja-Yoga education is not meant just to let children grow into human beings, but into *compassionate* human beings: forerunners of all humanity, who are able to inspire others. The first thing that has to be acknowledged is that in every child this divine is present, and this is something that the average teacher may not be convinced of. Katherine Tingley called a human being a god in embryo. That is just the right way to put it. One has this divinity within oneself, it just has to be born.

Your task is that of a midwife, as Socrates called it, to help the divine in your pupils to be born *from inside out*. A great help can be the life stories of the Sages I mentioned earlier on: Jesus, Gautama the Buddha, Socrates, Hiawatha, King Arthur. Study them with

your pupils, and both you *and* they will recognize a common pattern of self-conquest. There is no time to elaborate extensively on this subject in this lecture, but some ideas concerning the concept of COMPASSION must be touched upon.

Compassion

First of all the concept of compassion itself, based on the sense of unity, on regarding another person as yourself. What happens to someone else happens to you. From this follows:

- a natural forgiveness
- standing up for everyone in the group
- taking your responsibility in the group
- rising above the ups and downs of the group
- being able to lead and inspire others in the group

In these things you can inspire your pupils time and time again. A practical example? If you introduce group awareness as a natural quality in your class and you maintain this for all the years you teach this group, you won't have to correct the behavior of the group. The pupils will do it themselves.

In fact it is the responsibility of the pupils themselves to protect the weaker children against bullying and cyber bullying, revengeful behavior and the forming of cliques. Standing up for each other is a natural quality you can teach them from day one, from the first day you meet those thirty new little faces of six or seven years old in your classroom.

You re-awaken the nobility of character they already had in their previous incarnation, so in this life they can re-become the pillars of their group and, later on, of society, just as they were before.

In this lecture we tried to present to you an overview of the growth of consciousness which is specific for the schoolchild. Of the possibilities you have as a teacher to lead out the character of the child (e-ducation). We showed you the grand view of the ladder of life, composed by the kingdoms of nature, which makes all knowledge you have to pass on (in-struction), all subjects you have to teach, appear in an entirely different light. Hopefully, we unchained you from all exterior pressure to perform and made room for *ensouled, inspired* teaching.

And I hope we made clear that you are not alone in this

intensive but fascinating job as a teacher. The thirty “former colleagues” in your classroom are willing to work with you. Furthermore, you can count on The Theosophical Society, on our experience and knowledge of Rāja-Yoga education.

Reference

<http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2014/11/17/kamerbrief-over-toekomstgericht-funderend-onderwijs.html>.



After Johanna Vermeulen-Piket’s presentation, a group of children performed a song that was used in the Point Loma Rāja-Yoga school. And just like in Point Loma the younger children learned it from the older ones during this symposium.

The lyrics were:

*Happy little sunbeams darting through the blue
Even little sunbeams have a work to do
Shining at our brightest we with radiance clad
Help to make the rainbow, make the whole world glad*

Workshop results Sunday morning

In the workshops two questions were discussed. The answers are summarized below.

What to do if your child asks you a question and you don't know the answer?

All groups agreed that you should stimulate the child to look for answers itself. If you don't know the answer, do not beat about the bush and just honestly say so. Of course you can search for it together. Think together, talk about it together.

There are different kinds of questions, however. The "knowledge" questions are the easiest. They only need a search for the answer in an encyclopedia or on the internet. But there are deeper questions also. Those are questions whose answers can be found in the reincarnating part. As an educator you only have to ask further, stimulate the child to find the answer in itself. Maybe this will result in several answers. It can be very edifying to think together about which answer is more true. And if you cannot reach to a conclusion, go and find someone who is wiser than you. Bring in others. Some questions can't be answered easily because there is an entire world of thought behind it. For example, if a child asks: "Mom, are we rich?" there is no easy answer. But you can discuss poverty and wealth: material and spiritual poverty and wealth.

Each child has a motive to ask a question. Often you have to ask questions in order to reach that background

of the question. When a child asks: "Why does night fall?" the background may be that the child is afraid in the dark, but there may as well be an intuitive notion about the cyclicity of life. And then an entirely different answer is needed.

The Socratic method is a good way to deal with questions. If you use this method to deal with the question "Why do people bully?" you will reach insight in the duality of human nature. You will discover that bullying often arises from fear and how to overcome that fear.

Which aspects of education would lose their value and which aspects would become more valuable if the principles of Rāja-Yoga education were applied?

Education that aims at the lower thinking aspects would decrease in value. Simply passing on knowledge becomes less important. After all, we don't take those lower aspects with us to a next life. The focus should be on true insight and the perception of unity. Teach children to think independently. Children learn all kinds of facts, which may be altogether not unimportant in itself, but which concern the exterior world only. In other words, it is a matter of giving more attention to the long-term view and less to the short-term view. Teach children that the kosmos is alive. This will shed a new light on the appearance of things. Understanding of the connectedness and reciprocal

dependency of all things will emerge. Compassion, brotherhood and empathy will catch the limelight in a natural way then. This is much more useful than aiming at all those particular phenomena. Learn to see the unity behind the appearance of things. If you do that you follow the principle of equality.

Much time was spent on the subject of competition and whether you should grade your pupils' work or not. When a teacher teaches in accordance with the principles of Rāja-Yoga education, they will be much more able to judge whether a pupil has mastered something or not. Teachers should observe carefully. When you give grades there always is the danger that one pupil feels superior to another. As a teacher you can easily find out whether someone has understood something, simply by observing how they put into practice what they learned. If you deal with theory in the morning and practice in real life in the afternoon, you will see immediately. Then, if you teach how to plant a plant in the morning, and your pupil puts the plant into the ground with the roots pointing in the air, the teacher will see at one glance he did not understand it yet. Someone gave an example of how an economics teacher showed his students the ins and outs of an actual store and what it all entails. This made true understanding possible.

Moreover, if Rāja-Yoga was followed many other subjects would be taught, like astronomy. We would not raise specialists, but generalists. The big advantage of this is that a mathematician is a better mathematician if they know something about language and psychology as well; and a linguist is a better linguist if they have some knowledge of the elementary principles of mathematics.

