

*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

Theosophy's rightful place

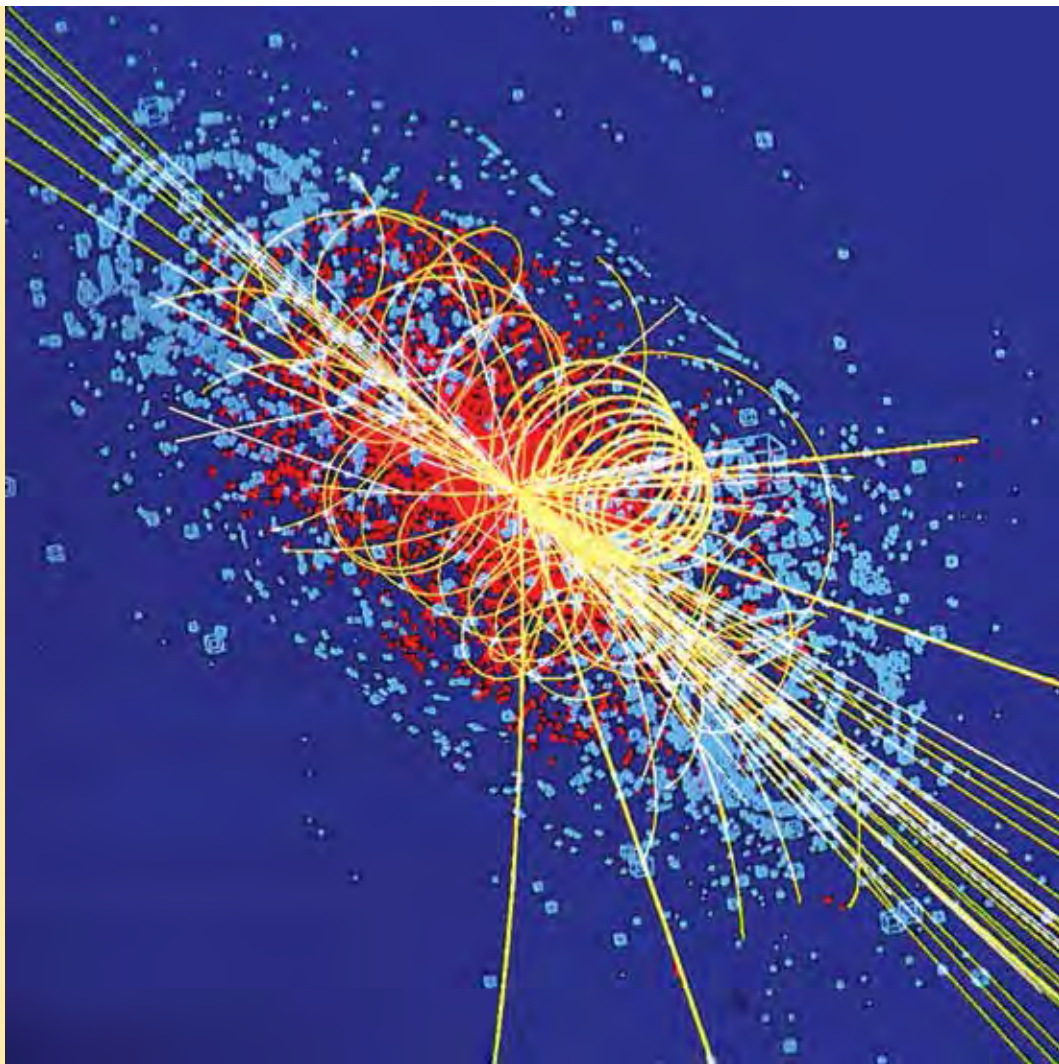
Spiritual progress in Kali-Yuga

Repentance works?

Brotherhood and sisterhood?

From Higgs-particle to Theosophia

The role of the poles



Cover illustration:

Photograph of the trails of atomic particles after their collision in a particle accelerator. In these large instruments, the particles are pushed up to inconceivable speed. After their collision, they transform into a fountain of other particles. Thus indications have been found for the existence of a 'Higgs-particle'.

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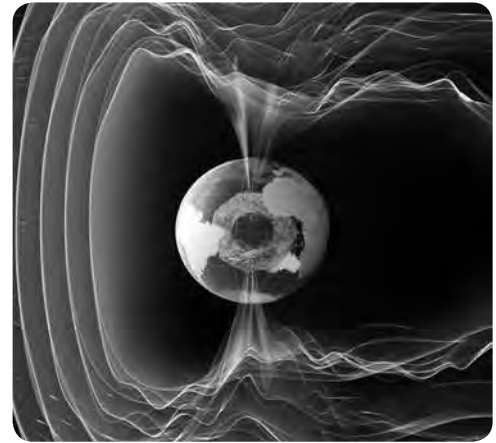
The indissoluble logic of cause and effect is a grand inner incentive towards a noble life.

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Brotherhood and sisterhood? 97

The main aim of The Theosophical Society is to form a nucleus of active Brotherhood. Although many consider this to be a beautiful goal, we sometimes hear criticism as well, even from theosophical students. What about the sisters, they ask. Are they not part of this too? Then shouldn't we speak of brotherhood and sisterhood?

Barend Voorham



From Higgs-particle to gravity to Theosophia

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Recently, physicists were able to confirm the existence of the so-called Higgs-particle. From a theosophical perspective this is a very interesting development, because scientists – probably without realizing it – come very close to the idea of a universal Aether: a fundamental teaching of Theosophia, which was taught in all wisdom traditions.

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Piercing the mystery behind the poles

Our poles as organs of our living planet

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In 2013, Greenpeace made the news with a spectacular campaign to draw worldwide attention to the risks of oil drilling in polar seas. The knowledge we gain from the Theosophia shows us why the poles, both 'outer' and 'inner', have such a particular significance.

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Editorial

In February 2013 we published the first English edition of our magazine, *Lucifer, the Messenger of Light*. It was an experiment. We did not know how the magazine was going to be received. Now, after three editions, we gladly conclude that our magazine plays a not unimportant role in the international theosophical community. *Lucifer* is read in different parts of the world. From all over the world we got encouraging reactions. Articles were translated into German and Portuguese, and, as we were told, they were studied and discussed at length. We are therefore determined to continue with *Lucifer* and we are very pleased to present this new edition.

It seems that our magazine arrived at the right time. In our troubled world there is a need for Theosophy now more than ever, and since we try to present Theosophy as clear and applicable as possible, we hope that it may contribute to solve the huge problems humanity faces. But *Lucifer* arrived at the right time in another way as well. Several theosophical groups and individuals are getting closer and are trying to work together in popularizing Theosophy. Like for instance ITC – International Theosophical Conferences, and The European School of Theosophy. We hope that *Lucifer* can play a role in the inter-theosophical communication. Some of the articles in this edition already came to existence thanks to the contacts we had with our fellow theosophists.

Karma, mercy and repentance is meant as a contribution to a discussion which was held in a study group on H.P. Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy*, where this subject was discussed. In *Brotherhood and sisterhood* we try to shine some light on the subject of the different sexes and show that real Man is neither masculine nor feminine; a subject that was discussed in the corridors during various international meetings.

We publish here also the keynote speech that one of our editors gave at the ITC in New York in 2013. In this talk you will find very fundamental ideas on why Theosophy doesn't play the role in the world it should play and what we can do to give it its rightful place.

In *Kali Yuga, an age of spiritual growth or decay* we try to counter the pessimistic view of many that our age is too dark to achieve peace and spiritual growth. We come to an opposite conclusion: it is possible to grow spiritually, especially now. This article contains some *technical* theosophical teachings, which, at first sight, may appear difficult for many students. However, when you see the logical structure of the teachings, they are not as difficult as they seem; they're just different from the common ideas of today. And they have a very practical value.

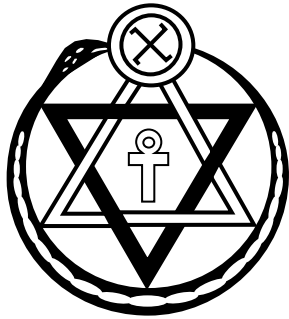
Another present-day subject is that of the poles, practically the only places on Earth which mankind has not explored yet. But since oil is found in the polar regions, those unspoiled spots are threatened by economic exploitation. In *Piercing the mystery behind the poles* it is shown that those isolated regions are of specific importance for life on our planet and should therefore be treated with care.

Finally, we present an article on the recently discovered Higgs-particle. Our Science workgroup have studied this subject intensively. In *From Higgs-particle to gravity to Theosophy* you will find a theosophical view on this very interesting scientific discovery. We tried to write an article that is comprehensible for those who are familiar with modern physics as well as for those who are not.

The inspiration and background vision of all articles come from the Theosophy as outlined by H.P. Blavatsky and elaborated and explained by other theosophical Teachers such as W.Q. Judge and Gottfried de Purucker. In all our articles we follow this Point Loma tradition. That means that we never approach a subject as a mere theoretical study, but always endeavor to present Theosophy as a practical teaching, which can and should be applied in daily life.

We hope that this edition of *Lucifer, the Messenger of Light* will contribute to a better understanding of Theosophy and above all that it will inspire people all over the world to apply the Wisdom Religion in their own lives. The more Theosophy is alive, the better it is for mankind. Therefore we welcome all your reactions, your comments and questions. They will inspire us to improve our magazine.

Herman C. Vermeulen



Why Theosophy doesn't have its rightful place in the world

In August 2013, during the International Theosophical Conference in New York, Barend Voorham gave the following keynote speech.

The editors of *Lucifer – Messenger of Light* consider this speech to be very important, because it gives a solid fundament for cooperation among the different theosophical organizations. Therefore we publish this talk in its entirety.

Dear friends,

When for the first time in this life I learned about Theosophy and its teachings, I was deeply touched. All my questions about life and death, about justice and suffering, were answered. It was that for me unknown mixture of logic, mysticism and above all compassion that overwhelmed me.

After some months I asked myself: how is it possible that just a few people know anything about Theosophy? There must be something wrong with their PR! Why aren't Theosophists invited to talk shows on TV? Why don't our politicians know anything about it? Why don't they teach it at schools? Theosophy, which so clearly shows that the best way to live your life is to do it in a compassionate way, needs to be better known.

I heard a similar reaction many times from people who recently learned to know Theosophy. Why are there just

a few people who know anything about these golden doctrines, which enrich your life enormously?

Start to study, let it live in your heart and spread Theosophy

I talked about this issue with the then Leader of the Point Loma T.S., Mr. Kok. He was a very wise man. He taught me that the whole issue should not be placed outside of me, but within me. If I wanted Theosophy to have its rightful place in the world, I had to study it, let it live in my heart and spread it among others. I had to *work* for it. That is important, because we are inclined to think that others are the cause of our problems and failures. But that is not true.

So if we ascertain that Theosophy doesn't have its rightful place in the world, we should not blame others, but ourselves. That may be painful,

Key thoughts

- » Everyone on Earth should be given the opportunity to investigate the Theosophia.
- » The theosophical Movement is much less strong than it could be, mainly because of a lack of cooperation.
- » The theosophical teachings form the logical basis for compassion: so let Theosophy not be a theory but a practical teaching, applicable to all problems.

but as Lao-zu said: *Truthful words are not beautiful; beautiful words are not truthful.*

Can Theosophy have its rightful place in the world?

But first we have to ask ourselves: when does Theosophy have its rightful place in the world?

When everybody is Theosophist? No!

So when?

When everybody on this earth at least knows what Theosophy implies and what its most important doctrines are.

Theosophists respect the free will of everybody. So we never have to try to convert people to Theosophy. It makes no sense whatsoever to put pressure on humans. They have to choose freely whether or not they accept theosophical truths. But at least they should be able to choose. So they should have the opportunity to get to know the theosophical doctrines.

And here my friends, we failed, or we partly failed.

Why is it that 138 years after the foundation of the T.S. just a few humans know about Theosophy? Is it because human's mind changes slowly? Or is it because of the prevailing anthropomorphisms? Is that the reason why the multitudes cannot grasp the theosophical ideas?

These facts may have contributed to it. Not one prophet is popular in his own time. We know Plato's allegory of the cave: the man who was freed from it, was not popular when he told his fellow humans in the cave about their illusionary existence. They even wanted to kill him.

But is that the only reason why Theosophy doesn't play the role it should play on our planet?

I don't think so. If that were true, the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion would have given us an impossible task. In one of his letters Master Koothoomi speaks about a future continent of Thought, the foundations of which will be so solid that no amount of opposition and ignorant malice will be found to prevail.⁽¹⁾

And H.P. Blavatsky stated in the last chapter of *The Key to Theosophy*⁽²⁾ that if the attempt of the T.S. succeeds better than its predecessors, the 21st century will be a heaven in comparison with the 19th.

So it is possible that Theosophy purifies the minds and hearts of humans, all humans. Of course it is possible! That is why the Masters sent HPB in the world to start realizing it, and if you study Theosophy, you know that everybody is in the core of his being a noble, yes, a divine being. So we just should learn to be it.

Did Theosophists stay united?

But HPB warned us. Theosophists should be selfless, earnest, devoted and wise. If not, the Society would degenerate and become a sect.

But there is an even more dangerous trial for the members of the T.S. In her last letter to the American Convention HPB makes reference to the old parable of the bundle of sticks: divided, they will inevitably be broken, one by one; united, there is no force on Earth able to destroy our Brotherhood.⁽³⁾



That's why I am happy to meet all kindred souls here. For this ITC – this union of Theosophists from different countries and organizations – proves our strongest will to be united in order to spread Theosophy in the world. We surely have achieved a lot. In the western world there is more tolerance. More than before humans acknowledge that other religions than their own may have a part of the truth as well. Ideas of reincarnation and karma are, at least to some extent, better known than a century ago. But compassionate acts still are not common. There is still a long way to go to realize the practical Brotherhood of all men. And if we didn't succeed in realizing this, we should not blame the outside world, but we should look at ourselves. Did we do our work well? Were we selfless, earnest, devoted and wise? And did we stay united?

