

*The Messenger
of Light*

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

***Lucifer — The
Messenger of Light***

**The Point Loma
tradition**

**Vow to benefit
mankind**

**How we emanate
from our source**

Râja and Hatha Yoga

**Addictions and
attachments**



Cover illustration:

Bodhisattva statue from the 4th-5th century CE. This statue is made in the ancient buddhist Gandhara kingdom, located in the region of present Northwest Pakistan and East Afghanistan. The Gandhara style is strongly influenced by Greek culture, as it was part of the domain of Alexander the Great.

Editorial

Lucifer – The Messenger of Light

2

Introducing the first English issue of the journal *Lucifer, the Messenger of Light*.

Herman C. Vermeulen

Theosophical Society Point Loma Blavatskyhouse: about the Point Loma tradition

4

In this lecture Herman C. Vermeulen speaks about the tradition of The Theosophical Society Point Loma, inspired by the letter of the Mahâ-Chohan.

Herman C. Vermeulen

Vow to benefit mankind

9

The author describes the bodhisattva-vow by means of some inspiring buddhist commentaries. This vow is the loftiest ideal that may infill our heart and mind. The lecture was held at the Point Loma Convivium 2012, in San Diego.

Nicholas Weeks

Like a stream from its source How we emanate from our spiritual core

15

Who does not want to know his origin, the source of his being? In this article we introduce one of the basic teachings of the Theosophia: the doctrine of emanation or 'out-flowing'.

Henk Bezemer

Râja and Hatha Yoga

21

An explanation of two, often contradictory systems of yoga.

Barend Voorham



Addiction and attachments

28

This article examines whether it is true that faith in an external God (existing outside of man) is necessary to rid yourself of your addiction. To do this, we place addiction in a broad context of various attachments.

Barend Voorham

Observations

34

- » Organ donation

Questions & Answers

36

- » Binary stars
- » Practical examples of emanation

Events

40

- » Symposium I.S.I.S. Foundation 2013



Editorial

Lucifer – The Messenger of Light

In 1979 some members of the Dutch section of The Theosophical Society Point Loma took the initiative to start a theosophical magazine. We didn't want to write about 'technical' Theosophy. There are already so many books about all aspects of the Wisdom-Religion. But primarily we wanted to show the practical value of Theosophy. We had some bad experiences trying to publish articles and letters in magazines and newspapers about actual subjects elucidated from a theosophical perspective. So we thought it would be better to found our own magazine.

The Dutch *Lucifer* has been in print thirty-four years now. We have published articles about almost every aspect of society. The range of subjects varies from social problems like divorcing, drugs and medicine to scientific issues like comets, climate change, evolution and disasters. Sometimes we have also tried to explain less understood aspects of Theosophy.

To understand Theosophy better

What are the effects when you try to apply the theosophical teachings? You can distinguish two main effects.

Firstly, you will understand Theosophy better, because you *recognize* the teachings in the circumstances you live in. You see as it were *Theosophia* reflected in your own situation.

To understand this better, you should realize that there are different kinds of knowledge. There is theoretical knowledge. You can study for instance the law of karma and draw the intellectual conclusion that in nature there is an iron law of cause and consequence. But if you don't apply that knowledge in daily life, it won't benefit you at all.

If you really want to *know* something, you have to *be* it. So after you have studied karma on an intellectual level, you should put it into practice, for instance to answer questions concerning our destiny, our family and friends, to the great problems of illness, poverty, or war and peace. Then you experience whether this teaching is true or false, helpful or not. If you experience truth, then you have gained wisdom that nobody can ever take away from you. You became the teaching.

Both editors and readers have the experience that a theosophical teaching becomes much clearer by applying it to a concrete problem or question, whatever that might be.

Concrete solutions

The second effect of applying the teachings is, that you are better prepared to live your life. You gain tools to cope with the troubles in your life. Your thoughts will change and therefore your actions. Even the situation in which you live, will change, for the circumstances are like a mirror of your own thoughts.

Theosophy is not just knowledge based on the laws of Nature; it is also a philosophy of life. That means that it has to give answers to all problems you are confronted with. Theosophy,

in fact, does have a practical answer to every problem, however big it may be. That's why the editors like to hear from their readers about what kinds of difficulties they are faced with (or dealing with). We are therefore stimulating the communication with our readers. Questions are always answered. That is a great challenge for us. Sometimes we have to undertake a profound study in order to answer a question. Some of the best articles in our magazine originated from questions that readers sent in. Anyway, in any case we try to apply the theosophical teachings and find answers that everybody can understand and, if one wants to, can practice in their own lives.

***Lucifer* in English**

In the last few years a better communication and understanding has arisen between all kinds of theosophists and theosophical organizations in different countries. We were happy to be able to participate in international congresses. Often we were asked about our vision on many issues and about our working methods. We had already published articles in our Dutch *Lucifer* about many of those ideas.

So it was natural for us to start to make an English written *Lucifer*, in a language that is not only understood in English speaking countries but all over the world.

To bring light to the hidden things of darkness

So here we present our first edition of *Lucifer, the messenger of Light* in English. It is composed of translations of some articles that were published in our Dutch magazine ('Râja and Hatha Yoga' and 'Like a stream from its source'). But you will find also an article that is a direct result of a lecture given in one of the theosophical congresses ('Addiction and attachments') as well as a lecture on the Bodhisattva vow. 'Organ donation' is a somewhat extensive version of an article that was already published on www.blavatskyhouse.org. To get to know us better, in this issue we have also published an article about the Point Loma tradition.

As our great teacher, H.P. Blavatsky, tried in her *Lucifer*, we endeavor to bring light to all aspects of human society, to science, philosophy and religion. To put it in her words:

Now, the first and most important, if not the sole object of the magazine, is expressed in the line from the *1st Epistle to the Corinthians*, on its title page. It is to bring light to "the hidden things of darkness" (iv, 5); to show in their true aspect and their original real meaning things and names, men and their doings and customs; it is finally to fight prejudice, hypocrisy and shams in every nation, in every class of Society, as in every department of life. The task is a laborious one but it is neither impracticable nor useless, if even as an experiment.⁽¹⁾

We are convinced of the fact that we can reach that goal only in close cooperation; cooperation of authors and editors, but also between the authors and readers. That's why we would be happy to receive your reactions and questions of any kind.

Knowing that nowadays a lot of people prefer a digital version you can subscribe to a digital and a paper version.

We truly hope that we, together with our readers, can clarify and spread the teachings of *Theosophia*, the wisdom that our world needs most.

Herman C. Vermeulen

Reference

1. H.P. Blavatsky, 'What's in a Name?'. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. 15 Vols., The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1990, Vol. 8, p. 5.



Theosophical Society Point Loma Blavatskyhouse: about the Point Loma tradition

During the International Theosophy Conference (ITC) in August 2011 in Julian, California, the ITC organization asked Herman C. Vermeulen to speak about the tradition of The Theosophical Society Point Loma. In his lecture Herman C. Vermeulen spoke about the structure, function and task of The Theosophical Society, inspired by the letter of the Mahâ-Chohan. Why is our organization focused on presenting Theosophy for all in an accessible way, accentuating its practical applicability? Why do so many members study with so much (com)passion? This lecture gives an enlightening picture of the motives of ‘our’ society.

Key thoughts

» In the Point Loma tradition, there is a leader as the head of the organization: a leader by nature, who inspires and stimulates.

» Our activities are based on active brotherhood, compassion. We find what that means in the message of the Mahâ-Chohan.

» Our priority is to spread Theosophy amongst people for whom it is still new, showing them the practical value of Theosophy.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak about the Point Loma tradition.

Some people said to me: “Are you sure you want to speak about Point Loma, because the strong ULT community doesn’t know leaders, and you do have leaders and rules, and so forth.” When you look at the way the theosophical organizations are structured, I think that The Theosophical Society Point Loma can be placed on one side of the spectrum, compared to many other organizations on the other side.

In a way, I find it difficult to speak about a theosophical tradition and I shall try to explain why. Normally we are invited to speak about Theosophy and its consequences in daily life. And now I am asked to speak about

the question: what makes the ‘Point Loma tradition’ special. And I realize that I have to address a number of very specific issues that we normally don’t speak about, because they are part of our way of living and working. Maybe the best way to explain the situation is to compare it to the preparation of a meal. There are many cooking traditions, but they all use the same ingredients. Potatoes, vegetables, herbs and so on. And it is the mixing of the different ingredients in the right proportions, according to a certain preference that gives you a nice taste, and a good meal that can be digested well. I think it works more or less the same for theosophical traditions. Every tradition has, let’s say, its own flavor, its own way of working, although we all base our work on the same original

theosophical background and principles. So, if we speak about theosophical traditions, then we say: “Know the tree by its fruits.”

Esoteric Section

Point Loma has a tradition of Leaders, starting with H.P. Blavatsky, and continuing with W.Q. Judge, Katherine Tingley, G. de Purucker, A.L. Conger, W. Hartley, D.J.P. Kok. Herman C. Vermeulen is the last one so far and still in function.

From the standpoint of our tradition, in the history of The Theosophical Society a number of important events occurred. One took place in 1888, when H.P. Blavatsky (H.P.B.) started the Esoteric Section. I shall explain why it was so important. Because by the establishment of the Esoteric Section she gave rules for a certain conduct, for a certain behavior on how to live the theosophical life. Some people think that if you want to adopt this conduct, you have to take the pledge. We say no, there is no need to take that pledge, but there are good reasons to study the pledge and contemplate on it, just to see how far you approach it in your way of living. This may help you to come closer to it, step by step.

The pledge was published for the first time by H.P.B. in the September 1888 issue of *Lucifer* and the Esoteric Section was announced in October and November 1888, also in *Lucifer*.

Pledge

PLEDGE OF PROBATIONERS in the ESOTERIC SECTION OF THE T.S.⁽¹⁾

1. I pledge myself to endeavor to make Theosophy a living power in my life.
2. I pledge myself to support, before the world, the Theosophical movement, its leaders and its members; and in particular to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders of the Head of the Esoteric Section in all that concerns my relation with the Theosophical movement.
3. I pledge myself never to listen, without protest, to any evil thing spoken of a brother Theosophist, and to abstain from condemning others.
4. I pledge myself to maintain a constant struggle against my lower nature, and to be charitable to the weaknesses of others.
5. I pledge myself to do all in my power, by study and otherwise, to fit myself to help and to teach others.

6. I pledge myself to give what support I can to the Theosophical movement, in time, money and work. So help me, my Higher Self.

If we apply this pledge in normal daily life, first we have to deal with the important rule: *Making Theosophy a living power in your life*. Then follows: *Loyalty to the natural leader of the group that you are part of, without paralyzing your own free will and conscience*. And then: *No gossip, no criticism but self-improvement: train yourself to help others by study and in other ways*. And finally: *Support in time, money and work*.

Natural leadership

These are very common but important basic ideas if you want to run a society successfully. The fact that we have leadership is an important aspect of our society. But we have a certain type of leadership; it is what I call ‘natural leadership’. Some people are leaders by nature.

In fact, all organizations have leaders. Sometimes it may be hard to identify them; it took me two or three years before I knew the leaders in the United Lodge of Theosophists. But they can be found: strong people, with very good ideas, who stimulate the organization.

Leader – officer – member

A natural leader, who lives according to the pledge, should live that pledge 24 hours a day. An important officer should try to live that pledge as much as possible. If you are a member of a theosophical organization, you can make a step by living the simplified form of the pledge – which is normal human behavior – and train yourself to live according to the real pledge. But all this is entirely based on your own free will.

Based on these views, William Quan Judge became president for life in 1895. This was the beginning of an important aspect of our tradition. In the period that followed, under Katherine Tingley, this developed into the leadership and hierarchical organization structure that we still have now.

In 1898 Tingley started to build the Point Loma Headquarters in San Diego. Since then the name of that location has always been a part of our society name. Currently the Headquarters are the Blavatskyhouse, in The Hague, The Netherlands.

What is special in our tradition, albeit not unique in the theosophical world?

- We are very focused on the original, fundamental literature and on the original theosophical teachings and principles.
- Compassion is one of the most important aspects in our tradition. When we plan our activities, and we have to choose between a public activity and an activity for our members only, it is always the public activity that has priority. We think it is better to spread Theosophy amongst people for whom it is still new, than to focus ourselves on those who are already familiar with Theosophy and already study it. The first task is more important to us.

Combining study and practice

We try to explain, elaborate and propagate the teachings, to work them out for our fellow men. We always do this by combining study and practice. This is very important, because study is good, but practice is better. If you study a theosophical subject and if the Theosophy has been applied correctly, you should be able to recognize it in your daily life. And if you can't recognize it in daily life, or you don't understand the basic ideas sufficiently yet, you need to rethink the subject, and then look again if you can recognize it in daily life. Within the spheres in which we work, we may distinguish the *spiritual atmosphere*: what do we radiate, what do we emanate, what part of our inner self do we radiate to our fellowmen; the *mental atmosphere*: compassion; and the *physical atmosphere*: the outer organization. This outer organization should be a full expression of the mental and the spiritual principles. As to the original theosophical teachings, we go back to the source. By doing that, you will see that our goals and ideas about what should be done, are not new at all. When I prepared this lecture I came across the famous letter from Master K.H. where he quotes his chief, the Mahâ-Chohan. It is a short letter but it contains everything we should do, a marching order, no doubt about it.

Brotherhood is most important

Brotherhood comes first and last, brotherhood is really the most important thing, says the Mahâ-Chohan. You must give yourself completely to the idea of brotherhood. You have to give up a number of things for it. I quote:

...It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvâna (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom) which is, after all only an exalted and glorious *selfishness*, but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best

means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true Theosophist.⁽²⁾

Furthermore the Mahâ-Chohan says: no focus on psychic phenomena, otherwise it becomes an organization characterized by priesthood:

Rather perish the Theosophical Society with both its hapless founders than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic and a hall of occultism.

Foundation for future religion

Then the religious aspects. The Mahâ-Chohan says something very beautiful about laying the foundation for the future religion of mankind:

It's time that Theosophy should enter the arena. The sons of Theosophists are more likely to become in their turn Theosophists than anything else. No messenger of truth, no prophet has ever achieved during his life-time a complete triumph, not even Buddha; the Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner stone, the foundation of the future religion of humanity.

So it is time to enter the *arena*, in order to lay the foundation for the future religion. The theosophical principles are religion *per se*, he says. However, they have nothing to do with churches or priests or whatever. And then he comes to a very important point: the fundamental doctrines of all religions in their esoteric meaning, religion *per se*, will be proven to be identical. Or in other words: if we study old religions, we should be able to show that they can all be traced back to the same basis. We should be able to show that discrimination on the basis of religion has no sense.

Keep in mind, these statements date from 1880 or 1881. Old incarnations of the *Theosophia*, like Buddhism, are eternal truths when the superstitions sticking to it are stripped off. Then an eternally true, original, basic philosophy remains. That is one of the reasons why the Mahâ-Chohan speaks very highly of Colonel Olcott, because he gave the original Buddhist ideas and structure back to the people in Ceylon. That is what we have to do as an organization, says the Mahâ-Chohan. There is no need to start anew. A large part of our duty is to bring back the original ideas.

Furthermore, there is the scientific aspect. The Mahâ-

Chohan remarks that it becomes time that we confirm Theosophy by the proofs from exact science:

The doctrine ... must become ultimately triumphant as every other truth. Yet it is absolutely necessary to inculcate it gradually enforcing its theories, unimpeachable facts for those who know, with direct inferences deducted from and corroborated by the evidence furnished by modern exact science.