Another important point is that the common interest always prevails. It's all about cooperation, about working together. If there is a good atmosphere in the classroom and if there is an awareness of the totality, bullying would never happen. For bullying is an issue that can be resolved only if you rely on that totality. It has to involve the entire group. The bully can do harm only when the group allows it. This process involves the so-called "followers". In Finland this method brought good results.

Always think and act from the totality. If you do that consistently, the problems will never arise. This totality

does not end at the walls of the classroom, however. The neighborhood, the city, the country, yes the entire world should be involved. Everyone can contribute to this totality and that should be practiced in the classroom. Difficulties that occur in the process are the means to grow in consciousness.

Someone wondered whether the weaker children should always be given precedence. The general thought was that the child that excels at something, who has a qualitative advantage in a certain field – for of course there is no identity but there is equality – should inspire and encourage in a natural way the children who are not doing so well yet. That is Lau Tzu's idea; the leader goes behind the people. He is not running in front, for then he might accelerate from the group and lose contact with his fellow humans. He should hit the breaks to remain able to inspire those other human beings.

So collectivity is very important, which applies in a family as well. A busy single parent should also reserve time for dining together for example, in order to enable the family members to talk. This talking together is even more important than finishing the plates. During such moments the important questions about life emerge. And it will give opportunity to lead your children inward with your own life energy, attention and dedication, so they can find their own answers.



Puberty: free will and helpless idealism

Promise for the future

In the series of lectures held during this two-day symposium on the development of the reincarnating human being, we have arrived at the phase which we normally would refer to as puberty. This last stage in the development towards maturity represents a time full of big challenges, trials and struggles for the adolescent as well as for parents and other persons involved in the education of the adolescent.

Each phase in the development of the child has its own specific characteristics and behavior. When it concerns puberty, most people in first instance are inclined to think of problems and conflicts. Typically one would picture groups of youngsters hanging around, who rebel against any form of authority from parents, teachers and alike, and who in general criticize their environment, whilst seeking how far they can push the limits. What am I allowed to do, how far can I go?

We are of the opinion that in fact this behavior reflects the symptoms of an underlying process typical for the puberty phase, namely the awakening of idealism within boys and girls. If more adults were able to see this process, they would take another stance towards today's adolescents and recognize the wonderful promise for the future, which lies within the youth. This would then allow them to assist the youngsters in building up a positive vision of life, since this is really what the puberty phase is all about.

Where do ideals come from?

In order to allow us to understand the source of idealism in the puberty phase, we will focus on the "recapitulation process" which we have already addressed several times during this symposium. From the time of our birth, or in fact slightly before, the reincarnating child repeats the various classes which the present fourth round of the school of the man has already been through. As we previously explained, each time one particular aspect involves ... whilst at the same time another aspect evolves. During puberty, the adolescent repeats "the fourth class" with its particular emphasis on the development of the force of desire. This represents the force, which in itself is neutral, that is required to accomplish things, to grow, to build up further insight and of course to realize them. The desire fuels the essentially free will of the human being to which Barend Voorham referred in his article "A new look on education: from Nature/Nurture to reincarnation". The free will directs the desire in a spiritual, unselfish or a materialistic, selfish direction. For example, you decide not to participate in the selfish materialism of the world and from now on you buy your clothes in second hand shops. Or you choose to always dress in the latest fashion, regardless of the price, where it is made and by whom.

Critical phase

The fourth phase, the development of the force of

desire, is a critical phase. It is the most materialistic phase, the turning point from the materialistic development (in Theosophy referred to as “the descending arch”) to the spiritual development (“upward arch”). The persona, being the instrument, has now evolved to such a level that the higher nature may now start exercising its influence, and in principle should be able to pass the turning point. The fourth phase represents a period of inner struggle with the temptations of the lower nature and a time during which independent ethical choices are made. Are we consciously making the choice to satisfy materialistic desires, one’s own interests, or do we realize the limitations thereof and use our spiritually focused free will and decide to strive after higher, more noble goals? The choice we make determines whether we will follow the ascending arch, or whether we will remain at the same level.

Are you now in a position to actually see what is going on in your struggling adolescent? His Higher Self presents itself in this stage and exercises its influence. This higher nature obviously represents the (relative) eternal part of the human being, the reincarnating part, the actor in the drama of life, his higher, more noble universal thoughts developed in previous lives, and ideals which are connected with the spiritual and divine part. Great ideas, for example about peace, justice, beauty and universal brotherhood. These great thoughts slowly and gradually arise within the adolescent as a memory, together with a strong desire to manifest these ideals. Can you now picture the confusion and struggle within the adolescent? The innocence of childhood has come to an end. The world is suddenly viewed with different eyes, which brings about a shock since this new picture of the world is far from his or her ideal picture. Hypocrisy, violence, hate, selfishness, injustice et cetera. Thereby the adolescent lacks the experience to always deal with these matters in a wise manner.

In this respect, think of young Muslim boys and girls who impulsively decide to leave for Syria in the belief to be able to realize their Islamic ideals. They do not see what is really going on in this country and they do not have the patience to first thoroughly consider their actions and seek advice from wiser people.

We assume that the source of their conflicts doesn’t puzzle you anymore and why adolescents rebel against

any type of authority and often firstly their parents. It actually would be worrying if this did not happen. During this phase, idealism should find its way. Children who do not find any inspiration at home will seek so outside their home environment. This often takes the form of worshipping certain “heroes”. Boys and girls often identify with idols from the music industry, sports or political arena. They may also be entirely absorbed by work for Greenpeace or Amnesty International.

As an example, reference can be made to the young Pakistani girl Malala who, already at a very young age and with danger for her own life, made the decision to fight for the freedom of education for girls.

The best preparation to cope with the challenges of puberty

Quite some parents experience a shock in the process of finding out that their child has changed into an adolescent who is difficult to handle. Although the severe problems which arise in this stage are obviously known since every parent was once an adolescent, most parents have hardly studied the specific characteristics of this phase and in particular its causes. We believe that by this lack of knowledge they fall short of their duty to be a good parent and coach for their child. And the child does not know at all how he or she should deal with the situation. This attracts the danger that wrong choices will be made and the adverse consequences which may be felt for the rest of the child’s life. Getting a wrong tattoo may then be seen as a relatively harmless example.