Of course there were theosophical brothers in the past who worked hard and selflessly for the Cause. Thanks to them we can meet each other now in this wonderful Conference. But did we stay united?

Maybe the main reason why Theosophy doesn't have its rightful place in the world is that theosophical students didn't work together. They didn't act in unity. Therefore they were not able to show and convince the world of the importance of Theosophy.

To be clear, united doesn't necessarily mean united in

one organization. Some organizations, political parties or churches for instance, may have one organizational structure, but they are divided in all kind of fractions and know all sorts of intrigues. Therefore we should first and for all be united in *thought*. Our spiritual aspirations and ideals should be united. Our aims should be united. We should all work together selflessly for mankind. Together we are better fitted to show the practical value of compassion.

When our minds and hearts are united, the organizational part will follow automatically. I don't say that the organization is not important, but if we are united in our hearts, we will without any doubt find a solution for the problems of the vehicle, for the outer organization is just the vehicle of the inner part of the Theosophical Movement.

To be united in mind and heart does not mean that we should always agree with each other. I actually think that it is better to disagree sometimes, for when different opinions meet, there can raise a greater Truth, provided that everybody is impersonal and doesn't stick to his own opinion.

All serious theosophical organizations share the same objectives and the three principles as outlined by HPB. And it is natural and obvious that we differ sometimes in our views on these core ideas, because they are so universal that we, not being universal yet, can grasp only a bit of it. Nobody has a monopoly on truth or wisdom.

Nevertheless we are united in these core ideas and if we listen carefully to each other, our knowledge can be deepened. The Theosophical Movement will benefit from all these different views and will be able to touch the hearts of many more people this century.

Furthermore it is good to realize that people almost never fight about universal ideas. Conflicts only arise from details.

Therefore we should not react emotionally – neither angry, nor disappointed – when our ideas do not appear to be the best or are not accepted by others. Of course we should respect the honest opinion of our fellow Theosophist as much as we want our own opinion to be respected. When we are united in our hearts – in the buddhic part of our being – we can surely solve every problem.

Therefore I believe that the best way to make our decisions in organizational matters, is to come to consensus. Just like the Native Americans – for instance the Iroquois – we should try to come to a common policy, accepted by all, even when it takes some time to make it. That is better

than making policy by majority. In fact it doesn't have to be so difficult to come to consensus, for we all work for the main objective of the Theosophical Society.

A nucleus of Universal Brotherhood

That main objective is to form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. A nucleus exists only when the parts that compose it are united. When Theosophists are not sufficiently capable to do this, their influence on their fellow men is limited. When that nucleus is strong and firm, then they attract others and the accumulations can begin. The stronger the nucleus, the greater the magnetic influence they have on the world. Then they are useful coworkers of the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion. When the nucleus is firm, Theosophists don't need to address each other, but they have the energy and time to address the millions who don't know anything about Theosophy.

Theosophy in simple words

To address the public doesn't necessarily mean to teach the technical Theosophy. In the years that the T.S. exists, we have built up a tremendous amount of literature. That is very useful and we cannot do without it. But it is not enough.

Another reason for our limited success to spread Theosophy lies in the fact that we have not been able to explain theosophical core ideas in simple words to the public, in such a way they will recognize their universality and instantly will adopt them and start using them in their daily life.

That's why we have to show the practical value of Theosophy. We have to show clearly that Theosophy has an answer for all modern problems, such as pollution, war, crime, poverty, life and death, disease, dementia, and so on. A problem may be huge, Theosophy always gives the tools to cope with it and solve it. If we are not able to make Theosophy practical, we fail to reach our brothers who don't know anything about it.

To be Theosophy

Further, the best way to show the practical value of Theosophy, is to live it, to *be* Theosophy. Every Theosophist can be a living example of the fact that thanks to Theosophy he was able to put his life on another, more noble level. If you are the living expression of compassion, your fellow humans will notice it and ask you about it. We don't have to be shy. Compassion demands that we

show our solutions for the problems in the world. We shouldn't hide our theosophical light under a bushel. We have to tell everybody about the Ancient Wisdom, which we all love deeply and which gives our lives meaning and happiness. Tell it your neighbors, your friends, your colleagues. We have a lot to offer. It would be selfish not to share Theosophy with others, who need it so badly.

Therefore, if compassion is our motive, we should develop creative ideas to promote and spread Theosophy. There are many possibilities: lectures, workshops, courses, magazines, internet, symposia, participation in scientific, philosophical and religious discussions. The main focus of our work should be to proclaim Theosophy loudly: pure and simple — ready to apply. Let many more humans know that Theosophy has solutions for all questions and problems in life.

Theosophical doctrines form the logical fundamentals of compassion. They show that the Universe is built on impersonal Love. Love is the cement of the Universe. Everybody can understand this.

This, my friends, is not a new message. In her last letter to the American Convention HPB wrote:

Be Theosophists, Work for Theosophy! Theosophy first, and Theosophy last; for its practical realization alone can save the Western World from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race, one nation from the other, and from that hatred of class and [from] social strifes, that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples.⁽⁴⁾

138 years after the foundation of the T.S. we are back in New York, enriched by all the experiences of the past. I am sure that if we stay firm and united we can give Theosophy its rightful place in the world.

So let Theosophy be not a theory, but a practical doctrine applicable for all problems and an inspiration for compassion for all.

References

1. *Mahatma Letters*. Many editions. Letter 9, last page.
2. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, Conclusion.
3. Letter to the American Convention, *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1982, Vol. XIII, p. 172.
4. See ref. 3, p. 174-5.



Kali-Yuga: an age of spiritual growth or decay?

Key thoughts

» Ages have everything to do with cosmic cycles.

» A cycle can be divided in four ages, which are related as 4 : 3 : 2 : 1.

» Each of these ages has a starting and an ending phase.

» Satya-Yuga is the spiritual, quiet age. It is the child phase. People do not have much responsibility yet.

» Kali-Yuga started 3102 A.D. during a special cosmic condition.

» Criteria of Kali-Yuga are: ethics is under pressure; everything is intense and happens fast; there is a strong influence from the Astral Light; there are huge opportunities for spiritual growth and decline.

» During Kali-Yuga the new big cycle (root race) comes into existence.

» Each new cycle starts with a few people with a different mentality.

We are living in a restless age. According to some people times are so dark and sinister, that we are meeting our downfall rapidly. ‘We are living in the end of times’, people say. It is said this has to do with Kali-Yuga, the Iron Age.

Is Kali-Yuga indeed such a dark age?

An investigation into old Hindu texts and our modern age.

Like all other ancient people Hindus had a cyclic vision of time. There is no absolute beginning: the moment at which time started. In an absolute sense, the universe did not start with a big bang, after which life and time came into existence. Just as an individual life does not start with conception.

Ancient Hindu texts picture the concept of boundlessness. The well-known statement from the Upanishads *TAT twam asi* — you are THAT, or: you are the Boundless, expresses this concisely.

So, nothing is created in the literal sense of the word; nothing was made out of nothing. Everything was always there. And everything — cosmos, man or atom — appears cyclically. As soon as the slumbering consciousness wakes up again, time starts. The eternal BEING, our deepest essence, does not know time, only boundless Duration.

What are ages?

In respect to time, the first thing you can notice is, that it is related to perceived movements of objects or bodies. We take the astronomical cycle as the unity of time, for instance the rotation of our planet around its axis. This gives us the day and night rhythm. We have divided that period in 24 units, which we call hours. Furthermore, the earth is orbiting around the sun in 365.25 days; so it turns 365.25 times around its axis, while completing its orbit around the sun.

So, it is always about external phenomena, like the rotation of the earth around the sun and the moon around the earth in cyclic orbits, which we interpret and explain by means of certain units of time.

However, when we are not in this world of phenomena, for instance, when we are sleeping, dreaming or dead, we do not know time at all.

There are no clocks in our dreams. When you wake up from a dream, you often do not know whether you slept for one or two hours or for some minutes only. How we value time also depends on our mood. Doesn't that two-hour movie go by much faster than half an hour in a dentist's chair? In short, time is always related to manifestation; to things, to phenomena, to interpretation, to appreciation, and therefore it is an illusion.

In Sanskrit this is called a *Mâyâ*, which means 'the measured'. All that can be measured is an illusion. That means: it is of a transitory nature and does not have sustainability in itself. It is the consequence of something hiding behind that appearance. So, an age is the period in which *something* is manifested.

For instance: a man is born. His 'age' starts. After about seventy years he dies. Then, in a certain sense, also time stops, at least for him it stops, since there is no manifestation. Only when this man is born again and reappears in this illusionary world, there is a notion of time again.

We should perceive the great ages in the same way. They are the life cycles of a being or a group of beings.

Yugas

As has been explained, in the boundlessness there are only relative starting and finishing points. In the East, these are presented as the breathing out and in of the divinity Brahmâ. When Brahmâ breathes out, there is a relative start: the manifestation starts. When Brahmâ breathes in, there is a relative end: the manifestation ceases to exist. However, after a rest period Brahmâ breathes out again, and once again a cosmos comes into existence.

So, there is a continuous cyclic process of breathing out and in. We have to view the notion of Yuga from that perspective. Yuga is a Sanskrit word, which literally means 'cycle'. A cycle is not so much a circle, but a spiral. As with a spiral staircase, you move up in circles.

There is another Sanskrit word which expresses the same idea: *Kala-Chakra*, wheel of time. Time rotates like a wheel. Ages come and go and come back again. And they always come back on a slightly higher level.

Now, this wheel rotates in a certain arithmetic ratio, that is 4, 3, 2, 1 or rest, and then 4, 3, 2, 1 again, and so on. According to Sanskrit literature these numerical ratios exist everywhere in nature. They apply just as well to the life of a planet, a sun, as to the life of the earth, or to a phase in life on earth. You always find those same relationships of 4, 3, 2 and 1. So, a cycle consists of four ages.

The four Yugas

The notorious Kali-Yuga is one of these four ages. It is part of a big cycle of more than four million years, called Mahâ-Yuga, or Great Yuga, by the Hindus. One thousand Mahâ-Yugas make one life cycle of a planet. In that Mahâ-Yuga these four ages are distinguished:

Satya-Yuga	4
Tretâ-Yuga	3
Dwâpara-Yuga	2
Kali-Yuga	1

The numbers we placed behind them, indicate the ratios between these four Yugas. So, Satya-Yuga – literally the age of truth – lasts four times as long as the shortest age, Kali-Yuga.

In fact, it does not matter to which cycle you apply these ratios. They are universal, so, applicable to a life of a solar system – the life of Brahmâ – just as well as to that of a planet, of a people, yes, even applicable to the life of a man. The only thing you should do, is take the numbers 4, 3, 2, 1 as a starting point, and for instance place one, two, three or ten zeros behind it. When it concerns small ages you should place one or more zeros with a dot before it. However, those numbers also indicate the characteristic of these Yugas. That is, they are associated with *Dharma*. Dharma means Law or Duty in the sense of divine natural law. Therefore, you can also understand Dharma as true religion, philosophy, science and ethics. It is the expression of perfect harmony and unity. When Dharma is practiced, you have a society based on ethics, human dignity, compassion and respect. People live in accordance with universal ethical rules.

In the typical metaphors of the Hindus it is said, that the Dharma-bull – the symbol of living in accordance with Dharma – stands on four legs in Satya-Yuga, on three in Tretâ-Yuga, on two in Dwâpara-Yuga and just on one leg in Kali-Yuga. Thus, the decay, the degeneration of ethics is pointed out.⁽¹⁾

You can find the same idea in ancient Greece. There, the four ages are called the Golden, the Silver, the Bronze and the Iron Age. The inner level of civilization ever decreases. The Babylonians must have known these ages too, considering the special dream of Nebuchadnezzar referred to in the Bible (*Daniel 2:32-33*). He dreams of a gigantic statue with golden head, silver breast, copper belly and iron legs. It is a symbolic representation of the evolution of mankind, which stretches out over four ages.

How long do these ages last?

As has been explained, in principle you can apply these four Yugas to each small or big cycle of life. However, they are applied mostly to the so-called Mahâ-Yuga.

The duration of these four ages is given in ancient Hindu texts like the *Vishnu Purâna*. There, the basic numbers, 4, 3, 2 and 1 reappear. However, each of the four ages has a starting and an ending phase. In other words, there is a dawn and a dusk. In Sanskrit, those are called respectively Sandhyâ and Sandhyânsa. The duration of both Sandhyâ and Sandhyânsa is one tenth of the Yuga concerned. That results in the following picture:

Yugas in divine years

Satya-Yuga	4000		
Sandhyâ	400		
Sandhyânsa	400	+	
			4800
Tretâ-Yuga	3000		
Sandhyâ	300		
Sandhyânsa	300	+	
			3600
Dwâpara-Yuga	2000		
Sandhyâ	200		
Sandhyânsa	200	+	
			2400
Kali-Yuga	1000		
Sandhyâ	100		
Sandhyânsa	100	+	
			1200
Total			12,000

In case you want to know how much this is in earthly years, you have to multiply these numbers by the number 360.

This number has everything to do with the rotation of the other planets around the sun. After all, the cycles on earth are related to the movements of other celestial bodies. There is a close relationship between the sun and the planets. They influence each other mutually. As the table below shows, there is a mathematical regularity in these orbital cycles. Their frequencies are matched. By the way, in that table we show round numbers. In the course of the many centuries of their existence the planets may change their rate of revolution somewhat. This has to do with the free will, which every living being has.