In other words: our teachings are true and if science is true too, then they should correspond with each other — there should be no difference between the two.

Accessible Theosophy

Concerning the practical and ethical aspects: making Theosophy accessible is very important. We have to work very hard to make the principles understandable, not only for ourselves, but also for our fellow men. The Mahâ-Chohan says:

For our doctrines to practically react on the so called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularise a knowledge of theosophy.

So, that means that we have to step down from our way of studying if we want to reach out to other people. We have to translate the knowledge, to adapt it to the way people are thinking, to enable them to understand it. For example, if we want to explain to physics students that Theosophy starts from the principle that there is 'a force behind matter', we can explain this in theosophical jargon, but we can also try to do it in words that are used in the universities.

Free yourself from your own ego

It is very important that we focus our work on the total society, on all social layers, no one excluded. Therefore, we should free ourselves from our own egos. We have to realize that sometimes we can be an obstacle in a certain process. Then we must not be afraid to set aside our own ideas and experiences, and try to implement things in a different way. In the words of the Mahâ-Chohan:

All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory apparent *self*, to recognise our true self in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish we must strive to

make other people see that truth, to recognise the reality of that transcendental self, the Buddha, the Christ or God of every preacher.

So, some simple basic principles have come to us from the time of H.P.B. These are still valid: nowadays maybe even more than in the past. We must show to our fellow men that this outer world is only temporary, while the human consciousness will last. Therefore, there is no need for 'the struggle of life'. One of the main problems in society is that people take part in this struggle for life without knowing and realizing that there is much more than just this outer life. It is time we rid ourselves of a number of obstructive thoughts.

To put it simply: we have gold in our hands and we should spread it all around. One more citation from the Mahâ-Chohan:

No, no, good brothers, you have been labouring under the mistake too long already. Let us understand each other. He who does not feel competent enough to grasp the noble idea sufficiently to work for it, need not undertake a task too heavy for him. But there is hardly a theosophist in the whole society unable to effectually help it by correcting the erroneous impressions of the outsiders, if not by actually propagating himself the idea. Oh, for the noble and unselfish man to help us *effectually* in India in that divine task.

I come to the conclusion of my speech. The unity of the Theosophical Movement does not depend on the singleness of organizations, but on the similarity of work and aspiration. By achieving this, we will KEEP THE LINK UNBROKEN as H.P.B. said (her last words). This is what we try to do in our tradition. And that's why we are here, because we want to share this with all participants of the International Theosophy Conference. We want to share this with all other theosophical organizations. Let us find each other in the ideas that bind us, let us work together and spread Theosophy in this world. The world needs it. Thank you for your attention.

References

1. G. de Purucker, *Esoteric Teachings*. Point Loma Publications, San Diego 1987, Vol. I, Appendix III.
 2. <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/mahatma/ml-choh.htm>.
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Leadership means *to inspire*

One of the seven Jewels of Wisdom – seven core ideas that form the fundament of the Theosophia – is the doctrine of the Hierarchies: there is a hierarchical structure in the universe.

Now, for many people the word ‘hierarchy’ evokes unpleasant associations. This aversion is understandable since a hierarchical structure in a company or organization often refers to a top-down organizational structure, in which subordinates must carry out the instructions of their superiors slavishly and without any input of their own. In its most negative form one could describe this as: ‘orders are orders’. The Theosophia however, has a completely different view of a ‘hierarchy’ and of a ‘leader’. The *Tao Te Ching* of the Chinese sage Lao Tzu contains a stimulating paradox: the true leader follows his people, in order not to be in their way.⁽¹⁾ In other words, as a person he should stay behind his people, to be able to lead them. This means: the leader inspires them to get the best out of themselves. Thus he works with Nature, where, as said, a hierarchical structure can be recognized. And by this we do not only mean that there are differences in consciousness everywhere – one is more developed than another – but especially that all these different beings are connected to each other. The further advanced being supports, helps, inspires the less evolved being. Let’s illustrate this. ‘Above’ the human consciousness there are beings that we could call divine. These gods create an atmosphere in which we humans, less advanced than they are, can live and develop ourselves. In our turn, we humans create a sphere for the animals, and so forth. We humans cannot live without the inspiring, life giving influence of the divine kingdoms. Nor can animals live without the human influence. There always exists cooperation, in which a being with a greater consciousness inspires the less evolved consciousnesses and serves as an example for them.

Let it be clear that all these beings *need each other*. The further developed beings use the less advanced beings as an instrument, a vehicle: and the consciousness of the less developed beings is nurtured by the further evolved beings. There is always a mutual cooperation. We find a hierarchical structure *within* a kingdom of nature as well. Amongst us humans however, things often go wrong, because the one with the most extended consciousness – the wisest – does not always get the lead, but instead someone with the greatest intellectual capacity for example, or the strongest will or even the strongest physical power. This doesn’t mean that the hierarchical structure as such is wrong,

but usually the way it is expressed is not as it should be. So it is not surprising that there is a hierarchical structure in The Theosophical Society. There is no organization that does not have leaders. Even among anarchists, who deny every form of leadership, there is always someone or a group of people that takes the lead. The question is only: what form of leadership is being chosen?

The Theosophical Society Point Loma has chosen for the inspirational leadership, the natural leadership. This corresponds with the general habitual pattern of Nature. The leader inspires the members. He evokes the best from them. He respects their free will, gives them the opportunity to develop their noblest abilities through their own efforts and to contribute these for the benefit of the whole. In this respect he functions as a teacher.

The leader cannot do without the ones he leads, as they cannot do without his leadership. After all, the goal of every theosophical organization is to form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, and you cannot do that on your own. The wisest knows best how to form this nucleus, but he also knows very well that to do that, others are indispensable. Therefore he will always listen to the ideas of other people, he assesses their ideas and supports them when necessary. Yes, he will encourage them to form new ideas and work out initiatives. By the way, when we use the word ‘leader’, we do not only mean the international leader, no, every chair of a lodge, but also every member is – or should at least try to be – a leader for his fellowmen. Not by forcing ethical behavior through commanding and forbidding – this never works – but by being the inspiring example. Natural leadership only exists if the leader lives up to what he knows he needs to be. A political leader or a manager of a company who pleads for moderation of wages, but gives himself a big bonus, doesn’t have much credibility and is not a leader *in reality*, even if he stands at the top of a company. The leader of a theosophical organization, therefore, is someone who *lives* the Theosophia. Only then he can inspire others. Finally the question could arise if a leader is indeed a real leader. To judge that, there is a touchstone available since ancient times: one can recognize the tree by its fruits.

Reference

1. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*. Verse 66, many translations.



Vow to benefit mankind

This article is the complete text of the lecture held by Nicholas Weeks in August 2012, at the Point Loma Convivium in San Diego. For many years, the author made a profound study of the more esoteric buddhist texts. In many of these texts we may find the fundamental ideas of the Universal Wisdom – the source of all world religions – expressed in a relatively pure form. This is certainly the case with the inspiring buddhist commentaries on the *Bodhisattva* vow in this article. These buddhist *sûtras* give us a sketch of the loftiest ideal that may infill our heart and mind: to live for the benefit of all mankind.

Key thoughts

- » Before we can live to benefit mankind, we must first resolve or vow to do so.
- » These vows surely affect our whole nature and last through the centuries.
- » Those possessed of compassion will definitely be ones who find success in realizing these bodhisattva vows.
- » In buddhist *sûtras* we find many inspiring instructions (e.g. the *pâramitâs*), pointing the way to bodhisattvahood.

Before we can “live to benefit mankind”⁽¹⁾ we must first resolve or vow to do so. As W.Q. Judge wrote:

The good man who at last becomes even a sage, had at one time in his many lives to arouse the desire for the company of holy men and to keep his desire for progress alive in order to continue on his way. Even a Buddha or a Jesus had first to make a vow, which is a desire, in some life, that he would save the world or some part of it, and to persevere with the desire alive in his heart through countless lives.⁽²⁾

The Buddha praised the supreme Power of Vows by saying that for realizing bodhisattva qualities, vows are more powerful than wisdom, patience or good actions. The *Avatamsaka Sûtra* chapter 39, states:

“The lamp of bodhi mind requires great compassion as its oil, great vows as its wick, and great wisdom as its flame.”

The bodhisattva vow is universal

Yet, the altruistic vow or purpose or intention of bodhisattvas is not confined to Buddhism. Spiritually helpful vows, like those of the Esoteric School may be limited to one or just a few lifetimes, and focused only on human beings, but such vows are still inspired by *bodhicitta* — a mind (*citta*) radiant (*bodhi*) with compassion, wisdom and power.

For example, H.P.B. writes that Âdi-Buddha or Mahâ-Vishnu is the seed of all Buddhas and Avatârs. Further, she writes this *bîja* or seed “is the

Bodhi

This word comes from the Sanskrit root *budh*, meaning 'to awaken'. It is the state when man has so emptied his mind that it is filled only with the Self itself, with the selfless selfhood of the Eternal. Then he realizes the ineffable visions of Reality, of pure Truth.⁽³⁾

Bodhisattva

A Sanskrit word meaning 'He whose essence is Wisdom'. ... When a man, a human being, has reached the point where his ego becomes conscious, fully so, of its inner divinity, becomes clothed with the Buddhic Ray; (...) that man is a Bodhisattva.⁽⁴⁾

culmination of the totality of spiritual wisdom in the Universe ... and has as worshippers all philosophical minds. In this esoteric sense the Lord Buddha was an incarnation of Mahâ-Vishnu."⁽⁵⁾

Kapila, the founder of the ancient Sâmkhya tradition, said that the "supreme purpose of Life is the ending of all sorrow and pain."⁽⁶⁾ In the Platonic tradition Socrates says that "The task of Founders [of the State; ed.] is to make sure those newly free of the cave's darkness, do not linger selfishly in the Light, but instead return to the cave and its prisoners and help them."⁽⁷⁾ Proclus wrote: "To perfect the inferior and provide for the lesser is the nature of souls, since their descent was caused by care for mortals."⁽⁸⁾

The Pythagorean tradition takes a vow or oath always to support and respect the divine Law, which is the guardian of the central, eternal flame. Hierocles, commenting on the *Golden Verses* of Pythagoras, says this vow is "the keeper of the divine law throughout the whole world-order."⁽⁹⁾ Our Theosophical movement has this to say about divine Law: "Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS — eternal Harmony, ... the light of everlasting Right and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal."⁽¹⁰⁾

The significance of vows

Now some words from Mr. Judge on the vow or pledge:

Oh, what a groan Nature gives to see the heavy Karma which man has piled upon himself and all the creatures of the three worlds! That deep sigh pierces through my heart. How can the load be lifted? Am I to stand for myself, while the few strong hands of Blessed Masters and Their friends

hold back the awful cloud? Such a vow I registered ages ago to help them, and I must.⁽¹¹⁾

Changes may occur in the instrument [of the Ego; ed.] during one life so as to make it appropriate for a new class of Karma, and this may take place through intensity of thought and the power of a vow.⁽¹²⁾

More from Mr. Judge on the vow:

Like you, I merely want to work. I seek no powers; *nothing*. I have made in my heart the martyr's vow. I am devoted as far as my lights in each life will permit, to service in the altruist army. Just now I only find the Theosophical Society to work in here. Next time, some other way — or the same. I am ready 'to step out of the sun shine into the shade so as to make room for others', and I seek no Nirvâna.⁽¹³⁾

The power of these meditations [on Aum, the Self, Âtman, Masters, the Lodge, Unity]* is not always to be seen fully in one life. One life is too short for the entire work, but these thoughts, vows, and practices surely affect the whole nature and last through the centuries. They bring us further and further along the road to the final perfection of this cycle and draw us to the time when we will have the power.⁽¹⁴⁾

Compassion in Hînayâna Buddhism

Hînayâna Buddhism is thought to have no bodhisattva path, or at least be indifferent to it. That is not so. Here is an excerpt from Ledi Sayadaw's [1846-1923] book on the bodhisattva path; the Burmese Theravadin sage writes:

What is meant by 'the Noblest Aspiration'? It is the verbal and mental undertaking that the bodhisatta had made at some point of time aeons before taking up the perfections. It was made in these terms: "What use is there to get to 'the yonder shore' of nibbâna alone? I will attain to Supreme Knowledge and then convey men and devas to the yonder shore." That was the pledge that sent the ten thousand universes reeling and echoing in applause. That was the bodhisatta's earnest wish. For he intensely aspired to Supreme Self-Enlightenment thus: "Knowing the Truth, I will let others know it. Freeing myself from the world, I will free others. Having crossed over, I will enable others to cross." This fervent and most daring aspiration is called 'the Noblest Aspiration'.⁽¹⁵⁾

* In this article, text between square brackets is from the author, if not otherwise indicated.

Which motivations lead to Buddhahood with certainty?

The Mahāyāna tradition tells us which kind of motives will condition a successful treading of the bodhi path to full Buddhahood. The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* says:

Bodhisattvas bring forth *bodhicitta* or the Resolve for Bodhi, for the very first time by [1] seeing the Buddha, or hearing him speak or [2] caring for all living beings who undergo intense suffering, or [3] hearing the Tathāgata's vast, sublime Dharma [Teaching, Law or Duty; ed.]. They then produce the thought for Bodhi and seek all wisdom.

The Bodhisattva's next step is to prepare the foundation by developing ten attitudes toward all living beings: altruism; compassion; wish to give happiness; wish to give security; pity; acceptance; protecting; identification with them; acting as their teacher; and being their guiding master.⁽¹⁶⁾

Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna agrees with the sūtra that there are only three motivations that will guarantee the eventual reaching of full Buddhahood. There are four other possible, but not certain, major motivations, according to Nāgārjuna.

When beings initially generate the resolve to realize bodhi, it may find its origin in a total of seven conditions associated with generating the resolve to gain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi [meaning the unsurpassed, right, and universal enlightenment].

What then are those seven?

1. The Tathāgatas may influence one to generate the resolve to realize bodhi.
2. Observing that the Buddha-dharma is on the verge of destruction, one generates the resolve in order to guard and protect it. [As number 3 of the sūtra stated.]
3. When in the midst of beings, one feels compassion for them and therefore initiates the resolve. [As number 2 of the sūtra stated.]

The next four resolutions may, or more likely may not, carry us to full Buddhahood:

4. One may have a bodhisattva instruct one in generation of the resolve to realize bodhi.
5. One may observe the conduct of a bodhisattva and, in emulating him, one may generate the resolve.
6. In the aftermath of an act of giving, one may generate the resolve to realize bodhi based on that.