The adolescents are not to blame. They have no understanding of their own nature and have not learned how to control themselves. Thereby any opportunity of the parent to take action to prevent a wrong decision will be too late, since typically the parents are the last persons with whom the adolescent wishes to discuss the challenges of life. It is for that reason that during this symposium you have heard us say on various occasions that one cannot start early enough in following a Rāja-Yoga education. The child will then have developed knowledge about life in an early stage and will be acquainted with compassion and brotherhood. He will know the duality of his own nature and by using his spiritually focused will, he will be

able to control his lower aspects. Most importantly he will have learned to rely on his higher nature, which represents the Self-esteem with capital “S”.

With the Rāja-Yoga education, the child has developed his thinking faculty with the trust that he is in essence a divine being who already possesses all knowledge within himself. Plato already said that “learning is remembering”. And isn’t it more interesting when studying, for example, the history of certain civilizations, to learn to recognize the functioning of universal principles such as reincarnation, karma and cyclicity, instead of memorizing facts?

Through Rāja-Yoga education, the child received an optimal preparation for the puberty phase. The child has self-confidence and instinctively recognizes the difference between good and bad. It can resist certain temptations without always being in a position to explain why. It feels connected with all other life, which gives a sense of responsibility to the child.

Finally, the child knows that his parents will support him. As Bouke van den Noort pointed out in his article, from birth they have protected the child against negative influences. By creating a good mental atmosphere and by living a good example, they have created a foundation, and offered the building blocks for its character, that by now will be expressed independently.

Puberty

- Development of force of desire, free will: *critical phase*
- Ideals of peace, justice, beauty arise as memories
- But the world is far from this ideal picture
- Searching for inspiration in hero worship

The role of the parents during puberty

The parent’s role changes during puberty. The child wants to explore the world independently and to create his own world view. It requires the parents to take a more distant stance. The child should be given more liberty allowing it to explore the world. Secondary schools typically facilitate this by organizing study trips during which the pupils will be away from home for a week. This stimulates boys and girls to carry out activities independently and to work together.

Does this mean that the protective role of the parent has come to an end? By all means, no, it hasn’t. They will still be around to support their son or daughter. In this phase it will be more on equal footing with the child. The “new colleague” has now advanced in its education to such a level that he doesn’t want to have someone around who is constantly observing him. He needs someone who now and then watches along with him and with whom he can discuss how things are progressing and what may be improved. A good occasion for this is a joint meal during which the day is discussed, experiences are exchanged, problems are shared and their possible solutions are addressed. Thereby, you may point to the books of the Great Teachers of the world such as Plato, Gautama the Buddha, Lau Tzu, Gandhi, Mandela or Martin Luther King. It is recommendable to take the habit of having a conversation as equals with your son or daughter since this not only allows you to better help them but you will also find that you will have a friend for the rest of your life.

Furthermore, it is important to create a safe home base, a home with a harmonious atmosphere where the parents set the example. It is typically the case that the children of parents who live in accordance with the theosophical principles will later do so themselves. A Rāja-Yoga education will see to it that your son or daughter is better equipped for the struggle of duality which he will face during puberty. This is not to say that it will always be an easy task. There may be karmic circumstances stemming from previous lives that may provide the necessary challenges.

And a Royal education is obviously not a guarantee for “kingship”, and the leadership qualities belonging thereto. Not all material is the same. A Rāja-Yoga education will in any case ascertain that the inner, divine glory which forms the essence of each human being, will have the best chance of manifesting itself and of influencing his life.

It is never too late

We have assumed that the child from the birth has been given an education in line with the principles of the Rāja-Yoga education. We did so, to show you an ideal picture. We clearly realize that today there are also parents of teenagers amongst you who learn about our

ideas for the first time. You may think that you have not done enough for your teenager and you may ask what you can still do to offer him or her some of the wisdom of the Rāja-Yoga education? To these parents we would like to say that from a reincarnating point of view, it is never too late to put the newly obtained knowledge into practice. You can already start doing so tomorrow by taking some time to discuss with your teenager the ideas that we have presented to you these last two days. What is his or her opinion? If you tell your teenager that you are also still in search of the Truth, then we are convinced that you will notice that

Role of the parents

- Let go, provide space for independent investigations
- But also draw the line between the acceptable and unacceptable
- Relationship growing to equality
- Harmonious atmosphere at home

he or she will be more open to the discussion than you may suspect. In the heart of each human being a desire burns for a greater Truth and this desire is strongest with adolescents.

Look through the expression of the personality and behind the mask of the persona, the apparent boredom, indifference and distant attitude. Focus from your own higher nature on the reincarnating part of your teenager, his treasure room of higher thoughts, insights and ideals; in fact what he truly is. If you approach your teenager on the basis of equality and with trust in your higher nature and that of your teenager, you will reach him. In this respect I may refer to the principle of the sender and receiver which Bouke van den Noort addressed in his article, a principle which always works, also in connecting with adolescents.

Lastly, let us not forget that raising a child is also a learning process for the parent.

Almost adult

The teenager will become a young adult. In his recapitulation process he will start “the fifth class” of the present fourth round. The intellect is in the process of controlling the desire. The nearly adult learns to

stick to his ideals without being distracted that easily. He still does not yet know what life will bring, but he will be determined and full of confidence that he will fulfill his duties to himself, the family of which he is part of, his country and the world as a whole. His Rāja-Yoga education has seen to it that there is a perfect balance between all of his faculties: physical – mental – and spiritual. We call this FIBRE OF CHARACTER.

As a parent you will say goodbye to your child, your new “colleague” is prepared. You will pursue your path in life together as colleagues and friends. Your task as parent has ended. Your child is now an adult and he has arrived at the level of development where he ended in his previous life. He will take responsibility for his own life and will shape it independently. How this will evolve will be further explained to you by Herman C. Vermeulen in the next article.

References

1. G. de Purucker, “Lomaland School and the Rāja-Yoga System of Education”. *The Theosophical Forum*, Vol. 2, 15 June 1931, No. 10, p. 206-207.
2. K. Tingley, *The Wine of Life*. Woman’s International Theosophical League, Point Loma 1927, p. 77-79. Source: www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature.



Maturity: and now growing further by yourself!

