

the Light-bringer

Lucifer[®]

For seekers of Truth

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

**Humanity, the key to
harmony in nature**

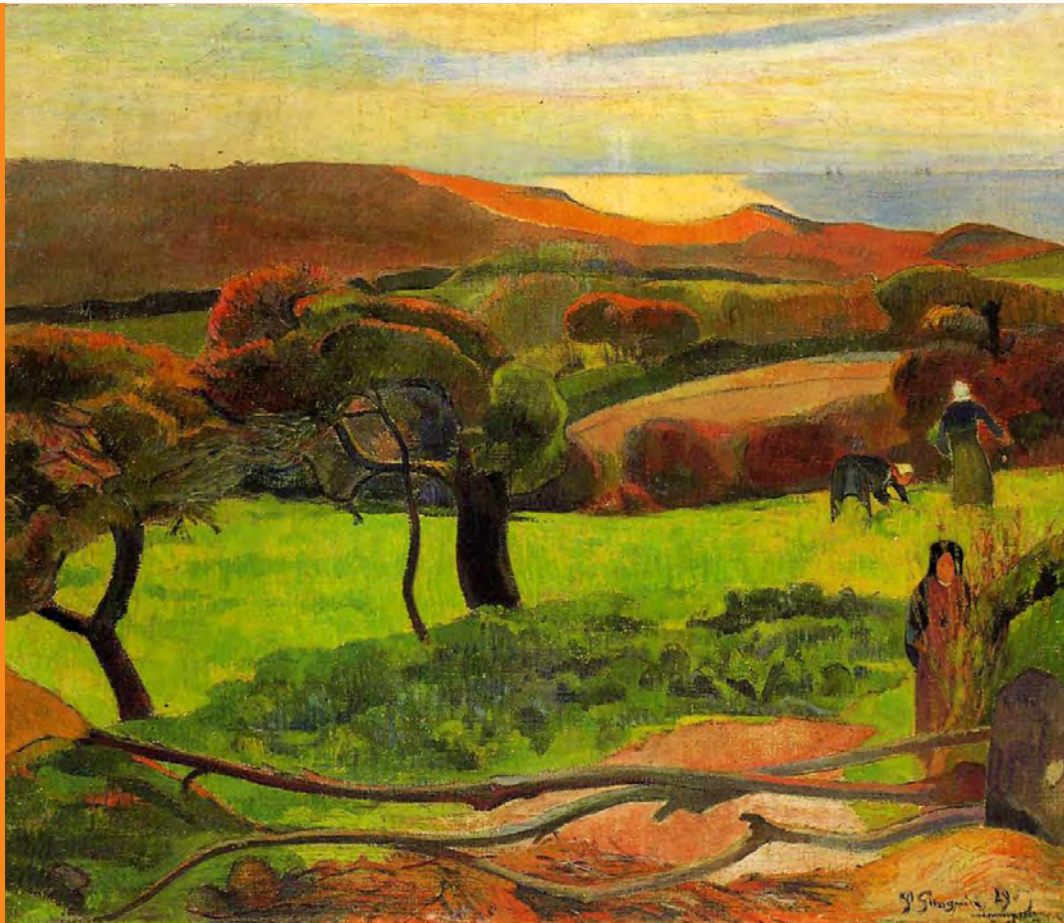
**Different states of
consciousness**

**The meaning of
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**Berlin's theosophical
influence on arts &
design**

Bees as symbols

**Pioneers in the
animal kingdom**



Les Champs au bord de la mer,
Paul Gauguin.

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In the previous article, published in our first issue of this year (March, pp. 9-15), we stated that consciousness is essentially boundless, but the consciousness of every being is limited, constantly changing and growing. In this article we will look at the composition of consciousness and delve deeper into the growth and different states consciousness can be in.

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Anyone who studies H.P. Blavatsky's gem *The Voice of the Silence* reads at the very beginning: "The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real." How then can we as thinkers understand the inner silence that we are sometimes able to perceive within ourselves? A theosophical reflection on the meaning of silence.

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This article was one of the introduction talks at the International Theosophy Conference (ITC) in Berlin in 2018, a city in which art, design and Theosophy come together as was shown in this talk.

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In 1982-1983, the then Leader of the Theosophical Society Point Loma, D.J.P. Kok, held a series of lectures on bees. These lectures have formed the basis of this article, that describes the symbology of the bee.

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Why do we find such huge differences in intelligence and social behavior in the animal kingdom, even within one group of animals? How can we explain this? This is part of a series of articles about "Theosophy in nature".

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Editorial

The coronavirus has changed our world. Lockdowns, social distancing, cancelled sports events and concerts, changing school hours etc. etc. — it seems like everything has been turned upside down. Also in our theosophical work a lot has changed. We can no longer give public lectures and courses. We therefore had to organize a lot of our work in a different way. However, we are not discouraged by the new situation.

Starting from the idea that nothing happens just haphazardly and that there is always a cause underlying any circumstance which can be traced back to those who are confronted with the consequences, we know that we can cope with this new situation in a positive way as well. We tried to make the best of it. A late Dutch soccer player once said that every disadvantage has its advantage. We had to work hard for it. Our technical staff worked overtime. There was an intensive internet cooperation with people living far away from our lodges. As a result, we saw that new possibilities for the theosophical work emerged like flowers in spring. As we wrote in our last edition of *Lucifer* – titled Learning from the Pandemic – the time of the pandemic is a time of challenges that can lead to spiritual progression.

So forced by the circumstances, we held our lectures and courses using ZOOM. That brought about interesting results. Our livestream lectures were interactive, as the speaker paused each 20 minutes to address the questions that were sent in meanwhile. Many people found the way to our online lecture archive (<https://www.youtube.com/user/blavatskyhouse>). The ITC (International Theosophy Conferences) of 2020 – which was to be held in Brazil – was now organised online, including online workshops. Moreover, it was bilingual (English and Portuguese). This new and challenging situation led to many new visitors, who otherwise would never have participated. In this issue we publish the keynote lecture of this year's ITC, “humanity, the key to harmony in nature”. Some of the visitors we saw back at our symposium of September, which was also held via ZOOM. We seem to have aroused a lasting interest with them.

It is always inspiring to see how universal laws also apply in the natural realms below the human kingdom. In this issue you will find a second article about the inspiring life of bees. Another article deals with the pioneers in the animal kingdom, because just as there are forerunners in the human kingdom, there are forerunners in the animal kingdom.

Because of the pandemic, many of us were forced to work from home. Some experienced at home a silence unknown to them. That certainly does not have to be disadvantageous. Silence has a great power, as can be seen from the article “The meaning of silence”.

Furthermore, in this issue you will find the second part of the fundamental article “The mystery of consciousness”, which mainly deals with the different states in which consciousness can be.

Finally, there is an inspiring article on Theosophy and art. Theosophy has always had a strong influence on art since the performance of H.P. Blavatsky at the end of the 19th century. This article, with the exciting title “From Blavatsky to iPhone”, describes the theosophical influence on the art world and especially that of Berlin.

As usual we have also answered a number of questions. This time there is a large variation: there are questions about Mukti, Nirvāna, the remedy against hard stubbornness, vivisection, the life phase of Venus.

Your questions and comments are of course once again welcome. We find the interaction with our readers of the utmost importance. It can only improve our work.

The editors

Humanity, the key to harmony in nature

Key thoughts

» Monads: essentially boundless centers of consciousness. They live and grow in cooperation with each other; without interaction there is no life.

» The consciousness-substance principle is indestructible.

» Each being expresses the ONE LIFE in its own unique way.

» Nature: force field of infinite numbers of interacting living beings.

» The lower realms of nature emanate from the higher realms. Every kingdom of nature has its function within the whole.

» Nature is not perfect.

» The laws of nature are the habitual patterns of divine beings. The highest Law is compassion.

» The distinguishing feature of human consciousness is thinking. We are just beginning thinkers.

» Wrong (selfish) use of thinking creates disharmony in nature.

» Our thinking consciousness imprints patterns on the consciousness of the animals, our younger brothers.

From 23 to 26 July 2020 the ITC (International Theosophical Conference) took place. Actually, the conference was supposed to be held in Brazil this year, but the pandemic threw a spanner in the works. However, thanks to a great effort of many volunteers, the ITC took place, albeit online.⁽¹⁾ This year's theme was "Humanity, the key to harmony in nature". We publish integrally the *keynote* lecture.