Orbital periods of the planets

Jupiter:	12 earthly years
Mercury:	48 times in 1 Jupiter year
Venus:	20 times in 1 Jupiter year
Mars:	6 times in 1 Jupiter year
Saturn:	2/5 times (30 earthly years)

The rotation of Jupiter and Saturn has the longest duration. When you multiply their orbital periods (12 x 30), you get the number 360. A complete cycle takes 360 earthly years. Then, as seen from the earth, all possible constellations of planets are covered.

That is why the number 360 was a very important number for the Hindus, and besides, also for the Babylonians, the Mayas and so many other people. So, in case you want to know the duration of the Yugas in terrestrial years, you have to multiply the divine years by 360. (See table)

Yugas in solar years

Satya-Yuga:	4800 x 360 =	1,728,000
Tretâ-Yuga:	3600 x 360 =	1,296,000
Dwâpara-Yuga:	2400 x 360 =	864,000
Kali-Yuga:	1200 x 360 =	432,000 +
	Total	4,320,000

Satya-Yuga

You can notice several things in the table above. First, that for man the durations of the ages are almost incomprehensible large. We are inclined to think in years, centuries at most. An age with a duration of more than four million years is outside our frame of reference.

Secondly, it can be noticed that the more noble ages, in which the Dharma is settled more in society, last longer than the less noble ones. Kali-Yuga lasts but one tenth of the total era and is four times as short as the Golden Age, Satya-Yuga.

The ancient Greeks and Romans referred to this era as the century of Saturn. That was the century of innocence. It is the time period in which man has no or hardly any responsibility and is therefore not weighed down by worries. It is the child phase. Children too live in a paradise world. They do not have big responsibilities yet. A child has developed only little of its aspects of consciousness.

Therefore, it does not have all faculties yet, and is much less responsible than an adult with normal capacities.

In the *Mahābhārata* it is said that in this era there were no poor people and no rich people. There was no need to work, because all one needed was obtained by will power. There was no illness, one did not lose one's powers with aging. There was no hatred or vanity.

Satya-Yuga was an era of abundance in which life quietly passed by. No big problems occurred, it was a calm but rather static situation. Probably it appeals to people in today's society, as we have a strong desire for this calmness. However, the question is if we really would like to live a life without challenges. Who longs for the time when he was a baby?

Life in Satya-Yuga was quiet and peaceful. The life span of humans is in accordance with this, since the ancient texts

tell that this lifespan also relates to the same numbers: 4 : 3 : 2 : 1. In Satya-Yuga people live for 400 years, in Tretā-Yuga for 300 years, in Dwāpara-Yuga for 200 years, and finally in Kali-Yuga for 100 years. To us these numbers seem unlikely, although in ancient myths, e.g. in the Old Testament, people were supposed to be even much older. Is it not said that Methuselah lived for 969 years?

Of course these are averages, however, also in respect to individual people, the life span in Kali-Yuga is four times as short as Satya-Yuga.

Kali-Yuga: the Dark Age

The blissful rest of Satya-Yuga is gradually replaced by more unrest. We will not discuss the two other phases here. They have an intermediary position between the peace of the Golden Age and the unrest of the Iron Age. You can



Nandi, the Dharma-bull, is used as a metaphor for the ethical decay in the four ages. For instance in the *Mahābhārata* is mentioned: "... in Satya-Yuga ethics is like a bull standing on its four legs among the people. In Treta-Yuga sin took away one of those legs; ethics has only three legs left. In Dwāpara-Yuga there is as much sin as ethics, and therefore it is said that ethics only has two legs. In the dark age of Kali (...) ethics is spread among the people with three parts of sin. Therefore, it is said that ethics is waiting among the people, with only a quarter left of it. Know, O Yudhishtira, the life period, the energy, the intellect and the physical power of man decreases in each Yuga."⁽¹⁾

see them as a proportionally quieter version of Kali-Yuga. This last mentioned age has a bad reputation. War and violence, and all the suffering related to them, are often attributed to this Dark Age.

According to the *Sûrya Siddhânta* – an astrological book of immeasurable age – Kali Yuga started at midnight of 23rd January 3102 A.D. So, it is over 5116 years ago that Kali-Yuga started. At the start of it there was a very peculiar planetary constellation: almost all planets were aligned. It started at the death of Krishna, which is described in the big epic the *Mahâbhârata*. The core of this very substantial epic is a war between two branches of a family. It seems that this conflict gives a clear indication of the characteristics of Kali-Yuga: war, infidelity and violence, in short, all that we can read in the papers nowadays as well. In many Sanskrit-works Kali-Yuga is described as an age in which Dharma languishes. It is a time of ignorance. People do not keep their promises and agreements. They do not realize that greed is wrong, yes, some do not realize that hostility, or even murder is not sound or wise.

In Hindu books, like the *Vishnu Purâna*, this black age is described as follows: the barbarians will be the masters at the border of the Indus. Kings will be addicted to power and will be in war with one another continuously. The strongest one will be the ruler. There will be violence, malice and wickedness. Well-being will diminish. Wealth is the only form of devotion. The word of the rich is law. The poor have no vote. The only commitment between the sexes comes from passion. Erudition is ridiculed. Compassion will be absent. There are all kinds of addictions, which are related to the fact that people experience their jobs as stressful and unsatisfactory. The natural division of the four castes falls apart. Wise teachers (Brahmans) are neither recognized nor acknowledged. The warriors (Kshatriyas) are no longer brave. Traders (Vaiśyas) are no longer honest and the servants (Śûdra's) are no longer humble.⁽²⁾

The Astral Light

However, the question arises whether these characteristics, which indeed characterize our present age, are caused by Kali-Yuga?

William Quan Judge said that people are strongly affected by the Astral Light in Kali-Yuga.⁽³⁾ One of the characteristics of the Astral Light is that all thoughts and actions are recorded in it. You can think of a picture gallery in this regard.

People are influenced by the Astral Light. Of course, that

influence does not occur indiscriminately, but only if you identify yourself with a certain layer of this astral sphere. So, a person who is focused on matter, who is weighed down by strong selfish desires, will perceive corresponding images and impulses from the Astral Light. Therefore, during Kali-Yuga people get impulses from completely other layers of the Astral Light than during the other Yugas.

All material desires, all worship of body and matter, stem from impressions which our ancestors imprinted on the Astral Light during the Kali-Yuga of the last Mahâ-Yuga (more about that later). To be clear: we ourselves were those ancestors! In the present Kali-Yuga these impressions still weigh down on us.

We are confronted with all our material inclinations from the past. So, we are confronted with causes we created ourselves. We harvest what we sowed.

We harvest the causes from the last Kali-Yuga now. That also explains, for instance, how apparently new developments, like information technology, are accepted and used so rapidly. We pick up the thread of the last Kali-Yuga.

Kali-Yuga: the intense age

Kali-Yuga is the fastest age. The consequences follow almost immediately upon their causes, certainly compared to the other Yugas. This leads to pressure and stress. Many things happen at the same time. A new fashion or trend, a political revolution or technical invention only just presented itself, and something new appears already.

Does this not look like our world today? Countries change rulers like people change clothes. There are revolutions going on everywhere. New fashions and inventions succeed each other at incomprehensible speed. Within a few minutes we hear and see what is happening in another part of the world. Media inform us on what is happening in other parts of the world all day. Developments tumble over each other like young dogs do.

Kali-Yuga is the age of speed. And contradictory as it may be, that is why it is the age in which the largest spiritual growth can be realized.

In the more quiet Yugas there were *chelas* – students of Masters of Wisdom – who longed for Kali-Yuga for that reason. There is more rapid growth possible there. For the results follow our attempts much faster. Each action and thought results in consequences four times as fast compared to Satya-Yuga. That applies to actions motivated by selfish desires, but also to actions motivated

by compassion. Therefore, you can come to insight, spiritual height, Mastery, more rapidly. You are able to contribute more to your fellow men.

Kali-Yuga is the great paradox. It is the darkest age and at the same time it is the age in which you can achieve wisdom and spiritual insight in the fastest way.

Man makes his time; time does not make man

Therefore, from the knowledge of Theosophia, we would not like to claim that Kali-Yuga is an evil age. For an age is neutral in itself. Is a day during winter worse than during fall? Is a day during 2014 worse than during 1914? Ages are neutral. People color ages. Time does not make man, but man makes his time.

Admittedly, each age offers its own possibilities. During winter you do different things than during summer. However, if and how you use those possibilities is dependent on man himself. We make the age ourselves. There is no doom that brings us war, violence or spiritual growth. That is what man himself takes care of. Every one of us makes his choices individually, and decides whether he uses the opportunities of an age for further spiritual growth or for selfishness and the cultivation of a feeling of separateness. In this way we collectively shape society. Time does not do that, we do it ourselves.

Now, Kali-Yuga forces us to make more choices than any other age. When there is pressure and everything is intense, we are forced to show who we really are.

Compare it to a situation of war. In times of peace and well-being we do not need to show who we are so much. However, when there is stress and danger, we are forced to make choices. For instance, do we choose to save ourselves at the expense of our fellow men, or do we sacrifice ourselves and help our brothers, ignoring mortal danger? These kinds of stressful situations force us to take a stance. If we choose for unity and the Whole, than we grow.

During Kali-Yuga suffering can be enormous. There is misfortune, there is trial. However, misfortune can be an incentive for spiritual development. Through struggle, through sorrow, we are able to practice patience, perseverance, our sense of proportion, compassion. We can also show which principles form the real basis for our deeds.

Often man rises to great heights in awkward circumstances, in times of chaos, war, tyranny or extreme poverty. It is not true that this misery is required for growth of consciousness, but it seems that exactly during these black

times people get a more profound notion of the meaning of life and express this by performing great works.

Everything becomes liquid under pressure. Therefore, Kali-Yuga can function as a catalyst, by which the lower and higher elements of both the individual man and mankind separate. In difficult times you have the opportunity to appeal to your golden aspects in your consciousness and you can show who you are intrinsically: a divine being.

Kali-Yuga as a senior year

It is for that reason that a separation between people takes place in Kali-Yuga.

A group of people with a new mentality emerges, while another group sticks to the old. This last group is attached to the present status and is not prepared to go along in the ascending line. It is a mentality of conservatism.

The new mentality demonstrates more universality. These people are willing to set foot on unknown paths and they develop new powers to do so.

You could compare this situation somewhat with a class in its senior year. Now is the time. The students have studied for a few years, but now they have to prove themselves. The amount of homework increases. Tests, which were not taken so seriously in earlier years and did not seem very important then, are essential now. They weigh down on their state of mind, which creates tension. Some candidates cannot handle that tension, and fall back to the old level. Because of the speed and the pressure a rapid decline can take place. Hopefully, they will make better use of coming opportunities, which will also present themselves rapidly. Other people handle the pressure better and pass their exam. Then, new challenges await them, on a higher level. Kali-Yuga is like a senior year. The candidates have prepared themselves gradually in the three previous Yugas, but it is this age that gives them the opportunity to successfully finish their tests, so they can move on to the next phase in their lives.

Therefore, in Kali-Yuga the new big Mahâ-Yuga of the new root race begins. Yet, a root race is not exactly the same as the Mahâ-Yuga.

Rounds and root races

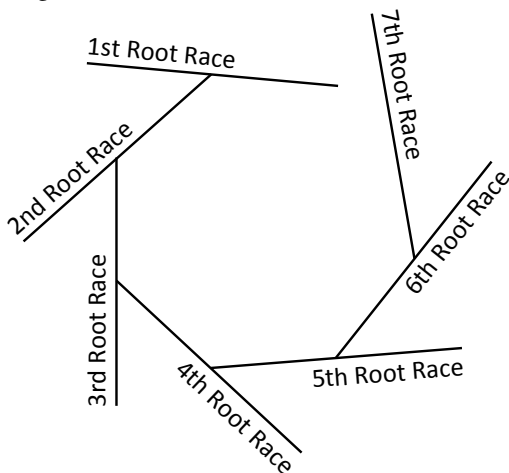
According to Theosophia evolution of mankind takes place in seven big cyclic movements, called Rounds. In each Round people are enabled to develop one of the seven principles of consciousness (See scheme 'Seven Rounds') Each of the aspects of consciousness in its turn is sevenfold also. The small repeats the big. Therefore, you can divide

SEVEN ROUNDS						
Body 1						Divine 7
	Feelings (senses) 2				Insight 6	
		Vitality 3		Thinking 5		

the aspect of desire in seven sub-aspects again, for instance. You can also subdivide each Round in seven sub-rounds, which are called root races in theosophical jargon. (In the diagram we show the seven root races in the fourth Round.)

At the moment, the biggest part of mankind is in the fourth Round and the fifth root race. In the fourth Round, desire (Kâma) is developing and, since we are in the fifth root race, in particular the intellectual aspect of desire is unrolled. If you look at the general mentality today, you will recognize this characteristic rather easily as well. Do we not live in a time in which many people try to satisfy their desire by means of the intellect? Is the huge development of technology not attributable to this?

Halfway each root race – when that root race is in its Kali-Yuga – the next root race comes into existence: see the figure below.



However, that new root race does not appear in a short moment. Does the night switch into day immediately, or is there a twilight? Likewise, the new root race gradually comes into existence. As the millennia pass by, it will gradually increase its influence and will become the dominating factor on our planet.

Transition from one root race to the other

Let's illustrate this with the transition from the fourth to the fifth — the present root race.

The fifth root race came into existence at the summit of the fourth root race, which – with a present-day word – is called Atlantis, and which Plato tells about in two of his dialogs. At that time, even much more than today, we made the aspect of desire the dominating power in our lives. It was the age in which mankind was sunk in matter deepest, and lived from the power of desire even stronger than nowadays. Desire is the bridge between the spiritual aspects and the more material aspects. In each fourth phase – whether the cycle is big or small – there is a turning point.