The ideal that we have built up during this symposium about the Rāja-Yoga education of the reincarnating child is very useful. But what to do when you have grown up, when you have finished your incarnation process and reached the point where you were in your last incarnation? Then you face the great task and challenge: *what shall I do from now on?*

Did we have an ideal education or not?

Thinking about the ideas that we presented to you, you could readily come to the conclusion: “It is a beautiful story, but if I look back on my education, then I must conclude that in *my life* I did not experience this ideal. And what must I do now?”

Of course we feel respect for our parents, me too. But when I look back I see some points where my parents were very good, and some far less good.

Yet, you should realize that when you become 21 and may call yourself grown-up, you start a very important phase. Our development from 0 till 21 years was mainly a *recapitulation*, a short repetition of the process of growth that we already had gone through in our past lives. I say “mainly”, because if you look more carefully, then you will discover besides the element of recapitulation also new elements: in our youth we also come in touch with new things and learn to understand them. Both processes run in parallel.

And of course, as nobody of us was already 100% harmoniously developed in his past incarnations, our

recapitulation did not run wholly harmoniously. Some gaps appeared in our development, gaps that actually should be filled in by our teachers. But the more we approach the age of 21, the more our development becomes *self-education*, and less and less recapitulation. New things have to be learnt, and that’s why the most serious part of our incarnation starts at our maturity.

What is your view of life, what do you want to be in life?

When you come to the point where you were in your last incarnation, around the age of 21, the question arises: what will I do *from now on*? Well, your answer will be largely determined by your *worldview*, how do you see life? Do you – yes or no – view everything from the materialistic standpoint, so, from the idea that matter is the only thing that exists? If that view has become dominant when you reach maturity, then probably you will consider it your main aim to gain a position in the society of which you are a part. Then you may develop a completely outward looking, materialistic view on life, and put all your efforts in that outer life. For instance for a reasonable job and a reasonable income — if your desires are not too ambitious. As long as you are comfortable. But this is a very limited view, solely based on the outer world. How different is the situation when you start from a spiritual view on life, of which reincarnation is a part. Then you will ask: on which things shall I focus my

attention, what shall I do until my death? How shall I find my position in society, and get along with my partner, in the light of reincarnation? Shall I devote time to other things besides the daily duties to provide for myself? In short, *what will be important then?* That question has been discussed in the workshops, and many valuable ideas and practical examples were put forward. Everything that contributes to your learning part on the level of your imperishable core is important: everything that you can take with you to following incarnations, everything that is spiritually sustainable.

And then the point is: are you willing to apply this spiritual view in practice? Recently, we spoke to a principal of a Krishnamurti school. He told that when he delivers his pupils to society at the age of around 18, he had to conclude that after a few years, a fair percentage of them had abandoned the principles of the school, and were in no way different anymore from all the other people that try to get a position in society. Now, ask yourself this question: I still have a certain number of years to go, how do I take up my life in such a way that it will be valuable for my next incarnations? One important issue are the relationships that you build up: do these relations meet the Life Expectancy that you have — “Life Expectancy” written with capitals, so, for the long term, including future lives? Another issue is: what should I do in society, besides my duty to earn my living? What should I do in my remaining time, to practice the idea “reincarnation is a fact”? Actually, all things you do can be viewed in that light, asking yourself: what can I take with me? If you use this criterion of spiritual sustainability, you can easily draw a line by saying: of all outer things I cannot take much with me. What you do take with you are your inner wisdom, your visions, your view on life, and your long term relations with other people — which are the more inner relationships in which you mutually stimulate each other to build up wisdom and give expression to it. Then you will come to the conclusion that a great number of other things are not worthwhile.

How do you educate yourself?

If we think about the education of the reincarnating child, and we wonder how we may guide the outflow

of the capacities in young people — not necessarily our own children — then it will be clear that this goes hand in hand with the state in which we are, spiritually. We are not able to “e-ducate”, to “lead out” something in other people, if we did not develop it ourselves, or are presently developing it. It all depends on the degree in which we are able to educate ourselves, to lead out our own inner qualities. We cannot be good educators if we are not able to guide these processes in ourselves. Well then, how do you awaken the reincarnating part in children? In the workshops some pivotal ideas have been presented, like asking good questions, and exploring things together. It doesn’t mind at all if we do not know something. Perhaps, not knowing the answer is much more interesting than when we know it, because then we can show how we can find out things, that information and truth can be obtained. It becomes a very dynamic process when we do that together, and continually talk to each other about: what is the use of what we just have found? Is this the real answer? Can we verify it in practice? And what does it imply for longer periods, in other words, what about the sustainability on the outer plane, *and* on the spiritual plane?

In this way, you create a very intensive and dynamical search. If you act in society with such a view on life, you will be able to inspire your “younger colleagues”, the children, *and* all your older colleagues. Then you can actually show by your own life which values are worth striving for.

It is a matter of fact that Theosophists are often approached not for the things they state, but for the attitude they show in everyday life regarding the things happening in society. They look much more to the background of things, to the sustainability on the spiritual plane. And by their different behavior they raise interest: they educate by their attitude and behavior. There is a good English expression for this: *walk your talk*. In other words, demonstrate what you proclaim. This proves to be a very powerful factor.

I experienced this in my own life. When I was still relatively young, I met someone with whom I would cooperate for some years, eventually. That person did nothing else than posing me questions, without giving answers. However, this led me on a certain road. The three years I cooperated with him had an enormous

influence on all the choices in my further life. Afterwards his parents turned out to have been members of our organization, so he was familiar with the Theosophia. But he never mentioned the word Theosophia. He only said: well, if you find these things interesting, search them out for yourself!

What we wish to state is: if you take spirituality and reincarnation as starting point in your life, then you may expect from yourself that you will apply it consistently. Of course, this doesn't mean that you may not read a nice book or go to a nice movie, or enjoy nature or holidays. For these are not the determining factors. The point is to put all elements of your life in a larger perspective.

What may support my self-education?

Suppose you discovered that all capacities are lying in yourself, then the question arises: what may support me in this process of self-education? That may be a variety of things: it may be the cooperation with other people, literature that gives us a first impulse, or contacts with organizations that express certain insights. And it will be our task to check all elements that are presented to us: what is their value from the viewpoint of reincarnation? Do they help me to come to a deeper understanding?