7. On seeing the characteristic signs of a buddha's body, one may feel delight and then proceed to generate the resolve.

Thus it may be on account of seven causes and conditions that one generates the resolve to realize bodhi. Among the seven sorts of generation of resolve,⁽¹⁾ where the Buddha has instructed one to generate resolve,⁽²⁾ where one generates resolve in order to protect the Dharma, and (3) where one generates resolve on account of pity, those possessed of the three motivations of this sort, will definitely be ones who find success in this. As for the other four types of motivation, it is not definite that they will be successful in every case.⁽¹⁷⁾

The path of inner growth

Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's approach to developing *bodhicitta* is outlined as follows:

1. First, the exhortation to delight in cultivating and accumulating [the supports for realization of] the unsurpassed bodhi. By resort to such encouragement, one is able to influence other beings;
2. to generate profound and vast resolve;
3. to establish vows to carry out the most definite form of adornment [with virtues and powers];
[The next six focus on the pāramitās.]
4. to relinquish lives and wealth in subduing greed;
5. to cultivate moral precepts, teaching and leading forth those transgressing against the prohibitions;
6. to practice ultimate patience, by which they control and subdue the hindrance of hatred;
7. to generate heroic vigor, through which they establish and stabilize beings on the Path;
8. to accumulate dhyāna samādhis, for the sake of knowing the minds of the many varieties of beings;
9. to cultivate wisdom, destroying and eliminating ignorance;
10. to enter the gateway of harmonizing with reality, thus abandoning all forms of attachment;
11. to propagate and explain the extremely profound practices of emptiness and signlessness;
12. and to proclaim praises of the associated merit, thus preventing the lineage of the Buddhas from being cut off.

Conditions for generating the vow

How does the bodhisattva generate number two on the list — the profound and vast bodhi resolve? By relying on

ten causes and conditions one cultivates and accumulates the basis for realizing bodhi:

[Those causal supports are present] in a case where a bodhisattva:

1. draws close to a good spiritual guide;
2. makes offerings to the Buddhas;
3. cultivates and accumulates roots of goodness;
4. resolves to seek the supreme Dharma;
5. maintains constant pliancy and harmoniousness of mind;
6. on encountering suffering, remains able to endure it;
7. possesses pure and abundant kindness and compassion;
8. maintains a profound mind dedicated to maintaining equal regard for all;
9. possesses faith and happiness in the Great Vehicle; and
10. seeks to gain the wisdom of the Buddha.

If a person is able to embody ten dharmas such as these, he will then become able to generate the mind resolved on realizing anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

There are four additional conditions which may be involved in generating the resolve to cultivate and accumulate the

bases for realization of the supreme bodhi.

First, it may be based on contemplation of all buddhas that one generates the bodhi resolve.

Second, it may be based on contemplation of the faults and perilous aspects of the physical body.

Third, it may be that it is based on seeking the most supreme abilities [of Buddhahood].

Fourth, it may be that it is based on kindness and pity for beings that one generates the bodhi resolve.

The bodhisattva vow

How does the bodhisattva go about setting out towards bodhi? Through which karmic practices does one bring about the complete realization of bodhi? The bodhisattva who has generated the resolve [to gain bodhi] and who abides on 'the ground of dry [not yet perfect; ed.] intellectual wisdom' should first solidly set forth right vows, through which he will attract all of the countless beings. [He first proclaims the basic vow], "I seek to realize the unsurpassed bodhi and to rescue and liberate everyone without exception so that every one of them is caused to reach all the way to the nirvâna."

Vasubandhu then gives examples of great personal vows that each bodhisattva should make. These great vows extend everywhere to all realms of beings and subsume all vows as numerous as the Ganges' sands. Following these personal vows is this pledge:

If beings were to come to an end, then and only then would my vows come to an end. However, beings are truly endless in number. Therefore these great vows of mine shall also never come to an end.

The six pârâmitâs as sources of bodhi

The six pârâmitâs are causes of bodhi because:

Giving serves as a cause of bodhi, since it draws in all beings.

Upholding the moral precepts is a cause of bodhi, for it leads to the perfection of the many sorts of goodness and brings about the fulfillment of one's original vows.

Patience serves as a cause of bodhi, inasmuch as it brings about perfection of the major marks and minor characteristics of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Vigor is a cause of bodhi, since it brings about growth of the practice of goodness and brings about the diligent teaching and transforming of all beings.



Dhyāna absorption is a cause of bodhi, seeing that by resorting to it, the bodhisattva skillfully trains and disciplines himself, while also becoming able to perceive all the mental actions of beings.

Wisdom is a cause of bodhi because, by resorting to it, one becomes able perfectly to know the nature and characteristics of all dharmas.

To sum up the essentials, the six pāramitās constitute the correct causes for the realization of bodhi. The four immeasurable minds, the thirty-seven wings of enlightenment, and all of the myriad good practices, work cooperatively in assisting its perfect realization. If the bodhisattva cultivates and accumulates [skill in the practice of] the six pāramitās, as befits the practices he has taken up, he gradually succeeds in drawing near to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

Vows supporting the six pāramitās

Vasubandhu also suggests establishing six vows or resolutions supporting each of the perfections:

In what manner does one go about establishing vows? [One invokes one's resolve as follows – thinking]:

If some person comes making all sorts of demands, I shall then *give* to him whatever I possess, even to the point that I will refrain from generating a single thought influenced by miserliness. Were I to generate a selfish thought in reaction to this circumstance even for a moment, and yet still seek a pure karmic reward from such giving, I would then be cheating all of the many buddhas throughout the worlds and would thereby be ensuring that I shall definitely not be able to realize anuttara-samyak-sambodhi in the future.

In *upholding the moral precepts*, I make pure-minded vows to remain free of deviation or regret, even where adherence to the precepts might cause my death.

In instances where I may be cultivating *patience*, even where I might be attacked, injured, or even sliced apart, I shall constantly generate lovingly-kind vows free of any sort of interference by hatefulness.

In instances where I cultivate *vigor*, even where I might encounter circumstances involving cold, heat, government officials, bandits, floods, fires, lions, tigers, wolves, drought, or famine, I must nonetheless solidify and strengthen my resolve so that there is no retreat or sinking away of vows.

In instances where I cultivate *dhyāna absorption*, even where I am disturbed by external circumstances threatening to make it impossible to focus the mind, it is essential to bind the mind to the objective, vowing to refrain from bringing

forth, even briefly, any sort of distracted thought which is contrary to Dharma.

In instances where I cultivate the accumulation of *wisdom*, I contemplate all dharmas in accordance with their true nature, continuing to uphold and maintain this contemplation even in the midst of that which is good, or not good; that which is conditioned, or unconditioned; that which is in samsāra [the cycle of rebodiments; ed.], or that which is identical to nirvāna. I will never bring forth any dualistic views in any of those circumstances.

In instances where my mind might fall prey to the hindrances of regret or anger, were I to retreat and sink into such distracted thought that, even for the duration of a finger snap, I brought forth duality-based views through which I might [instead] seek pure karmic rewards arising from the pāramitās, I would thereby cheat all of the numberless buddhas throughout the surrounding realms and would thereby definitely fail to realize anuttara-samyak-sambodhi in the future.⁽¹⁸⁾

The vows as basis for developing compassion and wisdom

Finally, let us ponder on what a Chinese Tang dynasty sage, Peixiu, says about vows, the most important of the Three Great Minds — which are: Compassion, Wisdom and Vows.

Since one aspires to engage in liberating beings on a vast scale, one consequently lets expansively great compassion and wisdom flourish. However, even though the mind is fundamentally pure, it has nonetheless long been obscured by one's toiling on amid the filth of the sense objects. One's habitual propensities, by their very nature, are difficult to suddenly melt away. A vessel [for the retention] of Dharma is such that one must refine the mind through polishing and tempering.

One knows there is the prospect of many rebirths in cyclic existence while not encountering the Buddha's teachings about the Bodhisattva Path. Consequently, he generates great vows that keep his noble purpose fresh in mind during such lifetimes. He also sets about perfecting the cultivation of the myriad practices. These practices [such as the pāramitās] and the vows mutually aid each other in just the same way as do [the two] wings [of a bird]. Thus it is that one progresses along, does not retreat, and proceeds directly on through to the realization of bodhi. This is precisely what is intended by the mind established in great vows.

Now, among these three types of mind, it is the one committed to great vows which is primary. This is because it constantly supports the compassion and wisdom through which one liberates the many beings. Therefore, along with the initial generation of the [bodhi] resolve, one must necessarily bring forth Bodhisattva vows.

In the *Avatamsaka Sûtra's* Conduct and Vows of Samantabhadra chapter 40, it states, “When a person approaches the end of life, in that very last instant, all of one’s faculties scatter into ruin. All of one’s power completely recedes and is lost. ...” It is only your bodhicitta vows which do not forsake one and depart. They always continue to lead one straight on through, until one reaches bodhi. Therefore you must not generate doubts about making such vows like the ten of Samantabhadra or these five traditional ones.

First, beings are boundlessly many. I vow to liberate them all.

Second, merit and wisdom are limitless. I vow to marshal them.

Third, the Dharma of the Buddha is infinite. I vow to master it.

Fourth, the Tathâgatas are countless. I vow to serve them.

Fifth, I vow to realize the unsurpassed, right enlightenment. One maintains these five vows, implementing them in one’s mind in thought after thought such that there is no interval in which they are not active. This constitutes complete implementation of the great mind of bodhi. This is what constitutes the upholding of the precepts of the bodhi mind. These Three Vast Minds and the Five Vows are layered one upon the other in a way whereby they support each other.

From one buddha to the next, the path is the same. It does not go beyond this. It is precisely this which constitutes perfect generation of the anuttara-samyak-sambodhi mind.⁽¹⁹⁾

Many other sûttras and shastras go into much more detail on the vowed actions of the Mahâyâna path. Yet this glimpse of the *bodhicitta* realm will give one the basis for further contemplation of the bodhisattva life.

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Like a stream from its source

How we emanate from our spiritual core

In the theosophical literature emanation, the process in which one consciousness causes other consciousnesses to flow forth from itself, is seldom spoken of. Too profound maybe? And yet, the study of emanation gives us insights that cannot be acquired in any other way. We will gain a much better understanding of who we are, and of our place in the *stream of consciousness*. We shall explain emanation by elaborating four theosophical key thoughts.

Key thoughts

- » We flow forth from our own inner nature. Other beings help us in doing so: those higher than us create the right preconditions, those lower than us make up our bodies.
- » A source-being is not only the source but also the final destination of all its children-consciousnesses.
- » Every being is a link in a stream of consciousness. The further advanced the being is, the greater his responsibility.

Of all existential questions, maybe the most appealing is the one of our origin. The more we know about that, the more we know who we *are*. It is no coincidence that this question is the central theme of traditional myths and religions all over the world, and in all times. In all these myths the first man appears on the stage as the child of a divine or spiritual source. That source was known by many names. But every name expressed the same idea: a condition of life and consciousness that is wiser, more expanded, and more constant than the human consciousness.

It is not only man that flows forth from this spiritual source, these old traditions tell us. All sorts of beings, in all degrees of development, flow forth from THAT — albeit often via one or more intermediate steps. So, all beings spring forth from a source that is ‘higher’ than they themselves are.

What is ‘higher’?

What is that, ‘a higher being’? In the Theosophia, ‘higher’ means spiritually more developed, with a wider, more profound consciousness. In other words, with more understanding of the mysteries of life. We talk about a difference in the *level* of consciousness.

How does ‘the lower’ emanate from ‘the higher’? What process is that? We will try to explain this by offering four fundamental thoughts on the theosophical doctrine of emanation. We will not make this a theoretical essay, but will provide many practical examples too. Finding examples should not be a problem. After all, the more *fundamental* the thought, the more *practical* examples should be available to support that thought. Maybe this seems to be a strange claim but we would like to say: examine it!

Source-beings

How can we prove that the 'lower' always comes forth from the 'higher'? Does the material and visible world indeed emerge from invisible, ethereal worlds? With this question we start our research.

And here we immediately encounter the limitations of our present physical abilities: our senses perceive only a very limited part of the kosmos.* Every one of our senses has its own limitations. With our eyesight we can see the colors red through violet, but we fail to notice the ultraviolet and infrared colors. When ultraviolet light strikes a crystal, it produces in some cases a soft fluorescent glow: our eyes see only the visible *effect* and not the stimulus behind it. We look around and see in this visible world an endless number of beings appearing and, after their life cycle has come to an end, disappearing as a coherent form. But we are not able to sense their origin and destination.

What we *can* sense are examples of emanation within the material plane. There are endless 'source-beings' on this plane as well. As it is above, so it is below. The material planes reflect the laws of the spiritual planes. We give some examples.

Examples of source-beings

We all have some general knowledge of the embryonic growth of a human being. The first, fertilized cell is called 'omnipotent' because it carries in it the faculties of all future organs. It is the most universal cell of our body. From that first cell, by division, numerous daughter cells are being born. These either possess that same 'omnipotence' or are relatively more limited or specialized: only able to evolve a limited number of tissues, for instance only blood cells. From these partly specialized cells are born countless fully specialized cells, like white and red blood cells for example. The specialized cells express fewer faculties and therefore occupy a lower position on the ladder of development than their source-cells do.

The lower, limited and temporal comes forth from the higher and imperishable. Eventually billions of cells emerge from that first cell! That first, small group of 'jacks of all trades' called embryonic stem cells, continue to exist in the shape of reproductive cells. These are the *source-beings* and they make up the immortal line throughout all generations.

Once we recognize this principle, we see it everywhere. The lizard can grow a new tail that resembles the former

tail. The queen bee is the only fertile female in the colony and produces all the offspring. And in our society it is the inspiring people, the ones that have strong and bright ideals, who are the source of organizations, associations and institutes. Organizations always start with the idea of one person, but eventually may attract thousands of co-workers. These co-workers often have a limited perception of the original goals of the organization. This is not a big problem as long as the inspirers are able to pass on their ideals to proper successors.

A chain of life

Wouldn't it be a logical deduction that all these visible source-beings that we encounter everywhere in the physical world, in their turn emerge from a higher but invisible source, a more spiritual source? That behind the fertilized egg cell there is an inner, more spiritual source – the human consciousness in this case – so that the fertilized cell functions as a channel through which flow the streams of life from the inner man to the physical plane?

This is a core idea in Theosophy. We can call it the 'hierarchical structure of the kosmos'. All that exists flows forth from a source that is more spiritual. Another word for 'flowing forth' is 'to emanate', a word coming from Latin. E-manate simply means: flowing out. Every being is 'a child of ...' but it is also 'a parent of ...'.

So, the lower always comes forth from the higher. And the lower is again a source-being for countless other beings. There is a chain of Life from spiritual to material, a stream of Life without limitations, without a highest or lowest point. If we accept this principle, we must abandon the idea of a supreme being or supreme god.

Emanation versus 'creation'

All ancient myths mention a divine source. Usually these myths are called 'stories of creation'. But that is exactly what they are not! They are stories of emanation ...

Emanation and creation are opposites of each other, if by 'creation' we mean: making something out of nothing. This 'creationism' is still a frequent christian interpretation of the Bible. The conviction is that God created heaven and earth from nothing, created all inhabitants of the new world from nothing. Thus, believers of creationism build an image of a supreme being that in no way resembles his creations. God and the world are considered to be completely different and separate things.

* In this article, kosmos (with letter k) refers to all kinds of kosmoses, small or large, macro or micro.

Now, compare this idea of ‘separation’ to the theosophical teaching that every source-being – however high – flows forth from a still higher being. Theosophy is much more logical we think. Something cannot emerge from nothing. The various forms of life that we see around us must emerge from something. Through the endless hierarchies of manifestation flows the Boundless, Eternal Life, *which every being is in its core*.

We flow forth from our own inner nature, our own deepest core. Other beings help us in doing so: those higher than us create the right preconditions for our existence, those lower than us make up our bodies. There is unity and cooperation without any limits.

Being born is waking up

How could ‘something’ ever emerge from ‘nothing’? According to the Theosophia every being, every conscious organism is in its core indestructible. Consciousness is essentially eternal. This is an important idea. Consciousness cannot be created. It is born in an outer form and withdraws from it over and over again — but it *always* was and *always* will be.

