

the *Light-bringer*

# Lucifer<sup>®</sup>

*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*

**Corona crisis: danger and opportunity**

**Acting from the principle of trust**

**The mystery of consciousness**

**The life of bees – a real community**

**Who are the real carriers of culture?**

**How a caterpillar becomes a butterfly**



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# Editorial

This issue of *Lucifer, the Light-bringer*, the first of a new decade, was already ready for publication when the coronavirus crisis broke out. It is a crisis that affects every citizen of the world. That's why we thought we should pay attention to this topic. We hope that we have been able to shine some light on this crisis and that mankind will use the opportunities that the crisis offers us to come to a different world order. We think that applying all the thoughts in the articles can encourage and inspire us to really change course, so that we can emerge strengthened from this difficult time.

That's why we will try with even more strength than before, to present the theosophical teachings in an understandable way, always demonstrating their practical usefulness. After all, the true value of Theosophy lies in its application.

If you take a look at the phenomena in this world with a theosophical eye, they suddenly appear very different to you. It's like you are wearing a new pair of glasses and see everything sharper. And because Theosophy covers all fields of human thought, if you put on those theosophical glasses, you can look at all facets of life in a very different way.

If you for instance look at the phenomena in nature with those theosophical glasses, you can draw universal conclusions, which are also very valuable with regard to your own life. An example of this is given in the article *Metamorphosis: how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly*.

The same wonderment arises when you consider the life of bees with an open mind. Although we humans have the power of thought and free will, we can still learn a lot from those little insects that value cooperation so much. The article *The life of bees, a real community* is the first in a series of three. The next two articles will pay attention to the analogy of bees and chelas and the occult relation of bees to the planet Venus.

There are people who claim that humans cannot work together because they are prone to selfishness. However, if you trust the other person, then you will see how you *and* the other change for the better. The article *Acting from the principle of trust* deals with this. Cherish the good in yourself and others and society will reflect this new mentality.

It is this mentality that makes you a true *carrier of culture*. Much more than powerful kings or politicians, men and women who cherish the idea of interconnectedness and unity of life support the people's culture.

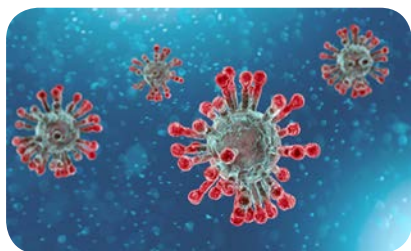
*Team Human* is the title of a book that discusses humanity in the digital age. Whether you applaud the technical development or not, the clear conclusion is that ultimately everything is interrelated. This fact forces science into the realm of morality, karma, circularity and timelessness.

That we have all the possibilities within ourselves to live as collaborating, unselfish beings, is clear from the article about consciousness. Much is written about consciousness, but mostly from a materialistic perspective. However, if you study consciousness from Theosophy, such as in the article *The mystery of consciousness*, you come to very different, much more inspiring conclusions.

Finally, in this issue of *Lucifer, the Light-bringer* we have again included some questions we were asked. This time it is mainly about the important theme of karma and changing habits.

We hope that we have been able to put together a versatile and inspiring issue that will inspire you to further study and apply Theosophy. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or remarks.

**The editors**



# Corona crisis: danger and opportunity

**The circumstances in which the whole world finds itself are unprecedented. There won't be many who could have predicted six months ago that the daily life of almost the entire world population would change so drastically in just a few days, although there were some who foresaw it. An immensely small virus proved capable of turning all ways of life upside down and causing a pandemic and world crisis.**

## Key thoughts

» As with any crisis, the coronavirus crisis evokes the more noble and creative qualities of people.

» Fear of the Coronavirus itself is not necessary. Necessary is: thinking about our relationship with animals and then draw the consequences.

» This crisis is directly linked to other world crises. Their causes are fundamentally the same: selfishness. The real value of life lies in our sense of ONEness.

As with any crisis, the more noble and creative qualities of people emerge. There are countless initiatives being taken for people to survive in these special circumstances and – more importantly – to help each other through this crisis. However, we also see fear, which manifests itself, for example, in the hoarding of all kinds of products that are not even scarce. People wonder if they become ill, can they survive and how long will this situation last? Fear of the coronavirus itself is not necessary. If you think calmly, there are two possibilities. We are not susceptible. That means we do not attract the virus. Or we are susceptible. Then we go through a more or less severe period of illness, which – no matter how annoying physically at times – causes a new balance and renewed vitality. If we die from it – which happens in small percentages with every kind of flu – then it is the effect of the virus only to a small extent, because it is just the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Moreover, dying is not

an absolute end, on the contrary, it is the start of an inner period of rest, followed by the resumption of our own evolutionary path.

The word “crisis” indicates a low point in a certain downward trend. If that is true, then there is an upward trend after the crisis. Then the way out of the pit has been found. Of course, the danger remains that we will fall back into old paths, but there is the opportunity that we will take a new path.

The greatest danger facing mankind today is not the virus itself; this we will overcome after a shorter or longer period of time. We are in much greater danger of falling back into our selfish habits, which have ultimately been the root cause of this crisis. However, if we take advantage of the opportunities this crisis offers us, it may prove to be a great blessing.

## So what are these opportunities?

First of all, let's look at the individual



human being. Because of the social isolation caused by the crisis, we can come to a much greater realization that true happiness is only created thanks to our fellow human beings. We cannot live without each other. So why should we want to live at the expense of others? Why should we set our personal, individual prosperity as the highest priority in our lives when it turns out that this prosperity is no guarantee for a happy and harmonious life?

The crisis can strengthen our empathy. Isn't it strange that just when there is "physical" isolation, we often feel more connected to others? Is it therefore not obvious that physical isolation is not the same as mental or spiritual isolation and that the latter two are much more important? Bodies can be separated from each other, but consciousnesses do not depend on locations to meet. Can't the crisis teach us this important lesson?

This crisis can bring out the more spiritual qualities within us, as long as we develop the patience that is required. Especially when the physical isolation lasts longer, it is an excellent exercise for us to learn to be patient.

You can learn to see the present state as a period of reflection on ourselves and our position in the world. Then you can come to a certain degree of detachment. You learn to see the relativity of all kinds of things that up until now seemed normal and on which we thought our happiness depended. We refer to the possession of all kinds of material things, to luxurious vacations and so on.

## **Global challenges: our relationship with animals**

There are countless opportunities that become available when we act according to a bigger picture. Our relationship with other countries and with animals can change drastically, thanks to the crisis. Let us therefore first consider the causes of this crisis.

As with any major world event, there are countless factors that have played a role. In fact, the corona crisis is one of the many crises in our world. It would be better if we came to an integrated approach, going to the root of all these crises.

The coronavirus that causes Covid-19 disease originated in Wuhan, China, most likely because a virus that lives in bats passed to humans via a civet or some other wild animal. It is certainly not the first time that viruses have passed from animals to humans, leading to epidemics. By the way, viruses also pass from humans to animals, but that doesn't give us any headaches. If we do not radically change our relationship with animals, it is not unlikely

that something like this will happen again in the near future. (Soon our magazine *Lucifer, the Light-bringer* will publish an article about the origin of viruses).

That is why we should really think about our relationship with animals and then draw the consequences. Worldwide millions and millions of pigs, cows, goats and chickens live in extremely unnatural circumstances. They live very close to humans and very close to each other. Recently avian flu was diagnosed in chickens in Asia and Europe. Experts believe there is a good chance that the virus of this disease can spread to humans just as well as the coronavirus.

Of course, animals are weakened in such unnatural conditions. They become susceptible to all kinds of bacteria and viruses, which people then try to combat by all kinds of pharmaceutical poisons, such as tonnes of antibiotics. This weakens the animals even more, which makes them even more susceptible to unknown germs. But there is more. Pesticides for agriculture and pharmaceuticals for animal husbandry are developed in laboratories, which are well isolated and secured, but whose secret manufacturing procedures always leak out, with all the consequences that entail. The same applies to the development of all kinds of chemical and biological weapons; even if we do not use them, the technique for making them is invented, and in the long run, they leak out. We play with fire. The way they are prepared can get into the hands of terrorists, which has happened before. The highly toxic sarin, discovered during an insecticide investigation, was used by a sect in the Tokyo subway, causing thousands of casualties. The sarin gas was of inferior quality, otherwise the disaster would have been much worse.

It is an illusion that we can protect ourselves against these animal-derived viruses by vaccination. In the first place, we never know which virus leaps over to humans, but moreover, viruses always mutate, so that a vaccine that has been developed over a long period of time and has been produced in sufficient quantities, quickly loses its usefulness because the virus has mutated. The only real protection is when we treat (domestic) animals in a different, respectful way. After all, keeping such large numbers of animals in very small areas is disruptive in many ways. The fodder these animals have to eat comes from places thousands of kilometers away from where these animals are kept. This means that jungles are burned down for the production of cassava and soybeans, while in other parts of the world it leads to a huge manure problem and pollution of the soil.

This whole problem is caused by human attachment to

meat. Although there are more and more people who are vegan, vegetarian or flexitarian, the total consumption of meat is still growing.

Everything's connected. Our hunger for cheap meat has created a system in which animals are bred in an unworthy, yes very cruel way. This leads to a demand for animal feed, which makes it attractive to exploit the forest for soy. This leads to a manure surplus in some countries, contributes to the nitrogen problem, the climate crisis, the massive death of insects and therefore of birds.

There are no causes without consequences. Anyone who looks objectively at this discordant state of affairs knows that there must be an effect in order to restore the balance.

## Globalization

Another point we could reflect on is globalization. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, one ideology remained: the free market. The free market is based on selfishness; on individual selfishness, the selfishness of a company, or the selfishness of a country. In the latter case, we call it nationalism.

By the way, the free market is not at all as free as its name suggests. It is the result of all kinds of mutual agreements between countries and between countries and multinationals. Think, for example, of the tax benefits that many of these gigantic companies receive, enabling them to make many billions in profits. Such agreements are always at the expense of weaker parties and increase the already enormous gap between wealth and poverty.

In this selfish market, the weak never have the freedom that the rich have. The rich own companies with monopolies on goods and services. Only a few large companies monopolize, for example, the clothing, food or chemical industries. In the ICT sector, even large losses are made in the race to become monopolists as soon as possible and thus the most powerful. If you do not belong to the club of monopolists, you are always subordinated to the rules of the game that they and their army of lawyers have drawn up.

Suppose you were born in a village in Romania and despite your professionalism, you cannot find a job. The choice you face is: no work and no income, or low pay in another country. Without even realizing it, you are used by subcontractors to lower the wages of people in Western Europe. And if you were born an African, even if you are highly educated, you do not even have that choice, because Europe and the US have hermetically sealed their borders for Africans. So one may speak of a free market; but it is

only the free market for the rich.

If selfishness is the motive for economic action, then almost nothing else is taken into account but one's own profit. Then the production process is cut into pieces and divided over countless countries if that lowers the price for manufacturing the product and thus increases profits. Low-wage countries, child labor and unemployment in previously industrialized areas are then created. Then, during a pandemic, scarce surgical masks are offered at exorbitant prices.

The current corona crisis should raise the question of whether this form of globalization has contributed to making the world a fairer, more harmonious and happier place. Is it a healthy situation that – to give just one example – most of the clothing of the rich countries is manufactured in Bangladesh and other East Asian countries in factories that are not allowed in the countries where those clothes are sold and under working conditions that are inhumane? Is it normal that China is the “factory hall” of the world, from where just about everything comes that we buy in big department stores and throw away after a short time? Perhaps it is less efficient if every country manufactures its own products and grows its own food, but doesn't it increase the pleasure of labor if we can creatively make our own products? Of course we do not have to close our borders to the products of other countries, but shouldn't we aim much more for the welfare of workers instead of the profits of companies?

It may seem as if this issue has nothing to do with the current pandemic, but that is not true. It is the same mentality that underlies it. And again, there are no causes without consequences.

Isn't the great paradox of our time that we have eliminated borders for all kinds of products, but closed them to people? After the previous big global “crisis”, the Second World War, we signed all kinds of treaties that should make it possible for people to move freely on the planet and to flee from injustice, war and poverty. There is almost no country that complies with these signed contracts. Millions of people are on the run. Every country is trying to close its borders to them. Is it possible to close the borders permanently to these people? If not, how do we solve the problem? Especially in times of crisis, we should think about this.

If the corona crisis teaches us one thing, it is that we cannot close the borders. Separateness is fictitious, especially in this modern world. It also teaches us that we cannot protect ourselves from the consequences of our own



If there is one lesson that we may derive from this crisis, it is that national borders do not isolate us from the world challenges. We are fundamentally involved in the destiny of all humans.

actions. We can feel insusceptible because we are rich, have good health insurance. The virus does not care about that and we will have to stay at home as well. We can spend billions and billions on weaponry, but we cannot defeat a microscopic virus with that. The only sustainable cure is a change of mentality.

## Conclusion

All in all, we can say that the crisis was not caused by an innate evil of man, but rather by a blindness, an ignorance of the true nature of life.