There are a few fundamental ideas on which you can build. One of the most important is: the knowledge that is proffered to you may not be dogmatic. It may surely not be presented as "this is right, and you should accept it as such". For then it is instruction, at best. We already said that instruction may be useful to gain a position in our society, and to know how to deal with things in practice. But did you ever ask yourself what would remain of your knowledge, if you would peel away all elements that you formerly had accepted as instruction? What would remain then as real knowledge and deeper insights? I guess that at least 70-80 percent of our so-called knowledge would be shown to be *assumptions*.

Take as an example Newton's laws of gravity. We all know that when you drop something, it will fall. But who among you has ever investigated *why* it falls and at what speed it falls, and which conditions should be fulfilled to let it fall? Think about the dropping of a piece of lead and a feather. According to Newton,

they should fall on the ground at the same moment, if they were dropped at the same time from the same height. But when we carry out the experiment, everyone knows that the piece of lead will reach the ground sooner than the feather. So, was Newton wrong? No, as we must take into consideration some other factors, like air resistance and possibly wind. Or you should be able to totally eliminate all these factors.

By our education and by our culture we receive a lot of things that we initially accept, based on the argument "this will probably be true as many people who know more about it than I, say it is true". But you must investigate it yourself. You must try to find out how you can experience the truth of something yourself. "But," you may say, "if I have to do that with everything in daily life, this will cost me 24 hours a day." But that should not frighten you. It is not a problem if you take things to be true, for the time being. But do realize that you *accepted* them as true, because then you always can take up the question again, and start the research. It is a real adventure to discover things yourself.

And just in the period that you are grown-up and step into society, an enormous lot of things are offered to you as self-evident: "just do it this way, because in our experience it is the easiest way". What I wish to point out is that we should try to keep the investigative attitude of an adolescent, of puberty. In a more pleasant way of course, not by opposing everything, but by continuously asking ourselves: why am I doing this? And on what grounds am I doing this now? Is it right according to my own view, or did I simply take for granted that it will be the best for me? As you know, each bank that calculates your mortgage costs, presents these in such a way that *it itself* appears to be the cheapest. But yet it is advisable to compare a few banks and recalculate everything yourself.

So you see that our whole life is one great self-education challenge. I had colleagues who at an age of 40 or 45 – although they worked in a scientifically challenging environment – came to the conclusion: I have still so many years to go before I retire, so, why should I care for anything anymore, this will last my time, etcetera. Spiritually, these persons were already at the end of their lives. But the challenge is to remain spiritually active till our last breath, and try contin-

uously to grow and get a deeper insight in Nature's workings and a better understanding of the Whole. What you heard in the last two days about the reincarnating child and his education, you can fully apply in your own life. The period after our 21st year has cyclical transitional moments, too. The beginning of our "old age" for instance. One of our former speakers said that some people tend to buy a motorcycle then, to drive happily around. Of course, you can also come to another insight and start searching for a more spiritual fulfilment of your life. A fulfilment that inspires you to self-education, in such a way that you will keep growing, keep learning for the rest of your life. You will be intensively engaged in building up relations and doing things on the basis of spirituality and the viewpoint of reincarnation; engaged in propagating universality, etcetera.

What support do we offer to assist you with self-development?

You see: your attempts to develop yourself are even more important than what your parents have done for you. The latter was your recapitulation period, in which they helped you to unwrap what you already had built up. But at a certain moment you are again what you have been, and then the responsibility lies completely in your own hands. Then it is up to you to give shape to it. The question that you may ask then, is: *what does the Theosophia offer me?*

As you see, I do not say "Theosophy", and neither do I mention an organization, but I use the most spiritual term: Theosophia, "the wisdom of the gods". The Theosophia has to offer you very much – I would say infinitely much – but that will not come about without effort. In the Theosophia nothing is imposed: we do not impose dogma's, nor do we have rules. You shall have to take up that knowledge yourself and test it in your everyday life — so, in all cases, do not just believe it. In the best case you may have some confidence, if you are able to recognize the truth of some bits of the Theosophia in your everyday life. But then too there is continuously the challenge to recognize and *live* the Theosophia in daily life, as it is much more motivating to start out from what *you* have experienced to be true, than what is told you or imposed on you. To give each interested person the opportunity to do

this, we refer to our literature and activities: see the website www.blavatskyhouse.org.

The core idea of my contribution is this. Once you have grown up, raising children is a large responsibility. But during the period from your 21st till – let us say – your 99th year you will not only meet children of yourself: you will meet many people who may learn from you. And here lies an enormous challenge. What do I mean? *All* our fellow men are in fact our colleagues, colleagues from former incarnations. Some of them are somewhat less progressed than we are. On the other hand, compared to other people who are somewhat further advanced on the path of self-education, we ourselves are in fact children. The point is to find our balance between receiving and giving. If you do that, then you have – in our theosophical view – a very pleasant and fruitful life, as you are in a continuous process of spiritual development. I do not intend to say that it will be free from all outer problems. But the end result will always be that you have built up some deeper understanding, somewhat more experience, which you can share with others.



Plenary discussion

The symposium ended with a plenary discussion between the public and a panel consisting of the speakers. Theses were postulated to which the public could give its vision. Thereupon the panel responded. We hereby give a summary of the discussion.

Without the doctrine of reincarnation you cannot achieve a good educational system

Public

I do not fully agree on this. Even without knowledge about reincarnation, one can achieve a lot in motivating children how to lead a proper life.

Public

But by the idea of reincarnation one can place everything in a larger perspective. You are able to see the consequences of your own actions much better.

Panel

In other educational systems there is also spoken of the inner constitution of human beings as well. When you ask about it specifically, usually you do not get a clear answer. However, when you accept reincarnation, you know there is something in every human being that knows and understands more, and in that way you can focus on this reincarnating part of the one you are educating. Then the education will proceed much better.

Public

If you take reincarnation as a starting point, there is the danger of being too much focused on good results.

Panel

I am surprised by your remark, because other views on education are focused on good results as well, aren't they? Look, surely we all know deep in our heart what needs to be done in the world. We all have ideals of peace and a just world. Theosophy offers the underlying knowledge. It shows why things are the way they are and why it is a good cause to strive for peace. Especially we in the Occident, when we had a better understanding of reincarnation and karma, would recognize the *logic* to aim for peace and justice, because then we would understand that all we do has its consequences.