Have you noticed that when people talk about nature, they often make it seem as if nature were an independent phenomenon, separate from humans. But nature as an independent phenomenon does not exist. Nature is not an entity. And a human being is in no way separate from it.

Nature

So, what is Nature?

We can answer that question with a counter-question: what is not nature?! Nature, in our view, is the agglomerate of all living beings. Not one exception.

The average person might think I'm talking about humans, animals, plants, perhaps even minerals. And, of course, they are all living beings and belong to nature. But theosophists go a step further. We say *everything* is alive. Everything we see and do not see is a living being. All act, react and are the object of the actions and reactions of others. So, atoms, molecules, cells, virus-

es, bacteria, planets, comets, stars, universes — everything is a living, moving and growing being, not essentially different from you or me. Nature is much more than what is generally understood by it. "Above" the human kingdom live beings with much greater consciousness and more refined abilities; call them gods if you want. And "below" the mineral kingdom there are so-called elemental beings, unknown to current science, that also belong to nature. Beings are all interdependent. They are not only part of nature; they *are* nature. And you immediately see that nature is not something outside man, but that man is an integrating and inseparable part of it. And if you reflect further on this, you also perceive that all these constituent parts are needed for the whole structure, that abstract structure, that we call nature.

Consciousness-substance

In that respect, there is no essential difference between that which in our

human language is referred to as “matter”, “substance” and “consciousness”. There is no essential difference between the tangible matter – the atoms and molecules that make up our bodies and the bodies of plants and animals and with which we build our houses, our cars, our planes – and our mind and our spiritual consciousness. Everything is life. Dead matter does not exist. There is what you may call “consciousness-substance”, or “substance-consciousness”. It is essentially the same. Life is consciousness, is substance, is nature. H.P. Blavatsky calls it the Substance-Principle in *The Secret Doctrine*.⁽²⁾

There is of course a difference between matter and spirit, but that is not essential. It is the same kind of difference as between ice, liquid water and water vapor. We will get back to that.

So it is perfectly true that everything is matter, as Master K.H. states in one of his letters to Sinnett.⁽³⁾ But matter is life and everything is alive. We just said that everything acts and reacts to each other. That means that matter, acting by its own peculiar energy or life, is in a constant state of motion, it is never in a state of rest. It always changes. So, nature is a force field of infinite interacting living beings.

Matter-life is indestructible

A next thought is that matter – or life – is indestructible. In other words, every part of that agglomerate of living parts that we call nature will never stop moving, acting, reacting. Plato, in one of his dialogues, makes a distinction between movement and self-movement.⁽⁴⁾ He says that if you set something in motion, it will someday stop moving. But something that moves on its own, from itself, will never stop and has always done so. Every being is, in other words, an eternal pilgrim. It has always been and always will be. Every being is essentially a boundless center of consciousness.

Monads

Such a boundless centre of consciousness is called a monad in the theosophical literature. Nature consists of countless hosts of monads. About the monad, H.P.B. says in *The Secret Doctrine* that “it is the only immortal and eternal principle in us.”⁽⁵⁾ Although all these monads are essentially the same – boundless consciousness – they are all in their appearance by definition different from each other. They are different as a manifestation. After all, if they were the same in their manifestation there would not be hosts of monads, but only one.

These differences between monads stem from the extent to which the potential and possibilities inherent in the monad have been developed. Each monad is constantly bringing out, developing and expanding more and more of the possibilities, potentials and abilities it contains. The extent to which a monad has developed, determines its status. So there is a human monad, or a monad that is in the process of developing the human consciousness — *manas*, mind. There is an animal monad. It has reached the status of animal and is developing animal consciousness. There is a vegetable monad, a divine monad, a super-divine monad, and so on.

Now, a monad can only express itself more and more in conjunction and cooperation with other monads. The first proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* speaks of boundlessness of which everyone is a part. Therefore, there can never be a long-term individual, isolated progression. It is impossible to grow as an individual being, yes, it is even impossible as a separate monad to manifest itself alone.

Why? Because there is always an interaction. Without interaction there is no life. There is therefore a mixture, an interblending, a cooperation of far and less far developed consciousnesses, without which no monad can live and grow and develop. That cooperation is reflected in what we call hierarchies.

Hierarchies

Hierarchies show beautifully how the cooperation between all these different monads occurs.

A hierarchy is first and foremost a unity. All beings belonging to that hierarchy have a common top from which the same life flows through the entire hierarchy. All monads are rooted in it. From the top of the hierarchy flow or emanate firstly the divine beings; the most developed beings of that hierarchy. They live in the divine spiritual realm. In religions they are referred to by different names: gods, deities, Dhyān-Chohans, Elohim. These divine monads emanate an atmosphere in which slightly less divine beings can manifest themselves. Monads that correspond with this sphere, because they have the characteristics and degree of development that belong to it, are attracted to it. These less divine, but still divine monads also emanate a sphere, to which the monads who belong to it are attracted. And so on. This is how the kingdoms of nature flow forth from one another. There are divine kingdoms, then the human kingdom, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the mineral kingdom and elemental kingdoms. This whole hierarchy of beings is Nature: visible to us and invisible.

By the way, above this hierarchy there is another hierarchy, and within each kingdom there is also a hierarchical structure. Nature repeats itself everywhere. We see the same patterns everywhere.

Each kingdom has its function

The different realms of nature work closely together. There are people who claim that nature could do without humans. We do not think so. Mankind has a special function within planetary life. Every kingdom in nature has its function in the hierarchy.

We humans, for example – and by humans I mean human monads, or monads who are developing *manas* – need the lower kingdoms to manifest ourselves. Our body is composed of living cells, living atoms, belonging to what we may call the material realms. Our intestinal system is part of the vegetable kingdom. We may not realize it, but we also have an animal element in us: the desire – or *kāma* – part in our consciousness. And our spiritual and divine nature is derived from the higher kingdoms of nature. As human beings, we have everything within us. We cannot live without other monads. In fact we *are* the other monads.

And what applies to one individual human, applies equally to mankind. I think very few people – even theosophists – realize how everything is interrelated, how everything works together in a magnificent agglomerate of LIFE.

Growth

Now, life also means growth. The interaction between all these different monads has one goal: to perfect the consciousness that these monads are developing in this great cycle – in a *manvantara*. A manvantara is the life period of our planet *Earth*. In other words, during this enormous period, humans can reach the pinnacle of being human. They can become god-humans.

And what applies to human monads also applies to animals, plants, minerals and so on. Each monad can reach in a cycle a state of relative perfection within the limits of its kingdom, and then goes on to the next cycle.

Note: there are no absolute endpoints. After all, if you have reached the highest level of development within one class, then there is another class in which you can continue your studies, so to speak. Theosophies' very first fundamental proposition is boundlessness.

Nature is not perfect

The fact that all these monads are developing, evolving

in interaction with each other implies that nature is not perfect. How can nature be perfect if the beings that compose nature are not perfect, if these beings are growing, evolving, learning, changing constantly.

The idea of a perfect nature comes from the idea that a perfect, omniscient, almighty being created nature. However, nature is not created. It is not created by a God, nor is it created by chance, as the materialist scientists affirm. Nature is the combined outflow of all beings, from the most evolved that we can imagine to the most unevolved that we can imagine. They are nature. And because all monads are learning to express themselves, and are therefore not perfect, nature is also not perfect. Now it will undoubtedly seem to us, human monads, that the beings who live in the realms of consciousness above ours are perfect, just as a toddler thinks his father or mother is a perfect human being who knows everything. And in a way, of course, they are. The actions of a parent are like laws for that toddler. Because for the life and growth of a toddler, a parent has enough experience and knowledge — at least you can hope for that.

Eternal laws are the habitual patterns of divine beings

Just as there is a difference in development between a child and his parents, so there is a difference between the human kingdom and the divine kingdom. That relationship is exactly like how we humans relate to the animal kingdom. That is why the habitual patterns of the beings above the human realm seem to us to be eternal laws.

However, they are not laws. There are no laws of nature — at least there are no laws in the sense that they are imposed by something or someone, neither in the sense that they are mechanical processes.⁽⁶⁾

Compare it to your own consciousness and your own habits. Suppose you have an aquarium and feed the fish every morning. For those fish it is a law that every morning at a certain time “food descends”.