As long as man seeks his life's purpose in appearance, in desire for prestige and luxury, he will be driven by selfishness. Selfishness leads to a narrow-mindedness of consciousness, yes, to mental blindness. By this, we mean that you then assume that the selfish causes you create will not lead to harmful consequences for yourself.

This crisis can teach us that there are other values in life, that we must strive for a more harmonious and just world in all respects, and that partial solutions to global problems do not exist.

The pandemic will undoubtedly disrupt the economy. Let countries solve that disruption together. Countries which are economically and financially better off, should not necessarily reject the request for help from less wealthy countries. They should not fall into the reflex – that is

the danger that a crisis also entails – that each country should take care of its own problems.

The crisis can make us realize that the real value of life lies in the consciousness of the human being and not in the form in which it expresses itself. In other words: the body and outer circumstances obviously need some of our attention, but human dignity lies in the noble aspects of our consciousness. How rich, sublime that consciousness can be, is known to everyone who delves into this subject. Through the study of the ancient Theosophia, you learn to discover and exploit the still unexplored layers in your own consciousness and thus seize with both hands the opportunity that this crisis offers us.

Of course the Theosophical Society Point Loma is happy to help you on this exploration.



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# Acting from the principle of trust

Imagine that we have a society based on trust. You do not need to ponder for long on this to come to the conclusion that such a society will look very different. The tax authorities, for example, are then a source of information and support. This service helps you to determine what you contribute to maintain and shape the society to which you belong. The goal is to determine a *fair* part of your income. The social service helps you to make an active contribution to that society. They appreciate it if you have been able to find a supplementary income on top of the support you receive. Nor will you be punished with strange rules if this job only concerns a limited period of the year, because that extra income is seen as a support and as a safety net.

A still very popular control method, however, is the creation of protocols, detailed step-by-step plans. Nowadays all these protocols are being drafted in order to enforce a working method, rather than to assist in determining the correct actions.

If we trust each other, we also do not need an army or security services that enforce behavior. The focus is then on helping and providing insight.

## Trust can be developed

It is interesting to discover that almost all sources of the Ancient Wisdom, the *Theosophia*, in their many appearances, make a number of recommendations to develop goodness and trust. Some of these exoteric scriptures have degenerated over time, during the ages, through all kinds of cultural interpretations and dogmatic views, so that their deeper knowledge has been lost. But there are certainly still well-preserved sources of wisdom.

I want to use two of my beloved sources to understand and further develop the moral attitude we outlined above. This is the *Tau Teh Ching* of Lau Tsu and the *Prajñā-Pāramitā* group of writings from Mahāyāna Buddhism, as recorded by Nāgārjuna. Both sources of the Ancient Wisdom speak of the concept of “virtue”.

## The Tau Teh Ching about virtue

The *Tau Teh Ching* consists of 2 parts; the first part is about Tau (paradox 1 to 37) and the second part is about Teh, virtue, that is, Tau in practice. This part starts with paradox 38. It explains the concept *Teh*, virtue. The Chinese character for Teh is:



## TEH (Virtue)



This character is made up of three pictograms. All Chinese characters are made up of one or more root pictograms, of which there are approximately 49. The character Teh, virtue, consists of “go”, “directly” and “with the Heart”. To translate a Chinese character you need insight and wisdom. Yet these three pictograms immediately show that there is *a direct action from the heart*: not the physical but the spiritual heart. Our spiritual heart is the source of our highest qualities, our unselfish, all-embracing qualities. And Teh is *being* these qualities. This is what the verse below is about, the difference between “being good” and “doing good.” It is very worthwhile to ponder over this. Verse 38, about *Teh* (translation Gia Fu Feng):

A truly good man is not aware of his goodness,  
And is therefore good.  
A foolish man tries to be good,  
And is therefore not good.

A truly good man does nothing,  
Yet leaves nothing undone.  
A foolish man is always doing,  
Yet much remains to be done.

In the first two lines of the last verse we encounter the Chinese term *Wu Wei*. This means: doing something without doing anything, in other words, working from Tau, the One.

### The Prajñā-Pāramitā: writings about virtue

The above verse is textually simple, but its meaning is very profound. What can help to understand it better is to combine this Chinese expression of Theosophia with another expression of Theosophia that we find in the Prajñā-Pāramitā scriptures. The basic idea of these writings, as expressed in Eastern mysticism, is “going to the other shore”. Often this is understood in the West as entering Nirvāna. But out of compassion we do not want to enter Nirvāna. It is about a different mental attitude. The

symbolism of “going to the other shore” means adopting a different attitude, a different mindset, a *lasting* different mentality.

Which mentality? As Lao Tsu shows: *not doing well, but being good*. In other words, not be able to do anything that is not done out of goodness. That is the opposite of the experience: “Oh, how good I was.” The intended attitude has nothing to do with the level of wisdom and insight that you may have. It is a mindset that you can adopt at any stage of development and apply with perseverance. Remember that taking a different mental attitude is much more difficult than studying the most complex theosophical writings. It is a self-victory.

In these same Prajñā-Pāramitā scriptures we find the well-known seven Pāramitās. The first Pāramitā is Dāna: the key of gentleness and immortal love. If we live and act based on the combination of the above thoughts, our society will look completely different. Competition, rivalry and “myself first” are concepts that do not belong in this thought, but unity, cooperation and mutual aid.

### Lasting help

Of course, from our daily thoughts, the first question that emerges is: what should we do with people who do not work according to these principles? What certainly does not work are the education systems that we see in many eastern developing countries and in China. Humans do not improve through coercion!

Then what can we do? Should we tolerate fellow human beings who are betraying trust and turn a blind eye to their behavior? That, too, will certainly not lead to better character. What does make sense, in accordance with the above theosophical thoughts, is to help our fellowmen to gain insight, by assuming Lau Tsu’s understanding of virtue and the realization that trust can be built.

Institutions such as prisons are not suitable, because punishment and retaliation do not work. If we assume the law of cause and effect, Karma, then nature always compensates for the caused disharmony. What we need are institutions that provide training, that give a positive stimulus. There are current examples of this, such as on the Norwegian island of Bastøy. Another inspiring example can be found in Uruguay. In a district of Montevideo, Punta de Rieles, lawbreakers learn to rebuild their life together in the knowledge that they are part of a greater whole. There are no guards but social workers who help and encourage them.



Everything is alive, all things are animated. A galaxy like this (NGC 3344, photographed by the Hubble Telescope) is a vast community of evolving beings.

# The mystery of consciousness – part 1

**Sometimes we look in awe at the starry night sky. In silence we marvel at the mystery of the cosmos. Sometimes we look into the eyes of a fellow human and it seems as if we see the same mystery. In fact we really do, because the mystery of the cosmos is the same as the mystery of man: it is the mystery of consciousness.**

**The concept of “mystery” is usually understood as an unsolvable riddle. We believe, however, that it can be solved, at least to a certain extent. That solution lies in our own consciousness. Let us therefore try to discover what consciousness is.**

## Key thoughts

- » Everything is consciousness.
- » Spirit and matter are states of consciousness.
- » Consciousness is the ability to (re)act and perceive.
- » Consciousness always exists in relation to “something” that is aware of something else.
- » The universe is manifested consciousness.
- » Every consciousness is limited and is constantly changing and developing.
- » Self-consciousness: perceiving oneself and reacting to it.

There are two fundamentally different ideas about consciousness: the materialistic and spiritualistic view. Materialism claims that consciousness is a by-product of matter and especially of our brains.

Spiritualism affirms that *everything* is consciousness.

If you hear this for the first time, it may sound strange, but if you try to understand this idea with an open mind, you will find that it is in the least very logical, and that it can also explain all kinds of psychological phenomena and riddles.

## What is consciousness?

The question what consciousness is, can be answered with a question in return: what is *not* consciousness?

It is difficult to define what consciousness is. Nevertheless, we can list a number of characteristics with which it complies. Consciousness is

life and everything that lives can set itself in motion. Therefore, *a* consciousness can act and react, just as it can be the object of actions of other consciousnesses. Consciousness is thus synonymous with a being, a living entity.

Acting is taking the initiative to achieve a goal. Reacting is acting in response to something that happens, in response to a stimulus, an act or a statement. It is often difficult to determine whether something is an action or a reaction, because there is always something that precedes an action.

Anyway, in order to act, you always have to perceive something. But you have to realize that perception is not only visual perception. Observing something with your eyes is just one of the many ways of perception. We perceive with our whole being, with all our senses, and also on different

planes of our composite beings.

Perception has two directions: we receive a stimulus, are touched and interpret that touch or stimulus. For example, we look, feel or send out a thought and we receive a reaction. This is a very dynamic process. In just one day, thousands, if not millions of stimuli will come at us. Observing is therefore not a passive event. In fact, the consciousness projects itself onto the object of perception. It throws, as it were, a bundle of light from itself, with its own personal spectrum, so that it becomes aware of what it perceives according to its own characteristic.

Consciousness is also described as awareness. Usually, self-awareness is meant by this. However, this is a certain form of consciousness. More about that later.

Well, we humans may be inclined to understand action and reaction only in the way humans do. We are thinkers, and our perceptions and actions are therefore always related to our capacity to think. However, there are countless other ways of perception. What we call instinct in the animal world is also perception. Dogs, for example, often perceive the intentions of their owners. If the owner of a dog only thinks about going to walk his dog the animal already becomes restless. It is also known of wild animals that left the forest they lived in before a forest fire broke out. Apparently, they had perceived one way or another that the fire was coming.

Flowers or minerals also have their own capacities of perception. If they had not such capacities they could not live. In fact, all phenomena perceive. Also minerals, which build crystals in their own forms. Atoms exchange electrons with each other to form a molecule. Because of their mass, planets influence each other. By the way, that is only one of the ways they influence each other. Suns emit a very strong radiation of energies. In short, what we call a phenomenon is an expression of consciousness that acts and reacts. The whole of the manifested universe consists of consciousness.

If you close your eyes and ears, smell nothing and feel nothing, and then wonder if you perceive something, the answer must be affirmative, otherwise you could not have asked yourself this question. Doesn't that mean that there is always perception and therefore consciousness?

If you look at the cosmos and nature in an unbiased way, it is obvious that every phenomenon – every consciousness – perceives, because all phenomena act and react to each other. Is there anything that does not react to the environment? Stars connect with each other, influence each other. Planets revolve around suns. Cosmic beings

are attracted to each other or repel each other. The same interaction exists in the atomic and subatomic worlds. Electrons revolve around the nucleus of an atom, just like planets revolve around suns. Even galaxies of billions of stars orbit around each other. There is an interaction everywhere, constantly. So is it unscientific to assume that everything is consciousness? In any case, it would be a workable scientific hypothesis.

### **Consciousness, will, intelligence and love**

Acting and reacting also assumes a certain degree of *intelligence*, because somehow what is perceived has to be processed. The less developed consciousnesses also do so, albeit not self-consciously. Do not confuse intelligence with intellect. Animals, plants, even minerals, atoms and less developed beings have intelligence *on their level of consciousness* as well and process their experiences in a more or less intelligent way. There are miraculous cases of intelligence known in the animal world, but also in the flora. Observe how different plants deal intelligently with sunlight and the environment in which they grow. There are no mechanical processes in nature. Consciousness always presumes an urge to act. In every consciousness there is a will; the will to live and grow, because the processing of what is observed leads to growth. As a being develops itself, his free will also increases. His range of consciousness becomes greater, and approaches, as it were, more of the boundlessness. Such a being is then less and less driven by impulses of desire, but chooses in freedom, from a greater wisdom, his purpose in life.

No being, however, can grow on his own. After all, you cannot live alone. The growth of consciousness always occurs in interaction with others. By interacting with other consciousnesses, those of the same level of development, but also those who have evolved further or less far, a consciousness expands. Consciousness therefore always requires cooperation with others. There is an intrinsic desire for each other, an attraction that stems from love. It is love for one another, which makes consciousnesses grow. A sense of interconnectedness, yes of unity, then arises. Intelligence, will and love lead to growth; they are therefore inseparable from consciousness.<sup>(1)</sup>

### **The infinite growth of consciousness**

The next step in our research into consciousness is: *what* is it that acts and reacts? What is it that is aware of what is observed? In other words, there must always be something in order for it to be aware of something.

Consciousness must always exist in relation to something that is conscious. If there is nothing, then there can be no consciousness. Experiencing consciousness, therefore, also means that there is a limitation, no matter how high and elevated the consciousness may be. More about that later. That “something”, that center of consciousness, is referred to in different religious and philosophical systems with different names. However, those names are not important. It is more important that you realize that there is a center of consciousness that is constantly growing and that is dressed or clothed in a certain form. In Theosophia such a center of consciousness, that core, is sometimes called a “monad”. Hindus call it “Ātman”.

That center of consciousness perceives, acts and reacts on its own level as well. It is therefore also consciousness. We said it before: everything is consciousness. And because consciousness can only exist in relation to something that is conscious, again, something must be active in or behind the monad, that core of consciousness. You could therefore say that behind or in the monad there is something you may call the monadic essence. Consciousness therefore exists in an ascending hierarchical structure.

Logic dictates that this monadic essence only can exist in relation to something that is also consciousness. And so on. It is obvious that our understanding can no longer grasp this and our language has no words for it. But we can draw the conclusion that the growth of consciousness must continue infinitely.