How this changes our ideas of the birth of a kosmos! A kosmical birth is a re-awakening of sleeping beings. It is an awakening, step by step, of all beings that belong to *that* kosmos. It starts with the most spiritual entities, from which flow forth those beings that spiritually are just below them, etcetera, step by step, ever lower until the relatively most material entities are emanated. Everything appears by emanation, by out-flowing — nothing is ever born from nothing.

First key thought: *the higher consciousness creates ‘the magnetic field’ within which the lower beings can develop themselves*

How do lower beings flow forth from higher beings? The first key thought is this: the higher consciousness creates the conditions for the manifestation of lower beings; it creates the field within which other beings can develop themselves.

This can most easily be recognized by the already mentioned human embryo and the lizard that loses its tail. The human or animal consciousness forms a ‘magnetic field’ as it were, within which the physical atoms of the body can live and find their proper place. This magnetic field arranges these atoms in the same way a magnet can arrange small pieces of iron. Furthermore, it feeds the atoms, it nourishes them. Some people are able to observe

this field, in Theosophy called ‘model body’ or *linga-śarīra*. The organization of the beehive is another example. Although bees are not physically connected to each other as the cells in our body are, there seems to be a cooperation just as if the beehive were one organism. All actions are extremely well coordinated. How is this possible? Here too the logical answer seems to be that there is an encompassing sphere of influence, some kind of magnetic field that flows forth from the central point, in this case the consciousness behind the queen bee.

The Earth and a National Constitution: examples of the first thought

Planet Earth offers to plants, animals and humans the conditions for their material existence. We live in a terrestrial sphere of influence, with its gravitation and magnetism, like a fish lives in the ocean: we are completely surrounded by it. Our body is built up of the different elements of the Earth, like a fish builds up its body from the elements of the sea.

In that life sphere the terrestrial beings are given the opportunity to pursue their own development, *within* the conditions that the higher, encompassing entity offers. These last words may sound as a kind of ‘limitation’. Now, there are indeed limitations that we human beings experience when we abuse the planet — creating deserts, floods and pollution that make physical life impossible. But we should mainly look at Planet Earth as inspirer and *stimulator*. Our Planet has a conscious, highly spiritual side represented by further developed beings. These beings continuously transmit stimuli for inner growth. These stimuli of inspiration reach every being, inasmuch as a being opens itself up to it: every being has a certain freedom. Emanation is not a mechanical process.

A human society is a kind of reflection of this planetary cooperation, although of course a ‘society’ is not emanated from *one* source-being. A country is not the body of one evolving entity, but a cooperation of many independently evolving people. The highest ideals of a country are usually found in its Constitution and in the common shared ideas about ethics and cooperation. If all works as it should, the leaders of a society should stimulate and inspire. They should remind their people about these highest ideals, especially by being living examples themselves. And where necessary they define boundaries, rules and guidelines. Within these limits everyone is free, meaning that each one carries his share of responsibility for the entire state.

Second key thought: *equals attract equals*

The above raises the next question: why am I a child of Planet Earth and not of another Planet? Why do the lower beings that build up my body, belong to me and not to my neighbor or my children? Or, put in a more general way: what bond is there between the source-being and the many lower beings that are being born within its life sphere and have their experiences there?

All beings are imperishable, as we mentioned before: they have an eternal past behind them. In that past they have forged bonds with other beings. These can be strong or weak bonds. The more the character of a being resembles the character of another, the stronger the bond is between these two beings. We can see this happening around us, in the relations between one man and another. But the principle is valid for *all* beings.

‘Similarity in character leads to mutual attraction’: this principle answers our question. The higher being and the lower beings form a cooperation because they share an essential characteristic. That is why the leaves of the apple tree all have the shape of apple tree leaves, even though every leaf is slightly different from all others. That is why our cells have qualities that reflect our character — although of course they are much more primitive consciousnesses. A musical person has a body with a well developed hearing and a precise muscle control. Someone who is a typical intellectual has a body that is fit for intellectual labor, etcetera.

Examples of ‘growing apart’

We see this principle of ‘attraction of equals’ in society as well. When an enthusiastic person founds a soccer club (of which he is in a sense the source-being), he will attract several people who share this enthusiasm with him.

This last example may also be used to explain that the bond between beings can change. The point is that every being goes through its own process of growth. We can ‘grow towards each other’ and we can ‘grow apart from each other’. Let’s say that after ten years the founder of the soccer club becomes more interested in basketball, and he leaves the club to become a basketball player. Will he take all his fellow members with him? Of course not. Most of them are still interested in soccer. The bond between them becomes much looser now.

We see a similar example at the end of the summer at the entrance of the beehive. In the summer, several drones (male bees) are born, who spend their time eating the stock of food. It is their task to fertilize new queens. After the

period of bride flights has passed, the bee colony enters another phase (changes to another character) and in that phase there is no place for drones anymore. If they haven’t left by themselves already, they will be stung to death now and dragged outside.

Theosophy gives serious warnings not to exercise a ‘revolution of character’ too fast. Sometimes a person is so taken by the ideas of Theosophia that he wants to change his whole thinking and life dramatically in a short time span — possibly out of an idealistic motive. In his efforts to give his mentality a new characteristic from one day to the next, he will attract new cell-beings. He will thrust out many other cell beings that have served him so far. If this process takes place too fast, then there is every chance of a complete disruption.

Likewise, it is not wise when a new leader of a country tries to change all the habits of his countrymen within a few years. Whatever his motive may be, he will only achieve a disastrous disruption. Nature does not grow by means of revolution but through evolution: a gradual, simultaneous growth of consciousness of *all* beings involved.

The third key thought: *source-being and emanated beings remain connected for the duration of a complete cycle*

Source-being and child-being stay connected with each other during a complete cycle of evolution. The source-being is not only the source but also the final destination of all its children-consciousnesses. At the moment of dying, these children return to their Inner Source, their Higher Nature. During the whole cycle, this Higher Nature is for them an example and a source of inspiration. It has already developed what its child tries to develop. This is the ancient idea of the teacher and his pupil.

How long the duration of such a cycle is depends on the beings at issue. But the emanation of lower beings is never free of any obligations. What this means practically, will be explained later when we consider the human mind and its emanations, the thoughts.

We can never see emanation and evolution apart from each other. Emanation is always the starting point of a period of evolution or development. The emanation from a higher being is for the lower being the impulse for the start of a period of development of its own faculties. The life sphere of the higher being provides a fitting, stimulating environment (because of corresponding characteristics) for his inner development. A stream of inspiration is constantly flowing from the encompassing higher being

to the lower being, its 'child'. Every time when we pick up and assimilate something of this inspiration, we start a new phase in our development. We have then become essentially different from before. So, a cycle of evolution knows many smaller sub-cycles with their corresponding 'emanational starting points'. Therefore emanation and evolution are inextricably interwoven.

The fourth key thought: *in their turn the emanated beings are the source of even lower beings*

Each being forms a 'field' for beings lower than it is. Every step 'downwards' is an emanation. 'As above so below'. This thought is the fourth building block or contribution to the overall picture of emanation.

All beings come forth from One Encompassing Source, often called 'the Divine'. The most spiritual beings of the kosmos provide the conditions for existence for the slightly less spiritual beings that in their turn provide the conditions for the next step in the manifestation of the kosmos, and so forth until we reach the most material world of this kosmos. The kosmos is like a tree: the roots provide the conditions for the growth of the trunk, while the trunk does the same for the branches, and every branch does this for the many twigs until we reach the individual leaves. Turn the tree upside down and you get the symbol of the *tree of life* that we can find in almost every religion: with its roots in the overarching unity and its countless branches in the worlds of form and diversity.

We human beings are the source-being for our cells. A cell-being is the source-being for countless beings that animate the atoms. And we can continue along this way, because the chemical atom is a small solar system in itself.

Dependency means: responsibility

So every being is a link in a stream of consciousness, in a long, no, even endless chain of life. The more self-conscious a being is, the further advanced the being is in its inner development, the bigger is the responsibility it has for the proper functioning of this cosmic organism.

The doctrine of emanation shows our big responsibility 'downward' and 'upward'. A human being, who lives and thinks in a petty way and cares very little about people outside his own group, is a source-being with a life sphere that pushes his lower beings in a certain direction. You can compare this with a soccer stadium during an emotional game. If we are part of the crowd, our emotional aspect is heavily stimulated, while all our other capabilities hardly

have a chance to manifest.

Only when we give our lower beings the full possibilities to evolve materially and spiritually, will we do them justice. Of course this too is a matter of inner growth.

Furthermore, we have a responsibility 'upward'. The choices we make in our lives also influence our source-beings, our inner nature. The more our self made characteristics match with our spiritual nature, the more interaction there is. And this interaction leads to *mutual and simultaneous* growth.

The practical use of these four building blocks in our lives

The first field of practical use is very near to us: our own human consciousness. We human beings are a source-being for our ... *thoughts*. We emanate thoughts, ideas. Undoubtedly a strange thought for many, since they are not used to see thoughts as 'things', let alone as 'beings'. But they are. In a living kosmos, all things are alive. Of course, the birth and growth of thoughts take place on the invisible mental plane. Yet, having developed our mental powers, we are able to study the life cycle of our thoughts with great precision.

Here we can apply our four key ideas in a practical way. The *human mind is the field* or the breeding ground for the birth and growth of thoughts. These processes can go very fast. Every second we attract thoughts, give them a growth impulse and transmit them again.

What thoughts do we attract? Not just any thought that 'passes by' but only those thoughts that correspond with our own character, according to the second key idea. Therefore the more harmonious we think, the less disharmonious thoughts we attract.

The link between thinker and thought remains. The transmitted thought goes through a period of development before it returns to our mind. But it will return. And because thoughts keep returning to us – as long as our character remains the same – these thoughts influence us. Thus we learn. And during the process it is important that we keep mastering our thoughts; we are their source; they should not take control over us.

The fourth building block shows our responsibility. When we people think egotistic or fanatical thoughts, we close off our thinking from the inspiring stream originating from our spiritual nature. The consequence is, amongst other things, that we cut off our cell-beings from this inspiring stream. We are 'starving' them. We experience the result of that in this life or in our next lives, when we attract those same cell-beings again. We become ill for example.

The Banyan tree as a symbol of emanation

Of course the mentioned four key ideas together form one single picture. Traditionally the Sages used images that are familiar to their pupils to explain spiritual concepts. These images explained more than an extensive intellectual explanation.

How did they picture the doctrine of emanation? Sometimes they used the symbol of the Sun, radiating rays in all directions. Another very popular symbol was the Banyan or Waringin tree, the Bengal fig tree. For good reason this tree is held in high respect by Hindus and Buddhists.

How does the Banyan grow? Some of its branches grow in a downward direction and touch the earth. There they root and become new trunks and in their turn grow branches. Each of these becomes a new centre of growth. Although each one is independent to a certain degree, all trunks remain connected. This way one single tree (or should we speak of a hierarchy of trees?) can grow formidably big. In many Indian villages this tree stands in the central square. Every single kosmos has its own individual 'source-being'. But this being is only a branch of an even bigger Banyan that in turn is again a miniscule branch of an even bigger unity. He who continues this idea will see that *One Boundless, Indestructible* Life forms the basis for all that is. We all *are* this Boundless Life. We are part of the Boundless Banyan. We are *one* with the kosmos.

Just this thought alone would give the present human mentality a totally different color and direction. It will color all aspects of our life. Our milder, more compassionate and righteous thoughts, ideas and visions – *all emanations of our consciousness* – will open up a new period of evolution or inner growth in this world.

Reference

1. *Meesterwerken van het menselijk genie*. Reader's Digest, Amsterdam 1988, p. 303.

For further study

- In fact, the key thought of emanation may be recognized in all theosophical teachings, starting with the third fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*. Vol. I, p. 17-20 (pag. orig. edition). In this proposition, H.P. Blavatsky describes the Universal Soul as source of countless 'Souls' ('monads'), that will return to their source at the end of their long cycle of evolution.
- A lucid definition of 'emanation', 'creation' and 'evolution' is found in: G. de Purucker, *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*. Point Loma Publications, San Diego 1990, p. 82-83 (ch. VIII). The teaching that emanation and evolution are two aspects of the same process, is worked out by G. de Purucker in *The Esoteric Tradition*. Theosophical University Press, Pasadena 1973, Vol. I, p. 218 and note 96. In the same book we find some stimulating ideas on the consequences of emanation for our view of life, see Vol. I, p. 265-267.



A stream of consciousness, flowing through all steps of the cosmic chain of beings.⁽¹⁾



Râja and Hatha Yoga

Key thoughts

» Yoga: by practicing discipline you achieve union with your inner god.

» Râja Yoga: by practicing concentration on your higher aspects (Human and Spiritual Ego) you will gain control over the lower aspects. Results: increasing consciousness of the inner god (Âtman) and physical health.

» Hatha Yoga: emphasizes on training of the physical body by practicing postures and breath control. It has an effect on physical and psychic energies and might cause physical and psychic disharmony.

» Hatha Yoga was in the far past used in rare cases to overcome physical or psychic obstacles.

For most people in the Western world the practice of yoga is a popular form of physical exercise and breath control. This particular system of yoga is known as Hatha Yoga. However, there are many other systems of yoga, such as Râja Yoga. This article focuses especially on these two – often contradictory – systems of yoga.

Many people in this chaotic world are searching for peace and tranquility in their life. They need mental and emotional calm to keep control over their turbulent life.

For that reason the practice of yoga has been popular among Westerners for many years. In nearly every city or village you can do a yoga course. There are millions of people who practice yoga. But do the teachers of these courses, let alone their students, understand the essential purpose of yoga and what energies all these physical disciplines might evoke?

What is yoga?

Yoga is a Sanskrit word that has become part of the vocabulary of almost every modern language. But the explanation in the dictionaries is mostly limited to only one system of yoga: Hatha Yoga. Yet in ancient India a large number of other yoga systems have always existed. In the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* – a holy scripture

that in the East and West is highly esteemed and which content is almost completely about yoga – various systems of yoga are described.

Literally yoga means ‘yoke’. Metaphorically it means discipline. So practicing yoga means to pursue a discipline. A yoke, however, also unites two oxen to operate as one. That’s why yoga can also be explained as union. By practicing a type of discipline you achieve union.

In ancient India the Yoga school was one of the six philosophical schools or *Darsanas*. It is believed that this school was founded by the sage Patañjali. As with every other school, the Yoga school could not exist without teachers, or gurus. People were allowed to practice the yoga exercises only under guidance of a guru. This is of great importance, because, as mentioned before, there are many systems of yoga. And only a true teacher is able to recognize the right method for each of his pupils.

***Bhagavad-Gîtâ*: different forms of yoga**

The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* clearly explains these various systems of yoga. Out of the eighteen chapters, sixteen of them (the exceptions are chapter one and eleven) deal with the various systems of yoga. Although the differences between all these yoga practices are very subtle for the Westerner, they are without doubt something else than body-twisting, posturing and breathing exercises. You will hardly find any reference to physical exercise at all in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*. In ancient India the yoga paths were associated with the four main types of human consciousness. By practicing a specific type of yoga, which corresponds with his state of consciousness at the time, the yogi achieves union.

The simplest form of yoga is Karma Yoga, the purpose of which is to achieve union by action. You should act only for the sake of the rightness of the action itself and not for the result. People who practice Karma Yoga will come

highest type of consciousness for instance, should not only practice Jñâna Yoga, but is assumed to have mastered the three other forms of yoga as prerequisite. The highest form of yoga is a combination of all four types of yoga disciplines.