The power of desire, first directed to matter, is bent towards the spiritual aspects.

This means that during the Atlantic phase there were some people, who started to have another mentality than what was usual. Undoubtedly, they were considered as weird at first. They were strange people, who deviated from the general pattern. It concerned people, who had developed the intellectual aspect in their consciousness more, and so identified themselves less with pure desire.

At a certain moment, those people started to form a community. With this we do not mean so much that they united themselves in a club, but more that they got similar orientations, demonstrated a similar way of thinking.

In fact, each shift in mentality starts with one human being, or with a small group of people. Someone lives in accordance with a certain thought, a certain idea. People are attracted to him and develop the same mentality. At first, that small group deviates from the big majority. However, the number increases and at a certain moment these people are as numerous as those who do not live in accordance with that new idea yet. So, during a certain time there are two different mentalities existing next to one another.

Cycles interlock. We can see that everywhere. It is not as if a cycle completely finishes, after which a next one starts. Likewise, a new generation does not take the wheel when the old has died. Usually, a couple has children when they are between twenty and forty years old, so when they are halfway their life cycle. Only when the old generation is fifty or sixty years old or even older, the new generation will become the deciding factor in the world. Therefore, during a long time two or more generations co-exist and live together. They learn from one another through continuous interaction. The same happens in large. When the Atlantians were at the top of their civilization – in their Kali-Yuga – and almost entire mankind was in that stage of development, the first people of the next, the fifth sub phase, in which we live nowadays, appeared. Halfway the one root race the other begins.

That number of people also grows, and finally, the seeds of the new, the fifth mankind were isolated geographically. Now, there is a root race *sui generis*. It creates its own community with its own *Swabhâva*, its individual characteristic. Meanwhile, the old mankind finishes its course in ever-smaller numbers and becomes separated from the new mankind. The separation of these two mankind goes hand in hand with geographical changes, since these processes are closely related to the living Earth, which also changes inwardly and outwardly. Therefore, old land sinks and new land rises.

Root race and Mahâ-Yuga

A root race is not exactly the same as what the Hindus call a Mahâ-Yuga. Since as soon as the new mankind has been formed, acts as a separate, independent group and becomes the leading power on earth, there will still be people with that old mentality of the fourth root race for

millions of years, until the fifth root race arrives in its Kali-Yuga and the first people of the sixth root race are going to develop themselves. Only then will the people of the fourth root race expire.

They expire because the bodies are no longer fit for the enlarged consciousness. It is the same as with clothes. When you are a teenager, some thirteen to fourteen years old, you are no longer able to wear the clothes from your childhood. That time passed by and those clothes are no longer produced, while the clothes that are for sale in shops now are purchased more and more.

Or: entire mankind incarnated gradually in new vehicles, the new bodies of the fifth root race. That happened because the mentality changed, but it does not happen for everyone at the same time. Each man or each group has its own pace and determines his own process of development. There are frontrunners and laggards. That is why there is always a difference in development between people.

Frontrunners and laggards

The question may arise how it is possible that there are so many individual differences, while cosmic laws still determine the cycles on earth. You could compare total mankind with a group of runners; some run up front, then there is a large group in the middle, and finally there are still a few laggards as well. The frontrunners are already able to go into the next phase of the marathon (to be compared with the fifth root race), while the large majority did not arrive at that phase yet.

You could also compare mankind very well with a class of pupils. For a school year, a curriculum has been set up. From October fractions are addressed, from February square roots, and so on. Yet, a quick pupil may have already started with square roots in January, while another is not ready for that in March yet. Now, when at a certain time most of the pupils are ready for complicated sums and are allowed to use calculators, this will also have its effect on the pupils who are not ready for that yet.

Although the different ages also present their own 'learning material', everyone determines his own journey of evolution. The evolution of mankind is not an automatic process, which happens at the same pace for everyone. The individual man always determines himself whether he makes use of the possibilities, which present themselves. As more people will choose for the new possibilities, at a certain time the scale tips to a new phase of evolution. Then, we say that mankind is in the fifth root race, because that new mentality has become the deciding

factor. Meanwhile, half of mankind is still in the fourth root race. Contacts among these people remain. Indeed, the interaction between cultures results in important lessons of life and creates a strong attraction towards the new phase of evolution. In fact, the new possibilities, which the new root race brings along, also have their influence on the laggards, just like the frontrunners in a year influence the other pupils.

In the ancient epic from India, the *Râmâyana*, there are hints to these two mankind which existed next to one another and which at a certain time were in war with one another. On one side, you have Râma and his friends, symbol for the new mankind, the fifth sub phase; and on the other side you have the Râkshasas, led by Râvana, also presented as demons or giants. They represent the Atlantians, and in particular the degenerated generations.

After Kali-Yuga

Living in Kali-Yuga is living in a pressure cooker. In the end, the high pressure results in geographic isolation of the seeds of a new mankind, while the old mankind finishes its course in ever decreasing numbers.

That new mankind, being a very small minority at first, is then in its Satya-Yuga: the golden and quiet age, in which everything goes four times as slow as in Kali-Yuga. Meanwhile, millions of people are still in the old phase. Drop by drop more people flow into the new phase, since although we influence one another, evolution is always an individual process.

Then, the moment comes at which a final separation between the two different mankind takes place, which goes hand in hand with geographical change. During the transition from the fourth to the fifth root race it was mainly water transforming the surface of the earth; during the transition from the fifth to the sixth root race it will be mainly fire, by volcanoes and earthquakes.

Although we only have some 5,000 years of the total 432,000 years of Kali-Yuga behind us, in Europe big changes will already start after some 16,000 years, according to Theosophia. It is certainly not as if a separation will take place overnight; it will happen during centuries. In the end, large parts of the surface, a.o. in Western Europe, will sink, while new lands will rise.

Kali-Yuga: expectation, hope, challenge and progress

In all these processes, we should never forget that we ourselves are the ones going through these phases. We

ourselves grow from a unselfconscious to an ever more self-conscious state. In this entire process Kali-Yuga is indispensable. The new, sixth root race will be of a much more noble nature than the phase in which we are at the moment. Society will be based on understanding and compassion much more.

In order to arrive at this spiritually further evolved state we have to go through Kali-Yuga. We separate gold from iron by heating. The pressure has to increase in order to reach the spiritual.

Therefore, our current age does not need to be a dark age, on the contrary, it can be one of expectation, hope, challenge and progress. We are able to write history. The opportunities for growth, for giving spiritual impulses to our fellow men, have never been as huge as they are now. We only need to make use of them.

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Karma, mercy and repentance

In nature a cause is always followed by an effect, whereby the nature of the effect is being determined by the nature of the cause. The logic of this law, which we know as the law of karma, doesn't need to be doubted. However, some people who take karma as a fact in life sometimes question this logic. They suppose that this universal law does not always work. In this article, we show that it is this indissoluble logic of cause and effect that is a grand inner incentive towards a noble life.

Key thoughts

- » When deeds are sometimes accompanied by appropriate actions and at other times they are not, we would live in a chaotic universe.
- » Nobody is able to nullify karmic consequences.
- » Someone who repents gladly accepts the consequences of his actions.
- » If we are not reaping the consequences of our deeds, we are being deprived the opportunity to grow.

Is there anything in nature that is in conflict with the law of karma? Are there laws of nature that fail to work at times, as some people claim about the law of karma? Is there anything in the law of cause and effect, which is not strictly logical?

Of course not! The resistance to the law of karma has nothing to do with a lack of logic; it arises from emotion. Sometimes people find it hard to accept the situation they are living in, or the condition the world is in. They consider some situations as being wrong. They internally object against it, often because they do not know the causes of their fate. They see others who, so they believe, live under good conditions and jealousy arises. Sometimes they do acknowledge that they are “not a saint”, followed by “everyone would do the same thing in my situation.” If you experience problems in life as

being too overwhelming, a strong desire may arise that someone else will take these problems away. It is then apparently assumed that a “higher power”, something outside of you, can nullify an already created cause. It is thought that if you truly repent there will be a chance to receive mercy. And mercy means that your deserved “punishment” is remitted and cause will not be followed by effect. Even in India, a culture in which reincarnation and karma have influenced minds for centuries, such ideas prevail: a bath in the holy river Ganges would liberate you from all sins.

It is no use crying over spilled milk

Can the result of an act be taken away after the deed has already been done? Our answer is: “no, that is not possible”. Even thinking a thought

has a consequence, which, once the thought is thought, must have its effect. When actions sometimes may or at other times may not be followed by an appropriate consequence, then we would be living in a chaotic universe. Then, laws would not be laws anymore and you could doubt each law of nature. The law of gravity could then for instance become inoperative without an underlying cause. "What is done cannot be undone," Shakespeare said.⁽¹⁾ It is no use crying over spilled milk. If you have sowed wheat and the plants come up you cannot change this into rye. You cannot erase performed actions; you cannot even revoke an unspoken word. Those words and deeds will result in consequences with resembling characteristics. Of course you can, if you believe that you have done something wrong, do something good as soon as possible. But that good deed does not take the consequence of the wrong deed away. The result has to work out. But because another act was performed quickly, the effects of both acts will occur more or less combined.

Suppose you find out that you have mistreated someone, which has led to a certain disharmony. You decide to put that straight. But the first deed has already been performed. The mistreatment is a fact. You can no longer avoid the consequences of it. But if you do not wait too long and perform a deed with a different characteristic with respect to the person you have mistreated, then the result of the latter deed will follow soon after the first result. This does not erase the first act, but a second deed is placed beside it, which has a harmonizing impact.

Eliminating karma?

Would it be just if the effect of that first act will be taken away? After all, you truly repent and you try to restore the caused disharmony as much as possible.

Let us answer this question using a thought experiment in which we conveniently ignore the impossibility that the effects of causes can be eliminated. Let us first imagine a righteous society.

A righteous society is a strongly cooperate society. Everyone knows he is a part of the whole. Everyone brings in his talents and abilities for the group. Yes, in fact you bring in yourself. Additionally, you receive from the community what you need. You give what you are and you take what you need. You will not take more nor will you reject to contribute your input. You will therefore never harm others. There is harmony, not in the sense of stagnation, but there is a dynamic harmony, where no one harms the interests of others.

When does injustice arise? This happens when you place yourself outside the community. When you consider yourself better or more important than others. That is, if you are selfish or self-centered. Towards such an attitude a reaction must come from the totality. And by virtue of the law of karma the characteristic of that reaction is similar to that of the action. You will therefore have to experience what it feels like to be mistreated.

Suppose now that someone – a god or another superhuman being – would take that experience of injustice from you, because this god thought that you were sincerely repenting. Would that lead to harmony and justice? We think this would not. Only he who committed injustice and therefore withheld from the community what it needed, can restore the harmony by rectifying what he has done wrong. After all, he remains a member of the community. But he deprived the community of something and kept that to himself. He did not provide his talents to the whole. He deprived that community of what it was entitled to, yes, he actually deprived the community of a part of himself, of his contribution to the whole. So if you eliminate the consequences of his actions, you actually eliminate him. He *is* karma, both his 'good' and 'bad' karma. He *is* his own causes and effects. How can you take these away?

Moreover, grace would mean favoritism. Someone's actions would be disconnected from consequences, while others have to experience the consequences.

The entire cosmos is based on collaboration and justice. These aspects support the universe. If justice were to be taken away by mercy the universe would waver. Nothing would be sure anymore. When will there be mercy, and when not? Would there never be consequences to our actions anymore, if only we showed sincere repentance? Or should we sometimes have to pay anyway? Eventually, such a view leads to anxiety, like you see in some Christian churches. People are never sure whether they are partakers of the grace of god. And if you do not receive that grace, you are doomed! There are Christians who are terribly afraid of death because they doubt if their sins will be excused. Fortunately, the universe is built on order and regularity. Therefore, no one can – not even the most powerful god – negate karmic consequences.

Rectifying committed injustice yourself

Does someone who repents his deeds actually want the consequences, which were caused by him, to be eliminated? In our opinion you do not want this at all if you *truly* have remorse.

True repentance does not arise because of the perilous consequences that your action has caused for you. If a criminal repents, *because* he is in prison, he is not doing repentance for the act he has committed, but because of the painful consequence of that act. He repents because of the punishment. He can seriously decide to never steal again, but only because he does not want to take the risk to end up in prison again. True repentance arises when he realizes that his action was directed against the community, that he committed injustice, that he acted against the habits of his country and humanity, and while doing so he thereby increased the disharmony. True repentance means that you want to restore this disharmony. It means you want to change the character of your input.

Instead of remission of the consequences of his actions, someone who truly repents will therefore want nothing more than to accept the consequences of what he has accomplished. He would find it unworthy for him when someone else has to clean up the mess, which he has created himself. He realizes that there is no grace needed to make him a better person.

Karma: the law of restoring harmony

We defined karma as the law of cause and effect. Basically this is a good description, but if you look at karma from a higher level, then karma is the law of the restoration of harmony.

Nature tends towards an equilibrium. And 'nature' is not something abstract, but it is the total of all living beings in different degrees of development: from highly developed spiritual beings to hardly developed unself-conscious beings. And all parts of the whole need each other. No creature lives in seclusion or separation. We exist thanks to the existence of others. Yes, in fact we are part of one another. We belong to the same 'cosmic tree'. The unself-conscious beings, such as animals and plants, will instinctively comply with that totality. Beings which have developed themselves further than mankind, do this self-consciously. Man is positioned between the unself-conscious and the self-conscious beings. He must still learn to comply self-consciously with the totality and play his role in the cosmic whole. In this learning process, he makes mistakes. He disturbs the harmony. How majestic does nature work? Because of the consequences he harvests during this process, he gets a chance to grow in consciousness and restore harmony. What opportunities for growth would be taken away from him, if by mercy he would no longer be confronted with the results of his deeds?