However, we cannot imagine this infinite growth. Somewhere we stumble upon a limit. That limit does not really exist, but our consciousness does not yet have the ability to see beyond that boundary. Everything that is beyond that boundary is an abstraction for us. In this context, Theosophy speaks of the Ring Pass-Not. Everything beyond that allegorical Ring is beyond our realm of understanding. That Ring is not an absolute limit, but is determined by the reach of our consciousness. As we grow, we will also shift the boundaries of our consciousness.

Will growth ever come to an end? No, because there is boundlessness. No consciousness can ever be fully aware of the Boundlessness, because *a* consciousness – a being, even the most advanced we can imagine – can never be boundless. After all, if it were boundless, it would be all and, therefore, it would not be a consciousness, for a consciousness lives and grows in relation with other beings. In the Boundlessness consciousnesses appear periodically: universes, suns, planets, humans, animals, atoms. Then they withdraw from the manifestation and all conscious-

nesses dissolve, like salt in water. The consciousness is then in a stage of rest, passivity. There is only Oneness.

## Free will and the origin of a cosmos

This state of rest ends at some point. The cosmos awakens and the consciousnesses reawaken and regain a form, a hierarchical form.

There is no power outside the cosmos that awakens it. It is important to realize this. It implies that a cosmos comes into being as a result of an inner urge, arising from its *own free will*. Free will is the essence of consciousness. Without free will there could be no consciousness at all. Everything in the cosmos is consciousness. It is true that a distinction is made between spirit and matter, but that is only a relative difference. That difference is actually made by consciousnesses that assign a certain value to something. We humans call something matter, if it is tangible to us, if it is composed of atoms and molecules. But atoms are consciousness too.

Matter is also consciousness. The universe is a hierarchy of consciousness. The leading consciousnesses in the universe are called spiritual forces or spiritual beings; in some religions they are called gods. Those spiritual beings use other beings to manifest themselves. For them, these beings are like building blocks, which they need to build up their vehicle or life form.

Spirit and matter are actually one. Spirit is ethereal matter and matter is crystallized spirit. They are two phases or two states. Whether you call something “spirit” or “matter” depends on the consciousness that gives it the status of spirit or matter. For a consciousness with a certain degree of development, “spirit” is consciousness that has evolved further than itself and “matter” is less evolved. Because the further evolved being is spiritually more developed and therefore has a greater range of consciousness, it directs beings who are the building blocks of the universe and who are less developed and which we call matter or substance. In essence, however, they have the same possibilities and potentials as spiritual consciousnesses.

So spirit and matter are relative. It depends on the degree of development whether a being or something is called spirit or matter. For humans, the sphere in which further developed beings live – you may call them “gods” if you like – is a spiritual realm, while for them it is as concrete and material as the material world is for us.

Consciousness therefore lies at the base of what we can call spirit as well as what to us is substance or matter. It is the root of all things. In other words: consciousness is the





A being is a stream of consciousness, which flows from our spiritual core, through our mental-psychological and astral part, into our physical part. If we were to discover the “deepest origin” of our consciousness, it would appear that behind what we saw as the core, an even deeper layer, an even more spiritual essence lies hidden --- and that to infinity. Waterfall in Furukuchi, Japan

foundation of gods, monads and atoms; the foundation of human beings, animals and minerals. The universe is embodied consciousness; or perhaps even better: embodied consciousnesses, hierarchically related to each other.

### **Emanation**

With the emergence of a cosmos, first the most advanced consciousness awakens: the top of a hierarchy. It radiates an electromagnetic field – an energy field – into which less developed beings, who also awaken, are attracted. These beings are not doomed to regain consciousness, as if they were forced to do so by a god. No, they do so, just like the “spirit of the cosmos” itself, of their own free will. Yet their free will is more limited than that of the top of the hierarchy. They have a smaller range of consciousness and therefore fewer possibilities, but they roll out or exude such a field of energy in the same way. That is why, for example, the free will of a human is greater than that of an animal; and that of an animal is greater than that of a plant, et cetera.

We call this process emanation, which means “flowing

out”. As a result of this emanation process the whole cosmos, with all its consciousnesses, comes into being once again. So the cosmos is a hierarchy, in which the further developed consciousnesses roll or pour out the field, which attracts less developed consciousnesses. There is a wonderful cooperation between high and low, between spiritual beings and the living building blocks. The spirit envelops itself in a series of ever lower consciousnesses: the living matter, the lowest consciousness of that hierarchy. The consciousnesses that represent the material side – the life atoms – form an instrument or vehicle for spiritual beings. These atomic beings are inspired, animated or stimulated to live by these spiritual beings. Everything works together. Consciousnesses cannot live without other consciousnesses.

The hierarchy of consciousness extends from the relatively most spiritual point to the relatively most material point. Yet these differences between consciousnesses are never essential. Anyone who has any awareness of this gigantic web of consciousness recognizes the same spark of consciousness in every living being, however undeveloped it

may be. He will therefore respect every being and consider any entity essentially the same as himself. How inspiring it is to imagine a society, where people apply this awareness in the daily practice of their lives!

### Brain as an example

We can explain in more detail this wonderful cooperation between consciousnesses of different degrees of development by looking at a human being. The human consciousness – the thinking consciousness or the mind – can only manifest itself thanks to the cooperation with less developed consciousnesses, such as atoms, molecules and cells, which compose his body. Feelings, energies, different kinds of vitality and thoughts are also part of the human being. In this context, you may speak of *Skandha's*: bundles of properties, composed of thoughts, elementals, cells, molecules, atoms.

With every new birth, man attracts these living building blocks. In this way he gives them the opportunity to manifest themselves and develop themselves further on their level. These living building blocks in turn give him the opportunity to build an instrument in which he can manifest himself and with which he can gain new experiences, so that the thinking human being can continue to develop himself. Cooperation is a double edged sword. Man attracts only those life atoms that suit him, with whom he has built up a karmic bond. So they have the same characteristic. Each of these consciousnesses occupies a place in the vehicle that suits his present level of development.

Let us illustrate this process by looking at the cells of the human body. There is a difference in level of development between, for example, the cells that form our muscles and cardiac or brain cells. The brain cells or neurons have evolved further and are therefore of a higher quality. This is the reason why not all living building blocks, such as nutrients that are transported by the blood to the different parts of the body, are admitted to the brain. Of course, certain substances must also be present in the brain, allowing the neural networks to function properly, but not all nutrients are welcome. In biology, this phenomenon is known under the name of *blood-brain barrier*. You can compare it with a doorman who allows certain living building blocks, which have a sufficiently spiritual character, to enter the brain and denies others, of inferior quality, access. After all, the living neurons must be of a certain quality if they are to serve as a vehicle for the living thoughts of the thinking human being.

This communication between these neurons and human consciousness takes place by resonance. More about this in part 2 of this article.

Brain cells are currently among the most spiritual that compose the body. They function as an intermediate nature that connects human thought with the material world. They work like a radio or *streaming* like Spotify. The radio or Spotify software does not produce music, but offers the opportunity to let that music be heard. It is an intermediate station. In the same way the brain cells do not think, but they resonate with the mind, forming the link between man and the outer world.

Materialistic neurologists claim that consciousness is created by the brain. We think the *facts* refute this theory. Our brain, composed of 100 billion neurons, forms a vast field of activity, with millions of actions per second. The number of possible connections of neurons – the synapses – is estimated to be 10 to the millionth (a 1 with a million zeros).

Compare our brain to a metropolis where millions of people travel every day by car, bus, metro or bike. There must be a regulating force to prevent total chaos. And our brain is millions of times more complicated than the biggest city.

Our mind, the thinking consciousness, is that coordinating force that directs those billions of cell-consciousnesses. It forms an electromagnetic field – an energy field – that binds and organizes the neurons, thus creating a vehicle in which it can express itself and through which it can receive information from the outer world. For the brain also transmits information from this outer world to the mind. Sound, colors, smells, heat or cold, but also certain pains in the body, are transported by the living brain to human consciousness, so that a human being becomes aware of them.

### Dynamic cooperation

The brilliant interaction between a human and the neurons in his brain is an example of the dynamic cooperation between consciousnesses. The dynamics arise because the different consciousnesses react to each other and, as said, consciousnesses always react to other consciousnesses. They react by means of resonance to consciousness of the same level of development, but also to consciousness that is further or less developed..

Thus, any manifested consciousness is limited compared to the top from which it originates. But that top also has a top from which it came, and so on. Therefore every

consciousness is limited. There is always something of which it is not aware. That limitation does not only relate to human consciousness; Buddhas or Gods are also limited. Strangely enough, this limitation offers the possibility of expanding consciousness. Nothing but the Boundlessness is absolute. Each limitation is relative. And in that relativity lies the challenge to expand consciousness. This limitation requires, as it were, a breakthrough. In other words, there is in every consciousness a tendency to grow.

However, growth of consciousness is never an individual matter. If a being were totally alone and independent – which is impossible – it could neither live nor grow. Therefore, there is no such thing as a being that lives apart from others. There is always some form of cooperation. Only because of this is it possible for beings to exist and develop. Beings evolve together.

### No lasting principle in humans?

So consciousness always changes. Consciousness *is* change. It goes from phase to phase. It dies in an old phase and is reborn in a new phase all at the same time. Every new experience makes consciousness change. The different consciousnesses – the beings – are constantly changing. They develop more and more from within themselves.

As said before, consciousness means perceiving, acting, reacting, changing and moving. There must always be something that changes. For if there is nothing, then nothing can act, perceive or change. In *essence* consciousness is boundless, which is unimaginable for us. But as *manifested* consciousness we can never give shape to boundlessness. Yet we are constantly growing in consciousness. That is why we are constantly on our way to giving more expression to the boundlessness, without ever being able to do so completely. We learn to be more of and better at what we are in the heart of our hearts: boundlessness. But we will never fully express it. Could that be the case, boundlessness would not be boundless anymore.

We call this doctrine *relative immortality*. There will always be *something* that changes. Our consciousness is the eternal pilgrim, who constantly travels to higher regions of consciousness.

Fortunately, we are always in the process of change. Imagine if we were not. Then you would have to be content with the limitation, with limited views. Then we would never be able to have new experiences. We would learn nothing more. We would not meet new people, but constantly repeat what we already knew. It would be a nightmare. The supposed heaven of Christians and Muslims is a place

where nothing changes. Probably these believers do not realize that their heaven is hell.

### Self-consciousness

It is because of this process of the growth of consciousness that we humans have reached the level of self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness and consciousness are often confused. Scientists tend to qualify only self-consciousness as consciousness. Theosophia, on the other hand, claims that everything is consciousness, while self-consciousness is a specific form of it. If consciousness is perceiving and reacting, then self-consciousness is: “to react to yourself”. In other words: you perceive yourself and you reflect on yourself.

Humans can perceive themselves. That does not just mean that they recognize themselves in the mirror. Biologists claim that some animals possess that ability as well. If that is the case, then it is limited to perceiving their *body*. However, humans can also perceive their consciousness. They can think about themselves. They can make choices. It goes without saying that you can only respond to those qualities in yourself that you have already developed. If you are not yet aware of certain spiritual possibilities within yourself, you cannot respond to them. In other words: self-consciousness is limited. The more the consciousness has developed, the greater the self-awareness is and the greater the free will is — and in accordance with that, the responsibility.

Free will is undeniably greater in humans than in animals, which implies that man can identify himself with spiritual abilities within himself, provided of course he has developed them. However, man can also identify with the animal aspects.

Consciousness is composite. This idea will be elaborated in a next article. A human being has the ability to choose which part of consciousness he identifies himself with. It is the free will that determines the dignity of the human being. Therefore, any organization or any human being that denies or manipulates free will detracts from human dignity.

The most important choice for man is whether he sees himself as a separate being, which leads to selfishness, or as a member of the community. Man can know himself to be connected with others, yes, one with an overarching whole, which leads to selflessness and compassion.

The beings that are less developed than humans also have consciousness: plant or animal consciousness, for example.



But they have no self-consciousness and their choices are therefore much more limited.

It is by developing the thinking aspect of our consciousness – the mind – that man gained self-consciousness. In myths from different parts of the world this is clearly told. There are always two “creations”. And we do not use the word “creation” in the dogmatic, ecclesiastical sense as if something had been created out of nothing, but as a process of emanation. First the human vehicle was developed and many centuries later the mind “descended” and human became human.

Self-consciousness is therefor closely linked to our thinking abilities. However, it does not stem from it, as materialistic psychologists claim, but thinking and self-consciousness are two sides of the same coin. We do not think with our brain as we have said before. However, brain cells are among the most developed cells, the most spiritual side of matter. That is why they can function as an intermediary between the thinking consciousness and the physical world.

Thinking itself, however, is only one of the countless forms of consciousness. Some of these forms have a reach that is larger than that of the human kingdom. We now speak of divine consciousness. Other forms have a smaller range, such as animals, plants and minerals, or what we call the building blocks in nature, like atoms. Both further and less developed consciousness is hard for us to imagine. We always tend to anthropomorphize it. We attribute all kinds of human qualities to it, because humans only understand human consciousness, although we can always *grow* in our understanding of “the other”. By making our mind more universal, we create room for deeper human knowledge, and eventually even for a kind of “knowledge of the gods”, divine wisdom.