Yoga exercises should permeate all of the activities of our daily life, including our social and civic duties, which vary according to specific type of of each individual's consciousness. Yoga in ancient India did not just mean some exercises aiming at the realization of peace of mind, but was completely integrated in daily life.

When men and women would fulfill their social duties and responsibilities by way of the yoga discipline, which corresponds with their individual state of consciousness, an ideal society would exist.

By the way, the quality of individual consciousness is not passed on automatically from parents to children, as the

Hierarchy of Hindustan

| Type of consciousness | Discipline to develop consciousness | Duties |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Brâhmana Sage, priest, philosopher | Jñâna Yoga Practice of wisdom | Calmness, self-control, simplicity, purity, patience, integrity, wisdom, knowledge, spiritual insight |
| Kshatriya Warrior, public servant, manager | Râja Yoga Mind control | Courage, glory, power, determination, not to flee from danger, generosity, leadership |
| Vaiśya Merchant, farmer | Bhakti Yoga Devotion, humility | Agriculture, cattle breeding and commerce |
| Śûdra Craftsman | Karma Yoga Acting | Compliance |

closer to union through giving unselfish service to relieve suffering without the hope or expectation of receiving anything in return.

Bhakti Yoga is practicing yoga by way of devotion. Although nowadays in India the devotion is directed to personal, anthropomorphic gods who are outside man, the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* clearly teaches us to concentrate our devotion to our inner god (represented as Krishna) and to our spiritual ideal. In chapter 10, sloka 20, of the *Gîtâ* Krishna says: 'I am Âtman. I am the Self. My seat is in the heart of every being.'

Practicing Râja Yoga results in a complete mastering of all powers innate to man, with the aim to use them for the benefit of mankind.

Finally, Jñâna Yoga aims for union by practicing wisdom in each and every situation.

These four systems in a consecutive order demand from the yogi an ever-increasing discipline. The Brâhmana, the

current Indian caste system supposes. The original idea of this system goes back indeed to the four main types of consciousness, but by erroneously thinking that a child will inherit the quality of consciousness from his parents, the idea has eventually degenerated into a horrible system of division, exploitation and injustice. The true idea of the four types of consciousness forming the structure of a righteous society can also be found in Plato's *Politeia*.

Union — with what?

If the purpose of yoga is to seek union through practicing discipline, the obvious question becomes: "unite with what?" Someone who believes in God may think of a union with God. But in the Yoga philosophy this can't be the case. All ancient Hindu schools teach man's composite nature. Man's consciousness can be divided in different layers, different planes, which are related to each other in a hierarchical way. Each school has its own system. In

essence the idea is the same. It is just that one school is more detailed in its division than another. All schools share the idea of a summit and a basis. The basis is the body, which has the function of vehicle. The top is the root of our consciousness, the fountain source from which the other principles below flow forth into manifestation. Now, the goal of yoga is the union of the personal man – the type of consciousness the majority of people express in daily life – with this highest principle of his composite nature. In Sanskrit this root of our own self is called *Âtman*, a word that may be translated as Self. You should not think of this Self as an absolute end or beginning, but rather as the relative horizon for us, human beings. We don't yet have the capacity to look beyond it. *Âtman* is our inmost link with the boundless. The personal man should open up his inner consciousness to the extent that he perceives in himself the *Âtmic* aspect and becomes one with it. Then he realizes that he is a part of the boundless, the infinite.

Between *Âtman*, this relative summit, and the physical body there are different steps or grades, which differ in characteristic from each other. The closer the step or grade is to *Âtman*, the more intense is the consciousness of the unity of all life and the more sublime is this characteristic. In this article we assume the following grades: the divine, the spiritual, the mind, the desires, the vitality, the astral and the physical.

Layers in human consciousness

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| Divine | <i>Âtman</i> |
| Spiritual | Buddhi |
| Mind | Manas |
| Desire | <i>Kâma</i> |
| Vitality | <i>Prâna</i> |
| Astral | Linga-sarîra |
| Physical | Sthûla-sarîra |

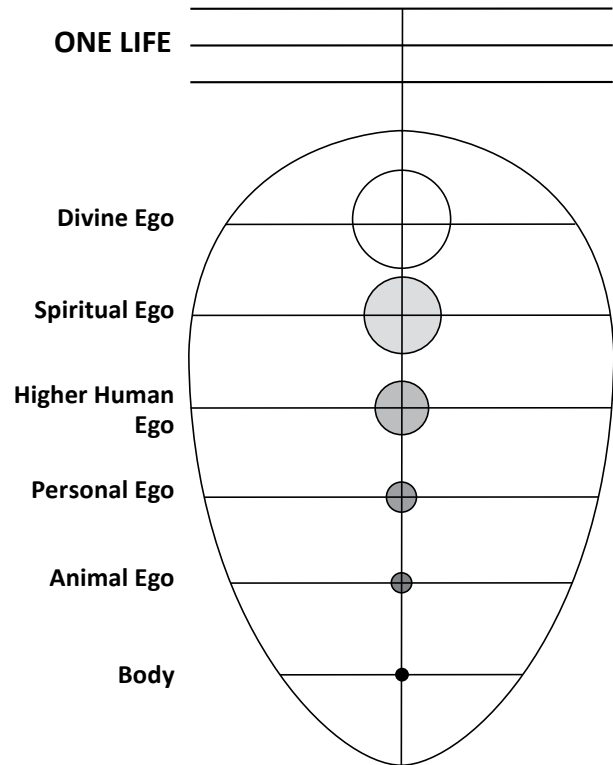
Stream of consciousness

You may look at man also as a stream of consciousness. In that stream the divine ray passes steps, levels or grades of consciousness, and at each level it transforms itself into an active force. Together these active forces form a hierarchy of consciousness, in which the higher developed grades function as a sluice gate in a canal, transforming the stream of consciousness to a less developed grade. Each of these transformation points is a living being with a specific character. You may call it an ego (an 'I'). In essence every ego contains the same qualities as *Âtman*,

the Divine Ego, the source from which it has flown forth, the same way a sunbeam possesses within itself everything of the sun.

So every human being is a composition of different forces, energies, and egos. There is a constant interaction and interchange of all those forces. Life streams continuously between those different entities or living 'transformers'.

Centres of consciousness in the stream of consciousness



Communication through resonance

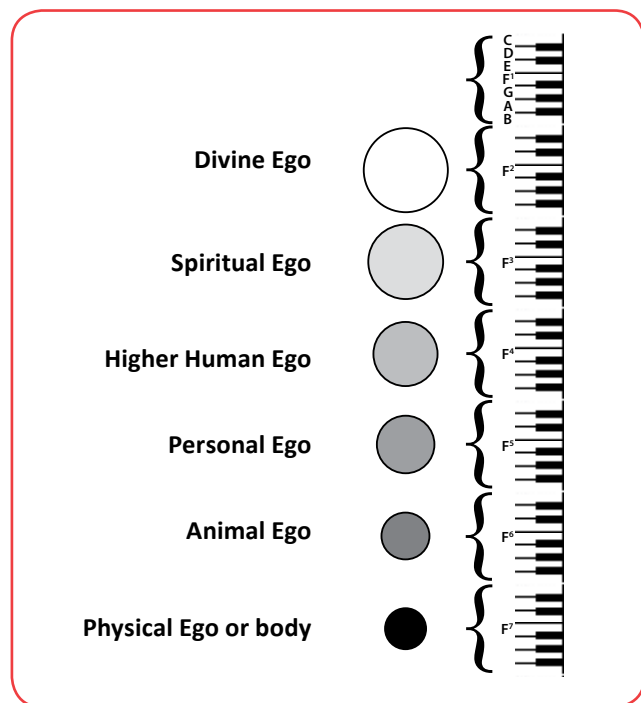
The interchange in the stream of consciousness takes place by way of resonance.

Each transformation point functions as a sender-receiver, which tunes itself to the frequency of the degree of consciousness to which it belongs. On the same resonance frequency on which it transmits 'information' (or energy or consciousness) – use the word you like – it also receives information. If tuned in for example to the 'desire' plane, it will also receive on that frequency.

Compare it with music. If you strike a string on a guitar, which is tuned at a certain tone, another string, which is tuned at the same tone, will also vibrate or resonate. Each ego can be divided in seven tones, which correspond to the seven planes of consciousness. In principle each

being in the stream of consciousness has the same qualities available as all other entities have. The only difference is how many of these qualities they have already developed. Suppose that in the Personal Ego an A-tone is struck, the A's in the other transformation points will resonate and vibrate as well, even when they are tuned in a higher or lower 'octave'. So everything is interlinked, connected and every thought, word or action vibrates through our entire being.

Especially in the case of practicing yoga it is important to realize, that this will cause changes in the stream of consciousness. Tuning yourself in to an ego will create a situation where certain energy may or may not flow to the body. If you focus on one of the higher egos, the Personal Ego will become more accessible for universal impulses and thoughts, whereas if you concentrate yourself on the Animal Ego, it will become more difficult to catch universal ideas.⁽¹⁾



Râja Yoga

Which energies now play a role in Hatha and Râja Yoga? Râja Yoga – or Royal Yoga – is a system aimed at purifying the thinking (*Manas*) by way of concentrating oneself on the Higher Human Ego and Spiritual Ego. It is the Personal Ego who practices the discipline. By mastering his mind he becomes closer to union with Âtman, the inner God. The discipline is developed by concentration on the highest ideal and controlling the personal-human nature. Please understand, it is the Personal Ego – our

daily consciousness – who must be disciplined, not the higher egos. By the way, to be disciplined doesn't mean that these lower elements should be suppressed or neglected. In fact the higher aspects of man's hierarchal constitution guide these elements to grow and evolve.

The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* gives us the following idea. Arjuna goes to war in a chariot, which is pulled by horses. Arjuna has put the reins of the chariot into the hands of Krishna. The symbolism is clear. Arjuna is the Personal Ego who struggles with his mind, in other words, who wants to develop the spiritual part of his consciousness. The horses are the forces which emerge from the Animal Ego, especially selfish desires and feelings. The chariot is the symbol of the physical body and Krishna represents the inner God. How can you interpret this?

Because the Personal Ego (Arjuna) turns to his higher aspects (Krishna) he is able to control his lower aspects, his Animal Ego and his body. It's important to realize that it is the Personal Ego which is practicing the discipline. After all it is Arjuna who is struggling and Krishna who guides the horses. The consciousness expands only through self activity and self discipline allowing something of the spiritual and divine worlds to be experienced. Submitting the body to a severe discipline by following the strictest diet or ascetic rules will not lead to even a glimpse of the spiritual-divine worlds.

The mind can only experience divine spheres of consciousness if focused on the higher parts of its nature. In other words, the Personal Ego should activate in itself only the noblest thoughts it can imagine, so that it will resonate to the Higher Human, the Spiritual and the Divine Ego.

Since the higher egos in the stream of consciousness live in the understanding of interconnectedness with all other beings, the awakening of those forces must be accompanied with a love for all living beings. The Râja Yoga practitioner needs to impregnate his mind with love for all beings.

In the diagram on page 22 it is mentioned that Râja Yoga is meant for *Kshatriyas* which is translated as public servants or warriors. In a broader, more ethical sense, this function type refers to leaders and guides of people. The battle they fight is against their own lower nature.

The qualities they need to be victorious in this battle are outlined in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*. They should be studied in this light. The *courage* of the *Kshatriya* is needed to conquer his personal interests. His *glory* comes from an impersonal attitude. Wisdom is the reward. Furthermore, he must be *determined* to look at the world with a comprehensive

universal vision. And *mildness* to solve problems in a friendly manner. An unselfish motive is always essential for Râja Yoga. This means dedicating one's own life to help and inspire others. Such a life leads to the purification of one's own consciousness. For when you actively and without self-interest try to help solve the problems of others, this stimulates your own development as well.

The effects of Râja Yoga on the physical body

Practicing Râja Yoga activates powers on the level of the Higher Human Ego and the Spiritual Ego. The Spiritual Ego awakens when you contemplate and live your spiritual ideals. Such *mânasic* activity – in the form of visions, inspirations and impersonal thoughts – establishes the contact with the Higher Human Ego (see the 'Piano-chart' on page 24).

As mentioned before, all egos are interconnected. So practicing Râja Yoga also affects the Animal Ego and the physical body.

The Latin saying 'Mens Sana in Corpore Sano' – a sound mind in a healthy body – is an illustration of the beneficial influence the mind of the Râja yogi has on his physical condition. When your spiritual part is king, the physical body will function more harmoniously. The body resonates in harmony with the energy coming in from the Spiritual and Higher Human Ego. The result is a sound vehicle.

Hatha Yoga practitioners

Hatha Yoga is not just a kind of physical exercise to keep the body fit and sound. The literal translation of the Sanskrit word *hatha* shows us Hatha Yoga is much more than that. *Hatha* is derived from the Sanskrit word *hath*, which means suppress. This implies 'violence' or 'force'. Therefore by practicing this system of yoga the goal is achieving union by force.

The majority of people using Hatha Yoga nowadays are looking for peace of mind and some tranquility in their hectic life. They suffer from the stress of daily life and are looking for a positive remedy. Encouraged by the New Age industry they think that Hatha Yoga will help them to improve their mental, emotional and physical condition and thus develop spirituality, a stronger sense of balance in their lives. They are in general therefore people with a positive attitude.

Technics of Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga is a system which exerts certain influences on

physical and psychic energies by way of certain postures (*Âsanas*) and breathing exercises (*Prânâyâma*).

There is a lot of literature describing the impact of postures on the consciousness. The question however is whether the Physical Ego (physical body), considering its position in the entire composite nature of man, can influence the Higher Human and Spiritual Ego at all. Of course there is through resonance an interchange of energies from 'below to above', but in order to induce energies from those higher egos to flow to the physical body, more is needed than just a certain physical posture.

The physical body is an instrument that sends signals to the higher egos. The more an ego is developed, the less the signals are able to disturb the balance. A certain physical pain for instance may irritate the Personal Ego, but the Higher Human and Spiritual Ego are not affected by it, although through resonance they recognize the signal. Postures may change the energies in the body which may reach the higher egos to some extent but for an effective influence from the higher egos on the Personal Ego, more is needed. As we will find out later, the motive of exercising these *Âsanas* plays an important role.

The true meaning of *Âsana* – to sit quietly – is to eliminate as much as possible any disturbing influences the physical body might have on the Personal Ego, so that the Personal Ego can concentrate completely on the higher egos. Finding a quiet place where you can relax the body is usually sufficient; a specific posture is not important.

Breath control exercises have a far more powerful effect than body postures. The Hatha yogi targets, besides peace of mind, also spiritual development. The Hatha Yoga system he practices however, predominantly stimulates the lower psychic attributes. These attributes are located at the level of the Animal Ego and the lower mind. The Animal Ego lives in the astral world, a world invisible to our physical senses, but certainly not a spiritual world. By practicing breathing exercises, such as *Kumbhaka* and *Rechaka*, some psychic parts, belonging to the field of the Animal Ego, are paralyzed. Some of the vital processes in the body are temporally brought to a standstill, blocking the flow of certain prânic energies from the Animal Ego to the physical body and vice versa.