Does individual karma exist?

Karma cannot be changed. Perhaps this is considered as being harsh, because we deny any form of mercy. The same applies for "vicarious suffering", or praying or fasting in order to try to get rid of karma. People can be so down that they believe they cannot recover from this alone. Should we just leave them suffer alone?

Our answer is a solid "no." We should do everything to help them, but we are not doing this by solving their problems for them, because we cannot do that; nobody can.

Heartlessness arises if we would believe that karma only exists on a pure individual level: as if causes are created by just one single person, and can therefore only be harvested by one man alone. But this is not how karma works.

Karma exists as a result of the unity of life. If there were no unity, nature would not be able to give a reaction. H.P. Blavatsky compares a deed with throwing a stone into a pond. The waves set in motion in all directions, but eventually flow back to the place where the stone hit the water.⁽²⁾

This means that once we are aware of something, we are also involved, and therefore we are karmically connected. So, when we see someone suffering, we have the duty to do something about it. What we can do about it depends of course on our wisdom and capabilities, but we should at least try to alleviate the suffering in the world.

In addition to this, we need to inspire and encourage people not to sow new causes, which will cause suffering in the near or distant future. We need to teach people the law of karma. If only half of the world population would understand the correct meaning of reincarnation and karma, then most of the suffering that human beings inflict on another will disappear.

Cross proportionate to force

Finally, we would like to present a comforting thought for all those people who suffer from sorrow: it is never the circumstances that cause us to be happy or unhappy. The circumstances are always colored by the perceiving consciousness. In other words, your vision on the circumstances determines whether you feel happy or unhappy. There are no exceptions.

To give a more profane example: imagine a football team that has lost a match. For one supporter this is a reason to mourn for a week, the other one shrugs and goes on with his life. There are people who live in great luxury and they are depressed, while others living in poverty, are

the epitome of happiness and harmony.

How do you assess the situation you are in? That's what it is all about. And because everyone interprets the circumstances in which he lives according to the character he himself – based on cause and effect – has formed, we hold the key to our happiness and unhappiness in our own hands.

Of course, some people have a really hard time: illness, death of loved ones, poverty. Such a person earns our compassionate attention more than ever. And the best way to help is when we can clarify that eventually this situation is something, which he or she has longed for from the bottom of his heart. Eventually, the meaning of life lies in growth and development of a broader, more spiritual vision. In every man's heart lies the urge to go 'up', towards that spiritual world in which the realization lives that everyone and everything is interconnected. Suffering gives us the chance to sharpen that vision.

Additionally, all the 'misery' you come across in life never has to be so overwhelming that your consciousness can't handle this and succumbs. In your consciousness you can remain harmonious and selfless. Of course, the body can die from disease or violence, but no one but yourself will be able to take away your vision on life.

In Christianity, there is a saying "force proportionate to cross". This means that an external god puts you to the test, but this god is also giving you the strength to endure the test. But why should *someone else* test you? Why would you make a person sick first and then give him a medicine? The expression should better be changed into: "cross proportionate to force". That 'cross' is being formed by the karmic causes we have sowed ourselves. These can never be stronger than the force. And that force is our character that is also sown by karmic causes.

Once you have developed this vision, problems become challenges. Every bump in the road, every adversity you experience, enables you to expand your wisdom, with which you can solve problems and avoid future difficulties. And as your character gets deeper imbued with justice, with the compassionate character of karma, not even one wish for mercy will come to your mind.

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Brotherhood and sisterhood?

Brotherhood has a central position in Theosophy. The main aim of The Theosophical Society is to form a nucleus of active Brotherhood. Although many consider this to be a beautiful goal, we sometimes hear criticism as well, even from theosophical students. What about the sisters, they ask. Are they not part of that Brotherhood? So, why then don't you speak of brotherhood and sisterhood? This article provides an answer to that question.

Brotherhoods

Not all brotherhoods that existed in the past, were profound. Often they were far from universal, on the contrary, they separated themselves from other people. Their members distinguished themselves by dressing in a certain way, by certain beliefs or by a certain way of life. They favored each other, granted each other privileges. In the Middle Ages it was certainly not possible for everyone to become a member of a brotherhood. Women were usually excluded.

Now, Theosophy speaks about *Universal Brotherhood*. Anyone can become a member, man and woman; and what is more, in fact we all are members already, even though many do not realize it.

This may seem rather cryptic, but we will explain what we mean. We will do this by focusing on a member of that *Universal Brotherhood*: man.

What is a human being?

One can describe a human being in different ways. One can describe him physically; then you will see differences between men and women. But you can also describe man in terms of consciousness. Then, slowly, you see the differences disappear. From the spiritualistic point of view man is consciousness. This consciousness is composite. Depending on how much detail you apply, you can distinguish three, four, seven or even more aspects. In the context of this article we can divide man in a spiritual aspect and a thinking, psychical-emotional aspect, which is usually called the soul. And finally the body is the carrier or the vehicle of this consciousness. Let us consider these three aspects of the human being: to what extent do they have a male or female character.

Key thoughts

- » In his higher nature Man is asexual.
- » Real man is a spiritual entity. It is beyond the differences between the temporary, external vehicles.
- » Sexuality is only a temporary phase in the evolution of mankind.

Body

Well, as said, one can distinguish between male and female bodies. These differences are not very essential by the way. Most organs in the body are neither female nor male. For example, a typical male or female brain does not exist. Sexes differ from each other only in their genitals. An interesting fact is that in the embryo differences between the male and female genitals develop relatively late, to be exact only in the seventh week. This happens after all the other organs, like the heart – which starts functioning first – are already formed. These organs determine a human being much more than the genital organs. If the embryonic development is a recapitulation of the evolutionary development, then this shows that the division into two sexes took place relatively recently. In some exceptional cases it is even hard to establish whether a body is male or female. The genitals are half male and half female and there also exist intermediate forms in the fields of chromosomes and hormones. Physically there is a range of transitional forms between male and female.

The psychic nature

Let's have a look at the psychic part of man now. There one can distinguish a higher part, which we can call the thinking faculty. There, in essence, no distinction can be made between men and women. Typical female mathematicians or male pedagogues do not exist for example.

In the psychic-emotional aspect one can possibly find differences, although these are certainly less clear than the differences in the physical genital organs. Traditionally activity, strength, a certain aggressiveness, but also intellectuality has been experienced as being typically male. A man likes challenges, is ambitious, and wants to win. Women however were supposed to be emotional, expressive and also a little whiny. They are good at caring tasks and slightly passive.

But in the 21st century in the West few people will accept these traditional gender role patterns without criticism. There are countless cases where women show certain male characteristics and men certain female ones. At best one could indicate nuances.

But still, even after the feminist waves of emancipation, certain characteristics are accredited to women and men, albeit those feminists consider female characteristics to be positive. They tend to see whining as involvement; emotionality as female intuition. Whether this really

exists, we shall see later.

At any rate, if there are differences in the psychic nature of men and women, then these are certainly not absolute and not generally accepted. A list of criteria with which one can classify psychic characteristics as male or female does not exist.

Spirit

Finally, one can ask if a human being is male or female in his spiritual nature.

Spiritual aspects like comprehension, compassion, insight and experience of unity are so universal, rise so high above the day-to-day consciousness that they also rise above the differences in sex. Spirit is neither male nor female. The spiritual man sees behind the outer man and recognizes the kinship between all men, yes even between all living beings. The outer differences like the color of the skin, race, nationality or gender are not important.

Therefore, we do not remember truly great Men as being a man or a woman. Does it matter that Buddha walked around on the face of the earth in a male body, while H.P. Blavatsky used a female one? When we think about them, we never think about their gender.

But we remember a typical manly man, like many Hollywood stars, or a typical feminine woman – like Marilyn Monroe – for their gender and not for their spiritual capacities. The more male, or female, the less a human being it seems. A true human being is a spiritual being. It is the spirit in man that stands above all those transitory characteristics and particulars.

Universal Brotherhood

When we speak of brotherhood in Theosophia, we speak of man as a spiritual being. 'Brotherhood is a fact in Nature' is a well-known theosophical expression. This Brotherhood is not an external, but a spiritual Brotherhood and therefore concerns the spiritual man.

In his outer nature man usually does not behave brotherly. He is competing with others, he is jealous, greedy and all too often aggressive. Who reads the papers, knows how *unbrotherly* man can behave. Still, brotherhood is a fact. So what does this mean?

The spiritual part of man can be considered as a spark of eternity. It is like the ray of a star from which countless other rays radiate. All those rays come forth from, yes, in their core *are* that very star. So, in fact there is no essential difference between the spiritual cores of people, not even between the spiritual cores of men, animals, plants, and

even gods and what not. All beings are one in their inmost core. That is why Brotherhood is a fact, because in spirit we are inseparable parts of each other, flowing forth from the same source. In reality we all are that source.

When we call people brothers, we address their spiritual part. That part is devoid of gender, it is pure and unsoiled by all kinds of earthly limitations. This is what we truly are. By studying Theosophia one develops a spiritual vision on life. One sharpens one's intuition. Therefore intuition is certainly not something female, nor something male for that matter. True intuition rises above the limitation because it provides a direct view on Universal interrelatedness. It comes forth from that part of man that is not limited by gender.

To refer to this part in man we use the word 'brother'. With this we do not mean the male – that is the psychic or physical part – but the impersonal part in every human being. In our imperfect language we have no word to specify this genderless, universal aspect. In our language it is customary to use the male form for neuter words. Don't we, for example, speak of *a human being and his evolution*? Of course we know that we mean both men and women. And when we talk about doctors, teachers and pilots, we certainly do not exclude women.

If we address our fellow *men* as 'brothers and sisters', then we would emphasize the psychic-physical part, while we intend to emphasize the spiritual element.

From bisexual to one gender

The gender of the human race is in fact only a temporary phase. In the third sub phase of this fourth great Round bisexual man has evolved into a one-sex being. According to the theosophical teachings on evolution this occurred just before the middle of the duration of the entire life of planet Earth. We are talking about some 20 million years ago. For our consciousness, which does not see beyond one generation at the most, this is a very long time ago, but if you look at it with a cosmic view, it is rather recent. Many myths from world history provide hints on the separation of the genders. In *Symposium*⁽¹⁾ Plato describes that Zeus cuts bisexual mankind in two, like one can bisect an egg with a hair. Subsequently he gave Apollo the assignment to beautify the two halves. And of course we also know the story from *Genesis*, where Eve was made from the side of Adam (man) — which was deplorably translated with the word rib.⁽²⁾

At present we are passing through the phase of genders. And as long as this lasts the genderless Man will have to

go through experiences both in male and in female bodies. Mark that it is not the spirit in man that is passing through the gender phase. This spirit has no gender. It is the essentially bisexual psychic nature that is in a state of imbalance, and therefore it sometimes tends to the male side and then again to the female side, just like the pendulum of a clock swings from the left to the right. This way a human being can be a man during a number of incarnations and will subsequently incarnate as a woman several times.

This swinging movement also explains that there are intermediate forms, that some men have female characteristics and the other way round.

Approach a human being in his spirit

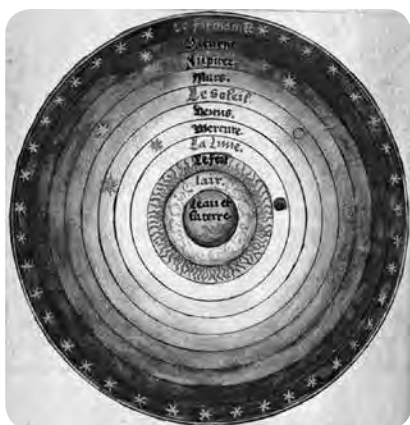
But all of this has nothing to do with what every individual – male or female – is in his core: a spiritual-divine being. Genders are transitory. Possibly for many the other sex can be a source of commotion that has to do with infatuations and unanswered love. Therefore it would be good to learn to rise above this man-woman contradiction. One does not achieve this by denying the differences, but by not rendering exaggerated value to it and by not focusing on it too much.

When someone lives from his spiritual aspects, this illuminates his whole psychic nature. Remember, this psychic part is not bad. There is nothing wrong with the outer differences between people. And we do not only mean the different genders but also the differences between the countless personalities that wander on the face of the earth. These differences often make life interesting. But they are not essential. They are temporary characteristics, temporary instruments which the spirit – the true Man – uses to gain experience.

The psychic nature in us can focus on the spirit so that the spirit can radiate its light through us. That is the process we want to stimulate. That is why it is good to approach a person as a spiritual being. Approach every human being in that part of his consciousness that is inextricably connected with that of your own and with the Universe. That is the spirit in all of us. Therein we are all each other's brothers.

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From Higgs-particle to gravity to Theosophia

Recently, physicists of the particle accelerator (the ‘Large Hadron Collider’ or ‘LHC’) nearby Geneva were able to confirm the existence of the so-called Higgs-particle. From a theosophical perspective this is a very interesting development, because scientists – so far without realizing it – come very close to the idea of a universal Aether: a fundamental teaching of the Theosophia, which was taught in all wisdom traditions.

Key thoughts

» Some decades ago some physicists suggested the theory that the differences in mass between atomic particles may be explained by assuming an all-permeating Higgs-field. Particles with much interaction with this field possess a bigger mass (inertness), and vice versa. Recently, this theory was supported by experiments.