Of course, a lot of good things are happening in schools. We try to add the underlying knowledge to it. This offers a strong foundation. When you forget the underlying meaning, all efforts of improvement would quickly be reduced to rituals and regulations.

Public

It would be clearer to me if you talk about a supra-personal educational system. According to me one could very well educate without the reincarnation part, but then on the materialistic level. As for the matter of supra-personal education, reincarnation and karma

should be included. That is much clearer.

Panel

You are right. I think when Socrates had explored this thesis, he would have asked firstly: what is reincarnation? That would have taken a lot of time. Then he had asked: what is right? And next: what do we mean by education? And finally, I think, he would have come to the conclusion that good education means, that people are being taught to become aware of the fact that they are an integrating part of society and that they should behave as such.

Public

For two days we talked about ideal family life and the ideal school, but wouldn't it be right to realize that not everything is perfect? Lots of families actually do not live up to the ideal situation as we presently describe it.

Panel

We present the ideal. We try to do this as clear as possible. Of course we know not everyone lives up to this. We ourselves find it hard to do so too. And of course we respect everybody, even if they have different opinions. We don't say that people, who do not assume reincarnation and karma, are not good citizens or are without any ethical awareness.

We, students of Theosophy, consider ourselves privileged in some way, because the ethical awareness everybody has – everyone has his conscience – is being explained so clearly by the theosophical teachings. By studying Theosophy we have gained a clear vision of how the way of education should be. Everyone can take advantage of this. You know, one acts as one thinks. When you comprehend the theosophical thoughts, you start acting accordingly. That is why such a clear vision is so important.

The wisest men should educate the children

Public

According to me it was told in one lecture that less strong people should be given the opportunity of expanding their qualities. Shouldn't the less wise person have that experience too? They also have to learn how to educate children?

Panel

It says: "the wisest people"; it does not say: "the absolute wisest people". But what is more important, teachers should feel love for teaching and love for their pupils and more over: have love for the parents. They should keep in touch with those parents and involve them into the whole process of learning.

And: you should realize you function as a teacher in relation to the one who is less educated than you are; but you also function as a pupil compared to those who are on a higher level than you are.

Besides, the level of the teacher is not the most important, but the educational method, the basic idea, is essential. A good educator, whatever level he may have, should get out of the kids what lives within them. The one that is best here stands high in the hierarchy, much higher than the one who only pushes knowledge into the pupils' mind. A true teacher is like an inspirer — he stimulates.

Public

If it is right, the less wise develops continuously with the help of those who are already one step further in that hierarchy. So I think one can put the so-called weaker one into the position of the wiser one. When that happens, they make a growth spurt. I agree with the thesis, but one should not deprive the "less wise" from the possibility of educating.

Panel

Indeed, what does it mean: the wisest? Again we can ask Socrates' advice. Once it was said he was the wisest man of Athens, because he did not think he knew something, but really knew he knew nothing. Or rather, he knew that about the core of things there was much more to know than what he knew of it. That is just like a true teacher who constantly searches for more knowledge to convey something and thereby realizes how little he knows yet. Consider this also in the light of compassion: always use your own knowledge in order to help others.

Public

A wise person should be able to pass it on. One could be wise, but if you don't express it, you are better off with someone who is less wise but able to pass it on.

Panel

When we say a wise person, we mean someone who has the capability of passing it on. If he is not able to pass it on, then he has not yet understood how to put certain truths into words in a simple, buddhic way.

Public

What about the parents? They need not to be wise at all. Yet they have to educate their children, who belong to them in a karmic way.

Panel

Education is a collective thing. Parents surely are obliged to do so, but grandparents, family, neighbors and school as well. But the one who is appointed as a professional educator needs to have some sort of qualification of course. He needs to have a deeper understanding, be wise. He needs not necessarily to be intellectually gifted. That is not the point. People can be intellectually gifted, but they are for instance unable to explain complicated mathematic formulas. However, when you are wise, you are above the subject material. Then you approach the subject matter of teaching from within and you'll be able to awaken the child's understanding. This awakening we call "passing on". Those who are best in doing so are the wisest and should educate children. And of course it is not only mathematics, but it is about all subjects, particularly the ethical facts of being human.

Public

I understand, but the main place of children is at home. Parents have to educate the children and make decisions such as what school my child will attend.

Panel

You compare two things with each other. The thesis says: "the wisest". That means the one with the largest vision. On the other hand you mention a *function*, namely the one of the parent. On the basis of the thesis, every parent has the assignment to become wise if he wants to educate his children properly. This means very hard labor for parents! Parenthood gives responsibility!

Now, you should also be properly aware – and I think this is what you mean – that, karmically speaking,

you are never born into a specific family *only* because of the mutual attraction between parents and child. The whole environment exerts an attraction. Aunts, uncles, neighbors, friends, they can all play an essential part in the education. Gladly most parents are wise enough to know that they are no experts on all fields. That's why they take the children to school and music lessons, etc.; they look for the best school. There are only a few parents who say: I keep my children at home.

Look, we all are wiser than some other people and less wise than others. And if we are wiser than others – and we would put into practice the Rāja-Yoga principles – then we should educate them in an inspiring way; and those who are wiser than we are, are our educators, they inspire us. *The Voice of the Silence* of H.P. Blavatsky says: seek out him who knows still less than you do — and let him hear the Law. So wisdom is relative.

Juvenile rebellion is to be welcomed**Public**

I think that the rebellion of young people in a sense is to be applauded, because they respond to the instruction of things and actually rebel against that, because they want to bring out something from inside.

Public

Otherwise family life would be very dull.

Public

I agree, simply because without juvenile rebellion there would also be no independent way of thinking anymore among youngsters. In that case they would accept everything they are told by the elderly people and that is the least thing we want.

Public

We can learn a lot of rebellious youth. Usually we act according to a standard pattern. Young people offer us some sort of mirror, so that we should see what perhaps needs to be changed. These are things we do not see anymore, because of being so much familiar with it.