Yet all these forms or stages of consciousness are intertwined. That is because the “higher” being is not separate from the “lower”, no, it brings forth the less developed beings and forms a whole with them. We already pointed out the close cooperation between the human consciousness and the cell-consciousnesses. However, we do not realize that we too are like a cell in the cosmic body of a solar system or galaxy.

A cell has *in principle* the same possibilities as a human being, be it that many aspects of its consciousness are still asleep or latent. But in essence it has the same possibilities as a human being. The only difference between a human and a cell is that a human has developed more – made more active – than a cell. In this way a divine being has

expressed more of its consciousness than a human being. No being is inferior because it is less developed. All beings are necessary. We cannot live without one another. The lower beings serve the higher as a vehicle for them to use to grow and develop. The higher beings are the sources of inspiration for the lower. All beings form a great web of consciousness, in which no one can be missed.

The awareness of this makes us live our life in a very different way. Instead of looking after our own supposed interests, we will live from the whole and for the whole. This leads to a broadening of consciousness.

In the next article on consciousness we will elaborate on this idea.

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## Reference

1. See: G. de Purucker, *The Dialogues*, Meeting 30, Supplement on “Free will”. <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/dialogue/dial30s.htm>
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# The life of bees – part 1

## A real community

In the year 1983, the previous leader of the Theosophical Society Point Loma, D.J.P. Kok, held a series of three public speeches about bees. The speeches were well received, not only because D.J.P. Kok spoke from his own experience (he was a beekeeper himself), but also because he seemed to be able to link the bare facts about the bee colonies to some profound teachings of the Esoteric Wisdom or Theo-Sofia. According to the editors of *Lucifer* it therefore seemed right to re-publish these lectures. The article in this edition, which emphasizes the fascinating biological facts, is the first in a series of three. The follow-up two articles will address the symbolic meanings of bees, today and in the past, and the mystical origin of the bees.

Bees, what do we actually know about them, except that they produce honey and beeswax? We have no idea how much work needs to be done before we can put a jar of honey on the table. All this work is remarkably well organized by the colony. Bees form a community which is based on strategy, architecture and a division of labor. The success of the colony lies in self-sacrifice and devotion to the totality. Terms we can also find in esoteric literature.

In the old teachings, the bee is also often used as a symbol. For deities for example, or as a synonym for the neophyte, the chela: the student of a Master.<sup>(1)</sup>

It seems useful and justified to further examine bees and their communal life strategy. Can people learn from these animals and what

symbolic role do they play in the Mystery Schools?

### **Bee colonies, a real working community**

There are only a few living beings that show the same zeal as the *Apis mellifera*, or the honeybee. The vast majority of a colony consists of work bees. Their task is, amongst others, to visit flowers and collect the nectar that is processed into honey in the beehive. One jar of honey requires 7.5 million visits!

In addition, the colony must also maintain itself. In order to provide the larvae with the necessary food, at least another 12.5 billion visits should be added to that. And then we have not yet taken into account the food needed by the work bees themselves. And if we also consider an average

### **Key thoughts**

» Bee colonies form an almost ideal community from which people can learn a lot

» The hierarchical structure of the bee colony reflects the laws of Nature

flight of a single bee to last about twenty minutes, that a colony consists of approximately 40,000 to 50,000 bees and that bees fly back and forth continuously from sunrise to sunset, we can then imagine how many flowers are visited.

Bees are of great importance as pollinators. It is important to mention that bees do not kill or damage anything when collecting water, pollen and nectar. Their activities are solely constructive. Basically, in the chain of life, the bee community plays a significant role. And on top of this, bee colonies show how much humanity can learn from the way bees live together.

The fact that bees are hard-working insects that exhibit community spirit already gives us a lot of food for thought. Of course, their actions stem from their consciousness which is not yet self-conscious. They are being driven by instinct. People have already developed the ability to think. Therefore, people are self-conscious and also able to make self-conscious choices. But by 'translating' the instinctive characteristics of the bees to a self-conscious level, studying their way of life can become an inspiration for us people. This becomes clear when we take a closer look at the structure of and division of work tasks in a bee colony

### **A bee colony: cooperation within a hierarchical structure**

If we closely follow the daily life in a beehive, it appears that all activities are aimed at achieving clear common goals. Nothing takes place for no reason and all the work is organized to perfection without a work distributor or coordinator being involved. All members of the colony carry out tasks that fit their constitution, and under normal circumstances no one deviates from this. Additionally, bees make the most of what their environment has to offer.

Beekeepers hold their bees in special cabinets in which there is room for breeding and for honey. When a swarm of bees occupies an empty cabinet, the workload is almost immediately being divided. First of all, wax needs to be produced so that the well-known six-sided cells can be built. In the cabinet there are racks with a sheet on which a vague impression of those cells has already been pre-pressed. This saves the bees a lot of work. Now all they have to do is build the walls. Scientific studies have shown that the shape of the honeycombs and the linkage of the cells, is the most economical structure one can imagine. This means that with a minimum of material the largest possible storage space is created. Moreover, the symmetry

of the cells is so precise that mathematicians have hardly diagnosed abnormalities in their calculations.

While a group of bees builds the first stock and breeding cells, others ensure that the new home is explored and cleaned. Gaps are filled with wax and walls are varnished with propolis (a natural glue-like substance). Depending on the shape and size of the new home, the number of cells to be built for honey, breeding and pollen is determined, the air ventilation channels are constructed and accessibility to the cabinet is arranged. A guard post is set up at the entrance of the cabinet.

All these tasks are performed by the work bees of the colony, the females that do not reproduce. The work bees follow a real career path in their life. During the first three weeks after they are born, they fulfill the lighter tasks. The work bee will stay in the cabinet. But once the bee has become more independent, the heavier part of its life begins. First, guard duties must be carried out at the entrance of the hive. Bees are not territorial. It is therefore possible to have multiple cabinets next to each other. But if there is a lot of wind, a bee could accidentally fly towards the wrong cabinet. Guards will stop these bees. It is assumed that they can smell whether a bee belongs to their own cabinet. Each cabinet seems to have its own fragrance — the smell of the colony. Subsequently the work bee will start her task as collector of pollen, a task that will last until she dies approximately four to six weeks later. We have already calculated how heavy this task is because so many flights are made per day.

The honeybee will die after a few weeks because of exhaustion. Her sisters that are born in the fall do not need to collect pollen and can spend the winter in the cabinet, extending their lives considerably.

Before the work bee is ready to start with her heaviest task, her experienced sisters will give her instructions on where to find the nectar and how much there is. The so-called bee dance is then performed on the combs. The older, experienced bees run figures in the form of an 8 or a 0. It contains all the information the new collector bees need in order to find the right places for collecting nectar and pollen.

First, a few short orientation flights are being made. The angles between cabinet, food source and sun are then determined, so that the bees, when they start collecting, will be able to find their own cabinet again. This special ability to orientate compensates for the relatively poor eyesight of the bees.

So, we see that bees are able to fully utilize their environ-

ment and that they are able to get the best out of the members of the community through training and guidance. All this is done in an atmosphere of natural, hierarchical cooperation among the bees. The more experienced bees take on the task of instructor so that the young bees are well prepared for their new task. The result is a perfectly functioning community which at the end of summer is assured of a cabinet full of honey and pollen.

If we compare this method to what we often find in companies, we notice that executives are often more concerned with their own career path than with the business goal as such. They do not always see young talent as an asset, rather as a threat to their own position. So, in their thoughts, people are quite often focusing on competition rather than on cooperation. But it is not inconceivable that when, as with the bees, people start to focus on cooperation in such a company, that is, when experienced people pass on their knowledge to the next generation of workers with the aim of creating and maintaining a healthy organization, success would be assured.

### **The queen is at the top of the hierarchy**

Each bee colony has only one queen. She takes care of producing the offspring and does nothing but lay eggs in cells. This is the only thing she is capable of. A group of work bees surrounds the queen with all possible care, feeds her and forms a kind of court. When a young queen is born in a colony, she goes on a 'bride flight' within a couple of days. She leaves the cabinet for one day and high up in the air she is fertilized by 20 to 25 drones. She then has enough seed for the rest of her life to be able to fertilize all the eggs.

Once an egg is laid, about 21 days pass until the work bee is born. Work bees come from fertilized eggs. The queen can also lay unfertilized eggs, which produce males, drones.

Queen cells deviate in form from the other cells in the cabinet. They look a bit like a hanging peanut. The eggs from the so-called queen cell will therefore produce queens. They are surrounded by the work bees of the queen's court and handled with special care. The larvae in these cells receive a special type of food (royal jelly). This is why later on a queen is the only one who is able to lay fertilized eggs.

The queen fulfils a special function in the world of bees. She is the head of the colony and the inspiration for it. She produces a colony which is inspired by the urge to work for the totality.

In esoteric philosophy we come across the term laya-centre. This center is the transformer between two levels of consciousness. The queen is a laya-centre and is connected to a higher sphere of consciousness and through her the inspiration of that sphere flows out to her colony.<sup>(2)</sup> This is a very good example of emanation. As the top of her colony, she carries the most responsibility and, even more than the work bees, sacrifices herself for the benefit of the colony. After the bride flight she becomes a breeding machine and will not come outside anymore. We can see that especially the queen is a servant, a 'slave' of the colony.

People can also be a transformer or source of inspiration for their environment. Think, for example, of the compassionate youth worker who moves heaven and earth to get a community center off the ground. People who are impressed by this come to help him and with their assistance enable him to focus entirely on achieving the goal. The project will gain results as long as this inspiration is effective. The youth worker, driven by an ideal, acts as a laya-centre in this context and lays 'spiritual eggs' by setting the example: he moves others to exchange their self-interest for cooperation in order to serve a common purpose. And by working together in such a way, we become aware of our inherent unity.

### **Drones fulfill a 'separate' position**

But what happens if we are not even slightly aware of our inherent unity? If we are separating ourselves from the community which we belong to, just taking advantage or abusing it without wanting to do anything in return? In the world of bees, drones are also separate from the working community. Each colony has between 200 to 400 male bees. The queen's fertilization requires a few dozen drones from other colonies. Multiple fertilization increases the likelihood that the queen will be able to lay fertilized eggs and prevents inbreeding. Up until the moment the bride flight takes place – the drones are then approximately two weeks old – these bees have been taken good care of in the cabinet. During the bride flight, the chosen drones which are accepted by the queen as her lovers immediately lose their lives. After mating, the lower body releases and the drone drops down on earth. The remaining males are part of a community in which everyone has a function. The function of these drones has diminished after the queen's fertilization.

For them, there will still be room in the cabinet as long as the summer lasts. But when the colony prepares for





Queen bee surrounded by worker bees.

winter, and the influx of food decreases, their days are numbered. Now that the bee community has to survive the winter months using the food supply it has gathered, the drones, who do not contribute, need to be removed from the cabinet in a gentle way. They are being more or less isolated from the food supply and driven into a corner of the cabinet. As from that moment, they will starve. When the drones fly out in good weather, they will find the door closed in front of them upon their return. During the night, most of them quickly die due to the cold. The males who want to stay inside are thrown out with joint forces and are possibly even killed. This is called the slaughter of the drones.

We see that despite their parasitic position, the drones remain part of the bee community for quite some time. They are being tolerated for as long as possible. This state of tolerance continues until they are being sacrificed to the higher purpose of survival. The males have not participated in collecting the winter stock and cannot claim any rights to it.

Unlike the bees, people can use their thinking and try to help someone who does not connect with society to change his mind. Someone who committed a crime ends up in prison in our society. He is punished for the actions

he has committed against society. However, it is better to offer him the opportunity to learn to be part of that same society. Then chances are he will no longer isolate himself from that anymore.

Because the more you retreat yourself as a member of your surroundings, the more likely you will lose the ability to make the connection. Total isolation – a human drone death – is then the result. It is wise to use the period of imprisonment to show the prisoner his connection to the community and, for example, to allow him to learn a honest profession. People are actually benefitting from keeping everybody onboard and do not need to exclude people. If they do, situations may come up that seriously disrupt society. All we have to do is point towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the many civil wars that are currently going on in the world. This affects everyone on earth!

By taking unity and cooperation– the main characteristic of being – as a starting point we prevent such situations. The daily life of bees illustrates this characteristic very well. Studying it, will definitely make us wiser.

Serving the totality is serving yourself. Bees show us great examples of this. Swarming is the ultimate form of servitude.



## Swarms: ultimate servitude

What is swarming, anyway? And why does it take place? This phenomenon takes place from midsummer onwards. Part of the bee colony leaves the cabinet together with the queen to build a new community elsewhere: the colony splits up to grow again, just like the way a cell multiplies by dividing itself in two. Moreover, if the colony would not swarm, young bees, who at some point have developed their wax glands and are now able to ‘sweat wax’, cannot follow their urge to build. After all, the cabinet is already full of combs with honey and pollen. Everything is covered. The brood is full. Only by leaving the young generation will have the opportunity to fulfill the urge to build. That is why the queen will lay some eggs in special cells, which are there to raise queen larvae and just before a new queen is announced, she will leave the cabinet with about half of the colony.