Or maybe an even better comparison: you having breakfast every morning at a certain time, is a natural law for the stomach cells in your body. They experience your breakfast as an influx of life that takes place over and over again in a cyclical process.

Thus, what we call laws of nature are the habits of the beings who live in realms (far) above us. The habits of the gods. Nature is composed of living entities. There are no mechanical processes. The idea of a mechanical nature is a remnant of a materialistic philosophy. If you assume

a living Universe, the laws of nature are the result of the actions of living beings.

That means that the earth does not revolve mechanically around the sun. It is from the inner impulse of life that it does so. The cycle of sunspots is not an accidental process, but is a habit of the living sun. By the way, this cycle is closely related to the rotation around the sun of the planet Jupiter and affects all kinds of processes in the solar system. We, humans who live on planet Earth, are beginning to understand something of those influences. You see: everything is connected.

Compassion: the LAW of Laws

You may ask; is there some kind of supreme law? A law to which the other laws are subordinate. Is there a deepest foundation in nature? The answer is: Yes, there is. We call that law Compassion.

It is not because of poetic considerations that H.P. Blavatsky in *The Voice of the Silence* calls compassion the LAW of Laws.⁽⁷⁾ What did she mean by that?

Compassion is not an attribute but the basic pattern of all life. After all, there is unity. So, all those entities are like the branches of the same tree. They are parts of each other. They live for and through each other and that's exactly what we call compassion.

Alaya

In *The Voice of the Silence* H.P.B. says that Compassion is Alaya's Self.

What is Alaya?

This Sanskrit word means literally non-dissolution; the indissoluble. It is a term used in Buddhism for the Universal Soul, the source of all beings. Mystically it is identical with *Mahā-Buddhi* or with *Mūlaprakṛiti*, the root-producer, or the root nature.

Alaya is an extremely mystical and profound concept. We could say a lot more about it. But what you will at least come to understand is that it is the source, the great producer of everything in a hierarchy. There is One Life and that Life is everywhere. That is Nature. All is rooted in Alaya; Alaya permeates everything, produces all living beings of that hierarchy.

And when I use the word "produce", I certainly do not mean it makes or creates something. No, everything is a monad, and a monad has always been there. I mean all life is actually imbued within Alaya. All beings express that ONE LIFE in their own unique way.

That ONE LIFE is the background of the LAW of Laws. If

you realize that the other is actually the same as you, then it is only natural that you live for the totality.

So there is a dynamic harmony in nature. The heart of nature is this impersonal love. Love, in the words of Gottfried de Purucker, is the cement of the universe,⁽⁸⁾ because it holds everything together and binds it together in a tremendous dynamic unity of infinite numbers of divine sparks or monads.

Beings differ from each other

You must understand harmonious unity very well. Harmony doesn't mean that everyone is the same. If we had all developed exactly the same abilities, there would be no harmony. Many things would remain undone. We have already said that monads differ in their manifestation. It is precisely because of those differences that there can be harmony. The difference in development supports, as it were, the cosmic building, it carries nature.

First of all there are the different kingdoms of nature, which form a gigantic cosmic hierarchy, but within such a natural realm there also are differences in development which may be very huge.

Of course everything is interrelated. The kingdoms of nature are not separate. Life flows from the highest divine kingdoms, to the elemental kingdoms and back again. Each kingdom is an intermediary between the kingdom above and below. All kingdoms need each other, to learn how to develop.

More advanced monads are the teachers of the less advanced ones

There is another essential aspect that we need to highlight in relation to these differences in the development of beings. For all these differences, there is a general rule of law, which is actually a kind of elaboration of the LAW of Laws. That general law is that every more advanced monad is by nature the teacher or leader of the less advanced ones. And a true teacher is, according to the word of Socrates, a midwife. Such a teacher helps his pupil to be born. The qualities of that student are already there, but thanks to the influence of the teacher, he develops those qualities. They are being born.

This is true on a large scale as well. As above, so below. In other words, the beings in every kingdom are in fact the inspirers of the beings of the kingdom beneath it. This is the way how mankind was awakened. We were stimulated to life by the gods.

On each stage the monads follow the same patterns. So,



Detail of the Prometheus Fountain in the Rockefeller Center in New York, a bronze sculpture that was created by Paul Manship in 1934

actually we are the gods for the animals, we should inspire our younger brothers, the animals. We will work that out for you later.

Manas: the thinking ability

But first let us take a moment to reflect on the typical consciousness that we humans are developing.

How can we characterize human consciousness?

We can discover that by simply finding out what the word “human” actually means. The word is derived from the Sanskrit root “man” to think. Manas is the ability to think. We humans are thinkers.

How that capacity to think has awakened within us is a wonderful example of the cooperation between different kingdoms of nature. The latent thinking capacity – our mind – was awakened by further developed beings, called Mānasaputra’s, Sons of Manas, Sons of Mind. They incarnated in the quasi-senseless, intellectually dormant human race. The Mānasaputra’s touched with their divine thinking our sleeping thinking, our latent mind, and, as you can light one candle with another, they ignited the thinking in us. It is the same process as parents and teachers do with their children. By focusing on the child’s already present but dormant abilities, by telling stories, asking and answering questions, in short, by the

process of parenting, education, you awaken the thinking in the child. Remember: Socrates compared an educator to a midwife.

In many myths, such as that of Prometheus and that of the serpent in Eden – the serpent so wrongly mistaken for the devil: how can you be a devil if you awaken the essentially divine thinking in humans – this process is symbolically represented.

Seven aspects of Manas

So, we humans are thinkers. But thinking has many colors. There are many layers in manas.

As above, so below. Just like there are seven (or in an even more specific division 10) cosmic spheres, there also are seven layers, seven characteristics in our thinking, seven aspects of manas. We do not have time to go

into details, but roughly speaking you can say that three of those aspects of manas are aimed at the realm above us: at the divine. Four of them identify more with the outer world and deny or pay no attention to the realms above us.

Incipient thinkers

We said that the heart of the universe is Compassion: a magnificent dynamic Harmony. But we also know, when we look around us, that we do not reflect that harmony. Why is that?

The answer lies in the way we use the subaspects of manas. We have brought manas into activity, but we are *absolute beginners*, to quote David Bowie. We are like toddlers, schoolchildren, we just learned to think. In human terms it may seem a long time ago that we ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil – a long time ago that Prometheus brought us the flaming fire of thought – but in cosmic terms it is only yesterday. That’s why we get lost in our thinking. We have the ability to think, but very often we use it in the wrong way. We misuse it. I mean that we go against the harmony of nature. We do not, or not sufficiently, take into account the inseparable bonds that exist between all the realms in nature and of course also between all those monads who are on their evolutionary journey through the human kingdom: our human brothers.

Self-consciousness

Now there is something that goes together with thinking, which is in fact the cause of the disharmony we all see in the human world and as a consequence also in the realms of nature that surround us. That “something” is self-consciousness, at least, self-consciousness that is misunderstood and therefore abused.

Self-consciousness is the property that consciousness can reflect on itself. There are some animals that recognize themselves in the mirror and biologists interpret that as self-awareness. But animals cannot look in the mental mirror. They can not figure out what they are thinking. They cannot think at all. They have not developed the ability to think yet.

We humans can. We can gaze into the mental mirror, know that we are an ego, that we are an individual human being. And that contains a certain danger.

Why?

Because we have developed self-consciousness, our free will has become much more extensive and powerful. Actually every being has free will. Free will is integral to the monad. As a monad develops, so does the free will. The further a being is developed, the greater his free will becomes. Therefore it seems to us that animals, let alone plants, hardly have any free will.

Anyway, we humans have free will, related to our thinking ability, which is in its turn related to self-consciousness. But do we understand our self-consciousness properly? Do we interpret it properly, when we think that we are separate from our fellow human beings and from the rest of nature’s realms, both above and below us?

The human kingdom is a critical point in the development of the monad. Self-consciousness is attained, but it is by no means fully developed. The spiritual and material meet in a human being. The spiritual finds its shelter in an organism built up of lower elements. Humans are two-natured beings.

The focus on the personal man, who identifies himself with the outer world, is in fact a misinterpretation of who we really are. This ignorance leads to the disharmonious world of today.