» This is a very interesting development from a theosophical point of view, because these theories approach an old, universal teaching: the existence of an Aether. This Aether is the all-embracing Source of all that exists. Each embodied being evolves out of the Aether in a process of densification, like ice crystals do in water.

What problem made researchers formulate a new theory (on the Higgs-field)?

Physicists have a theory on elementary particles, the ‘standard model for particles’. However, with this current model they were not able to explain why particles vary in mass. And this mass can vary enormously: very much mass (like a top quark), relatively much mass (nucleons like a proton or neutron), little mass (like an electron), or no mass (like a light photon).

What do physicists mean by mass?

Do they mean what we call ‘weight’ in daily practice? No, by ‘mass’ they mean the *inertness* of an object: the phenomenon or effect that, if we propel two different objects with an identical force and during the same time, the object with much mass will

move slower than the other, lighter object. So, ‘inertness’ is a resistance against change.

What is the cause of that inertness?

With respect to those atomic particles, for many years already physicists dismissed explanations like ‘a proton is larger than an electron, and therefore heavier’ (although protons are consistently portrayed larger in drawings). Or: ‘a proton consists of more dense matter’. Physicists look at the mass of such an extremely elementary particle as a kind of vortex or ‘whirlpool’ within a field of forces. They also call it a ‘local disturbance of a field’.⁽¹⁾ This mass does not have a size, but it has a position, and it exerts a force or influence on other particles. So, from one point of view, we can look at an atomic particle as a focus of force.

Do those elementary particles, which exist in many forms, always remain unchanged?

No, they are able to transform into other particles as well. There is an extensive family of atomic particles. Particles can change into other particles. For instance, a proton can fall apart into a neutron, a positron and a neutrino. However, there is no arbitrariness here – nowhere in Nature by the way – but a strict organization, cause and effect: collisions with a certain energy can result in certain products only, since the amount of energy before and after the collision is always equal.

Nowadays we can observe many of these transformations in particle accelerators, circular devices in which atomic particles are pushed up to inconceivable speed, with the aim to make them collide subsequently. The particles that are produced by these collisions are observed with highly specialized detection equipment.

The new theory confirmed

In order to explain the variations in mass, a new theory has been designed: the Higgs-field with its accompanying Higgs-particle, named after one of the discoverers. Recently, the Higgs-particle, initially predicted by theorists, was traced, with a high level of probability at any rate, with the aid of the largest particle accelerator in the world, the Large Hadron Collider of CERN nearby Geneva. So, that was an experimental confirmation of the theoretical prediction.

Of course people were very pleased with that, because each theory has to prove itself in practice. Does the theory turn out to be applicable in all situations, or only under certain conditions? As soon as there is such an experimental confirmation, this theory will become the basis for new research. And in time it will undoubtedly be replaced by more universal theories.

Now, what is the so-called Higgs-field?

The Higgs-field is a newly discovered energy field that fills the cosmos completely. It is omnipresent. The field has other characteristics than the already known fields like the magnetic and electric fields. Atomic particles that have a strong interaction with the Higgs-field seem to have more mass: they give more resistance when you try to accelerate them.⁽²⁾ Particles without mass like the light photon do not have any interaction with this field at all, and move with the speed of light, or 300.000 km per second. That is the maximum speed that scientists have been able to measure in our material world so far.

How can we imagine the Higgs-field?

One of the most comprehensible analogies is a cocktail party for physicists, at which a tax advisor and a famous physicist (for instance mister Higgs) try to get from one side of the hall to the other.⁽³⁾ Those present do not know the first person and he will walk smoothly along everyone: he has a mass of ZERO. Mister Higgs, however, attracts enormous attention, since everyone has a couple of questions he or she would like to ask him. The idea is not that the gathered people in the hall would form a kind of physical barrier (since then we would return to the idea that ‘the size of a particle determines its mass’), but that the *recognition* of this well-known person causes *more interaction*, and those chats take time.

A more physical explanation

For physicists the above-mentioned explanation is too restricted, since it does not represent the theory in all its details. A more technical explanation, that makes more use of physical notions, is given by Leonard Susskind in a lecture that can be found on the internet.⁽⁴⁾ He completely confirms that you can look at a larger mass as a more quick, more frequent interaction between the particle and the Higgs-field. The more interactions per second, or the quicker the ‘vibration’, the heavier the particle. What does such an interaction with the field imply, expressed in more physical terms? At each interaction the spin (= direction of rotation, the direction in which the particle rotates around its own axe) of the particle changes. It switches again and again between zero and the value plus one, in a way. So, the phenomenon mass turns out to be correlated with the frequency with which the spin of a particle switches.

What does this new attempt to explain mass mean?

By this new interpretation, the researchers confirm that what we call ‘our mass’ is *not* a fixed characteristic of us, that is inherent in our body, as it were. No, our mass turns out to be the result of interaction, of exchanges between our body and the field in which we exist and move, like moving iron objects are in continuous interaction with a surrounding magnetic field.

Now, the question remains: what is meant by the Higgs-particle?

According to the above-mentioned simple analogy, this particle can be regarded as a wave that moves through the

List of terms

Atomic particle: the body of a being, of a center of consciousness. In comparison with human beings these elementary beings are still on a very low level of development.

Field: the sphere of influence or the field of forces that a being radiates; each being creates its own sphere of influence, large or small.

Mass: the phenomenon that when you want to give an object a higher speed, this action will evoke a resistance: the larger this resistance, the larger 'the mass' of that object.

Higgs-field: the omnipresent field which physicists deem necessary from a theoretical point of view, in order to explain why one atomic particle has a bigger mass than another. From a theosophical point of view, the physicists approach the ancient tenet of Aether with this (apparently new) theory.

Aether: The all-embracing Source of a Cosmos: it is both spirit and matter, consciousness and substance, since both aspects of Life are unified in the Aether condition. From this universal Aether flow all planes of existence — each with its own relative ether.

Higgs-particle: the smallest energy-unit of the Higgs-field, which you can simply imagine as a 'wave through the Higgs-field'. Because the theoretical physicists were able to estimate the energy content of that particle, it was possible to search for it with the particle accelerator.

Gravity: the phenomenon that two objects attract one another. This depends on their mutual mass, their distance, and on the gravity-constant, which is a characteristic of the cosmic gravity field in which the objects are located.

Light photon: electric-magnetic radiation, like the visible light, is wave and particle simultaneously. The particle aspect is called 'photon'. From a physical point of view it has no mass (Theosophia explains that this is because it belongs to an intermediate state between physical and astral substance).

Higgs-field.⁽⁵⁾ Remember the hall with gathered physicists. Suppose that everyone is standing at equal distance from one another, so, with a proportional dispersion over the hall. When someone makes an interesting announcement somewhere in the hall, some neighbors may also want to hear this and will move to the announcer for a while. As soon as they have heard it they will go back to their original spot. However, now their neighbors will want to know what has been said, and will approach the new messenger. While the rumor spreads through the hall, you will see a kind of traveling 'compression': it's not that the people travel the whole hall, but the temporary densification goes through the whole hall.

That wave does have a certain portion of energy. The Higgs-particle has that as well. In particle accelerators, physicists are able to measure that portion of energy indirectly. They cannot do that directly, since the Higgs-particle lives way too short. So, you have to reason backwards from the many end products of a collision of particles, to establish if there has been a Higgs-particle. That was attempted in the LHC for years. And with that method they finally found the particle they were looking for.

And now our theosophical comments. First: what are 'atomic particles'?

The key to a better understanding lies in the theosophical fundamental thought that all external forms owe their existence to a conscious, living power. This inner power is consciousness. So, atomic particles are the bodies of beings. These beings, these centers of consciousness, are the binding powers behind the small bodies — until that consciousness withdraws into the inner spheres again and the particle disintegrates into its elements. So, when we talk about elementary particles and their interaction with one another, this word 'interaction' actually has much more meaning in Theosophia than researchers suppose: it is about an interaction of *beings* that are conscious of one another and react to one another. That these beings are hardly developed in comparison with our human consciousness does not matter.

Now, each being is in its core a spark of Boundless Life. This Boundless Life has two aspects, which are nonetheless one in essence: consciousness and substance. In ancient times, the ONE, the Source of a Cosmos with its countless numbers of beings that belong to it, was called the Aether, and in the religious documents of India, Ākāśa. Aether does not 'fill' space, since it *is* space. From a theosophical

point of view Space or Aether is not an emptiness but the ALL, the sum of consciousness and substance.

When during the birth of a cosmos Aether expresses itself in active, embodied consciousness, it takes on a more dense condition: its more external aspects materialize, as ice cores crystallize in cold water. Or, in order to use another comparison: each embodied being can be imagined as a vortex, an individual whirlpool in the ocean of Aether. The analogy with 'ice out of water' puts emphasis on the matter side of the process, and the analogy with the 'vortex in the sea' emphasizes the force side, the consciousness side of it. So, all beings are emanations or differentiations of the Aether, and after each cosmic period of external existence the Aether absorbs them all again.⁽⁶⁾

The idea that each substance, when analyzed more deeply, can be traced back to 'centers of force' that attract one another, has been accepted in physics for some time now. This thought is also in line with the Theosophia, with this important difference that we do not consider this force to be 'soulless or aimless', but in fact 'conscious and intelligent'. In the final analysis, the external world consists of a collaboration of countless centers of consciousness (monads), which are in continuous interaction with one another.⁽⁷⁾

What is a 'field of forces' from a theosophical point of view?

Each being radiates a field of forces: the sphere or field that reflects the reach of influence of its consciousness. Each field of forces, a magnetic, electric or Higgs-field as well, is the emanation of beings. For cosmic beings such as the Solar Being, this sphere of influence is immense: all planets in our solar system are surrounded and permeated by it. And our solar system is in its turn a small part of the sphere of influence of the Galaxy Being, and so on. The Source of all this is the Universal Consciousness-Substance-principle that the Greek philosophers called 'Aether'. It is not only the source of the physical world but of the divine, spiritual, mental and psychical worlds as well. Now, according to Theosophia, each of these planes of existence has its own 'ether' (with small letter e), and we can look at these ethers as reflections of the original Aether, but, on a lower, more material level. Even our physical world has its own ether, its own condition in which the physical matter and the physical forces merge to a unity. And it is exactly this ancient notion of ether that now seems to be discovered again in the form of the new theory on the Higgs-field. After all, the Higgs-field

is everywhere as well, permeating everything, and 'a little more ethereal than the physical matter'. The Higgs-field gives mass to all the various physical bodies as well, just like the ether makes all external things appear by a process of emanation and condensation. In short: there is at least an interesting similarity!

We have to mention one difference: while physicists still talk about 'mass-less particles', like light photons, which allegedly have no interaction with the Higgs-field, Theosophia emphasizes that also the so-called mass-less particles have a mass, a substance, but they are so ethereal (in an intermediate state between the astral and the physical) that they appear mass-less to our physical instruments. So, those particles are only *relatively* mass-less. They flow from the ether as well.

Scientists came to the conclusion that they had to assume this Higgs-field, in order to develop a logical view on the characteristics of the elementary building blocks of our universe. Of course, most of them will listen to the similarity with the old Aether-idea with a big question mark: after all, most of them are allergic to all that is vague in their eyes (not entirely unjustified by the way): however ... the notion of the Aether is not vague, it is a logical building block in the explanation of what substance is.

The theosophical view on 'gravity'

The Higgs-theory resulted in the conclusion that the mass of a thing is not something 'that a thing has of its own', but that it is an effect of interaction between that particle and the field in which it moves. That was illustrated aptly in the story of the cocktail party, in which someone who is recognized and approached by many people walks through the mass slower than someone who is unknown. This is also a reappearance of an old theosophical teaching, already put forward many times by H.P. Blavatsky in her literature: that what we experience as gravity (the attraction between masses) is an effect of the *interaction* between the object and the vital-magnetic field of the cosmic being in which we live.

What scientists call gravity, is a certain type of magnetism from a theosophical point of view.⁽⁸⁾ Among other things, this means that gravity is not only an attracting force, but also a repelling force — even though this repelling force is not recognized by physicists at this moment. All processes we observe in magnetic fields have their match in similar phenomena of gravity. It is known, that when you move a coil in a magnetic field, that this movement results in an electric current and produces an own magnetic

field around the coil (called ‘induction’). That evoked magnetic field is opposite to the larger magnetic field in which the coil moves. We experience that opposite field as a rejecting force, as a resistance we have to overcome in order to give the coil speed. Now, that resistance is the exact match of what physicists call ‘mass’. And mass is, as has already been stated, only a word for ‘the experienced resistance when we try to accelerate an object’.

The theosophical explanation of the Higgs-particle and the Higgs-field

The Higgs-theory poses that more or less interaction between the particle and the Higgs-field will result in a more or less slowing down of its movement, so, a larger or smaller mass. And it is known in physics that a fast vibration is ‘more rigid’, acts more like a particle, like a little lump of substance, than a slower vibration. For instance, our body stops visible light: it collides against us like a particle, as it were. However, radio waves, vibrating at a much lower frequency, bend around our body, and therefore reach the backside of our body. These comparatively slow vibrations are more wavelike — they spread in all directions. You can also recognize this general law in a flywheel. If it rotates quickly, you will experience much resistance when you try to move it. It behaves as a heavy particle.

This general rule does not only apply physically, but also mentally and spiritually. In fact, the observed patterns in the physical world are nothing more than the material expression of mental and spiritual patterns. Let’s take human thinking as an example: if we are used to direct our lives to spiritual aims, to ideals of universal brotherhood that always apply, and thus are focused on long term aspirations, our consciousness will be disturbed much less by daily external changes. If you, on the contrary, tend to react passionately to daily incidents, you identify yourself with your outer nature, your emotional and instinctive nature, where much faster frequencies apply. Personal feelings and longings come and go, as we all know.⁽⁹⁾ With such an orientation you risk forgetting your *long term* ideals, and you will resemble a ship adrift at a turbulent sea.