It is an obvious conclusion that the survival of the colony is so important that the queen makes the sacrifice, risking her own life, to leave the cabinet taking half of the colony with her. This increases the survival rate of those left behind significantly. Maurice Maeterlinck, a Flemish philosopher (1862-1949) published a work in 1901 on the bees, that he had studied and observed for years. With him, we can share the following thought on swarming: “So strong, however, is the law of the future that no bee hesitates in light of the uncertainty and the risk to die” (...) “Who gives her the energy we never possess, to break with the past as with an enemy?”<sup>(3)</sup> With her action, the queen shows herself to be a true leader. She sacrifices herself when her services no longer benefit her colony.

The general well-being is all that matters. This is the case with truly great leaders on earth. A better example than the life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is hard to find. He went through an evolution during his life that made him the absolute servant of his people.

As his understanding of the essence of life grew, personal well-being gave way to service to the common good. We could see that in his entire, humble, way of life. He did not wish anything for himself and worked continuously to free his country. By living this way, he was able to reinforce his ideas of nonviolence and the need for cooperation so strongly that many followed him on his path. And he withdrew, once India’s independence was a fact, without a fuss from the public scene, because he knew that his role in the public limelight was completed. It was only when his country was plunged into a deep crisis due to violence that he became active again. Only very far-developed people

possess the wisdom of seeing that a true leader gives up power when his services are no longer needed. And with Maeterlinck, we can ask ourselves where a great human being gets his inspiration to act so selflessly.

It is a fact that we are going through a continuous evolution, in which our experiences we have gained on earth, increase our knowledge and our understanding of the essence of things. We are increasingly influenced by our own divine essence and grow in our role as a teacher and leader for those who are not yet so far developed. The same Maeterlinck speaks, in relation to bees, about the “spirit of the beehive”. He came to the conclusion that the bee colony forms a kind of unity which is controlled in an invisible way. He plays with the idea that there could be something above the bee community that, so to speak, determines the actions of the joint colony and therefore also of each bee.

We prefer to assume that the bees are instinctively aware of forming a totality, a partnership and therefore each bee brings in his own talent, or function for the benefit of the colony to which he belongs. It is this consciousness (which we should not confuse with self-awareness, because bees have not yet developed that, like all animals) that ensures that the conditions are constantly responded to, so that the bee colony can benefit and grow optimally.

We can achieve such a process, but then in a conscious way, in human society. Only people will have to call upon their conscience and decide self-consciously whether and how they are committed for the totality. Many will come to the realization of unity very gradually; others are experiencing an accelerated evolution. The latter will, when they have developed the characteristic of unity far enough, enter the path of the neophyte or the so-called *Chela*. Chelas are students of very far developed people, known in theosophical literature as the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion. Those in ethics and spirituality far developed people become the Chela student of such a Master. This is the subject of the next article in this series.

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“The carrier of culture”, sculpture by Charles Hammes.

### Key thoughts

- » Our culture has both ‘pagan’ as well as Judeo-Christian roots; furthermore, the Enlightenment has also had a strong influence.
- » Although people often identify themselves with their own group, each person has the ability to experience kinship with all people.
- » There is a huge difference between restricted and universal brotherhood.
- » The quality of the culture is determined by our thinking.
- » A spiritual culture never belongs to one particular nation or group.
- » Carriers of culture are people who take the initiative to promote universality.
- » The Mystery Schools have always tried to ennoble the culture.

# Who are the real carriers of culture?

## Identity politics versus universal policy

**In many European countries there is a discussion going on about cultural norms and values. Over the last few decades and for various reasons quite a lot of people from outside Europe have settled in this continent. Some Europeans fear that their own culture will get lost. Their culture, they claim, is based on Judeo-Christian values which they want to preserve. But is our culture really rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition? Do we have to go back to that culture if we want to preserve everything that is valuable? Or can we take our culture to a higher level in another way?**

On our journey to a just society, side-walks are often taken. Due to the lack of a generally accepted philosophy of life, we tend to embrace all kinds of ideas, which we believe provide us with a feeling of security. One of these ideas is the so-called “identity politics”.

### Identity politics

*Identity politics* is a concept that was already in vogue in the US during the sixties. It is a catch-all term; everyone places their own accents. It is therefore typically a concept that often leads to confusion, because people attach their own meaning to it.

In very general terms, you can say that identity politics means that you engage in politics from a social identity. Unlike emancipation movements that want to integrate the social group into the culture of the majority, people who engage in identity politics

stress that they are different. They do not want to change their identity. They actually turn themselves against others. They identify themselves with *their* group in such a way that they derive their dignity as human beings from it. In the US, identity politics was practiced by homosexuals, Afro-Americans and other minority groups.

Nowadays, people also apply the concept to their own country, or their own culture, which they consider to be better, or at least different, from that of other countries or cultures. They believe that their civilization is in danger because of immigration. They are deeply rooted in their own habits.

### Cultural Christians

Also among groups of the New Right Movement, an attempt is being made to choose a starting point for one’s

own identity. A Dutch politician launched the term *cultural Christian* for this purpose. Although he does not believe in the dogmas of Christianity, he is nevertheless attracted to the culture of Christianity, which, according to him, belongs to the European heritage and which we must cherish and respect much more than we currently do, because other cultures would otherwise overshadow ours. Those other cultures are those of the newcomers, especially Muslims. They evoke such fear that people are willing to throw all historical knowledge overboard and base today's culture on something that has never existed. In the first place, you could wonder whether our culture has been shaped by Christianity or, as it is often called, the Judeo-Christian traditions. Christianity, as professed by the churches, is a hodgepodge of all kinds of religious traditions from the Mediterranean countries, such as the Mithras faith and the worship of the child Horus, son of Isis, which came from Egypt. The Neoplatonists delivered many of the theological dogmas, although they were often misunderstood. The New Testament, and especially the Sermon on the Mount, was strongly influenced by Buddhism. Finally, the mystery religions underlie the idea of the crucifixion of a god. So, it was just as much the 'pagan' religions of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and in Western Europe also the Teutonic people and Celts, that strongly influenced, yes actually formed, our present culture. Moreover, from the Renaissance onwards, Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire, Descartes and Montesquieu had an important influence, while they were not *per se* Christian, sometimes even anti-Christian.

The whole idea of the Judeo-Christian traditions possesses a sense of superiority, which is all the more pronounced when a country has to deal with immigrants, especially if they have a different religion. Anyone who has any historical awareness, however, knows that the advent of Christianity – or rather should we say, *ecclesiasticism* – has led to a tremendous degeneration of civilization in Western Europe. Not just economically and scientifically but also in the fields of health and hygiene, and culturally. The serfdom of peasants, the prohibition of ideas other than the dogmas approved by the Church, the cruel wars of expansion proclaimed by the Pope – called crusades – the transatlantic slave trade, the disadvantaged position of women, are just a few examples of our Christian civilization which are not that pretty. To invoke them as an identity with which you can stand up to the newcomers is, to put it mildly, rather odd.

## Brotherhood

There is currently a wave of resurgent nationalism moving throughout Europe, yes, throughout the whole world. There are several reasons why people want to retreat into their own cultural group. Fear of the other, for the unknown, is perhaps the most important one. We do not want to give up our security and are afraid of losing ourselves if our habitual patterns change. We do know the feeling of brotherhood and solidarity, but only with regard to the people closely related to us.

There are people who state that it is very difficult, yes, perhaps even impossible to see those who do not belong to our group as a brother, because we have to give up something essential if we do so. Feeling kinship with people from our own group gives us something to hold on to. We cannot feel the same kinship with strangers. If we do try to feel it and we see that they do not take over our habits, we become disappointed and withdraw even further into our own group.

Strangely enough, before the Berlin Wall fell and the world was still divided into West and East, many people could rationally cherish the ideal that one day we would find each other in a sense of shared humanity. That faith is now gone. It is considered to be a too optimistic illusion, because everywhere we see disharmony and discord between countries and between cultural groups within countries. However, we strongly disagree with this conclusion and we have sound arguments for it.

## Know thyself

The gloomy conclusion that we are incapable of seeing *all* people as related to us is, I suppose, based on the Western history of the last decades, in which it was not possible to build a multicultural society with mutual trust. But in fact, the rising nationalism, xenophobia and racism of recent years is nothing more than a continuation of a mentality that has existed in the Western world for centuries. It is this European, Christian culture that stems from the dogmas of the Church, such as the assumption that man is born in sin, and that Christianity is the only true religion. Although the number of believers in our secular society has decreased considerably, the old way of thinking still largely determines the way we think. But does this mean that we would never be able to live in peace with those who think differently?

There have actually been eras in which different cultures and religions existed peacefully side by side. In the great Indian empire of King Ashoka all kinds of groups lived

together. In Alexandria at the beginning of our era, there was a fruitful exchange of ideas between various Jewish movements, Christians, followers of the Egyptian Isis worship, thinkers from the Greco-Roman cultural area, Hindus, Buddhists and others. Science flourished. Even in Roman times – which were certainly not always ideal – everyone, no matter which group you belonged to, was a Roman citizen and lived in the Pax Romana.

Placing even more weight on the scale than this historical proof for the reality of the existence of a harmonious multicultural society are the arguments we can find within ourselves. Anyone who considers himself with a little more than superficial attention will notice that there is a ‘me’ who acts like a frightened little weasel, wanting to retreat into his own nest, his own cultural identity, and has nothing to do with others. But there is also a better ‘me’. That better me – we often talk about the Higher Self – is our real lifebuoy. And that is not a sentiment, but a fact, something everyone can discover within himself.

“Man, know Yourself”, was written above the vestibule of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. That Self is the true human being, who through ignorance and misconceptions can often not express himself, but who everyone can recognize, awaken and use as a guideline for his life.

## Universal Brotherhood

That part of us that cannot feel any kinship with people from other cultures is the personality. That word is derived from *persona*, mask. It is not the true human being. The true human is hidden behind the mask. The personality is the role that the true human plays. And because man identifies himself so much with that role – he calls it his identity – his worldview is rather limited. The personal man does not think outside the box and lives under the assumption that he only belongs to that group of people who act in the same play. Sometimes he even experiences no connection whatsoever with any community. And if he already feels a certain kinship with others, the bond is from personality to personality, just like the way supporters of the same football club feel related to each other and not to those of another club, even though they are very much alike. They form a *limited* brotherhood. And those groups of personalities that are based on limitations, obstruct a *general awareness* of kinship.

There actually is *Universal* Brotherhood. That better me within us – the Higher Self that rises above the personality – already lives in the awareness of it. It experiences the kinship with everyone, because it knows that we humans,

originating from the same Source, are part of the same Life. We are parts of each other.

Now you could argue that that Higher Self is nothing more than an illusion shaped by hope. But is that so? Can we not recognize its superpersonal characteristics in ourselves? In fact, we face the same difficult choice that is presented to us in all religions: the inner struggle within ourselves. Do we listen to our Higher Self or do we fall back on the selfish personality? The Djihad of the Muslims, the sword that Jesus brought us, the great war of the Indian epic the Mahābhārata with in that mystic tale, the jewel of wisdom, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, they all represent the battle between the “mask” of the personality and the inner divinity that we are as well.

Pico della Mirandola, one of the great philosophers of the Renaissance of Florence, says in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man* that man is the greatest miracle. He has free will. He can choose. He can take any form he wants to. He can be divine or bestial.

We have given you, O Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgement and decision. The nature of all other beings is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature.

I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a being neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine.

<http://bactra.org/Mirandola/> Many translations  
*Oration on the Dignity of Man*  
Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

Could we not sense that free will in ourselves? And when we have noticed it, could we not learn to see the connection between all phenomena? Can we not experience that people, whoever they are and whatever group they belong





Delphi, Greece.

to, have the same desires as we do? Does not everyone want to be happy? Are others, like us, not looking for a meaningful life? Are they not also struggling with questions of life and death, good and evil, sickness and health, justice and injustice? Can we, in short, not find out that spiritual brotherhood is a fact by searching in our Self? We state that everyone can realize his super-personal kinship with every other human being — yes, indeed, with every other living being. That realization takes away all fear. It makes us calm and above all compassionate. And it creates a sublime culture, in which one group of people, despite their individuality, can live in dynamic harmony with the other.

### **What is a culture?**

A culture is all that is generated by a certain group of people: technical devices, artistic expressions, music, life patterns, architecture, cities. It is often contrasted with nature. Nature and culture are often considered to be two separate entities.

We, however, think that man is a part of Nature, although he fulfills a special function in it. And that function has

everything to do with human thinking. It is the quality of the thoughts we think, that determines the quality of the culture.

If you merely define a human being physically and judge him according to his appearance and outer habits, then you may quickly tend to identify yourself with that group that has the same habits you have. The culture you then advocate is defined on the same external appearances. Then you will judge wearing a tie differently compared to wearing a turban. The result is the we-versus-they-thinking, which colors our mentality to such a large extent. This is the main cause of the current chaotic world view. We are then unable to identify ourselves with people having different habitual patterns. We subsequently look for a supposedly common root that should define our culture and call ourselves, for example, cultural Christians, even though we do not believe in that religion. It goes without saying that such a culture will not go in the history books as consisting of high quality.