If we see ourselves as an integral part of nature, we will never claim more for ourselves than we need to live. Then we would not have a situation in which the richest two thousand persons possess more than the poorest 4.6 billion. Then, like the Bisnoi – a simple people in the desert land of Rajasthan, India – we would share the proceeds of our harvest with animals. Then we would never withdraw

more from a living organism than what it is able to deliver and from which it can recover.

Karma

In the end, however, we can never permanently isolate ourselves from nature, because we are nature itself. In other words: nature reacts. The balance will restore itself. That process, that law, is called karma, the law of cause and effect. Every thought and action has consequences that are strictly in accordance with the nature of the action and will return to the one who acted. The law of karma exists by the grace of the totality of life. Everything is interwoven into a great Web of Destiny. That is why every thought and action has an influence on the whole. If we never act against the habitual pattern of nature then the dynamic harmony of nature will never be disturbed. Disasters, like the current pandemic, will not exist. Hunger, enmity and hatred — it would not exist. Nobody would be poor, because nobody would be rich.

Harmony

So, let us find the harmony in ourselves. Unless heart, mind, and spirit work in harmony, man has neither inner rest nor peace. We are two-natured beings. There is a lower and higher manas. And as long as we have not learned to control our lower thinking with our higher thinking, we live in disharmony with ourselves. The environment will reflect this disharmony, for whatever we think or do affects the totality of life. Our actions affect the lower realms of nature. Only when life flows in a pure way, from the gods via the humans to the animals and plants, and when the experiences of those lower beings work back towards the monads in the other kingdoms of nature, then there is harmony.

The word harmony comes from an old Greek word meaning agreement, concord of sounds. It was mainly used in music, when different notes – a high and a low – sound together. The notes fit together. They are stuck together like with a hinge. Every entity or every kingdom of nature has this hinge function — it is a link between more and less developed entities.

Our minds were awakened by the gods, the Mānasaputras. That is an example of the link upstairs.

Animals, our younger brothers

There is also a link, a direct influence of ours, to those below us. With our mind we imprint patterns on the consciousness of animals. The closer these animals are to

us, the stronger these patterns are imprinted. Have you ever considered that the struggle in the lower realms of nature could be a reflection of the fights in the human kingdom? Children raised in a family where parents constantly quarrel with each other will all too easily adopt this characteristic. But human children always have a portion of free will at their disposal and can follow another path than their parents. Animals have much less free will. Instinctively, they follow the paths of nature taken by humans.

Fortunately there is not only struggle and selfishness in the human kingdom. There are noble thoughts, sacrifice, compassion among humans as well. Those characteristics also influence the animal kingdom.

On YouTube there are some beautiful movies of animals helping another animal even of a different species without any advantage for themselves. A lioness adopts a baby antelope. She doesn't lose sight of her foster child for a second. She feels the constant threat of her own kind. There is a movie of a leopard that takes care of a baby-baboon. A dumped baby cat that is taken care of by a crow. A dog who, at the risk of his own life, pulls a hit dog off the highway. And there is much more.⁽⁹⁾

If we restore the harmony within ourselves, if we live in the higher part of our consciousness, which is by nature unselfish, there will be a restoration of the harmony not only in the human kingdom but we will affect the other kingdoms as well.

Work on with nature

If we keep this in mind, the words of H.P.B. in *The Voice of the Silence* might have even more value. Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.⁽¹⁰⁾

Therefore, study yourself, find harmony within yourself, know yourself as a part of the oneness of life, and nature will reflect that harmony. The kingdoms of nature above us have learned to cooperate self-consciously with nature, the kingdoms below us do it unselfconsciously. We are in the middle. We have a great responsibility. What do we do? Do we choose selfishness and work against nature? Or do we let the light of our inner god shine within us and live for all living beings, thus building a harmonious world. The choice is ours!

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The mystery of consciousness – part 2

Different states of consciousness

In the previous article, published in our first issue of this year (March, pp. 9-15), we stated that consciousness is essentially boundless, but the consciousness of every being is limited, constantly changing and growing.

In this article we will look at the composition of consciousness and delve deeper into the growth and different states consciousness can be in.

Beings – consciousnesses – all originate from the same source. There is therefore an essential unity underlying all living beings. In other words: all consciousnesses form a great web of life. Everything is interconnected. What one does concerns the other. Yet there are considerable differences in the range of consciousness, and we have to acknowledge that for most people many states of consciousness are a terra incognita. As soon as we fall asleep, most of us cease to gain self-conscious experiences. How is that possible?

A stream of consciousness

The great paradox of human consciousness is that it basically encompasses everything, even though there is so much we know nothing about. After all, because every being is part of that web of consciousness, it also contains everything in that web, just as a drop of the ocean reflects the entire ocean. You can therefore imagine human consciousness as an

ocean that contains divine, human and even animal faculties. But we use only a limited part of all those abilities. We are like a talented disciple who, as yet, has barely developed his talents.

In that ocean of consciousness, there are consciousnesses that have developed abilities that are still asleep in the average person. Are these beings separate from us? No, of course they are not. Everything is part of that ocean of consciousness.

Well, these more advanced beings fulfill a certain function in relation to us. They belong to us, yes, they are us in a certain sense, because we are all that ocean of consciousness. These thoughts are encapsulated in the representation of man as a stream of consciousness. In that stream there are, as it were, knots, transformers, or – another comparison – locks, just as they are in a river or canal. Each transformer is a being – a consciousness – that functions at a certain level. That level corresponds to the

Key thoughts

- » A human being is a composite stream of consciousness.
- » Consciousnesses from different levels of development communicate by resonance.
- » There are four states of consciousness; four different “glasses” you can wear to perceive.

abilities it has developed.

Compare that stream of consciousness with an electric current that is transformed into a lower and lower voltage. Those transformers are monads, centers of consciousness. Do not think of them as being in a certain place: the center of a monad is everywhere, and the perimeter is nowhere. It is abstraction for us, in essence boundless consciousness. That's why each monad is essentially equal to each other monad. The differences between the monads arise from the extent to which each monad as entity is able to express the leading consciousness. As a result, each monad has a particular level of development, a particular character. This character – that an entity has built up himself – is his egoity, his ego. So, although all entities have the same foundation of consciousness (being monads), yet each entity must differ from each other entity, without exceptions, because he expresses his consciousness in his own unique way. Compare this to two persons who have some degree of mathematical talent. One of them uses it intensively and develops it. He becomes a mathematician and lives in a mathematical world. The other is not interested or lazy, and leaves this talent unused.

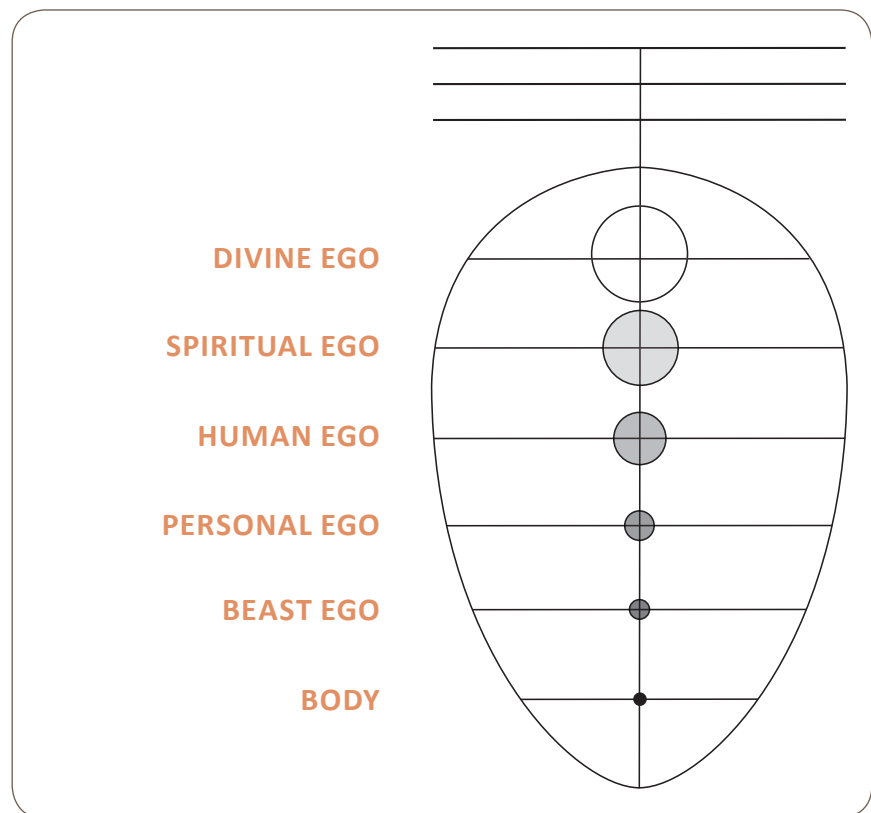
The world in which monads live corresponds to their level of development. The more developed, the greater the range of consciousness. It is the same as an adult who has a greater range of consciousness than a child and therefore lives in a larger world.