The motive for Hatha Yoga

Most people do not realize that the motive for practicing any system of yoga, determines the results which will be achieved. This applies of course also for Hatha Yoga. By practicing this system of yoga one makes his consciousness

more sensitive to all sorts of influences. Without an impersonal and unselfish motive, one is particularly more sensitive to all sorts of astral influences active on the plane of the Animal Ego. Someone who practices Hatha Yoga with a personal motive might attract all kinds of dangerous forces. Had he known more about this, he would have thought twice before starting to practice Hatha Yoga.

When the goal for practicing Hatha Yoga is to keep the body fit and healthy, there can be different motives at issue. Is the goal a sound body in order to lead an easy and comfortable life, or does one want a sound body in order to fulfill better the duties in life for the benefit of all mankind? The latter one creates a totally different result than the first one.

Practicing Hatha Yoga for the cultivation of psychic capacities always includes a personal and selfish motive. Especially in (apparent) spiritual affairs, a selfish motive works counterproductive, because a selfish characteristic attracts influences in the astral world with similar characteristics, which eventually may lead to disastrous results.

The effects of Hatha Yoga

In the beginning Hatha Yoga may bring the practitioner some peace of mind. Certain thoughts that torture the Personal Ego are not perceived anymore because the 'downward stream' is closed.

Hatha Yoga however is not without risk, especially when practicing the exercises fanatically and when the motive is to acquire psychic powers. The whole 'energy system' between the lower and higher egos can be disturbed resulting in all kinds of emotional and mental problems. Emotional instability may occur. The Hatha yogi will become oversensitive to many different influences and unfit to control his thoughts.

Physical disease such as tuberculosis may also be a result of this practice.⁽²⁾

Finally – and these are the worst consequences – all sorts of psychological problems may become manifest, in extreme cases severe psychiatric disorders.

From the perspective that man is a composite being this can be easily explained. The breath control exercises cause disturbance of the normal, natural processes. The lower parts of the composite entity become more sensitive to astral and instinctive influences, which originate from the Personal and Animal Ego. The 'antenna', so to speak, is tuned to the lower astral realms, which allows all sorts of astral influences to enter without any control. This creates

disturbances in the psychical processes and it might also cause astral disturbances in the lower mind.

That explains why these exercises are dangerous for the physical and mental health.

One can argue that the results of Hatha Yoga differ only gradually from the use of alcohol and drugs. Both block some aspects in the stream of consciousness flowing from the higher to the lower egos, whereas on the other hand the gates to lower egos, especially the Animal Ego, are opened up in an uncontrolled way. When Hatha Yoga leads to a dominantly passive behavior, it is most likely that the vital flows are blocked: they cannot manifest themselves anymore. When all sorts of 'new' feelings appear, probably a natural restraint has been lifted. In fact those feelings and impressions are not new. They already existed on the animal plane of consciousness but were hidden or kept under control by the Personal Ego.

In some cases people may acquire some powers, which are called now paranormal, by practicing Hatha Yoga and a strict physical ascetic lifestyle. This is caused by an increased sensitivity of the Personal and Animal Ego, which subsequently are opened up to receive certain influences.

To guarantee these influences are pure and spiritual the mind must be impersonal and unselfish with an universal vision and a compassionate motive.

If that is not the case, the Hatha yogi will develop only a limited power to engage consciously on the astral plane with limited effectiveness. However interesting these powers may seem, they are transitory and are lost at death. Considering the dangers involved, one might reconsider if aspiring to these powers is a worthwhile activity.

Hatha Yoga: a medicine in rare cases

One might ask why Hatha Yoga grew so popular despite the serious dangers involved. Both in the West and in India the number of people practicing Hatha Yoga far outnumbers those who practice Râja Yoga. There are also schools which claim to teach Râja Yoga, but in fact they just practice a variant of Hatha Yoga.

An explanation might be that people in present times are more attracted by sensational phenomena and are looking for excitement and joy rather than seriously following the ethical precepts and common sense which are part of the Râja Yoga system. People want quick results. But it is an illusion to think that by a magic trick consciousness can be expanded. That idea comes from the sixties of the last century, and although it was proven wrong many times,

people still believe in it.

That leaves the question how a dangerous system as Hatha Yoga has come into existence. The answer to that question leads us back to the far past when great Râja yogis still taught people more or less openly. Each Guru had his own chelas who were practicing to live the teachings. In some rare cases a chela suffered from physical or psychic problems, which hindered him in his spiritual growth. In such situations the Teacher would prescribe certain Hatha Yoga practices, just as a doctor would prescribe a patient a certain medicine now. These were specific exercises prescribed by a Master intended for a specific pupil and practiced under his supervision. And the chela's motive always was unselfish of course, otherwise a Master would never have accepted him as his pupil. Only in those circumstances those practices could be beneficial and remove some obstacles in the process of growth.

Unfortunately, when the authority of the Râja yogis diminished, the ideas of Hatha Yoga ended up in the hands of less wise people who thought the exercises would be beneficial for everyone. But who would go to a pharmacist and ask for a pound of medicine? This is exactly what happens when an ignorant student asks an ignorant teacher to teach him some Hatha Yoga exercises.

The safe path

As mentioned before, there is a relation between the popularity of Hatha Yoga and the turbulent thoughts and feelings from which many people suffer nowadays. It is an encouraging sign that these people do not just give up in despair but try actively to do something about their problems.

In our opinion it would be better if they first look for the causes of their unrest and stress. They will discover that these feelings and thoughts are always the result of a limited personal view of themselves and the world of which they are a part. When a person identifies himself entirely with the Personal Ego, and lives in the illusion he is separated from the great stream of life, there will always be turmoil, because separateness does not exist. Therefore, if you live in desolation, thinking you are not responsible for others, you may expect a natural reaction. The primary cause of our restlessness lies in our own personal view of the world in which we live and of ourselves. Every selfish desire – also a desire for inner calm – carries in itself the seed of restlessness.

For that reason it would be much better to dedicate the personality to the service of all. That is the principle of Râja

Yoga. The student on that path may sometimes also fall and have feelings of deception, but knowing he is part of a sublime wave of consciousness, makes him forget every false move and disappointment and always inspires him to carry on. This Royal Path is therefore the safe path to union with the Self, a path that everyone can walk.

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Scene from 'Cast away'.

Addiction and attachments

Key thoughts

- » Everyone creates his own reality. The personal man assesses the world from his own inability and believes that in order to break through his habits the help of others (God) is necessary.
- » Addiction is rooted in the personality's lack of confidence.
- » If the means to get rid of your addiction implies that you're raising a new illusion to an absolute truth, then you have created a new dependence.
- » Only a change in mentality leads to liberation of an addiction.
- » There are physical, mental and spiritual addictions.
- » Tools can be used but they only have a limited value.

Nearly a year ago we published an article from Jim and Sally Colbert in our Dutch journal, titled *Theosophy, Alcoholics Anonymous and God*.⁽¹⁾ This started a discussion on the theosophical merits of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and its methods. An actual issue, while this method is in widespread use, not only in the US but also in Europe. The AA method rests on the assumption that you can get rid of your addiction if you surrender to a greater Force or Power, which is located outside yourself and without that Power you are unable to change your life. So, according to AA, belief in an external God is essential to get rid of your addiction. We asked our readers for reactions. Many readers pointed out that the work method of AA is not consistent with theosophical principles. This article examines whether this view is true. To do this we place addiction in a broad context of various attachments.

In the movie *Cast away*⁽²⁾ a man survives an airplane crash and ends up on an uninhabited island. On the island he finds a volleyball. Driven by loneliness he paints a face on that ball, which he calls Wilson. In his lonely existence on the island he talks to the ball with more and more respect; it becomes increasingly important for him. At first he considers Wilson to be a friend, but later the ball becomes a higher power and the man depends on it to find the strength to survive. When he kicks Wilson in the water, because he is not capable of getting him out of his isolation, he quickly regrets this, after which an even stronger relationship develops. Later,

in an attempt to escape, the man has to choose between a self-made raft and Wilson. He chooses for himself and asks Wilson to forgive him. He owes a lot to Wilson. James Colbert introduced the metaphor of Wilson in his contribution at the Convivium in Point Loma in 2012.⁽³⁾ Wilson represents something to which we assign a certain reality, in which we find comfort. We derive a certain status from that object. We make ourselves to some extent dependent on it. 'Wilson's' can be objects, such as a ball. But also habits, or something mental or even spiritual can take the form of a Wilson. Thus,

status at work, alcohol (ab)use or some religion can all be Wilsons. So there are many types of Wilsons possible. The question then arises: when does something become a Wilson? And: are Wilsons acceptable? And if some are, which ones are and which ones aren't? Are Wilsons also subject to change?

In short, this article is about Wilsons. It is about illusion and reality. And these two have everything to do with addiction and attachment.

Objective idealism

Reality and illusion are no isolated things. What is real to one person may be an illusion to another. Also, a certain reality sometimes appears to be illusive and, the other way around, what seemed to be an illusion at first appears to be more real than initially thought.

We're not using illusion here in the meaning of 'something that doesn't exist', but as the concept illusion (Mâyâ) as applied in Indian philosophy. Mâyâ comes from the Sanskrit root *Mâ*, meaning 'to measure'. Mâyâ is that which has been measured.

Everything that can be measured – so every phenomenon – exists as an illusion. It has a beginning and therefore an end. It is not enduring. It exists by the power of something else. As a shadow exists because something else projects that shadow, every phenomenon exists as a reflection of something else. There's something that works behind or through it.

The meaning and the value of a phenomenon are determined by the human consciousness. In this way everyone makes his own reality, which is called objective idealism. The objects (phenomena) are interpreted by the ideas (consciousness) of men. In other words: something is true as long as the observer assigns reality to it.

In the Vedas this objective idealism is explained by the well-known example of a man who comes home at dusk and gets startled by a snake. After closer inspection however, it turns out to be a coiled rope instead of a snake. But his consciousness assigned truth to it as being a snake. For him the rope *was* a snake at that time. That moment therefore, his fear was as real as if he had seen a real snake. Thus, reality is that which one identifies with. Everyone makes his own reality.

Wilsons

The 'Wilson' in the movie *Cast Away* can be explained in the same way as the perceiving consciousness interpreted the rope to be a snake. The lonely man on the uninhabited

island assigned the reality of a living being to a dead ball. To him, that ball *was* his friend. His grief when he lost the ball was just as deep as if Wilson would have lived for real. In fact, there is no difference between Wilson in the movie and the coiled rope in which someone sees a snake. In both cases, reality is granted to an illusion.

A lot of people have their own Wilson. A toddler has his teddy bear with whom he talks and without whom he cannot sleep. An employee needs his coffee in the morning, without which he cannot start working cheerfully. Other people need their cigarette, or they will become very cranky. Another person meditates and needs incense and a candle to do this; otherwise he won't succeed to come in a certain mood and think spiritual thoughts. And may we not, in this context, mention our self-made god, who gives so much strength that you are able to resist a drink? What's wrong with a Wilson? Even though it is an illusion, when it provides support and gives you the strength to manage life, then this illusion helps you to go on with your life. Or does a Wilson also have disadvantages?

Before we can answer that question, we will first examine how a Wilson comes into being.

Why do we create Wilsons?

Why does someone need a Wilson? Why does someone regenerate an illusory image to such a comprehensive reality that he cannot live without it? The solution to this crucial issue lies, in our opinion, in the composite constitution of man.

In the human consciousness one may distinguish at least two forces that at times work together harmoniously but at other times work against each another. In the last case it may happen that one force becomes so strong that the other one is not noticeable.

We are talking about what you may call the *personal* and *impersonal* consciousness. The personal consciousness is that which focuses on and identifies with the outside: with the body, the feelings and selfish thoughts: in short, the personality. This personality believes that it is separated from others. It hardly realizes or doesn't realize at all that it is connected with others.

The impersonal force is more universal. If this force is dominant in our consciousness, then we see the connections, and we place our own personality in a broader perspective.

The personal aspect has a much smaller range. It sees and experiences less. You can compare it with a man in a valley, whose view is limited by the slopes of the mountains. The

impersonal human thinker, on the other hand, stands on the top of a mountain and has a much wider view. While the personal man sees the valley as the only reality, the impersonal man oversees numerous mountains and valleys. The capabilities and possibilities of the impersonal man are of course also much bigger.

The personal man thinks *anthropomorphically*. That is to say, he takes himself as a starting point. He judges the world from his own inability, and believes that in order to break through his habits, he will need the help of others. He assigns to himself the reality of a powerless being. He believes that he is not capable of doing anything good. Due to this supposed impotence Wilsons are being born. The seemingly impotent personal thinker places the solution to his problems outside himself and projects, as it were, a part of his own consciousness and abilities into something he has made himself, and makes himself dependent on this.

Where does addiction reside?

It may sound weird, but addiction originates from the same psychological phenomenon as the emergence of Wilsons. A person is addicted when he can no longer live without something: alcohol, drugs, gluttony, gambling, sports or whatever. Of course he does not really need these things. In fact, he imagines or believes he needs these things. He is not capable of reaching the deeper layers of his consciousness that *know* that for a harmonious and meaningful life these things are not necessary at all, but are rather a hindrance.

There are several kinds of addiction. It may be a physical, mental or even a spiritual addiction. In an addiction, the focus on a desired object is so strong that one loses control over himself. That is true, whether the desired object is something physical, mental or spiritual. We may mention coffee (physical), power over another person (mental), or meditating an hour every day (spiritual). Characteristically, the desire is always so dominant that it *casts away* other, impersonal aspects. Often the addict realizes that by succumbing to his addiction, he will throw himself into misery. But he is too weak to resist the temptation.

Addiction may also occur when someone can no longer cope with the situation in which he finds himself. He experiences that situation as mentally or physically painful and he flees.

Addiction can take crazy forms. When you feel worthless, and you think that you will give yourself a certain status by some sort of illness, you can even get addicted to a

disease. Then you are proud of the number of pills you take and your unending visits to different doctors.

Yet all these forms of addiction have something in common. It is the *personal* part of us that is addicted, just as the personal man creates his Wilson. Addiction always originates from an illusory view on life.

Addiction is rooted in the personality's lack of confidence. The influence from the impersonal layers of the consciousness is blocked. You even deny that you have those higher aspects. You think that you only possess the personal abilities. You're in the valley and you have no idea that the mountains have peaks you can reach.

As soon as you no longer trust yourself, you feel impotent to resist a temptation (alcohol, drugs, gluttony, gambling) even though you know that it's going to cause you a lot of misery. A downward spiral will set in. You'll crawl even more in your personal self and tend to eliminate all impersonal influence. When you are drunk the first time, you'll often feel ashamed when you are sober. But as you're getting used to drink, the shame disappears. The corrective effect of the impersonal Self is no longer noticed.

The solution for addiction

The only sustainable cure for addiction is regaining control of yourself. And you achieve that by living in the impersonal part of your consciousness. Actually, you will only get control over your personality when you assign more reality to your higher aspects. Somehow, some sort of awareness should sink in, that succumbing to personal desires is the same as assigning reality to an illusion. When you experience the reality of your own mental powers, the focus on the lower aspects will disappear and this will kill the *roots* of addiction. Only a radical change in your patterns of thinking will solve addiction.

Such a solution is certainly not easy. Everyone who offers an easy solution to the problem of addiction has a poor understanding of the human consciousness. After all, a pattern of habits has been built up during a lifetime, or perhaps during many lifetimes. The consciousness has nourished certain thoughts and feelings for a long time. Long cherished thoughts and desires have become strong entities that will not just disappear. For a long time they will harass the man who is changing his patterns of thinking. This is why it is often advisable for an addicted person to change his environment, so that he will no longer be reminded of his addiction. A busy day schedule may help to prevent old thoughts from coming back. Yet these will always come back, cyclically. Time and again you

should deal with these thoughts by thinking different kinds of thoughts. Eventually the thought cycles, the periods between the recurring thoughts, gradually become bigger and finally dissolve.