Public

I would like to add to this, that it also depends whether

that rebellion is acceptable. It is not always justified. You can simply object to something. Not looking for an alternative. And when someone presents an alternative, you are against it too. But you can also be rebellious because you are kept in line.

Panel

The rebellion indeed may have different reasons. The rebellion which we meant is because of the fact that children, just like grown-ups, according to Gandhi's words, have two windows: the one window shows how things should be and the other window shows the way it is. If these two windows are too far apart and one has not yet the peace of mind and the means to practice the ideal situation in a calm way, then rebellion arises. And that rebellion is quite different from just simply rejecting and not willing to take responsibility. I think the touchstone of personal and supra-personal exactly shows what kind of rebellion one meets. If it comes from an ego being hurt, or because the youngster himself feels being injured in his personal selfish interests, then there is a sort of rebellion one should indeed try to put to a halt. But if it proceeds because of the fact that we in Europe for instance are not able to take care of boat refugees, then that anger is acceptable. How can you, being young, understand that Europe, with approximately 400 million people, all having a relative level of prosperity, is not able to shelter ten or twenty thousand refugees? I can very well imagine young people get rebellious to that. In the lecture about puberty was spoken of "clumsy idealism". This idealism develops during puberty. Children become extremely critical towards their parents as they watch their parents with their clumsy idealism. When they notice that their parents are worn-out tellie watchers, they get worried and want to oppose to it. But in case the parents themselves have made that idealism as part of their life, at the utmost they can say: "Here they go again to the Blavatskyhouse", but they won't be rebellious. They respect their parents, even if they do something different themselves in expressing their idealism.

4. Are we able to learn till our last breath?

This statement was completely agreed by the whole audience and the panel.

5. Theosophy is the best teacher for young people and grown-ups

No more time was left to deal with this thesis, but the audience was advised to ponder this themselves. Thereby you should take in consideration that Theosophy is not so much a couple of doctrines related to some organization, but more like the wisdom of the Gods, which can be studied and applied by young people and old.

Theosophy for the Young

From: *The Mysteries of the Heart Doctrine*⁽¹⁾

A widespread interest in the psychology of childhood is one of the signs of the times. This is only logical. With the gradual breaking down in the minds of men of a blind belief in dogmas, there came a gradual building up of a belief in the doctrine of evolution. If present conditions are the logical outgrowth of the past – for evolution is but the written record of Karma, the inexorable law of cause and effect – then the future will be the child of the present and we can make it what we will. All future evolution, therefore, depends upon how early a true knowledge of life and destiny may come to the generations of men and, naturally, those who realized this came to believe that nothing was of greater importance than the right education of the child. For upon that the future of humanity depends.

Thus the minds of men were ready for Theosophy, the eternal doctrine of the Soul, when it was brought to this Western world twenty-five years ago by Helena P. Blavatsky. She taught us that we are souls, *Souls*, the creators, not the victims, of our own destiny and that all evolution is in our own hands. And to no class did her great heart go out with more compassion than to the misunderstood, mistrained children of the world. These are her own words:

If we had money we would found schools which would turn out something else than reading and writing candidates for starvation. Children should above all be taught self-reliance, love for all men, altruism, mutual charity, and, more than anything else, to think and reason for themselves. We would reduce the purely mechanical work of the memory to an absolute minimum, and devote the time to the development and training of the inner senses, faculties and latent capacities. We would endeavor to deal with each child

as a unit, and to educate it so as to produce the most harmonious and equal unfoldment of its powers, in order that its special aptitudes should find their full natural development. We should aim at creating *free* men and women, free intellectually, free morally, unprejudiced in all respects, and, above all things, *unselfish*. — [*Key to Theosophy*]

Those who live in heart-touch with children are often astonished by the mystical, spiritual character of their earliest questions:

Who am I? Where did I come from and how did I get here? Why don't we see the wind? What makes the grass grow? What does "forever and ever" mean? What makes the flowers and insects die every Autumn and then come back to us every Spring? What is the moon? Where did the stars come from? What is the sun? What is God?

The child of three or four never concerns himself about the style of his garments, or the price of coal, or the last election. His questions force us to believe that this little Pilgrim Soul intuitively divines the nature of the journey before him and therefore asks for *spiritual knowledge*, the only compass that can guide him through it. "The Soul knows what it requires," and it is therefore the most important thing in the world that these early mystic questions of the child be answered rationally.

Why is this important? Because the child is a soul, a warrior, early destined to enter that battle which we call life. Shall that divine Warrior-Soul express itself in the street fight, in business "competition," in "professional jealousy" — the curse of the world of art? Or shall the Warrior do battle with the lower personal

nature, that elemental self which is harder to conquer than it is to take a city? It all depends upon the ideals given to a child during the earliest years of life; and that he looks to us for spiritual, high ideals his questionings clearly indicate. “Give me a child until he is seven,” said Katherine Tingley, “and not all the temptations of the world can move him afterwards, for he will have learned the divinity of his own soul.”

Into battle, then, the Warrior-Soul must go, and what is the armor that will render him invincible? It is a knowledge of what life is, a knowledge of himself, of the duality of his own nature, of the angel and the demon within his own heart, each struggling for mastery; a knowledge of the dual forces he must meet and use and transmute by the alchemy of the spiritual will; a knowledge of his own divinity, *that he is a Soul*, therefore unconquerable, never to be dominated

by anything save the dictates of his own conscience, his own Higher Self. In a word, the armor he needs is Theosophy.

And Katherine Tingley tells us, what the World Teachers have ever told a heedless humanity, that the time for a Warrior to put on his armor is *before* battle, not after. (...) Must the children of the race forever run the same risks, waste their best years, suffer needless pain, squander their energy and time uselessly — all because they enter the battle of life without their spiritual armor?

Reference

1. Katherine Tingley, *The Mysteries of the Heart Doctrine*. The Theosophical Publishing Company, USA 1902, p. 89-92. Source: www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature.

Gottfried de Purucker

Lomaland School and the Rāja-Yoga System of Education

Extracts from lecture delivered in the Temple of Peace, Point Loma, February 9, 1930⁽¹⁾

Question: “Can you tell us something about the special methods used in the Rāja-Yoga System of Education?”