The monadic world is not our sensory world. The world of a fish is the sea, of a swallow the sky. Thus the world of the relatively most developed monad in this stream of consciousness is the divine-spiritual world. That world is much more ethereal than our world. It is therefore not perceptible to us. The more developed monads have a range of consciousness which reaches throughout the universe. And by the whole universe, I don't just mean the physical universe, but especially those inner worlds.

The personal human has fully identified with the physical world: planet Earth. This fact also explains why we lose consciousness when we fall asleep. We lie in our beds, thinking. Maybe our thoughts drift to the events of the

day and then suddenly we are gone. We sleep. Theosophia teaches that we also lose our self-awareness at the moment of dying.

The reason for this is that we only attribute reality to this sensory world. These other worlds do not exist for us, like land does not exist for a fish. Actually, when we are sleeping or when we are dead, only the longing for a manifested life remains. That is why we always wake up again or – in the case of the cycle of death and life – always reincarnate. We return to that atmosphere where we can self-consciously go on with our lives. With our free will we have chosen to do so.



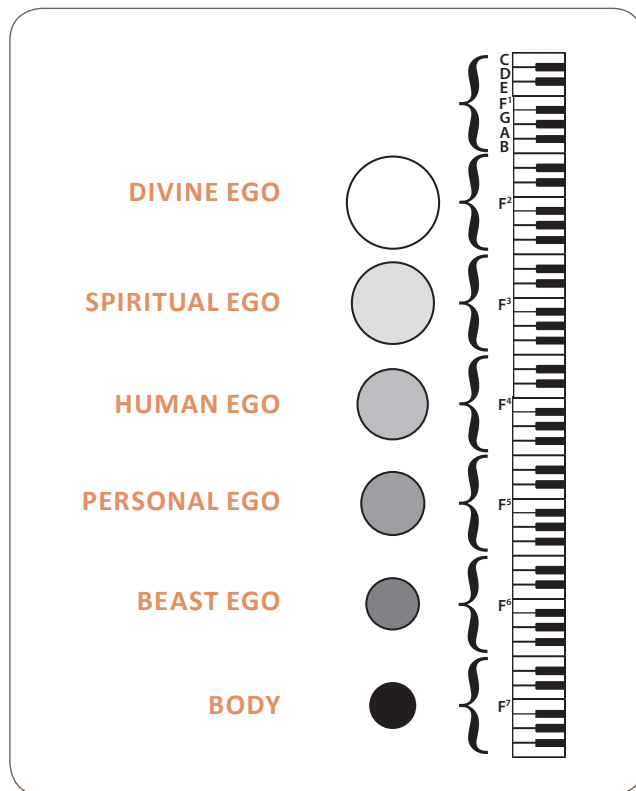
Egg-diagram

The diagram on this page is a symbolic representation of the stream of consciousness that we are. In our present stage we identify ourselves mainly with the personal ego, but it is clear that in our evolution we will increasingly identify ourselves with the further developed monads. We have to disconnect our consciousness more and more from the personal aspects, from our personality, which is nothing more than the mask that serves the higher aspects in order to manifest.

Understanding, compassion, awareness of cohesion and unity, these are the qualities of the further developed monads. Even if we live in the personality, we can activate

the higher aspects in the stream of consciousness. We can reach these other states of consciousness.

This takes place through resonance. We have developed a model for this, which we call the piano model.



Each monad is identical to any other. They all possess the same aspects. When we, as personal egos, strike the chord of connectedness, kindness and compassion, we vibrate along with the characteristics of those higher monads. If you sound a C in a certain octave on the piano, then the C's in the lower and higher octaves will resonate. So when we strike the tone of impersonal, "above personal" spirituality within ourselves, we vibrate along with the higher monads in our stream of consciousness. As we become more familiar with them, we will also learn to experience their states of consciousness.

Thus, we do not have to die to become aware of these higher states of consciousness. We can do that here and now.

Consciousness has seven different aspects, seven different colors or tones. If you strike different tones on a piano – a chord – then the trained listener can distinguish each of them. Thus a person, living in this physical world, can be aware of what his senses are telling him, while at the same time he is in another state of consciousness or is lead by the influence of that state within himself.

States of consciousness

In our life on earth we have different states of consciousness: a state of calmness or anger; an emotional state or an intellectual state, and so on. All these events belong to our state of waking.

But at night we sleep. And where is our consciousness then? It is in a different state. And in our sleep we sometimes dream; but sometimes we do not dream. These too are different states.

Well, the *Upanishads* distinguish four fundamental states of consciousness. The first one is called *jāgrat* in Sanskrit, the waking state. Then there is the state of *svapna*: the dream state. If you sleep very deeply – a sleep without dreams – you are in the state of *sushupti*. Finally, there is the state of *turiya*, also called *samādhi*. This is an even deeper state than that of *sushupti*, an even deeper sleep, with no dreams at all.

The waking state or *jāgrat* is the normal state or condition of consciousness, when it is not asleep.

Svapna is a state in which consciousness is more or less liberated from the physical body. It is partially awakened in the astral realms.

The astral region is a material region that is slightly more ethereal than the region we can perceive sensually. It is the world of emotions, feelings and desires. Although some people believe so, it is not a spiritual sphere. It lies between the spiritual realms and our sensory world.

Sushupti is the state of self oblivion, in which man is immersed when the perceiving consciousness enters the purely mānasic – thinking – state. It is the manas – our thinking – that belongs there. That thinking capacity is the real human consciousness. Manas, like everything else, is composite : there is a lower and higher manas.

The lower manas focuses on the material world. When that happens, man is in the *jāgrat* state. The higher manas is then inactive. However, it is never completely inactive. Occasionally we notice something from it, if we focus on it. But usually this state is so unknown to us, we are so unfamiliar with it, that we cannot gain experiences in the world of the higher manas. Compare this situation to a four-year-old child attending a math class. He doesn't understand any of the formulas the professor writes on the board and falls asleep.

Turiya, which literally means the fourth, is an actual destruction of ordinary human consciousness. It is a sense of oneness with Ātman-Buddhi — our inner god. Why is *turiya* the destruction of everyday consciousness? Because *turiya* is such an exalted state, in which one

knows oneself to be one with all life. The personal ego is far too limited and simply cannot live in such an elevated state. Compare it with the following: the child within us must die if the adult wants to be born. The child is, as it were, destroyed. In a similar way, our daily consciousness, by living in this feeling of separation, is destroyed if we want to reach the state of *turiya*, which is a state of utter unconsciousness for our daily consciousness.

You could say in this context, that the personal ego sleeps in comparison with the further developed monads. It is sometimes claimed that a human being is a sleeping Buddha and although this thought appeals to our imagination and can be inspiring, it is actually incorrect. The Buddha within us is wide awake; the personal human being sleeps in the buddhic atmosphere.

Manifested consciousness is always relative. Sleeping and waking are also relative concepts. If you compare human consciousness with that of animals, plants or minerals, it is awake and they sleep because they have not yet developed *manas*. *Manas* is still latent within them. In the same way we sleep compared to a Buddha. That is why *sushupti* and *turiya* are called the consciousness of dreamless sleep.

Homesickness

Nevertheless, a human being, living in his personality, may have a vague awareness of these more elevated states of consciousness. It is that indefinable longing or that gnawing aspiration in us for something we do not or hardly know. It is not a longing for earthly things, for riches or health, but a longing for a certain form of bliss that we have never experienced self-consciously, but of which we nonetheless know that it exists. It is the longing for what is behind the horizon of our consciousness.