Perseverance, continuously focusing on the impersonal side of your consciousness, is the only way to overcome these thoughts. Do not 'fight' them; forget them by replacing them with something better.

Can Wilson help you to change your mentality?

You might be tempted to assume that if you can get rid of your addiction by using a Wilson this is a step in the right direction. Although you have made yourself dependent again upon an illusion emanated from the personality, if this one is socially more accepted and it enables you to pick up your social life in a more normal way, then very few people will object to it. For instance, it will be considered as a step forward when you swap drugs for cigarettes. And if you can stay away from cigarettes, even though you'll start eating sweets, then it's also easily accepted.

However, we think that the goal never justifies the means. If you create an illusion of an absolute truth to get rid of your addiction, then you have created a new, perhaps even stronger dependence that, in the long term – perhaps in subsequent incarnations – may lead to even greater problems. We refer here especially to the belief in a personal god.

You may ask: what is wrong with cherishing a certain idea in order to get rid of a disease, even though that idea leads to a new, albeit less serious ailment. If you believe in temporary solutions, you can answer, "there is nothing wrong with that". But is this ailment actually less serious, or will it cause unforeseeable consequences in the future? Of course, someone who is liberated from his alcohol addiction with the help of a belief in an external god, can lead a better social life than when he was sloshed every day. But does it also help in the long run?

When you learn to play the guitar, you can sometimes make quick progress when you teach yourself a wrong posture. You feel unable to get your fingers in a certain position, but by forcing your hand, you succeed. This works nicely until after some time this wrong technique injures your hand, making it impossible for you to learn more difficult chords. Yes, perhaps you will not even be able any more to play the chords you formerly played with ease. The apparent progress turned out to be temporary and disadvantageous in the long run.

Is surrendering to God a change in mentality?

If no real change in attitude has taken place, then the release of an old addiction will quickly lead to a new one. An illustrative example is the famous English guitar player Eric Clapton. After he set himself free from his heroin addiction, he became addicted to alcohol. He managed to overcome that addiction by first going into a rehab clinic and subsequently following an AA program focused on faith in God. But, as he writes in his autobiography, he was only then really able to control his addiction, when he *surrendered*. He knew he would not make it on his own and asked for help. "... getting down to my knees, I surrendered".⁽⁴⁾

But has his tendency to addiction now disappeared? Or is it more probable that in a next life Eric Clapton, besides his great musical talent, again inherits his tendency to addiction? Has his faith in God brought him any further? The belief in forces existing outside of a human has, through the ages, caused a lot of misery in individual lives and among entire nations. That misery becomes even greater when one's happiness depends on it.

When an alcoholic loses his addiction through faith in God, he is still dependent on something outside of him. No opening has been made through which the influences of the higher man can flow. You are thrown back again to your lower self, living in the delusion that only an external god can bring something good.

Suppose that at some point in your life the faith in God that has freed you from your addiction, begins to falter. That is certainly not an unlikely event, because human reason cannot be disabled permanently. When you start to doubt the existence of a supreme God by several reasonable arguments, what emerges is the realization that after the original addiction nothing essential has changed in your consciousness. So, it is most likely that you will be drawn back to the same addiction as you believed yourself to have overcome.

A corollary is that someone's addictive belief leads one to impose his belief on others. In the case of addiction this means that you are attempting to force others to rehab according to your method. Such behavior is certain to preclude enduring results.

The word 'god' is a very broad term, which may include many different things. If you see God more as a force in yourself, as something that you are a part of, then you realize that you have the abilities to achieve whatever you want. If you conduct your rehabilitation with such

spiritual awareness, you will translate your 'dedication to God' in a dedication to your divine thoughts and to your responsibilities towards your fellow men. Then you will be motivated fully to take on your responsibilities in this life.

Hierarchy of addiction

If you look at addiction from a broader perspective, it appears that there is practically no one who is not addicted in some way or another. Everyone has his attachments and the boundary line between attachment and addiction is extremely thin. Regarding addicts as a completely separate group is therefore not justified. Just as criminals aren't completely different from the 'good citizens' who often refrain from stealing only out of fear of going to prison, people being addicted to alcohol or drugs are often not essentially different from their fellow men. Addiction is a somewhat heavier form of attachment, which furthermore causes a certain social rejection, especially when the laws of a country have prohibited that specific drug, as is the case in many countries. Therefore one often thinks that drugs are a bigger problem than for example alcohol and gambling.

But are not many of us attached to our habits, to our Wilsons? The inevitable cup of tea with a chocolate that must be consumed when you watch television: is that not a form of addiction?

When you take a closer look at the types of addiction, you can distinguish a hierarchy of addictions: physical, mental and spiritual. The physical ones are usually the easiest ones to identify. Your body wants something and does not feel good if it does not get it. In fact, here is also a mental component: your thoughts circle around your body. In your mind, you identify yourself with your body. You must therefore substitute these thoughts for other ones, if you want to get rid of this addiction.

Mental addiction is often more difficult to overcome because, due to its subtle nature, it is more difficult to recognize. Each time when the mental image to which you are addicted pops up again, you have to divert your attention from it by thinking another image or thought. Spiritual addiction is the most difficult one to overcome, because it is very subtle. It originates when someone is attached to his own spirituality, for example when he is spiritually self-sufficient. He neglects his social relations and issues, because he doesn't want to leave his own spiritual, blissful world. It is this type of addiction that leads to what Theosophy calls 'spiritual selfishness'. It is the practice of spirituality for one's own well-being.

The relative value of Wilsons

Anyone who observes himself honestly sees his own attachments and knows that these differ only in intensity from the obsessions of an addict. Everybody has his path of struggle, leading eventually to an independence from all earthly attractions.

In fact, the entire human evolution is an increasing detachment from the illusions of physical life. Phase after phase you will live more concordant with the Truth. As long as you have not reached this complete liberation, you will be more or less trapped in the maze of material existence.

Everyone has to find his own way through that labyrinth. It doesn't suit us to judge other people. But we should help one another, be compassionate to each other.

When people create their Wilson it is of course their own responsibility. Although it is never necessary to follow the difficult road, people learn sometimes by trial and error. It may be that someone is actively trying to improve his life, to make it more universal. Perhaps he deliberately allows temporary Wilsons, now and then, although knowing that these personal attachments will have to be overcome at some later date. Perhaps he thinks that presently these Wilsons will not harm anybody, while at this specific time it would cost him a lot of extra energy to tackle them.

Presumably, a lot of people who are sincerely working on improving their lives have a number of Wilsons. They should try to keep their dependence on them to a minimum. Let them keep the steering wheel in their own hands.

Self-knowledge is crucial here. When you learn to observe yourself from your impersonal consciousness, it is as if you look at someone else. From this viewpoint you are better able to recognize your own limitations and your own Wilsons. You will be able consciously to decide which Wilsons you choose to keep and how you can get rid of them during the course of your life. When a toddler learns to ride a bike, it is sometimes helpful to use training wheels. When the child progresses, parents can take off the training wheels. By this kind of self-examination you can evaluate your own Wilsons and establish a plan to let them go when they no longer serve.

Here is an example: suppose you need a certain type of entertainment in order to relax. At a certain time of the day you like to lie on the couch and watch a television show. When you observe yourself from an impersonal angle, you know that this TV program certainly does not contribute to your development, nor will it lead to a more

harmonious world. Yet, if you do not watch that program, you may not feel as well as you would like. You can then decide to maintain this Wilson for the time being while making plans to get rid of it or to replace it with another activity that is more in line with your own spiritual ideal. Besides, overcoming these Wilsons should not be the ultimate goal in life, because that only leads to the already mentioned spiritual selfishness. You should, according to theosophical standards, serve humanity rather than working to eliminate all your Wilsons.

The impersonal man also has his limitations and may have Wilsons as well. But because his insight is much broader than that of the personal man, he understands the relative merits of each and does not give them an absolute value. Indeed all tools only have a temporary value. This is beautifully illustrated by a metaphor from the Mahâyâna Buddhism. Herein the spiritual state of consciousness (Nirvâna) is presented as 'the other shore.' In order to reach the other shore, you need a raft. But when you're on the other shore, you will have to leave the raft behind. You should not take it with you, because then, instead of it being a tool, it will become a burden.

Free will

Only when people learn to understand the nature of their thinking, they can genuinely change. Therefore, the first prerequisite for overcoming any addiction is always that you start to understand your own situation. Others cannot impose this insight. It comes from within. It comes when people, by their free will, *dare* to contemplate their own mental condition.

The next phase is to work on change. You will effectively change when you have the confidence that the solution to the problem lays within you. This insight too can only arise by using your own free will.

The experience of your own inner god will provide a much better and more sustainable solution for addiction than the belief in something outside of you. If the AA program would assume an *inner* god instead of an external god, the results of the work would be much more enduring. (See box 'Key thoughts on a theosophical AA program'.) Free will is essential for each detachment process. Subsequently the realization arises that we have the means to solve any problem, and can live as spiritual free beings according to the Truth in ourselves. That is why a Wilson can, at most, only provide a temporary or a false solution.

Key thoughts on a theosophical AA program

One of our readers sent us this – a not yet elaborated – theosophical AA program.

Recognition of the problem

I acknowledge the fact that I've become dependent on alcohol and am therefore addicted. My life has run out of control because my craving for alcohol determines my thoughts and actions.

Insight into the problem

My character is the result of the characteristics of my thoughts. The shortcomings in my character are the result of admitting wrong thoughts growing in my mind. I see that my lower, animal nature has prevailed at the expense of my Higher Self, which is what I am in reality. By giving in to my drinking impulses, I built a habit that continually became stronger and which finally took over my life. Because I identified myself so strongly with my lower nature, it was impossible for me to experience the influence of my Higher Self.

The solution

I will not find the solution in my lower nature. There is only one way to solve this problem, and that is to identify myself with what I really am: a spiritual-divine being with inherent, infinite powers. This will change my way of thinking and thus my character. I will focus my thoughts on my higher aspects of thinking and will consequently become receptive to the influence of my Higher Self.

Finally

Now that I have seen and experienced that it is possible to raise my thoughts, actions and my life to a higher spiritual level, I will do everything in my power to help others with the same or other problems by sharing this knowledge and when needed to be there for those who need support.

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Observations

Organ donation

On October 22 of last year the Dutch Government launched a new campaign to encourage all Dutch people to register themselves as organ donors. The project however suffered a bad start as a recent high profile case in Denmark made organ donation subject of a controversial discussion in that country.

What are the facts?

A 19-year-old woman fell into a deep coma after a car accident. A doctor asked the parents' permission to remove the organs. According to him there was not the slightest hope of a miracle. The doctor argued that if the young woman would survive, she would certainly remain in a vegetative state for the rest of her life.

But what happened? When they disconnected her from the respiratory support machine the young woman didn't die: 24 hours later she woke up. Since that moment a year has passed, and she is now able to walk, talk and even ride a horse. The only problem she appears to have is with her short-term memory, which may have been avoided if the doctors had treated her as a survivor instead of as a potential donor.

This remarkable story was filmed and broadcasted by Danish public television. It evoked a tremendous number of reactions in Denmark. People who had registered themselves as a donor, signed out. The Minister for Healthcare announced plans to strengthen the rules: the procedure to take out the organs may only begin after brain death is diagnosed. Physicians of course protested against such change, because in their opinion they would lose precious time.

In the Netherlands, the government continues to urge people to register as a donor. Commercials are used to attempt to popularize joining the Organ Donor Registry. These commercials attempt to appeal to the emotions, even suggesting that the people are selfish if they don't want to donate their organs after their death.

Though not easy to find, there are different opinions available. A recent article in the leading Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant*,⁽¹⁾ with the meaningful title: "Man is not a

box from which you may pick what you need", mentions some good arguments against organ donation. These are similar to those based on the principles of the Theosophia, which we have used for decades in our communications about the subject.

Brain death

The case in Denmark is not unique. One may wonder how many men and women would still be alive, if doctors had not taken out their organs prematurely. A protocol does exist wherein organs may only be taken out after brain death has been established. But brain death is a rather vague term and difficult to apply. Before the first organ transplantations took place, the term didn't even exist. It was invented by physicians from Harvard University to make organ transplantations palatable to the public. It would have been unacceptable if the general public thought that organs from dying – i.e., still living – humans were being transplanted. By introducing the term 'brain dead' it would seem to the public that the donor was already dead. Waiting for the heart to stop beating strongly shortens the time available for transplantation.

Brain death is defined as the irreversible cessation of all brain activity. However, there are cases describing the factual story of people who came back to life, although they were diagnosed as brain dead. In fact it cannot be said that they 'came back to life', because they had never died. The proposition that brain death is irreversible is therefore not true. Brain death suggests that the brain died, but apparently that's not the case. There are people of the medical profession who refer to a brain dead person as a 'mechanically ventilated corpse'.

There is a case of a pregnant so-called brain dead woman of whom the baby in her womb kept growing. The baby eventually was born after a Caesarean section. How can a 'corpse' bear a healthy baby? In short, organs are sometimes taken away while the donor is not dead yet. In the interest of full disclosure to the public, these cases should also be published by the authorities and the organ donation lobby.

Objections against organ donation

The quintessential problem of organ donation is rooted

in our view on life and death. If you think that life is the product of matter, you will be inclined to look at your body as a kind of machine that, like an old car on the junkyard, may be used to supply spare parts to other machines. But if you see a body as a living instrument that is used by a human being – call it the soul or the consciousness if you like – it is the living expression of that inner man.

Therefore the building blocks of the body – the cells and atoms – are not dead material. Though they don't have *self*-consciousness, like human beings, they are living entities. They belong to us. Their characteristics are similar to those of the human being they belong to. There is cooperation between the human consciousness and these building blocks. We need them to build up our vehicle, and they need us, because we provide the 'vital field' they live in. We are their universe in which they live, grow and have their being.

In several articles published in our Dutch magazine *Lucifer – the Messenger of Light* we have provided a large number of arguments against organ donation. These can be summarized as follows:

Objections for the donor

- It is impossible to ascertain by medical means when somebody has died. The diagnosis of brain death does not guarantee that someone is dead.
- During the process of dying the human soul has a panoramic vision — a very clear review of the past life. By removing organs, this panoramic vision may be severely disturbed.
- The deceased enchains himself to a person who receives his organ: a person who might be totally unknown to him. As a consequence, the process of dying may be delayed. Moreover, he creates a karmic bond with someone else, which will inevitably have its consequences in a future life.

Objections for the receiver

- By implanting a new organ the receiver also adopts some of the characteristics of the donor. Many of such cases are known. It has been established by scientists that an organ has its own memory function. This may result in severe psychological problems.
- The body always attempts to reject the foreign organ. For the rest of his life the receiver of the organ will depend on heavy medication to counteract this rejection. Organ transplantations are not a cure: you remain ill. Because of the medicines, the recipient

has an increased susceptibility to infections as well as tumor growth. Another important warning is that the operation may fail. So in the case of a heart or liver transplantation, the patient may die immediately.

- You do not get the chance to work out your disease, which may handicap your future life.