Of course I can. The Rāja-Yoga System of Education is a system – not founded, not thought out, not originated, but – introduced by Katherine Tingley, my great-hearted Predecessor, whose portrait you see in the Temple this afternoon. The title “Rāja-Yoga” is Sanskrit. It means “royal union.” In itself it is but a term, and yet the idea behind this term is that there is, in the human being, at the very core of the core of him, as the heart of the heart of him a divine entity,

a living god, the highest part of his being: and that an appeal can be made to this inner glory at any time and in any place, through the ears of the adult, but likewise, although with more care and with a tenderer love perhaps, through the ears and eyes of a little child.

The idea, then, back of the Rāja-Yoga System of Education, is to bring out this inner, divine splendor, as much as may be: not to develop it, not to stimulate it, for it is always there in its supernal glory, filling us full, even us imperfect creatures, with all that we have that is noble and fine, splendid and gracious,

and kind; but to part the veils of the lower selfhood so that this inner glory may shine forth through us.

As you may know, the only difference between the great man and the man who is not great, is that in the former this inner splendor, this inner glory, has had some opportunity to come into manifestation in his life. Whereas in the inferior man, this inner splendor has not been able so fully to express its transcendent powers. All inspiration, all that tends to ennoble humanity, all genius, all the streams of illuminating thought — whence spring they forth? From within.

There, then, is the fundamental idea back of the Rāja-Yoga System of Education: to co-operate with natural laws so that the little child will have less to struggle against, so that it shall be guided with a helping hand, with a kindly and sympathetic understanding — in brief, so that it shall be guided by an understanding heart. That is what our teachers strive to do, and the success that we have had in certain cases has been remarkable.

But not all children are equal. We cannot take impossible human material, obviously, and produce a god walking on earth; but even with very refractory human material we can soften things, we can lead forth the inner splendor, at least to some degree; because our Theosophical principles of thought and action are based on the laws springing forth from Nature's heart. There is the keynote — nothing unnatural, nothing weird, nothing uncanny; but love, understanding, and the wise philosophy of the Ancient Wisdom-Religion of mankind today called Theosophy.

That is all, and it is simple, as you can see. Those are the ideals behind the Rāja-Yoga System of Education which we are striving so earnestly to put into practice; and the methods that we follow are based wholly upon those ideals.

Some people perhaps might object to the Sanskrit title, and say: Why don't you choose a term more easily understandable, some English term, for instance? Why go to the far Orient and pick out a word that inevitably will make people misunderstand you in

the Occident, and therefore cause them to confuse your school and your efforts with those of certain schools of Oriental Yoga? Why? Because wisdom dictated this choice. Because these words describe exactly, when you understand them (and they are worth understanding), just what we are striving to do. Our school attempts to inculcate not only ethical principles of the loftiest type, but also to teach the child to respect itself, to teach it self-control; we endeavor to elucidate the child's own innate powers, its own inherent faculties, so that it shall grow up a developed and free man.

In using the word "free" I do not refer to politics at all. I refer to something loftier and more sublime by far: I refer to matters of the spirit and of the mind and of the heart, which when developed, make a man free, inwardly free — a truly free man. You know, of course, just what I mean.

That is our aim, that is our ideal: that is what we are striving for.

Reference

1. G. de Purucker, "Lomaland School and the Rāja-Yoga System of Education". *The Theosophical Forum*, Vol. 2, 15 June 1931, No. 10, p. 206-207.



Lectures in English on the seven Jewels of Wisdom, and their practical value

From: January until May 2016, each 2nd Sunday of the month

Location: Blavatskyhouse, De Ruyterstraat 74, The Hague

Start: 2 o'clock PM

Entrance is free and there is ample time for questions

This series of 5 lectures will give you an insight into the main key thoughts of the Universal Wisdom, also called Theosophia. This Theosophia is the common source of wisdom for all the Teachers of Mankind, like Plato, Pythagoras, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna. It was re-introduced into the modern world by H.P. Blavatsky, who started her public work in 1875.

Theosophia is no dogmatic belief system which should be accepted without thorough thinking and research. We encourage everyone to test the logic and inspirational value of the Theosophia by himself, and especially its practical value in daily life. To show this, we will apply the theosophical key concepts in each lecture directly to the great questions that modern mankind faces, such as religious intolerance, the problem of wealth and poverty, the lack of a real purpose in our lives, and the lack of understanding of the ethical codes of humanity, like the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Programme

10 January

The Riddle of Life and the Seven Jewels of Wisdom

To build your philosophy of life, to find answers to all of life's questions

14 February

Reincarnation and Karma

Wisdom to solve the problem of poverty and wealth

13 March

Growth of humanity

Wisdom to solve the problem of global "growing pains"

10 April

Compassion and responsibility

Standing *beyond* matter, yet *in the midst of* society

8 May

The esoteric origin of human rights

The inner power to change the world

Did you miss a lecture, or do you live far from The Hague? One week after each lecture, it can be viewed online on: www.blavatskyhouse.org.

I.S.I.S. Foundation

The activities of the I.S.I.S. Foundation (International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth) are based on:

1. The essential unity of all that exists.
2. By reason of this unity: brotherhood as a fact in nature.
3. Respect for everyone's free will (when applied from this idea of universal brotherhood).
4. Respect for everyone's freedom to build up their own view of life.
5. To support the developing of everyone's own view of life and its application in daily practice.



Why this journal is called *Lucifer*

Lucifer literally means Bringer of Light.

Each culture in the East and West has his bringers of light: inspiring individuals who give the initial impulse to spiritual growth and social reform. They stimulate independent thinking and living with a profound awareness of brotherhood.

These bringers of light have always been opposed and slandered by the establishment. But there are always those who refuse to be put off by these slanderers, and start examining the wisdom of the bringers of light in an open-minded and unprejudiced way.

For these people this journal is written.

“... the title chosen for our magazine is as much associated with divine ideas as with the supposed rebellion of the hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost* ...

We work for true Religion and Science, in the interest of fact as against fiction and prejudice. It is our duty – as it is that of physical Science – to throw light on facts in Nature hitherto surrounded by the darkness of ignorance ... But natural Sciences are only one aspect of SCIENCE and TRUTH. Psychological and moral Sciences, or theosophy, the knowledge of divine truth, are still more important ...”

(Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the first issue of *Lucifer*, September 1887)