The explanation for this is, that man in his *jāgrat* state can still sense something of *svapna* or *sushupti*. The four states of consciousness reflect each other. In each state are the other three as sub-states. So if you are in the state of *jāgrat*, even then a *svapna*, *sushupti* and even a *turiya* state of consciousness is possible. We could call it a sub-consciousness state. This is the key to expanding our consciousness, because we humans, living in the state of *jāgrat*, can still experience something of those more elevated states.

So there is a state of *jāgrat-jāgrat*, of *jāgrat-svapna*, of *jāgrat-sushupti* and of *jāgrat-turiya*.

You live in *jāgrat-jāgrat* if you only attribute reality to this world. You even deny the possibility that there could

be something else other than our physical substance. Anything your senses cannot perceive does not exist.

Someone who lives in the state of *jāgrat-svapna* is a dreamy type. He lives and works in the outer world, but it seems as if he is somewhere else. Actually, he is. He is a sensitive person who colors the physical world according to his state of feeling.

Few people live in the state of *jāgrat-sushupti*. Yet at certain times in our lives, we can all experience this state. These are moments of real understanding, of recognizing connections between events, of the underlying unity.

Someone once told me that he was in mortal danger on one occasion, but he was in a very lucid condition, in which he saw everything very clearly and knew exactly what was happening. It was as if he judged the situation from a completely different perspective.

If you consider life in the state of *jāgrat-turiya*, your life will become very different. You see oneness in everything. This state awakens homesickness in us. We know that there is a beauty and bliss far beyond this material world, and we also know that at some point everyone will be aware of it.

Four pairs of glasses

You can compare these four states of consciousness with four different perspectives from which you interpret the world. They are four different glasses through which you can look at things. Each pair of glasses gives a different color to life. You see the same thing but interpret what you perceive very differently.

The first pair of glasses causes you to focus exclusively on this physical world. You believe in matter, and anything you do not see, hear, taste or smell simply does not exist. These glasses give a one-sided view of life. You do not see the underlying connections.

The second pair of glasses hardly gives a clearer picture of life. You do feel that there is more than just this outer world, but you become entangled in the illusions of the astral world. These glasses can make you very happy sometimes, but also very sad. Everything is a bit vague. Sometimes you experience a relationship with your fellow human beings and feel sorry for someone who is suffering, but a moment later you have forgotten it and are back in your own world where you think you have been harmed because someone does not give you enough attention.

When you look through the third pair of glasses, you see yourself as part of a greater whole. And I do not only mean this in the material sense – so part of your country or of

the world – but you also know you are a part of worlds that transcend the physical world. You see your own life as a link between past and future. You see yourself as a vehicle of a greater consciousness. You see yourself as part of humanity, yes, as part of all life.

Very few people look through the fourth pair of glasses and when they do, it is only for a short moment. But even a short glance gives the perspective of perfect oneness. The idea that there is a “me” and a “you” has completely disappeared. There is only “us”.

Sometimes when we are in nature, when we see a beautiful work of art or listen to great music, we put on these glasses almost unconsciously. We forget our personal ego and at the same time we are very aware of everything. We know ourselves as a part of that totality. These are moments in our lives that we will never forget.

Turiya, the elevated state of consciousness, is the tone of the divine and spiritual ego. When you are in this state, you are living in this divine and spiritual world. This is where the artist finds his inspiration. This is where the true scientist and philosopher derives his intuitive ideas.

Expanding consciousness

We only understand something more of our consciousness when we expand it. Only then can we grasp its essential nature.

How do we expand our consciousness? Should we meditate? Do we have to follow certain dietary guidelines? Do we have to follow a religion?

Meditation can certainly help. But meditation is a general term. It requires that you actively put on the pair of sushupti or turiya glasses. That takes effort. For that you have to work. In other words, you have to actively form a mental image of the cohesion of all consciousnesses and of the unity that underlies all consciousnesses. Because of imagination consciousness expands.

Create a mental image of the world, humanity, of all living beings. Think of it as one whole. Try to imagine that this overarching consciousness and you are not two different things, but one. So you are your friends and enemies. You are the animals and you are also the gods. You are the sun and the planets. You are the universe as well as the ant in your garden. You are all of it.

Maybe it still sounds vague. Then make it concrete. Know that you and your fellow men belong together. Everything you do affects the whole.

Consciousness extends as far as the awareness of a human being reaches. Does it extend to your body, your person-

ality? Or does it encompass the whole of humanity, yes, do you see that all boundaries are illusions, because the only reality is CONSCIOUSNESS?

And with this we express the basic idea with which we started these two articles: every being is consciousness.



The meaning of silence

Anyone who studies H.P. Blavatsky's gem *The Voice of the Silence* reads at the very beginning: "The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real".⁽¹⁾ How then can we as thinkers understand the inner silence that we are sometimes able to perceive within ourselves? A theosophical reflection on the meaning of silence.

Key thoughts

- » Inner silence consists of vibrations that our personal consciousness does not perceive.
- » A spiritual thought has a very different frequency than a personal thought.
- » With inner silence we "hear" our supra-personal, spiritual Nature.
- » Motivation, concentration and our free will are the most important tools to develop our supra-personal aspects of thinking.

In our thinking, we usually connect the word silence to an experience in the outer world or in ourselves, our inner world. Strangely enough, we almost always refer to silence as the absence of something else: *no* sound or *no* movement. Silence is also linked to a state of rest, in the sense of *no* restlessness, *no* action. Depending on our state of mind and the situation in which we find ourselves, we value this silence as positive or negative. And finally, there is the silence of inner harmony, without disturbing elements, which we always appreciate positively.

This observation says little about the nature of the concept of silence, except that it is a peculiar example of the pairs of opposites, in which silence only seems to be opposed to non-silence. In today's busy world, outer silence is a scarce commodity, and many see this as a major cause of the effort it takes to experience inner silence.

The fact that almost everyone has the sensation of inner silence at one time

or another shows that this silence cannot be defined as not perceiving sound waves or movement. Our consciousness experiences something. But not the absence of something: we perceive something of a high, spiritual quality for which we often have no concrete description.

In spite of this, the experience is reason enough to seek this silence within ourselves more often. What is the deeper meaning of silence?

Swabhavat

If the phenomenon of silence extends from the outer to the inner realms, we may be able to start with the scientific knowledge about sound and movement and compare it with the knowledge about the inner realms the Theosophia tells us about. After all, the Hermetic axiom reads "So above, so below, so below, so above." Physics teaches that sound consists of vibrations of a certain frequency, just like for example light and electricity. In a Dutch *Lucifer*-article about "The power of color, sound and number"⁽²⁾,

Herman C. Vermeulen described how vibrating particles (like air or water molecules) do not move but do pass something on.

What vibrates and what is passed on? Theosophy teaches that life – consciousness – is the basis of every form of manifestation. But also that spirit and matter are two sides of Nature as Oneness.

The mentioned article goes deeply into this concept of “Primordial Material”, Consciousness Substance or, with the Sanskrit name, *Swabhavat*.

The answer to the question of *what* moves now and *what* one particle passes on to the other is *Swabhavat*. This Cosmic substance moves in an infinite spectrum of vibrations.

A solar system, a human being, an atom — we are fairly familiar with these concepts, but they are also vibrations.

The form of manifestation differs; the ONE – the essence – is equal.⁽³⁾

An important consequence for our subject is that the heartbeat of Kosmic Life is always there. Inner silence, we can say, consists of vibrations that we do not perceive with our outwardly directed, personal consciousness. It must be a supra-personal perception, because our consciousness is experiencing something positive, as said before.

Now we can experience something with our personal consciousness that we sometimes call inner silence, but this is more the psychological silence of feeling comfortable, an experience of peace when we are “comfortable in our own skin”. In itself that is very positive, but the inner silence we can experience supra-personally is of a spiritual quality: a silence that on our long evolutionary pilgrimage will deepen during our process of growing spiritual awareness, of more awareness of the essential Unity of all that exists.

Only before the first differentiation of the periodic manifestations of the Kosmic Life (see the second proposition from *The Secret Doctrine*)⁽⁴⁾ is this silence missing, as H.P. Blavatsky writes in Stanza II, sloka 2 of *The Secret Doctrine*:

Where was the silence? Where the ears to sense it? No, there was neither silence nor sound; naught save ceaseless eternal breath, which knows itself not.⁽⁵⁾

The Stanzas consist of very mystical texts, about which Blavatsky notes in the preceding Proem that “all these Stanzas appeal to the inner faculties rather than to the ordinary comprehension of the physical brain”.⁽⁶⁾ To

understand what we mean by inner faculties, we also have to address those inner capacities.