Theosophy does not prescribe any strict rules of conduct. Each person should choose what he thinks is the best in accordance with his own conscience. But we strongly believe that in the case of organ donation the information provided by the government and its institutions is largely incomplete and utterly subjective. On an issue that is so very important from an ethical perspective as organ donation one can only make the right decision when all information is available.

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Questions & Answers

Binary stars

In *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy* G. de Purucker⁽¹⁾ states that the so-called star-doubles 'form a septenary system which, like our own sun, have a lower single sun, or lower fourth-plane sun, just as our own physical sun is'. But on the same page the author says that in our time we can only see one sun, the lowest in degree. Those two statements seem a contradiction to me. Can you explain this?

Answer

The major difference between the theosophical vision on the Universe and the growing scientific knowledge is that the Theosophia considers the world that we can observe with our senses to be one of the various 'cross-sections' of the Universe. Our material world is one of many. All scientific discoveries are within the realm of this material world. But the Theosophia acknowledges many other worlds. The so-called binary stars fit perfectly into this concept.

According to science, binary stars are two suns orbiting around a common 'centre of mass', a term from physics for the virtual mass centre of the whole system, lying somewhere between the two rotating suns. Those star systems are also called star doubles – as dr. De Purucker does – but this term is also applied to the so-called 'optical binary stars', which are not really binary stars, but viewed from the earth appear close together in the sky. Binary stars, however, have a common center.

There are all kinds of binary stars. One star may be much larger than the other. Matter may transfer from one star to another. There are also 'eclipsing binaries'. In this case, the orbiting plane of the two stars lies in the line of our sight so that the two stars periodically eclipse each other and seem to be one star. In fact, at that moment one is standing exactly behind the other, seen from our position in space.

The number of binaries is so great, that you may state that they are rather rule

than exception. Scientists estimate that about sixty percent of all the stars are part of a binary system.

Different worlds

The fact that there are so many binary stars fits wonderfully in the theosophical teachings about stars. As stated before, according to the Theosophia the Universe does not just consist of our observable world, but of many other worlds or spheres. Because these worlds are built from substances with completely different characteristics, we cannot perceive them.

Compare it with electromagnetic vibrations. There are such vibrations with a higher and lower frequency than visible light — such as, respectively, gamma radiation and infrared rays. It's not hard to imagine that there are vibrations with a frequency that cannot be registered by any instrument. So there are worlds that we cannot perceive at all. The Theosophia distinguishes four (or seven) different worlds. These four worlds correspond to what in Ancient Times was called Earth, Water, Fire and Air. Each of these worlds has its own suns and planets with their inhabitants.

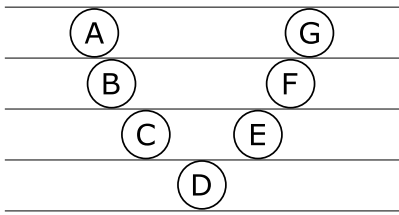
Planetary chain

Theosophia teaches that everything is connected to each other. Nothing exists in complete isolation. That means that a star or planet on one plane has a close relation with stars and planets on another plane.

Take for instance our planet Earth. This blue globe is a part of a sevenfold 'chain' of globes. These globes function as a unity. They work together and are mutually dependent on each other.



Eclipsing binary stars (in the Large Magellanic Cloud) called OGLE-LMC-CEP0227.



We live on globe D. That is the well-known blue planet Earth. As you can see on the illustration, globe D is the lowest of the chain. It is on the lowest of the four substantial sections, planes or worlds. Globe C and E are on a plane that is more spiritual and ethereal; Globe B and F, and A and G are 'above' this world. Of course the word 'above' is not correct, for this drawing is only a schematic view. These worlds and globes are interwoven. Just like radio waves can cross through walls and doors, these worlds penetrate each other. Instead of 'above' and 'below' it would be better to speak of 'inner' and 'outer' or more or less ethereal spheres of being. S

o, the theosophical term 'planetary chain' should not be taken literally: the term is meant to convey the idea of a 'cluster of closely connected globes', occupying almost the same space, and embodied on four different planes of existence.

Sevenfold suns

Everything in nature is built according to the same patterns. So not only a

planet is a chain of seven globes, but also a sun. The globes of our daystar correspond to the planes of the globes of for instance the earth-chain.

The scheme of the seven globes of a planet therefore is also applicable for a sun. That's why, living on Globe D of the earth-chain, we only see one sun. And for the same reason the inhabitants of the other globes of the Earth see two suns: the ones that correspond to the planes of the globe on which they live.

Question

But how is it possible that, living in a world where there is only one globe, we can see binary stars?

Answer

The globes A and G of a sun-chain are not necessarily on the same plane as the globes A and G of our sun-chain. Those globes may be on a higher or lower plane. The globes A and G, or B and F, or C and E of a particular star may live and exist in the world where in our solar system the globes D of the different planets and the sun are located. Hence, we see two stars close to each other orbiting a similar spot. That is exactly what scientists call binary stars.

Question

Are the globes that are on the same plane – for instance Globe C and E – identical?

Answer

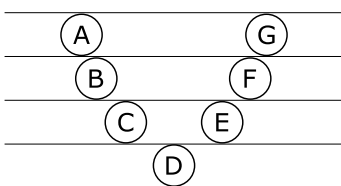
No, they are not. They also fulfill a different function in the whole system. A planetary chain as a unity is the vehicle for the multitudes of entities who must gain experiences on these globes in order to learn, grow and climb in the hierarchy of life. The Theosophia speaks about a life-wave – or various life-waves – that makes a journey over the entire planetary chain. This life-wave does not only consist of the Human Kingdom, but also includes the Animal, Plant, and even the Divine Kingdoms.

In this evolutionary process the globes A, B and C form the descending arc. Globe E, F and G are the ascending arc. Through these globes entities will go back to the spiritual worlds, from where they originated.

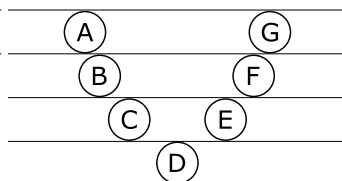
When the multitudes of entities have passed through a globe, it enters into a state of obscurity. That means that a particular globe slumbers or sleeps. It rests. The life-wave goes to the next globe, until finally globe G is reached. Then there is a long period of rest, after which the life-wave will again descend to Globe A. Round two starts. And there are seven Rounds.

Solar chains function just like planetary chains. So globe C of a star may be in obscurity, whereas Globe E

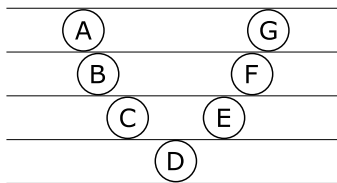
Planetary chain Earth



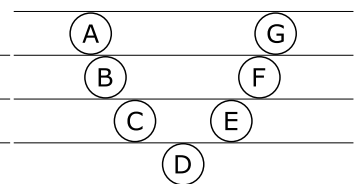
Chain of a star



Chain of a star



Chain of a star



is full of life. This is likely the case in many binary stars.

Question

Is this the reason why in a binary star one sun may absorb the energies of the other?

Answer

It might well be so.

In fact, all the stars we are able to observe have only one thing in common: they are in the same material world as we are. That's why we can perceive them. But their position within their sevenfold 'chain' may differ. They may be Globe D in their chain — then they are not a binary star but a single star. They may be in the descending or the ascending arc. They may be in the first Round — then they are young stars. They may be in the seventh Round — then they are old. They may be in obscurity, or they may be dying.

That's why there are many types of binaries. One of the component suns may be much weaker than the other, so that our telescopes can hardly register it. For example: our brightest star in the night sky, Sirius, is accompanied by a much smaller star, which is baptized Sirius B.

The distance between the two stars of a binary may also vary, as well as their relative positions, viewed from our Earth. In some binaries the distance and position angle change very quickly. You can notice that already within a few years.

Although astronomers have gathered a lot of data about binary stars, they are the first to admit that we know very little about them. Considering the fact that we can only observe our plane of the Universe, it should be obvious that 'the greatest part' is not known at all. But one thing is clear: just like in the human world there is a great variety of

people, there is a stupendous richness of all kinds of stars and star systems. Countless entities — stars — follow their own course of evolution, in which they work intensively with other cosmical beings. In the living Cosmos cooperation and mutual dependency is the norm.

Reference

1. G. de Purucker, *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*. Point Loma Publications, San Diego 1990, Ch. 41, p. 455.

Practical examples of emanation, spiritually and physically

Question

In ecology, the idea of a 'biotope' plays an important role. How would you explain the existence of biotopes?

Answer

A biotope is a very interesting phenomenon in nature. A biotope is an area with uniform living conditions (e.g. a forest or marshland or desert area) in which certain plants and animals can thrive, because they are in harmony with their environment. It is their natural habitat. There they are able to grow.

If we give this some thought, the concept becomes broader and more dynamic. If we create the right circumstances, the corresponding animal or plant appears naturally. There is clearly a mutual attraction between different types of beings, creating living conditions for one another. However, there is a crucial boundary. For example, if we create a square meter of some biotope, we will probably not attract one single being, because the minimal condition, in this case the minimum size, is not met.

This example of mutual attraction and

cooperation is an aspect or part of the concept of 'emanation'. The biotopes in nature clearly illustrate that beings in equal or even different phases of development have a stimulating influence on one another, more than that, they create a necessary cooperation. This cooperation provides them with the mutual opportunity to gain experience and work towards inner growth. Once again this proves that growth or development is not possible by living alone. It is an illusion to think we are separate from one another.

Question

What do you mean by 'emanation'?

Answer

'Emanation' is a Latin compound meaning 'the flowing out' of what is within. Each embodying being emanates a characteristic 'sphere' or 'force field' to which lesser developed beings are attracted, thus forming his body. In this force field, the lesser developed beings find the appropriate habitat to develop themselves.

This concept of emanation is a very fundamental idea in The Secret Doctrine of H.P. Blavatsky, and in the philosophy of Plato, the Neo-Platonist Plotinus and his teacher Ammonius Saccas. An example is the planetary being Earth, creating an appropriate environment for all the other beings within our planet, among others we ourselves. Another example is we ourselves, we human Egos, who create a 'consciousness field' to which the atoms of our body are drawn. Our birth is an emanation process.

Question

So, emanation is the attraction of lower beings by some further developed being?

Answer

That is only one aspect. It is a mutual

attraction. If we consider the biological example of a habitat from a fundamental standpoint, then we can say that lower, less developed beings are able to attract higher, further developed beings, although they cannot demand cooperation. How do you attract higher beings, for instance great spiritual teachers? By being open to them, by being a qualified spiritual biotope, by developing corresponding spiritual qualities within your own sphere. In that way you establish connections, and strengthen existing connections. 'Developing spiritual qualities' means: to be these qualities in the core of your being. False pretenses or wrong motives do not work.

Question

Are we really capable of making our character more spiritual?

Answer

Of course we can, every being has endless capabilities in itself. Every form of good education is based on this principle. It creates an environment that evokes one's higher characteristics. Not by rules and regulations or memorizing facts, but by showing someone the way to his own conscience (our wisdom from past incarnations).

In a good learning environment there is always a dynamic balance between providing space and stimulation. In a sense it is easier if someone tells us exactly what to do, than when we are told which goal we need to achieve and what the important factors are. In the latter case we have to use our own inner abilities to fulfill the ideal — while taking the responsibility for the consequences.

These aspects of the universal teaching of emanation sketch us a picture of a 'dynamic spiritual biotope': the attraction of beings who explore the given

possibilities themselves. We can find many examples of this, in nature as well as in our daily lives. For example: do we play a protective role for people that are attracted to our culture, to our 'biotope'? In our society you can clearly see comparable processes taking place, that can be solved with compassion — by living for the whole and not for yourself alone.

Question

You mentioned birth as an example of emanation. What is the role of the reproductive cells of both parents?

Answer

Indeed, birth is an emanation process. You can find the same principles of cooperation in the human birth process. And about your question concerning the reproductive cells: our reproductive cells are incarnations of universal stem cells that belong to other persons, at least most of them are not our own. Since we have built up karmic relations with other people, these cells incarnate in our body, although they do not belong to our own cells. Why doesn't our body reject these reproductive cells, while other foreign cells are forcefully rejected? Why does our body protect them, and is even actively stimulating their growth?

From a biological standpoint, the mother protects the mature egg against her own immune responses by wrapping the egg in a firm layer of cells. She is able to allow her own cells to play a protective role for the benefit of foreign cells, in this case the universal, reproductive cells.

What kind of (spiritual) sphere or biotope is created between parent and reincarnating Ego, so that the mother is able to play host for the cell-beings of the reincarnating Ego? It is a dynamic cooperation with two aspects: on

the one hand providing room to other beings, on the other hand challenging them to use the possibilities for growth themselves. The mother's body protects the embryo against rejection (we do not yet know exactly how this works). At the same time it appears that the vitality of the embryo has to be strong enough to develop into a healthy baby within the influential sphere of the mother. Compare this with a comet that is finding its place within a solar system, and needs to find its balance between its own characteristics and the dominating characteristics in that system, between its powers and the powers in that system.

Symposium I.S.I.S. Foundation on 25/26 May 2013

Practical spirituality: beyond matter, in society

Two days of shining the spotlight on COMPASSION

What is practical spirituality?

Spirituality is 'hot'. There are many courses and books available. But how do you find your way through all of this information? Is this something you are able to do *yourself* or should you rely on others?

Above all there is the question *why* you should live spiritually. Is spirituality too 'woolly' and of no practical use or is living spiritually the answer to all of life's problems?

Finding answers

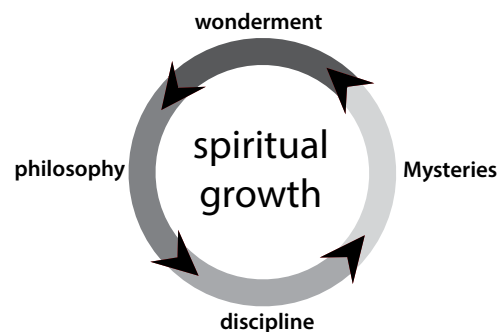
In order to be able to find answers to all of these questions, the I.S.I.S. Foundation has organized a symposium about practical spirituality on **Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May 2013**.

There is more than just the spiritual and the material World. Spirit is sometimes depicted as the wind, invisible for our eyes. But not everything that we cannot see, hear or touch is spiritual. Where does the material end and where does the spiritual start? How do we make the distinction between unpractical woollyness and clear practical spirituality? There is a clear standard that can be used to discriminate between true and false spirituality.

Structure of the symposium

During the two days, we will follow a cycle that those who grow spiritually can recognize and will repeat again and again.

That spiritual growth evolves according to this cycle:



During the symposium you will be able to examine this cycle of spiritual growth and find the answers to your questions yourself.

Pass on your knowledge

When you discover spirituality in yourself, and awaken and apply it, then you are an example and an inspiration to others. You follow in the footsteps of the Teachers and the Sages of the history of mankind. You master matter, but out of *compassion* you work in society. What could be more practical than that?

Where and when

On 25 and 26 May in The Hague (International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Kortenaerkade 12, The Hague, The Netherlands). On both days there are lectures, workshops and the opportunity to exchange ideas. The working languages are both English and Dutch; the lectures will be translated simultaneously.

**The program for the I.S.I.S foundation symposium 2013 will follow soon,
check our website: <http://www.isis-foundation.org/symposium/>**

Lucifer®

Colophon

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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 Theo-sophia. (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.

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 activities of the I.S.I.S. Foundation 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)