From Higgs-field to Theosophia

Even physical studies have a deeper background, involving spiritual lessons for us humans: as above, so below, the moral and spiritual laws of the Cosmos reflect themselves in the physical laws. In order to give a clue: the teaching

of cause and effect (karma) is in its essence based on the interaction between beings and the spiritual consciousness field in which they live. Just as mass is an effect of interaction, so are all karmic workings. The character we give to our actions evokes a reaction that recovers the balance within the cosmic field.

As for the technical-physical details of the Higgs-theory: these will undoubtedly be replaced by newer and better theories in due course. However, they may be seen as an important step in the recognition of the theosophical key thought, that Space is not emptiness, but a fundamental Fullness, and that each being creates an own field within Space, for which he carries responsibility.

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The mount Meru.⁽¹⁸⁾

Key thoughts

- » There is a difference between the material, visible poles and the spiritual poles.
- » The position of the Earth's axis is directly connected to the phases of inner growth of our planet (and thus of us human beings). A new evolutionary cycle is marked by a shift in the Earth's axis.
- » The North and South Pole are two organs of the living planet. They perform essential functions, among others for the streams of entities which are continually flowing in and out of our planet.

Piercing the mystery behind the poles

Our poles as organs of our living planet

In 2013, Greenpeace made the news with a spectacular campaign to draw worldwide attention to the risks of oil drilling in polar seas. The knowledge we gain from the Theosophia shows us *why* the poles, both 'outer' and 'inner', have such a particular significance.

Greenpeace and other environmental groups who care about the fate of the ecosystems of the North and South Pole, point out the extreme vulnerability of these areas. Because of the cold temperature, these ecosystems recover very slowly from disturbances. And the extreme weather is a permanent risk for offshore workers. A third important point: are we able, with today's scientific knowledge, to understand and foresee the effects of our interventions in these areas? Much knowledge has been collected only very recently. For example, just now we are getting some spare bits of information about the world *under* the polar ice.

Our poles and climate throughout the ages

What is happening at our poles has an enormous impact on the whole Earth. For example, the snow and ice plateaus generate a worldwide cooling down. The cold water of

the polar seas acts as an 'engine' for several ocean currents, among which the warm Gulf Stream. So, poles and climate are always directly related to each other.

That's why we always see them changing simultaneously. In the far past our Earth's axis had a different inclination, changing the high North into a subtropical region. The fossil imprints of subtropical plants can be excavated in Greenland. The greater changes in the movement and inclination of the Earth's axis cause the rising and sinking of complete continents, resulting in a gradual transformation of the face of the Earth. According the Theosophia, the 'skin' of the Earth needs a periodic renewal, just like the skin of man and animals.

What is a planet?

The theosophical knowledge about the poles is closely related to the teachings concerning the planets, being the living building blocks of

a living Solar System. So: what is a planet? It is a cosmic being that envelops itself in spiritual, mental, psychological, astral and physical 'spheres' or 'globes'. Each *heavenly body* is the instrument of a *heavenly being*, a consciousness-centre with a cosmic scope. The entire Cosmos lives, is a living cooperation of beings.

Every being within the Cosmos follows its Path of inner growth, made possible by an uninterrupted alternation of inner and outer existence, of sleeping and waking, of 'death' and physical existence. In other words: every being reembodies itself. A planetary being too. And at the start of a new embodiment, the planetary being projects from itself a sphere of influence, a field of forces, which will become the habitat of countless other beings, which are attracted to it. These 'other beings' are one or more steps less developed than the leading planetary being. They are of all grades and types: a complete planet is always a cooperation of *all* kingdoms of nature. Otherwise the planet would be incomplete, would 'lack an organ'. We human beings are only one kingdom of the ten kingdoms that exist according to the Theosophia.⁽¹⁾

What are the poles?

An essential key to study the poles is the principle of *analogy*: according to the Theosophia, the smaller beings reflect the inner structure and habits of the greater beings of which they are a part.

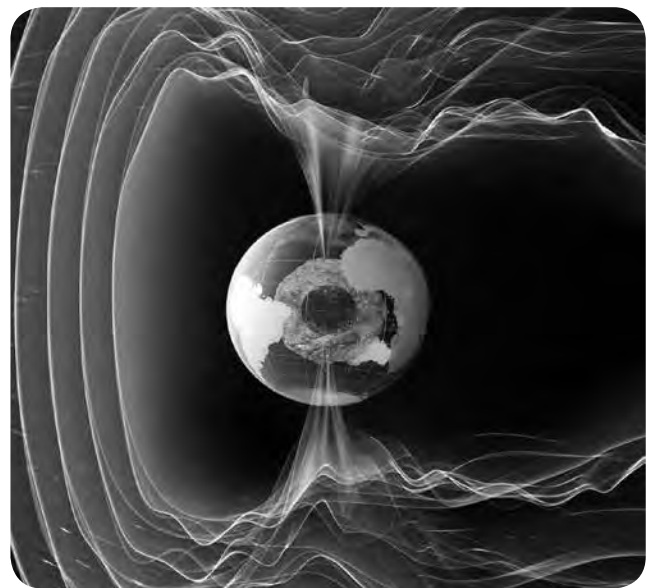
More concretely said: the planet Earth has principally the same inner structure as the Sun or the Milky Way. And so do we, human beings, have the same fundamental structure as the Earth, Sun and Milky Way, of which we are a living part. On every plane and level the outer details may differ greatly, but the fundamental processes do not. When we look at the poles with 'analogy-eyes', we will recognize the North and South Pole to be two *organs* of the Earth. The Earth is a living organism, composed of various organs. Within this organism, the poles act as mouth and lungs (absorption organs) and excretion system. But by 'absorption' and 'excretion' we do not only mean perceptible physical flows, but also spiritual, mental and psychical flows. Just as we human beings influence each other on spiritual, mental and physical levels, so does our planet exchange all kinds of influences with the surrounding planets and stars.⁽²⁾

The circulations of our Solar System

If we put on 'aether-glasses', we would see that the Solar System is a *fullness*, entirely filled with living, ensouled

forces and substances. We would look at a dynamically changing organism, with the Sun as its central Heart, just like our heart is the central organ of our physical body. Starting from the Sun, channels or 'highways' run to all planets. Other channels connect the planets to each other. These channels consist of flows or 'rivers' of entities. You may compare them to the fixed routes of migratory birds, flying from continent to continent. In fact, a finely distributed network of circulating beings connects all parts of the Solar System to each other, comparable to the vascular and nervous systems in our body.⁽³⁾

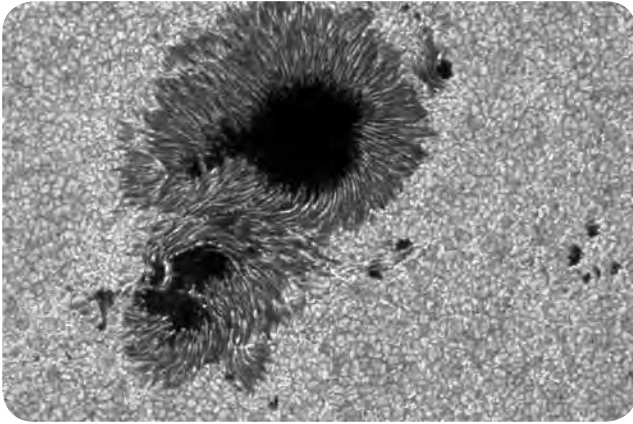
These cosmic routes are followed by all beings that – after completing a certain cycle of manifestation within their own planet – are attracted to other planets and spheres of our Solar System. We human beings follow the same circulations. Between two incarnations, we make a real inner pilgrimage through the spheres of our Solar System. We should interpret these inner voyages more as 'changes in state of consciousness' than as 'a concrete body travelling through space'. Of course we may speak of a kind of 'travelling', but these processes on the more ethereal planes have completely different qualities, and are experienced with a completely different sense of time and space, than we are used to on our physical globe Earth.



An artistic representation of the magnetic field of our Earth; the solar wind (in this drawing coming from the left) strongly warps the field.

What modern science has discovered so far

A part of the vital and substantial flows in the Solar System have a physical component, and thus can be detected with appropriate instruments. An example is the Solar wind. This Solar wind enters the Earth near the poles. Above the



Sunspots.

magnetic North and South Pole, the lines of the Earth's magnetic field bend towards the surface, creating two openings. On every other spot on Earth, the magnetic field is impervious to electrically charged particles coming from outside. It functions as a protective shield. There is one other opening, and that is the point of the Earth's magnetic field precisely opposite to the Sun. Here is a kind of entrance as well.

The famous polar light is caused by the inflow of charged particles into the higher atmospheric layers of the poles. The beautifully changing light flashes and colored curtains are caused by a chain of chemical reactions, resulting in the lighting up of particular gasses. Sometimes, polar light is accompanied by powerful sounds. That is a very interesting, unexplained phenomenon.⁽⁴⁾ When there is a strong inflow of the Solar wind, this will produce powerful electric and magnetic effects. Radio connections will be disturbed. But that is not the whole story ... such a period of Solar activity also affects the psychological welfare of humanity. This has been proven by some intuitive researchers, for instance by the Russian researcher Tchijevsky, who lived in the 19th century. He discovered the close correlation between historical events with a regional and worldwide impact, and the sunspot cycle. This same correlation can be traced in more recent events. To illustrate: during September 2001 there was a sunspot maximum.⁽⁵⁾

Now the poles, and especially the South Pole, are not only an entrance but also an exit, a channel of excretion. But this fact has not yet been discovered by modern-day science.

Our poles: repositories of planetary vitality

In theosophical literature we find various indications of the importance of the poles. Besides being points of

inflow and outflow, they are also repositories of planetary vitality. Depending on the situation, they absorb or emit vitality. Therefore, our poles may be compared to the safety valves of a pressure cooker. In *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky subtly adds that if our planet would lack these valves, the physical globe would soon fly into pieces.⁽⁶⁾ So we are speaking of tremendous forces. We can compare the poles' function of 'blowing off steam' to earthquakes, that also loosen enormous amounts of accumulated energy.

The character of the North and South Pole

The Theosophia teaches that the North and South Poles have opposite characteristics. The North Pole is the place where lofty spiritual flows enter the Earth and undergo many transformations. After leaving the North Pole, these flows are guided to all parts of our planet, by means of spiral routes. The South Pole is the main expeller of all the relatively material forces and substances.⁽⁷⁾ In this regard we find the same duality in our planet as we can find everywhere in Nature, and in every individual being. It will be clear by now that both poles are really indispensable parts or organs of our Earth. Think for a moment about the function of the South Pole: which human society can do without a well functioning garbage collection and waste processing? If this doesn't work properly, we won't be pleased! And the more spiritual and inspiring side of a society is just as indispensable.

Tuning in to 'the North Pole'

As said, the North Pole represents the spiritual side and the South Pole the material side of the Earth's axis. We find symbolic accounts of this cosmic fact in almost all mythologies of the world. In India, the North Pole is designated as 'mount Meru' and the South Pole as 'the abyss'.⁽⁸⁾ In the myths of the old Greeks and the Romans we read about two gates that connect our waking consciousness to the dream world: a gate of horn and a gate of ivory. The gate of horn refers to the cow: an animal that we mainly find in northern areas. While the elephants live in southern areas, from the European perspective. *True visions* enter our consciousness through the first gate, while *misleading* dreams, of all kinds, come in via the second one.⁽⁹⁾

May we conclude now, that it makes sense to move to northern countries, for spiritual purposes? Not at all. This is a too material interpretation, and thus a very *misleading* one. Physical distances have no significance

if we wish to receive inspiring influences. The ‘two gates’ are inside us, not outside us. It all depends on the self-directed development or our own latent spiritual powers, which will enable us to tune in our mind to the right frequencies: to compassionate, universal ideas. And this can be done on every spot on Earth, in Australia just as well as in Lapland.

The *spiritual* North Pole

When you study the Theosophia, you will discover that the *spiritual* North Pole has essential functions. For the moment, forget the material image of a vast plain of ice ... but instead think of an ethereal plane where a group of half-divine, compassionate beings perform their appointed tasks. In the theosophical literature we read about the existence of the Hierarchy of Compassion: the Sages and Bodhisattva’s and Buddha’s who took up the task to stimulate and guide the evolution of all beings of the Earth. They are the inspirers of humanity. This Hierarchy is active all over the Earth, but also has a few ‘headquarters’: a number of focal points from which its influence radiates. The first one is Śambhala (lying somewhere north of the Himalayas), the second one is the *spiritual* North Pole, and the third one is referred to as ‘the Sun’. Each center is a link or transformer in the stream of wisdom flowing from the spiritual Sun to us, human beings.⁽¹⁰⁾

We also read that there is a continent lying on and around the North Pole area, called in theosophical literature ‘the Imperishable Sacred Land’ because it is the only continent that will last from the birth till the death of our globe. In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P. Blavatsky mentions an old scripture that tells us that: “the Pole Star has its watchful eye upon it, from the dawn to the close of the twilight of ‘a day’ of the GREAT BREATH (which means one planetary life cycle; ed.). Once, this continent was the residence of the first human beings, in their first, very ethereal stage of evolution. Being ethereal, these human beings left no physical traces. The Imperishable Land will also be the residence of the last human beings.”⁽¹¹⁾

Well, where can I find this continent, you may wonder. Around the North Pole we only see an icecap, floating on the sea, isn’t it? Physically, that is true. But the continent we are speaking about has an ethereal character. It is part of the more inner planes of being. In the far past, when our bodies were just as ethereal as that land itself, we lived on that land. And in the far future, when we have learnt to live according to spiritual insights, we will have developed the appropriate senses to perceive this land ourselves.