The thinker

In our evolution, thinking is the most important quality of our consciousness that we are developing and working with now. Man – *Manas* – is a thinker. The brain acts as an intermediary between our consciousness and our body. The brain offers our thoughts an outward instrument, but it is the consciousness that attracts or rejects these thoughts. And we are often very busy with that.

Theosophia teaches that thoughts are also living beings, relatively primitive forms of consciousness that each have their own specific vibrational frequency or wavelength. We are used to the terms “color” or “characteristic” in relation to the nature of thoughts. But the principle of channel and receiver, as we know it from physics, certainly also applies to our thinking. The brain is the *hardware* in the outward part and our consciousness is the director for all incoming and outgoing thoughts.

How does the thinker direct his thoughts? What wavelengths does he tune into — and what motives does he use to do so? These questions are important if we want to understand the characteristics of the vibrations that our personal consciousness apparently finds so difficult to register.

Man is a composite being. With an imperishable, spiritual core, a learning part and a transient part. Theosophy distinguishes seven universal principles, whereby in *Manas*, the thinking ability, we can also distinguish seven aspects of thinking with their own characteristics.

The desire (as a neutral force), the vitality, the feeling and the physical belong as thought aspects mainly to our personality – often focused on ourselves – and therefore are transient in nature. The intellect, the insight and the sense of unity belong as a thought aspect more to our imperishable spiritual core and are therefore supra-personal. Why do the thought aspects also cover the entire spectrum of seven cosmic principles? Because they are all essentially expressions of the Cosmic substance, *Swabhavat*, the ONE. Therefore, with all these aspects of thought, we can work on the development of the spiritual principle, *Buddhi*, and the divine principle, *Ātman*.

Concentration

With this view we can also imagine that a spiritual thought has a very different frequency than a personal thought. The spectrum of personal thoughts – aimed at the outer

world – is quite familiar to us, but it is often more difficult for us to adjust to the frequencies of supranatural thoughts as well. And the “higher” the spiritual quality of the thought, the more difficult it becomes to align with it in a concrete – pure – way. No shame, because as a pupil on the spiritual path, man is still developing the supra-personal aspects of thought. An important instrument to stimulate this development is concentration. The physical image of vibrations that has been sketched out also helps us to clarify the effect of concentration. When we concentrate on a thought, we reduce the width of the wavelength of a thought. In other words: we make the thought so clear that other thoughts – especially the closer wavelengths – are no longer perceived. Next to the thought we are concentrating on, there is *silence*. We urge disturbing thoughts to silence.

Concentration is pre-eminently a force that helps us to access our inner, spiritual abilities, because we are often not yet strong enough to shape the spiritual influence of our higher Nature – which is always there – within ourselves. We then close ourselves off from the “sounds” of the personality and focus on the spiritual within us. H.P. Blavatsky writes in the wonderfully beautiful *The Voice of the Silence*:

When he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the ONE — the inner sound which kills the outer.⁽⁷⁾

Although Blavatsky refers to *Ātman* with the ONE here, the parallel with how we can experience *Buddhic* influences is clear. In that sense we could also read Blavatsky’s words from this article’s intro, that the Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Lower thinking destroys the higher. Inner silence is: no longer hearing the personality and, if we want to, hearing our supra-natural, spiritual Nature.

Free will

A second, perhaps even more important instrument in our spiritual development is therefore free will. Why do we tune in to certain wavelengths? And do we do this consciously, or do we let the waves of thought blow past our thinking aspects without much thought?

The motivation to focus on thoughts of a certain quality partly determines the degree of concentration that we can achieve. If our motive is to live for ourselves, if we want personal silence to avoid “problems” as much as possible, then we will focus on matching, selfish thoughts. The result can be disappointing — the karmic law will never

bypasses us. In the meantime, our higher thinking aspects will have to wait for their chance, unused.

But our motivation to want to live for the totality can be nurtured by creating an ideal image of a better world, and by refreshing that image – as a continuous form of meditation – every day. When we practice this in the sense of the Unity of Kosmic Life, a wonderful world opens up for us. The higher part of ourselves gives much more *lasting* happiness and satisfaction than the lower. Compassion is a diamond that outshines the tin medal of self-interest. And we have our free will to choose that diamond! If we activate our supra-personal will, we also discover that it is much more powerful than the personally focused will. For free will is part of our imperishable essence. The more we choose for our mental compassionate, spiritual potential, the more our free will can be truly free. Disturbing noises, disturbing thoughts, they no longer affect us. Free from the obstacles we often put up for ourselves as personalities, we should focus on a life in the service of the totality. We align our thinking with the spiritual wavelengths of *Buddhi* and *Ātman*. Our personal thoughts are put at the service of supranatural thinking and our imperishable, spiritual essence.

We practice hearing the *Voice of Silence*:

Before the Soul can comprehend and remember, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united just as the form to which the clay is modelled, is first united with the potter’s mind. For then the soul will hear, and will remember. And then to the inner ear will speak – THE VOICE OF SILENCE⁽⁸⁾

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3. See ref. 2, p. 165.
4. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, 2 volumes. Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, California 1988, See for the three Propositions pages 14-17.
5. See ref. 4, p. 28.
6. See ref. 4, p. 21.
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8. See ref. 1, p. 2-3.



Berlin's theosophical influence on arts & design

From Blavatsky to iPhone

This article was one of the introduction talks at the International Theosophy Conference (ITC) in Berlin in 2018. Each year this conference is organised on a different location in the world and it has become a kind of tradition to show the connection of that particular location with Theosophy. In 2018 ITC was held in Berlin, a city in which art, design and Theosophy come together as was shown in this talk.

Key thoughts

- » Since the appearance of H.P. Blavatsky and her message, theosophical principles have been a lifelong inspiration for many artists.
- » In their desire to “dematerialise” the subject, artists changed from realistic to an abstract form of art and new art movements arose all across Europe.
- » Big names in the art scene influenced by Theosophy, came together as teachers in Bauhaus, which was located in Berlin before it was finally closed.
- » The theosophical influence on Bauhaus is still, both aesthetically and ethically, reflected in contemporary architecture and design.

Good morning everybody. When I was asked for this introduction I already had a few ideas in mind. This year Herman C. Vermeulen had given a lecture on the Spiritual function of Art and Design,⁽¹⁾ which formed a starting point for me to continue. Curious what to find more, I dove into the subject in order to discover what influence Theosophy had and still has on art and design in Germany. During my search I found a few surprising links, one of them for example the iPhone I hold in my hand. So, I added a little subtitle to this talk: “From Blavatsky to iPhone.” You might wonder now what Blavatsky has to do with iPhones, but the next 15 minutes I will show you that there is in fact a relation and that Berlin has a part in it.

The influence of the Theosophical Movement

Before we start in Germany, I will give you a quick overview of what has happened in the art scene in the

rest of Europe in order to provide the necessary context. Because just as in Theosophy there are no absolute beginnings, there is no absolute beginning of theosophical influence on art and design in Germany. From the moment *The Secret Doctrine* was published in 1888, fundamental changes took place in the art scene all across Europe. The universal principles of Theosophy and the ideal of unity and universal brotherhood begun to take root in the minds of many artists, often serving as a lasting inspiration for their work. As a consequence, a sudden change in art movements takes place, of which a few come together in Germany, here in Berlin.

Blavatsky came, as she said, to break the molds of mind. To change the materialistic and dogmatic view on life in a universal, spiritual vision. And by doing so, she had a tremendous impact on artists, and art movements. In a way this is not surprising since art is also called the language of

the soul; but when you start looking for them, you will be still surprised how many famous artists devoted their life to express this spiritual vision in their art. Some historians also mention the groundbreaking influence of Theosophy on 20th century arts and architecture.

With the shift from a materialistic to a spiritual view on life, we see a simultaneous change from realistic to abstract work. There is a general desire of artists to express the spiritual essence behind the external forms. But they faced a challenge; because how can you express the inexpressible? How can you use materials to express the immaterial?