It is always thoughts that determine the quality of a culture. After all, every cultural expression is based on thoughts. Whether it is a library, a democratic or dictatorial

state system, a prison, or a TV show, it is thoughts that have created these institutions.

So the value of a culture is determined by our thinking. And what thoughts we think is determined by our view on life. Are we nothing more than a body? Are we doomed to do evil? Or are we consciousness with seemingly infinite possibilities, capable of realizing great things?

In the first case we think from the personality, which leads to gaps, boundaries and walls between people and groups. In the second case we break down walls, we see the common bonds, yes, we see the essential unity that is the basis of all those different expressions of life.

This spiritual view leads to a qualitative culture. The noble thoughts will crystallize in the institutions of society, in policies, in human manners. Or as Helena Blavatsky wrote in 1890:

Real culture is spiritual. It proceeds from within outwards, and unless a person is naturally noble-minded and strives to progress on the spiritual before he does so on the physical or outward plane, such culture and civilization will be no better than whitened sepulchers full of dead men's bones and decay.<sup>(1)</sup>

She adds to this that such a spiritual and intellectual culture can never go hand in hand with dogmatic creeds.

## Spiritualizing the culture

Every contribution to a super-personal mentality lifts the culture to a higher plane. In fact, it does not matter in which field that contribution is made, as long as there is a super-personal motive and as long as the attempt aims to develop people's understanding, through which they see their common bonds. The attempt may seem small, but if the motivation is good, the culture will be enriched. To give a few examples: local residents organizing a communal meal for *all* of the residents of the neighborhood. Volunteers organizing homework classes for children who cannot keep up in school. Money that is collected for the local music club. If the motivation is super-personal, those who organize these activities are the culture bearers of their time. That is, they are the ones who, to speak with Pico della Mirandola, are developing a (beginning) divine form. When Madame Blavatsky talks about the culture going from the inside to the outside, she means that first of all the mentality has to be reformed and then all the actions and everything that is accomplished will breathe that spiritual mentality.

Individual successes in this spirit will ultimately also be reflected in a country's policy. While current politics mainly deals with economic and financial issues, when culture becomes more spiritual, attention will gradually shift much more towards those matters that do not relate to the prosperity of our body but to that of our soul. In schools artistic classes, music, philosophy and creativity will become much more important. Of course, every civilization will also have to pursue an economic policy, but the proceeds of prosperity will be distributed equally among people, regardless of their position in society, which will make the gap between rich and poor disappear.

If you take a look at history, you can see that the real cultural ennoblement was created by super-personal initiatives and not through belligerent statesmen hungry for power. In my homeland, the Netherlands, for instance, you see that men like Baruch Spinoza, Christiaan Huygens, Constantijn Huygens, Hugo Grotius and William the Silent are such bearers of culture. Spinoza, because he explained the unity of everything in logical-philosophical propositions; Christiaan Huygens through his super-personal scientific work; the poet, composer, architect, scholar and diplomat Constantijn Huygens as a true *Homo Universalis*; Hugo Grotius, because he designed international laws and was one of the first Europeans to think about human rights; William the Silent, because he, against the spirit of the times, advocated free will and freedom of religion. Of course, there are many others who helped to ennoble the culture from a super-natural point of view. Each nation has its own carriers of culture, which are often far more important than the kings or presidents who may have seemed very important in their time but have contributed nothing to the exaltation of culture. For example, people like Rousseau, Voltaire were much more important to culture than the kings during which reign they lived. Who does not know Shakespeare? His plays still amaze people and raise many questions of life. But is there anyone who knows king James during whose reign Shakespeare must have lived and worked?

The characteristic of all these carriers of culture, no matter how different they may be from one another, is that they had a *universal* view on life and man. They did not exclude anyone and had solutions or ideas that included the totality of life.

Anyone can be such a carrier of culture. Perhaps we have less influence than great and well-known philosophers, scientists and artists, although that remains to be seen. Thoughts can spread quickly. A good initiative can become

a general trend. In any case, we help to ennoble culture more if we are universal in life than when we set ourselves apart from others whom we believe do not belong to our culture. A spiritual culture is actually characterized by the fact that it does not belong to any particular nation or group.

## Mystery Schools

It may seem that every bearer of culture is a self-contained human being. In a certain way he is, because man, equipped with free will, has to make his own decisions and no one can force him to think in a super-personal way. Nevertheless, there is constant encouragement to change the mentality. Yes, in fact, there is an invisible group of advanced people who are constantly trying to inspire us. In ancient times there were secret institutions, Mystery Schools, whose members were committed to exert an uplifting influence on culture. This was not done by publishing the lofty teachings studied in those schools, but mostly by what we would probably now call cultural expressions. In the so-called Eleusian Mysteries in Agrae, near Athens, a kind of drama shows were held once a year, around the time of the vernal equinox. These so-called Lesser Mysteries were mainly meant to inspire the general masse to a certain mentality by means of a cultural expression.

Also the many myths told all over the earth are cultural expressions in narrative form, in which esoteric truths are communicated in a veiled way, so that the population would be inspired by them. Other artistic expressions, such as some magnificent Greek or Asian statues – of Buddha's for example – still inspire.

Although the Mystery Schools are closed on an external plane, they still exist on the internal plane and their influence is still there for those who open themselves up to them. In other words, you are never alone. If you sincerely try to be a bearer of culture, you will be supported in it, either noticed or unnoticed by yourself.

The way that influence comes to us is not important. Therefore, it does not matter which religious, philosophical or scientific group you belong to, as long as you focus on the universal side of the cultural group to which you feel attracted to. A Christian will find his inspiration in the Sermon on the Mount or in Paul's Letters. A Muslim, Buddhist or Hindu will find similar teachings in the inspirational writings of his religion. A humanist will find his inspiration in the works of the great universal humanists. It is really not "forbidden" to love your homeland; but you

should then love the great things your nation has produced. The existence of religions and social groups is therefore not the problem. The problem is that these groups often feel superior to others. As a result, so many people no longer see the universal roots of humanity, which makes them consider their own civilization separate from other civilizations.

The ancient Theosophy is invaluable in this respect, because it shows the common root of all major religions and philosophies and is therefore a key to true civilization. That civilization can never be assessed by the prosperity or power of a nation, but only by the extent to which it is able to apply universal ethics as a matter of course in everyday life.

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# Theosophy in Nature

## Metamorphosis: how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly

**A caterpillar that changes into a butterfly, who hasn't been fascinated as a child by this wondrous phenomenon, and asked oneself how it is possible? In this second episode of the series 'Theosophy in Nature', we will try to answer this intriguing question.**

### Key thoughts

» As mysterious as the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly seems, so universal is the process of transformation.

» Outer change is the result of inner growth.

» A body is a cooperation of innumerable living beings, who share corresponding characteristics with the being using that body.

» DNA contains the instructions for the body's building blocks, but it is not the builder. Consciousness determines when the 'caterpillar instructions' are switched off and the 'butterfly instructions' are switched on.

» The processes during pupation show many similarities with those of embryonic development: is the caterpillar a 'prematurely' born butterfly?

How does a caterpillar turn into a butterfly? A fair question, since there is more to it than simply the developing of wings and longer legs. A complete transformation is taking place in the cocoon, which seems so motionless from the outside. Almost the entire body of the caterpillar is decomposed into a 'soup' of cells. Practically all organs are rebuilt: from the digestive system and outer skeleton up to parts of the nervous system and the brain. Not only structures change, also functionalities do: chewing mouthparts of the caterpillar make way for a long, curled tongue which the butterfly uses to drink nectar. The small eyes on the caterpillar, usually six, change into two compound eyes. Soft skin turns into powdery scales with most beautiful color patterns. But more than a change of form, there is also a change in behavior: the leaf-chewing eating machine turns into an elegant fluttering entity. It is as if an entire new animal emerges after pupation. Why does this transformation take place? And what is the cause of this radical change?

### A universal process

As mysterious as this transformation seems, the process of transformation is in fact a universal process. All life undergoes metamorphosis, only the time span in which it takes place differs from case to case. In order to understand what exactly happens during the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly, we will first take a look at the general, universal process of transformation.

The wonderment we had as a child for the metamorphosis of a butterfly is of all times and all cultures. This is shown by the fact that you can find this transformation everywhere in the world as the symbol of rebirth or reincarnation.

In ancient Egypt, age old depictions of butterflies are found, symbolizing the immortality of the soul. The Aztecs and Aborigines considered butterflies as souls of deceased loved ones. The word 'psyche' in Greek means both butterfly and soul, and in early Christianity the butterfly also symbolized rebirth. It is interesting to note that all over the world there have



been cultures assuming an immortal soul that is cyclically ‘clothed’ in a body. A soul, a life center that continuously alternates between the outer, material world and inner, spiritual realms. The idea that the outer life is only a certain phase in this cycle, a certain *state of consciousness* the soul goes through, implies a number of things.

Firstly, that life does not arise from matter, but that matter is the expression of life. The body is only a temporary vehicle of an imperishable life-center, a center of consciousness. And it is this everlasting consciousness that cyclically manifests itself in a body in order to gain experiences in the outer realm after which it retreats to inner realms for a period of rest. The soul – of whatever being – constantly ‘commutes’ between the spiritual and the material realms, for which the latter it uses a body.

This body, however, is in its turn a collection of countless living beings that are subject to exactly the same cyclical process, albeit on a smaller scale. This brings us to the next point, namely that matter is nothing but consciousness in a lower stage of development. So atoms, molecules, cells: they are all in essence immortal centers of consciousness, but in a lower evolutionary degree of development compared to us. So our body is one immense co-operation of innumerable consciousnesses.

It is important to realize now, that this interaction takes place on the basis of *corresponding characteristics*; a tree consciousness attracts plant cells which form a wooden structure, an animal consciousness cooperates with animal cells which form a body of flesh, and so on.

### DNA doesn’t do anything

You may now wonder what this cyclic transformation between the spiritual and material realms has to do with

the caterpillar and the butterfly, because it is not meant to be understood that each one represents one of these two states. But this transformation of consciousness however, does provide a possible answer to the fundamental question science stands for.

In their research of metamorphosis, biologists have discovered that the caterpillar and the butterfly share the exact same DNA, despite their totally different appearance. It turns out that during pupation a completely different set of this DNA is activated. The DNA set ‘caterpillar instructions’ switches off and the set ‘butterfly instructions’ is switched on. However, the fundamental question remains: what causes this other set of DNA to be activated? Because DNA in itself doesn’t do anything. And that is a very fundamental thought: DNA contains the information for the building blocks of the body, but it is not the builder, it doesn’t determine anything.

Let me explain this a little further. Take the next example: someone is excited about a new book he just read. When you ask who has written it, you get the following answer: the words, the alphabet. This might sound absurd – who would ever accept such an answer – but the analogy with life and DNA goes quite well here: just as the words itself don’t write the text, DNA doesn’t determine which building blocks are being formed and when they are formed. In the case of the book, the words form the building blocks for the text, but who puts them together? Who has the overall story in mind?

Just as the writer is using words to write the story he wants to tell, so does the underlying consciousness determine which part of the DNA, the genetic material, is selected and synthesized into the building blocks that are needed for that particular moment.<sup>(1)</sup> Wings to fly, a curled tongue to drink nectar; it is the consciousness that is the driving force behind the activation of the right sequences of DNA in order to create the required building blocks. The imperishable life-center that first manifests itself as a caterpillar starts a cooperation with another team of cells that meet the requirements to express the new phase it enters.

### Infinite growth and change

We now have a first answer to the question *how* the caterpillar turns into a butterfly, but not yet *why* this happens. This brings us to the third aspect of consciousness we want to discuss: progressive growth. In addition to the cyclical transformation that all beings go through from life to life between the outer and inner realms, a gradual and continuous metamorphosis takes place over time.

As a result of the experiences during our lives, we learn, we grow. We are able to express our consciousness more and more. In order to be able to express the newly developed faculties, we also need an adapted body to fit the new requirements. In other words, a different configuration of building blocks, a new cooperation is needed. As consciousness develops, the living beings that compose the body develop along with it. Everything changes, all inner development leads to an outer change in order to be able to express that change. We can already observe this within one lifetime during the metamorphosis from baby to toddler, or the physical changes that clearly occur during puberty. But if we consider these changes over a larger time scale, we see a more drastic metamorphosis. For, who or what were we millions of years ago? If all life is essentially immortal consciousness, what were we before we became human? Theosophy teaches that consciousness, in its journey of development, gradually goes through the different kingdoms of nature. Before we reached the human stage (in the previous life cycle of our planet) our consciousness was in the stage of the animal kingdom and we had a corresponding animal body. If we go even further back in time, we were at the level of the plant kingdom and expressed our consciousness in a plantlike body. The Sufi mystic Jalal ad-Din Rumi refers to this general line of progressive evolution that nature follows in one of his poems:

I died as mineral and became a plant,  
 I died as plant and rose to animal,  
 I died as animal and I was human,  
 Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?  
 Yet once more I shall die human,  
 To soar with angels blessed above.  
 And when I sacrifice my angel soul  
 I shall become what no mind ever conceived.  
 As a human, I will die once more,  
 Reborn, I will with the angels soar.  
 And when I let my angel body go,  
 I shall be more than mortal mind can know.