The position of the Earth’s axis reflects the human evolution

Another important aspect of the poles and their axis is their changeability. Their position changes continuously, according to cyclic laws. And in this process, several cycles play a role.

Each time our planet Earth (and we, human beings, as parts of the planet) starts a new evolutionary stage, and another aspect of consciousness will become dominant, the poles change their position. So, our inner growth always reflects itself in the outer body of the planet.⁽¹²⁾

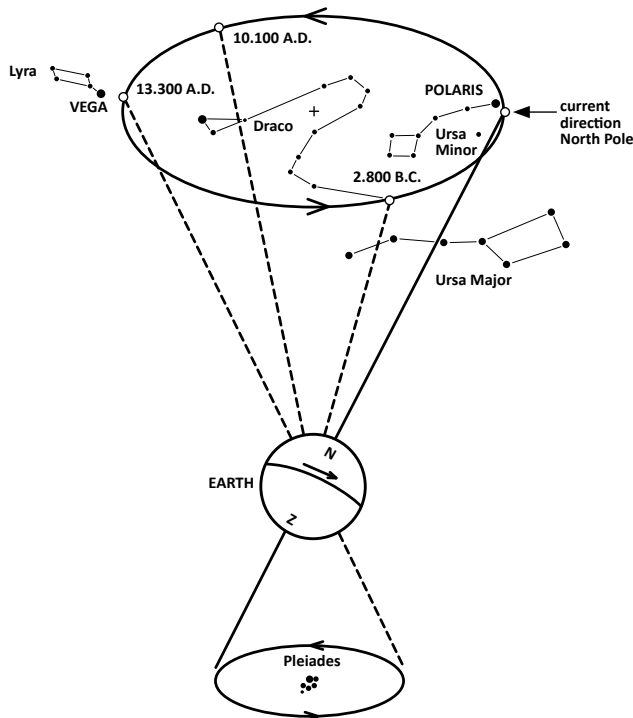
These processes of inner growth are cyclic: they express themselves in ‘cycles within cycles’ — the smaller cycles gradually making up the larger cycles. And as complicated as the pattern of *all* these frequencies is, so is the pattern of changes in the Earth’s axis!

Science today knows a number of these astronomical cycles. An interesting theory in this field is the theory of Milanković, who tried to explain the periodical return of ice ages by a combination of the Earth’s orbital movements.⁽¹³⁾ Let us discuss now two important cyclic movements from a theosophical perspective: the cycle of precession and the turning around of the poles.

The cycle of precession

The so-called ‘cycle of precession’ is quite well-known. This cycle is connected to a long-term movement of the rotating Earth, as a result of its tilted axis. A complete cycle of precession takes 25,920 years; 12 times 2160 years. We can follow this cyclic movement by determining the Sun’s position in the Zodiac on March 21st. Presently the Sun is in Aquarius. After 2160 years it will be Capricorn, and so on throughout the whole Zodiac, in an opposite movement. During these 25,920 years, we see the Sun on 21 March travelling through all twelve constellations. During this cycle, our North Pole is pointing to different spots in the sky. The present situation, with our North Pole pointing almost precisely to the star that we *presently* call the ‘Pole Star’, is only a temporary phase.⁽¹⁴⁾ For instance, there will come a time, some 12,000 years from now, when the bright star Wega will be our Pole Star.

In theosophical terms, the Solar journey through one constellation is called a *messianic cycle*. The reason behind this name is that each period of 2160 years is inaugurated by a strong spiritual impulse from the Hierarchy of Compassion. H.P. Blavatsky was the messenger who set the stage for the present messianic cycle. She gave an impulse with a great impact during many centuries.



In our age, the North Pole is nearly directed towards Polaris, the Polar Star. But this situation will change: during 26,000 years the position of the Earth's axis passes through a cycle.

About 16,000 years from now, a *complete* cycle of precession is ended. The transition to the new cycle will be accompanied by huge changes, geographical and psychological.

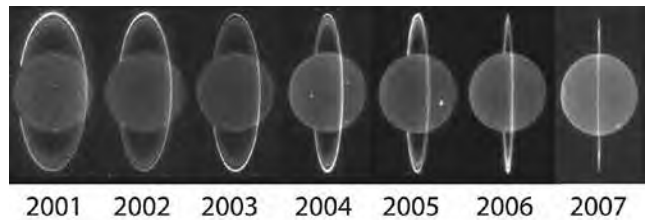
The turning of the poles

The second cycle we wish to discuss is the periodic change of the inclination of the Earth's axis, in other words, the angle between the axis and the Earth's orbit around the sun.

At this moment, this angle is 23.5 degrees (see the illustration). Our astronomers know that this angle gradually changes. But most scientists think that it moves only a few degrees up and down. According to the Theosophia, these slight fluctuations are small stages within a much larger cycle that eventually, after millions of years, will make the poles switch around.⁽¹⁵⁾

The impact of this switching process is enormous, not only from an inner but also from an outer point of view. Take for instance the stage halfway, when the Earth will be 'lying on its side'. In this specific position each pole will be very warm during half a year, and very cold during the other half.

What indications do we have for the existence of this



The planet Uranus, photographed in a sequence of years. The planet lies clearly 'on his side'.

great cycle? Let us mention some. The planet Venus is momentarily, as the only known planet of our Solar System, in its 'upside down-phase'. The Venus inhabitants see the Sun rising in the West. And the planet Uranus currently lies 'on its side'. So, is it such a crazy idea to assume that *every* planet passes these phases?

However, we should not confuse the reversal of the geographical poles with the reversal of the Earth's magnetic poles. The latter event happens much more often, and the impact on our globe Earth is much smaller.

According to the Theosophia, our planet goes through many other cycles. For those interested we refer to the literature.⁽¹⁶⁾ To get a correct understanding of these cycles, we must remember that they are all dealing with *stages of inner growth* of humanity, or parts of humanity (resulting in external effects).

Frequent hints in myths

Those initiated in the Old Wisdom recorded their knowledge in symbolic language, often in myths. Studying these myths is worthwhile, as you will find strong indications that all major religious movements have emanated from the same source, which is the only sensible explanation for the many similarities in the story lines. For example, in many creation myths twins appear. They represent the two opposite poles of being: spirit and matter – which are nevertheless ONE. One of the many meanings of the twin symbol is geographical: the two poles of the Earth.

Not only twins but also snakes and dragons may refer to the poles, because the poles move along meandering, cyclical and spiral paths through space. An instance is the Greek myth of Leto. Leto united with Zeus and got pregnant. Zeus's jealous wife Hera commanded a dragon to hunt Leto, never giving her a moment's rest. Leto wandered incessantly until finally she found a quiet island where she could give birth to her two children, the gods of the Sun and Moon, Apollo and Artemis. That island was a *new* piece of land which rose from the sea.

A geographical explanation of this myth is: Leto is whole mankind, which is ‘hunted’ by changes in the Earth’s axis, during the transition between two evolutionary periods. Old continents sink into the ocean, while slowly new pieces of land start to arise. Mass migrations take place. When the new continent has taken shape, all men find here their new home and build up a new, higher developed civilization (already carried by Leto ‘in embryonic state’ during a long time).⁽¹⁷⁾ In the strange story about ‘the woman and the dragon’ in the Book of Revelation (12:1-6) we see a similar symbolism.

Taking responsibility

In the symbolic legends of ancient India, the spiritual North Pole was depicted by a mountain: mount Meru, on top of which the gods have their abode. Mount Meru has seven levels or steps, that can be climbed. It represents the spiritual structure of our planet, and also the Path of evolution that we all pass through. It can also be connected to the seven degrees of initiation.

As we concluded, both North and South Pole are indispensable organs of the living Earth. This brings us back to the way we make use of the poles today. Do we look at them only as an opportunity for economic profit? Then we make the same big mistake as we did with the largest part of our forests and seas — a mistake of which we presently encounter a growing number of negative consequences. The seven steps that lead us all to the top of mount Meru start with ... taking our responsibility. Each one of us, on whatever latitude of the Earth we may live in this incarnation, can make his mind so pellucid for his greatest ideals, that he factually, in his consciousness, climbs up the ladder of life. And on whatever level we presently are, in this incarnation we can become a link, by transforming the wisdom and inner inspiration we are able to receive from the top of the mountain, and pass it on to its wide foot (entire humanity).

Do we really realize that consciousness is boundless in essence, with a potential limitless scope? As a matter of fact, we are all children of the Kosmos, and thus *at home* in our Solar System, *at home* in our Milky Way — referring particularly to the inner planes of both. According to the Theosophia, universal brotherhood is a fact in Nature. Every one can view his vital problems – including his questions about the North and South Pole – in the light of this inspiring fact, and transform his life accordingly.

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Questions & Answers

Compassion and suicide

The Theosophia teaches us the Law of cause and effect, and invites us to develop the inner quality of compassion. Can you explain what real compassion means towards a fellow human being who doesn't see any alternative but suicide?

Answer

True, we should always practice compassion. But being compassionate does not mean that we always agree with all the things people do, or that we always approve their deeds. However, we should never condemn the individual himself. He is in essence a divine being, and that he does not always act in a divine way, has to do with the fact that he doesn't remember his own divinity. Therefore we shall never give a moral judgment about someone who commits suicide, although we have strong reservations about suicide, based on what Theosophy teaches about the process of dying.

Someone who kills himself, in fact only destroys his body. His consciousness does not withdraw yet into the spiritual plane. Strictly speaking, the process of dying hasn't started yet. Someone who takes his own life comes into a kind of intermediate sphere, which we call the astral sphere. This is not an agreeable sphere. It is a plane contaminated by various earthly emanations, in which desires play a central role. In old myths we find many references to this sphere, it being called the Underworld, Hades, or Amenti.

During the natural process of dying, the man passes through this sphere

unconsciously, or half consciously — the intensity of consciousness depending on the degree of attraction that he feels towards this plane. Spiritually inclined people go through this phase almost without being aware of it. In exceptional cases however, like suicides or executions, the man will be more or less conscious.

If you wish to understand this condition to a certain extent, you should imagine the mental condition of a person who commits suicide. In many cases, such a person will be filled with aversion, hatred, and possibly also despair and resentment to life and to his fellow men. After death, you are the same person that you were before dying. So, a suicide will be in the same state of mind as he was before his death. He only encounters himself: his own thoughts and emotions. But as he finds himself in an unknown sphere now, and in another state of consciousness than the familiar waking condition, his state of mind is completely uncontrollable. You may compare it to being caught in a constantly recurring nightmare, while you do not possess the free will to get it under control or to change it. Therefore: no matter how deep the suffering may have been before death, this is always less terrible — because more controllable — than when you put an end to your own life.

Moreover, the condition of the individual suicide depends on his character and the motive he had to end his life. Of course, a captured resistance fighter who fears that he will betray his comrades when being tortured, and therefore decides to take his own life to prevent this from

happening, is in a completely different condition than a politician who was caught swindling and out of fear of losing his power and prestige decides to end his life. Both will experience a certain degree of consciousness on the astral plane and go through the shocking circumstances of their death over and over again, but they will be in totally different states there.

Besides, this astral phase is always a temporary one, because the energy that makes you enter this astral condition will be exhausted sooner or later. When this happens, you die the 'second death' and enter a spiritual sphere — called devachan — if during your past life you have developed a certain affinity for this.

So, Theosophy warns us for the dangers of suicide. Such an act does not solve anything. In another life the suicide will encounter the same problems he could have solved in this life. Our duties and responsibilities towards our fellow men are in this material world. Here we can learn, grow spiritually, however painful this may be sometimes. Now we can sow the karmic seeds for a more harmonious future.

We therefore believe that compassion requires that we, with all the wisdom that we have, should try to take away the despair and hopelessness in a human who considers suicide. The theosophical teachings are very clear. If we would not share these teachings with others, we would not be compassionate. Perhaps the doctrine sounds a bit harsh, but it is better to clearly state this than to create doubt and uncertainty.

Furthermore, there is another very

important thought we should think of. There is always a way out of suffering. We know that the pain can be tremendous, but the rescue lies in ourselves in the form of spiritual and divine knowledge. This knowledge is in everybody and we should try to awaken it. For all those who know something about the processes of dying, it is a solemn duty to tell their fellow men

about it and help them to find the way out of suffering. That way out is always the way inside.

Finally, we want to say that we help those who have committed suicide best, by not thinking of them in an emotional way, because that intensifies the bond they have with the Earth, whereas they should try to detach themselves from this sphere. Try to think of the dead

with supra-personal love. Remember especially their deeper, idealistic side. If you cannot do this, then leave the dead in peace. Know that in our core we are never separated. Everyone makes mistakes in life, but we all get the chance to rectify them, in this or in a next life. That is a comforting thought.

Events

Symposium Berlin 14 september 2014

On Sunday 14 september 2014 the German section of The Theosophical Society Point Loma organizes its first symposium in Berlin.

The theme of this symposium:
**7 Jewels of Wisdom, a Universal
Philosophy for daily life.**



The working language will be German. A whole day we will exchange thoughts during lectures and workshops in the theme of the 7 Jewels:

1. Reincarnation,
2. Karma,
3. Hierarchies,
4. Self-becoming,
5. Progressive Evolution,
6. the Two Paths and
7. Âtma-Vidyâ - Knowledge of the Self.

Together we will discover the practical use of these teachings in our daily life.

The symposium is open for everyone interested in Theosophy. Entrance is free.

Visit the German section on the I.S.I.S. foundation website for more information (in German) and for registration.

<http://www.stichtingisis.org/internationaal/Deutsch/>

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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.

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

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

 International
Study-centre for
Independent
Search for truth
Foundation

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)