This poem not only describes our previous stages of evolution, but also hints at stages that our consciousness will reach in the distant future. It is hard to imagine what our bodies will look like by then, but G. de Purucker describes it as bodies, not of flesh, but of ether, of a luminous matter or concentered light.<sup>(2)</sup>  
 So just as a caterpillar develops into a butterfly, we devel-



oped over tremendous times from shape to shape, from one kingdom of nature to the other. Always the same immortal consciousness gradually developing from phase to phase followed by a suitable body

### Whence the sudden change?

Now that we have explained the underlying process of external change, there is one more question to answer: why do we see such a sudden and radical change in case of the caterpillar turning into a butterfly during one lifetime? Before we can answer this, there is another law of nature that we have to look at: the law of recapitulation. The process of accelerated repetition of our past evolutionary stages during embryonic development. It is known for example, that during the embryonic phase a human being has certain organs and structures which later will 'dissolve' and disappear. Such as the phase of hermaphroditism which reflects an earlier period of our evolutionary development. A possible hypothesis now, is that the caterpillar is an earlier evolutionary phase of the butterfly, but that the recapitulation takes partly place outside the egg.

In other words: that a caterpillar is a 'prematurely born' butterfly and the moment the butterfly hatches from the pupa is in fact the 'normal' birth moment of the butterfly. This idea is also finding acceptance by science, since fossil records are known of insects that had the adult stage immediately after hatching.<sup>(3)</sup>

The phenomenon of an embryonic development partly taking place outside the egg or uterus is not unique in any case. Tadpoles show something similar and even in the case of a mammal like the kangaroo we see it occurring.



After a short gestation period, just a little more than a month, the kangaroo embryo is born, barely the size of a peanut and yet without ears and eyes. Equipped with two little stumps that later will become its front legs, it crawls into the pouch where it will continue its further development for the next four months, while being attached to the nipple.

Although we have to consider the caterpillar being a prematurely born butterfly as just a hypothesis, there is something interesting taking place in the cocoon that supports this idea. As mentioned before, characteristics from earlier evolutionary developmental stages appear and disappear during the embryonic stage. The decomposition of these structures occurs from within by means of a self-dissolving capacity of cells. Interestingly, this process which is called apoptosis, does not cause an inflammatory reaction of the immune system which would happen in case of normal cell death. It is therefore an intended, controlled breakdown of cells during embryonic development. And exactly this same mechanism takes place in the cocoon, where caterpillar structures are broken down, recycled, and converted into butterfly-structures.

### Cells follow their superior

But there is another similarity with the embryonic stage. During the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly, certain clusters of cells play a primary role. So-called *imaginal discs* – named after the imago, the adult stage of the butterfly – are cell clusters that have the potential to grow into the various organs of the adult stage. The wings, the long segmented legs, the antennae: they are all latent features already present in the caterpillar, waiting to be constructed by these special cells. Here again, we see an analogy with embryonic *stem cells*: universal, undifferentiated cells that have the capacity to develop into different structures, depending on the position and purpose they have in the body.

In the ‘soup’ of cells inside the cocoon, these imaginal discs, these cell clusters remain vital and form the focal points from which the new organs are constructed. At the cellular level they are the most advanced, the most universal cell-types from which the new butterfly structures ‘roll out’. Time to recall the consciousness principle, because: wasn’t it true that this enormous variety of cells share the exact same DNA? From the specialized caterpillar cells that dissolve up to the undifferentiated cell-clusters that are dormant, waiting to develop into butterfly structures, they all contain identical DNA. It is the consciousness

that determines what part of it is being activated, so that each cell performs the task it is supposed to.

### Antennas or legs?

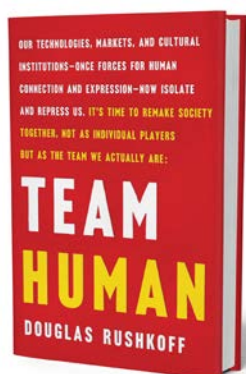
A final and strong indication for the fact that consciousness is the leading principle and not the physical matter, is shown by several experiments in which the imaginal discs were transplanted from one larva to another. When these discs were removed from an older larva and placed in a younger one, they immediately adapted to the stage of the young larva. Their development was delayed, and they did not react until the larva had reached the pupal stage. The consciousness of the young larva therefore determines when they become active. Something similar was observed when imaginal discs, destined to become the antenna, were transplanted to the location where legs were supposed to grow. In a number of cases it turned out the predestined antenna cells developed into the legs! A riddle for the scientists, an understandable phenomenon if you realize that consciousness is activating the specific DNA that is needed at a particular moment.

In conclusion, what we see happening in the pupa has all the characteristics of embryonic growth. Considering this, it is but a small step to imagine the caterpillar to be the embryonic phase of the butterfly.

Undoubtedly many questions will remain about the miraculous phenomenon of the caterpillar becoming a butterfly. This article is therefore not meant as a conclusive writing in which everything is said, but as an attempt to show by means of the Theosophia, the universal wisdom, that on logical grounds answers can be found to questions that at first seem inexplicable. If teachings are universal, they should be able to provide an answer to all of life’s questions, without exception. Also on ‘How does a planet reproduce’, that will be the next topic in this series ‘Theosophy in Nature’.

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# *Team Human* – a manifest for humanity in the digital age

A fellow American theosophist and friend gave us the book *Team Human* at the last ITC in Wheaton last August.<sup>(1)</sup> It is a manifesto of the American writer, thinker and media scientist Douglas Rushkoff and a strong call for more humanity and inner connection.

In *Team Human* Rushkoff reflects on our time, in which the capitalist system in combination with all technology seems to separate people. It is surprising that this modern thinker mentions the cyclicity of life and that the name Blavatsky also appears in his book, even though this is in a subordinate clause. From a theosophical perspective you could ask yourself “how could it be otherwise when you write a manifesto asking for more humanity and more focus on human values?” It is hopeful that a popular writer presents ideas such as reincarnation and karma in an accessible way for a wide audience.

*Team Human* consists of one hundred clear, concise, smoothly written and footnoted statements spread over fourteen chapters. Rushkoff begins by observing that our modern information and communication technology, our economic markets and our cultural and social institutions do not lead to more humanity and

connectedness, as was once intended, but in many cases even to the opposite. According to Rushkoff, our institutions and the technologies they employ are too often based on a cynical and negative image of man. An image in which man is portrayed as a being that is often not very intelligent and peaceful. The result is that technology, and digital technology in particular, such as social media, internet platforms and the digitized services of many of our institutions, distances people from one another rather than bringing them together. Sometimes technology is even used as a means of repression.

According to Rushkoff, we have to start again from what makes us human in order to turn this tide and come to a society and technology that is more humane. And for him, the starting point is that being human is a team sport. Being connected to others is essential. And cooperation is not only essential for people. In all of nature, cooperation is omnipresent. The earlier image of the *survival of the fittest* has been superseded by most biologists, he writes.<sup>(2)</sup>

How did we drift away from this positive image of man as a connected and cooperative being? Rushkoff mentions a number of factors:

- the rise of individualism;
- the blind faith in (the promises of) technology, originating from a mechanical worldview and a corresponding utilitarian philosophy of life; a vision of life in which everything is weighed up against the direct practical usefulness for the satisfaction of - in particular material – needs;
- and the capitalist system.

You could recognize a certain coherence in these three points, but Rushkoff does not make this coherence explicit. Roughly speaking, his reasoning is that, while promising personal autonomy and personal success, the market economy tempts us to focus on material products rather than on each other. While, of course, those new jeans cannot live up to what the advertising about them is telling us. And even if the advertised image would become real, it would not really make us happy. Individual success, without inner connection to others, has never led to lasting happiness.

Capitalism is the driving force behind this dream. Money was once invented as a simple means to exchange items and improve markets. However, it became a goal in itself when people started lending it out in exchange for more money. This principle – that capital is lent out in exchange for multiplication – still plays an important role in our economy. That is why the economy needs to “grow”. The original intention of the economy – how to achieve a balanced distribution of available food over time in order to ensure that everyone in society is able to provide for their primary needs – has disappeared almost everywhere. After making money from a means to an end in itself – money which is in fact an abstraction – things have been further abstracted into companies, shares and derivatives and have thus moved further and further away from people, Rushkoff states. Moreover, man has become one of the means of production in this capitalist system. But outer growth, as opposed to inner growth, cannot continue forever. Everything that manifests itself in nature is cyclical.

Rushkoff devotes an entire chapter (Spirituality and Ethics) to cyclicity. He explains that cyclicity and circularity have been the starting points for the majority of humanity throughout most of history. Only recently, with modern religions, time has become ‘linear’ and the image has arisen that life would be a one-off. Rushkoff contrasts this with the ideas of reincarnation and karma, albeit with a somewhat concise explanation. However, he explains

very well how the idea of “YOLO (you only live once)” is the cause of the unbridled desire for growth, short-term focus and the depletion of natural resources as a result. “People used to believe in circles. They came to believe in lines.” he writes.<sup>(3)</sup> To avoid any misunderstanding, it would have been good if Rushkoff had added the inner progression of consciousness to the image of cyclicity, so that it is clear that this cyclical development spirals, but he did not do that. And if he included the idea of the composition of consciousness, his analysis would have become even stronger.

Yet he does mention how the divine has come to stand outside man himself through exoteric monotheistic Judaism and Christianity. He also points to the inner struggle of man to live the spiritual ideal. As an example he mentions the author Frank Baum of *The Wizard of Oz*. On the one hand this writer was a devoted follower of Blavatsky, but on the other hand he was the founder of the first magazine on window dressing and retail strategies for department stores.<sup>(4)</sup>

How can we change? Rushkoff argues for a renaissance instead of a revolution. Revolution claims something new, while it usually only changes those in power leaving the power structure intact, he says. A renaissance, on the other hand, is a rebirth of old ideas in a new context. And whereas the previous Renaissance gave us a three-dimensional image of the world instead of a two-dimensional image, including the rediscovery of perspective in art and the abandonment of the image of the earth as a flat disc, the coming Renaissance “potentially brings us from a world of objects to one of connections and patterns”. In this new world our image of the world is as that of a “fractal, where each part reflects the whole. Nothing can be isolated or externalized since it’s always part of the larger system”<sup>(5)</sup> In this way we also embed the value of individualism from the last Renaissance within the value of collectivism. “The key to experiencing one’s individuality is to perceive the way it is reflected in the whole and, in turn, resonate with something greater than oneself.”<sup>(6)</sup>

In addition to this worldview, we must continue to learn to cooperate with (cyclical) nature. Rushkoff compares this with learning to raft. You fail when you give in to the tendency to resist the current or when you stop paddling and surrender, while you can steer well when you move and paddle *with* the current.

Finally, he urges us to start mainly locally, with small initiatives with the people around us in our immediate surroundings. “Find the others”, he concludes.



*Team Human*'s problem definition is very extensive, and his analysis is sometimes somewhat negative. For example, the good aspects of technology and people-oriented organizations, which are also abundant of course, receive little attention. And despite the number of footnotes in his statements, there are many assumptions in his substantiation. His reasoning is more associative than a logical line of reasoning. But after all, it is a manifesto. Rushkoff points out that man has become too detached from his connectedness with others, and that point is made convincingly, with recognizable examples that give food for thought. It is very interesting to see that in his attempt to put down a positive alternative, you can, with a little imagination, recognize all three theosophical fundamental propositions: unity, cyclicity, and reciprocity and 'as above, so below'.

And in line with Theosophy, Rushkoff is also optimistic for the long term: because ultimately everything is interlinked. "That's what forces science into the realm of morality, karma, circularity and timelessness".<sup>(7)</sup>

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# Questions & Answers

## Our role in a crisis

### Did we contribute to a crisis on the other side of the world?

In principle, yes. We humans never live on our own, but live in the context of groups, our country and the whole world. Universal Brotherhood is a fact. We don't have to reach for it, we already are that Oneness. All we have to do is express it.

Now, we are not *directly* responsible for, for example, the border conflict between North and South Korea. But if we quarrel with a neighbor because the branches of his tree hang over our fences, we contribute to an atmosphere in which bigger conflicts can arise.

Together we are responsible for the Earth's thinking atmosphere and it is always thoughts that determine our actions. The more we feel ourselves as separate from other people, the more

we contribute to global conflicts.

That is why we have to learn to be what we are in the root of our being. Expressing that connectedness leads to compassion, cooperation, helping each other. Compassion does not mean that we are moved by some kind of passionate feeling or by pity, but by the fundamental idea that we belong to each other, and that progress is only possible if there is progress for everyone.

If there is a disaster or crisis elsewhere in the world, it happens to many more people than those who are at the scene of the disaster itself. In fact, its influence spreads over the world, in one way or the other. Thus, all humanity "has a fever" and each human being is involved, is responsible in his own way: negative or positive, just as we choose.

### Is the world engineerable?

Usually we learn by looking back on our lives. When our experiences are surprising or unwanted, we wonder why these things could happen to us.

But why not look ahead, why not learn to foresee things? We can ask ourselves what the consequence of each action is. The world is indeed engineerable, but only if we think with an unveiled mind, that is, try to break through our mental blockages from an impersonal motive. We all know: many people have great difficulty in recognizing the real causes in their lives and overseeing the consequences of their acts. Perhaps they really want to do something about global problems. Maybe they even make a high effort. But their reform efforts stop at a point that suits them, at the point where their own views and possibilities are at stake.

Two people in conflict often point fingers at each other when you ask them what should be changed. That seems to be the simplest solution. But in nine out of ten cases, *both* parties have to change if a solution is to be found. And then a different basis for cooperation can be established, often in a short period of time.

## What are the causes of disease?

Every disease has its origin in our thinking consciousness, our mind, and not in our genes or in bacteria or viruses. Of course the condition of our lower nature also plays a role: did we take sufficient rest, did we make daily walks in a park, etcetera. But that condition depends on the thoughts we think as well. So it is always our consciousness that steers. And then we do not mean our last-minute consciousness, so to speak. It is the qualities of our consciousness in the earlier years of our lives and in our previous lives, that determine the whole structure of our lower nature.

Our gene patterns determine nothing: they only offer possibilities. Biochemists are finding this out more and more. You can see genes as switches, which are not always in the right position. If such a switch is indeed not in the right position, this does not mean that you will become ill. Your lower nature follows the characteristic, the sphere of influence that radiates from your consciousness.

A bacterial or viral infection will only lead to sickness if we are susceptible, if the germ reflects a disharmonious characteristic in ourselves. If not, they will not take hold in us. You may get a disease of which you have laid the causes in a distant past. A long time may elapse between the cause and the effect. But that does not mean that the sphere of influence of our consciousness is not in effect.

## Questions on karma

If you think about your own life and about karma, can you still learn a lot from your previous life?

## Answer

Just as you can learn from your past experiences from this life, you can, in principle, learn from the experiences you have gained in past lives. But then you must be able to look back into your past lives and to do that honestly, and really understand what the underlying causes were. And the largest part of us cannot do these things yet.

But does this situation hinder our inner growth? Is it necessary to know more about our former lives, to be able to learn a lot now? No, it is not. Why? Because our current life is in all respects a perfect reminder of our past. Everything that happens to us now – the family we are born into, the country we live in, the colleagues we work with, and so on – is a direct continuation of our past. Everything that we may have done wrong in former lives presents itself again, so that we get the opportunity to do better this time. Everything we did well, we can now learn to do even better. In short, our entire life, down to the smallest details, is a continuation of our previous life and is our most adequate learning material.

To illustrate this with an example: suppose we have wronged others in a previous life, or that we have disadvantaged the community we were part of. Then in this – or any following – life we end up in a situation where we can correct this disharmony. Such a circumstance is probably not pleasant for our personality, but we can learn an important lesson as a result. Each day in our life is therefore a learning school, built from the teaching material that we have compiled ourselves in the past.

There is one precondition for learning: regard your past in the light of your best insights and, if necessary, draw important conclusions from it. For example by reforming certain habits,

or by avoiding a repetition of errors. A well-known saying is: “Those who don’t know their history are doomed to repeat it.” This applies not only to a nation, but also to us as individuals. Yet many people fail to learn lessons from their past. The result is that they continually end up in the same difficulties. Why does this happen? To begin with, many people don’t wish or dare to look back honestly. For them, it is difficult to look as “observer from above”, instead of from a preconceived feeling or judgment.

If you don’t look at yourself objectively, you tend to blame others for everything that went wrong. You often see this happening with two arguing children who have to come to their teacher. They are hardly able to view the argument from the perspective of the other. It may sound a bit unkind, but often we adults act like little children and judge everything from our personal perspective. However, we will only *learn* when we develop a super-personal vision.

Furthermore, we usually remember only a little bit of what actually happened. Our memories are often very selective. That too has to do with the personal perspective from which we view everything. Our memories may even be non-existent, because we imagined something during the event, or added or omitted all kinds of elements afterwards. We must take this possibility into account.

As mentioned, most people cannot remember their past lives. That is generally a blessing, because looking back on your past lives is anything but pleasant. You look back on earlier stages of your development, when you understood less, were more ignorant and inept. In our present view, the things that we did must always fall short. Perhaps we regard some past actions as major failures. And who knows about karma, the law

of cause and effect, realizes that sooner or later we have to compensate for all our shortcomings. This may make us depressed, despondent or scared ... about things that perhaps we will not encounter in this life at all!

As said, it is a blessing for most people that our memory does not extend beyond our current incarnation. It greatly helps us to live with an open mind in this life. We start new developments full of hope. We learn from the experiences in this life without the ballast of unfounded thoughts as “if I did not manage then, I will probably fail again”. After all: we all carry limitless potentials in our consciousness!

### Question

Does the law of cause and effect apply equally to all people?

### Answer

Yes, certainly. Cause and effect work universally: everywhere and always in the boundlessness. All beings (and that means “all that exists”) are a constant source of causes. We continually influence all other beings, and the ensuing interaction ensures that sooner or later we will meet each consequence on our path: a consequence that has the same characteristics as the cause we once produced.

### Question

Do we also attract conflicts and wars as a nation?

### Answer

In this Universe, nothing happens fortuitously. The law of cause and effect means that through our thoughts and acts we form our own character. And our character determines “what we attract” and “to what we are attracted”. We know of a family that used to hike in the French Alps. They were experi-

enced and their walks generally went without problem. Once there was a serious problem, and just then something happened what rarely had occurred before: other people passed by. These people could help. Now we can never look into the hearts of our fellow people, but we can certainly imagine that a group that was always helpful themselves, also attracts helpful people. This also applies to larger scales, when we talk about countries and groups of countries. Any country who loves harmony attracts neighbors who also like harmonious interaction, in some measure. Those who like to prove themselves by fighting, evoke mutual struggle.

Conflicts and wars are never things that happen to us from the outside. If we have a hostile neighbor, we have wronged that neighbor in the past. By offering cooperation to that country or group now, and support them when necessary, we can compensate for that injustice.

Who has knowledge of karma is able to solve many problems before they become huge. After all, wars and conflicts almost always build up gradually, because both sides look at each other with growing distrust, and vilify each other. If we never allow ourselves to be seduced into such ethically mean actions, but consistently see the other as a fully equivalent human being, many problems will be solved before they become uncontrollable and explosive.

### Question

Do you always get the situations and difficulties that you can handle?

### Answer

Yes. Every consequence has the same characteristic and power as its cause. The more powerful we pursue our goals – constructive or selfish goals –

the more powerful the consequences we evoke. Those who lead relatively colorless lives and fear each deviation from their everyday pattern, will build up a destiny without extreme peaks and troughs.

We can compare it to this physical fact: when you cycle at great speed, you evoke a lot of air resistance. You have to be constantly alert not to lose control in corners. If you cycle at sight-seeing speed, you have much less resistance to overcome. This applies also to our mental and spiritual life.

Each human is at the core a spiritual being with unlimited possibilities. That's why we can always face our destiny. What we are unable to understand or handle today, we can understand or handle tomorrow. Of course, this principle should be applied with some common sense. Is it wise to take up tasks far beyond our present capacities? Be brave but not reckless. Yet, sometimes we achieve much more than we ever dreamt to be able to. For example, if we take up a demanding task for the sake of other people, when no one else does it. Why? Through our selfless motive we evoke our own Higher Nature, our latent sources of vision and power. Consider for instance what young people like Malala Yousafzai and Greta Thunberg have achieved.

## Changing your habits

What should you do if you want to get rid of annoying habits?

### Answer

The first thing to realize is that habits are based on thoughts. So the question is actually: how do I get rid of certain annoying thoughts?

Here, not only “the how” is important,



but also “the why”. What is your motivation? Why do you want to get rid of a certain habit? Because it blocks a certain personal wish, for example, to become the best in your sport? Or do you want to reform it from a sense of responsibility? For instance, because it is bothering you in your role towards your children, or towards your family or working duties?

From the first motivation, you may be able to master that one habit, but since you have not changed the *character* of your thinking, you will soon be confronted with similar problems — often in more intense form. From the second motivation you will truly think on another frequency, which will result in a fundamental, lasting change.

Suppose you are pursuing a goal that extends beyond your own interests. And you have some habits that are no longer adequate, in the light of your ideals. You want to get rid of them. How do you do that? When you know how karma works, you will understand the right way: *sow the seeds for a different way of thinking*. Concentrate on inspiring, constructive ideas, and put your energy into these.

Build up a different way of thinking with your imagination. You imagine how someone thinks and lives who has achieved what you want to achieve. You make that image as clear and powerful as possible. And if you sometimes fall back into your old habits – which is not surprising because old thoughts regularly return – do not be discouraged. Every attempt leads to greater power. Sooner or later you will have become what you imagined.

What will never work, is fighting your old habit. Then you make it stronger instead of weaker: you give it extra energy, by letting your mind circle around these thoughts. The key lies in *forgetting* the thoughts that you think

are no longer adequate, that are illusory. And you forget them by substituting the more truly for the illusory.

## The symbol of the turning of the Wheel

What is meant by the turning of the Wheel?

### Answer

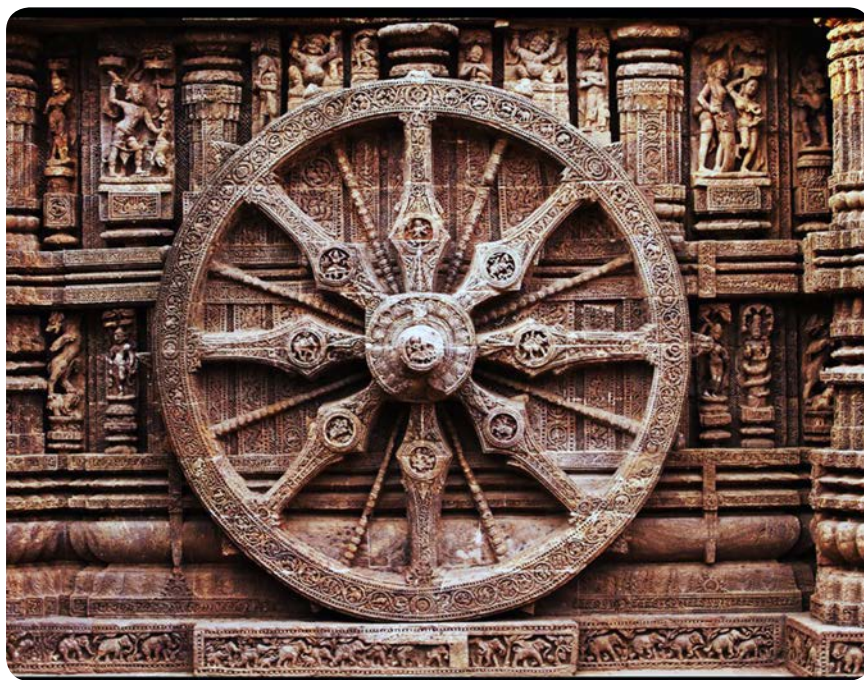
The turning of the Wheel is a symbol that we often find in Buddhism. But not only there, because it is a universal symbol.

In Buddhism, this wheel is often called the Dharma Chakra, the Dharma

spoke being an aspect of the teaching. But the turning of the Wheel can also indicate the succession of developmental cycles. When Gautama the Buddha began his public promulgation of the Universal Wisdom in India, “he set the Wheel in motion,” as it is called. He gave a spiritual impulse that gave the evolution of humanity a powerful spiritual “push”, a keynote that introduced a new cycle.

In Buddhism we also hear a lot about the Samsāra Chakra, the Wheel of Rebirth. The Buddhist doctrine gives us the key to grow beyond this wheel of rebirths. Those who have done this successfully are able to choose where or when they are born, to do compassionate work.

Buddhism is infused with universal



Wheel. The idea of Dharma involves: cosmic order, fundamental law, and consequently our duty, our task. It also indicates the teachings of Gautama the Buddha, in which this Dharma is explained. It is often depicted as a wheel with 8, 16 or 24 spokes, each

truth in many aspects. Throughout the ages it has preserved much of the Theosofia that Gautama the Buddha passed on to his fellow men throughout his life — partly to everyone, and partly to his direct disciples.

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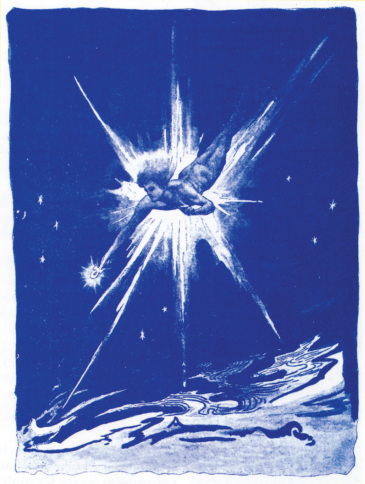
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3. Respect for everyone's free will (when applied from this idea of universal brotherhood).
4. Respect for everyone's freedom to build up their own view of life.
5. To support the developing of everyone's own view of life and its application in daily 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)