Three principles

And yet artists found ways to “dematerialize” their subject. This can be recognized by three general principles that artists started to apply:

1. The application of geometry, in order to express universal, cosmic ratios;
2. Reducing objects to their essence in color and form, resulting in the use of primary colors and straight lines only;
3. Abstraction of the subject. The tendency to work without form to get closer to the “Idea” of the subject as Plato calls it. By leaving out all external details that would only distract the viewer from this higher Idea, this essence.

So, as from 1890 we see a sudden, radical change in application of these principles. Whether artists always succeeded can be discussed, but the point is: they all tried, in their own way, to express the spiritual essence of life. I will give a few examples, so you may get an idea.

The School of Pont-Aven

Let us start in Brittany, France at the School of Pont-Aven. This school can be characterized by the use of primary colors, geometrical compositions, the absence of perspective and shading and the absence of details.

The painting of Paul Gauguin (image 1), is an early example of this. Gauguin, one of the pioneers of the School of Pont-Aven makes use of bright colors, two dimensional plains and the reduction of detail. The same applies for the painting by Maurice Denis (image 2), another member of the Pont-Aven School. Again, we see forms that have been reduced by leaving out detail and shadow effect.

Les Nabis

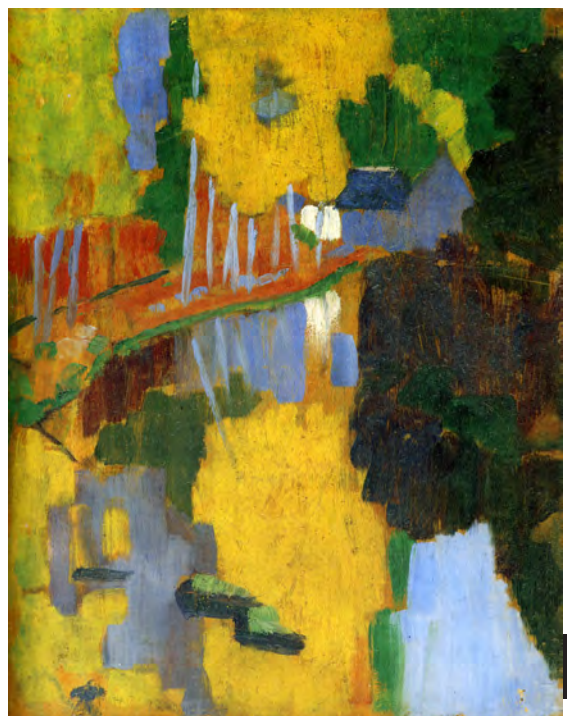
Around the same time in Brittany a group, which called



1



2



3

themselves Les Nabis, which is Hebrew or Arabic for “the Prophets” (because they saw themselves as the revitalizers of the spiritual in art) was formed. In the painting of Paul Sérusier (image 3), founder of Les Nabis, you see a further

abstraction of form and color. Realistic elements are now fully replaced by color interpretations, all for the purpose to express the higher Idea of the subject only.

Cubism

Another movement, with its center in Paris, that arose somewhat later, is Cubism, of which Paul Cézanne is the forerunner with his late work. But the work that is considered as the determining piece for this movement is the painting *Les Femmes d'Alger* by Pablo Picasso. (image 4) For a long time, art historians thought that the work shows an erotic scene, but a doctoral research in arts revealed that the women depicted in the painting, symbolize Hebrew letters, forming one of the 72 names for the Divine, found in the Kaballah.⁽²⁾ An interesting fact is that Picasso studied the Kaballah and that he was a member of the Order of Martinists.



4

Within Cubism there was a sub-movement called *Section d'Or*, which means golden ratio. This collective of painters attached great mystical significance to the golden section. According to the group, it symbolized their belief in order and the significance of mathematical proportions, because it reflected patterns and harmonic relationships occurring in nature.

Mondrian

Another artist, who said that *Cubism embodies the greatest potential for evolving a truly spiritual form of art* is Piet Mondrian, a famous Dutch artist known as one of the

pioneers of abstract art.

Mondrian is also known for being a Theosophist. He became a member of the Theosophical Society one year after attending a lecture on devachan and kâma-loka in 1908 by Rudolf Steiner, who at the time was still a member of the Theosophical Society. This lecture was a very defining moment in the life of Mondrian, who ever since devoted his life to translate the theosophical ideas in his work and express universal harmony in the best possible way.

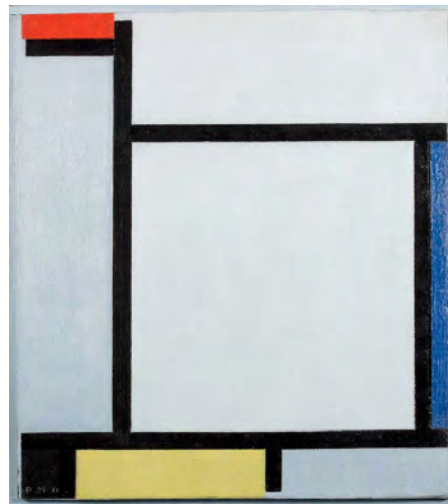
This was an ongoing process in which the different phases of development are clearly visible in his work. Gradually Mondrian's work became more and more abstract. A good example of this is his famous tree, which in the course of time evolved into a cubistic abstraction. (image 5)



5

Mondrian saw art not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end; to spiritual development of the society. To his opinion art would not be needed anymore when this ideal society is realized.

The next painting (image 6) is the kind of work he is most famous for: to Mondrian the purest way to express



6

the very essence, universal harmony. We now see the application of straight lines and primary colors only, that to Mondrian's believe will *lead to visual internalization of matter, to purer revelation of light and only express the silent emotion of the universal.*⁽³⁾

This particular piece was Mondrian's first in this style and when he finished the painting, he wrote a letter to Steiner in which he said to have found the art for true anthroposophists and theosophists. Steiner however never answered to Mondrian's great frustration.

De Stijl

Driven by the universal ideals of Theosophy, Mondrian started the idealistic art movement *De Stijl* together with Theo van Doesburg. They wanted to create new timeless designs, which they called the new plastic art or *Neoplasticism*. According to the movement, design had the purpose to elevate people. They wanted to create a world in which people would experience a sense of harmony. Because harmony, they said, is the law of the universe and therefore it should also be expressed in design. This meant, again, reduction to the most elementary basics: primary colors and geometrical forms with straight lines. Principles that are clearly applied in this famous chair of Rietveld (image 7), one of the members of De Stijl.



7

Kandinsky

Someone who inspired many members of De Stijl group is the famous artist and theosophist, Wasily Kandinsky. And now we arrive in Germany. Because Kandinsky,

born in Russia, moved to Germany early in his career. He too, is well known for his abstract work on which he said the following:

Abstract painting leaves behind the “skin” of nature, but not its laws. [...] Art can only be great if it relates directly to cosmic laws and is subordinated to them.⁽⁴⁾

Kandinsky started a movement in Munich: *Der Blaue Reiter*, which means the Blue Rider. Members of this group were Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger and Alexej Jawlenski, all involved with Theosophy and they all shared a common desire to express spiritual truths through art.

In their paintings, every color had its own symbolic meaning. Kandinsky saw blue as the most spiritual, hence the name of the group Blue Rider.

Bauhaus

From here we make a little jump to Bauhaus, the art school founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius. Bauhaus started in Weimar, but moved to Dessau in 1925 and finally under pressure from National Socialism to Berlin in 1932. Gropius wanted – just as De Stijl movement – to build the future. He had the ideal of transforming society by combining art with architecture and design. He too was convinced that an inspiring surrounding would bring out the better, noble qualities in people. Therefore, we see the same principles as in De Stijl: design should be free of unnecessary details, any “untruths or ornamentatio” as Gropius called them. And design should always be a fusion of arts and manufacturing. For that Bauhaus had a unique approach to teaching, because their workshops were always co-directed by a craftsman and an artist.

And here in Bauhaus things come together, because who were these art teachers? Van Doesburg and Mondrian from the Stijl movement, who visited Bauhaus to give lectures; theosophist Kandinsky and two members of his Blue Rider group, Paul Klee and Lyonel Feininger; and Johannes Itten, also strongly influenced by Theosophy. Together they had a determining contribution to the modernism of the 20th century. Klee and Itten in particular, with their color-theories they taught at Bauhaus.

Sketches of his notebook (image 8+9) show how Paul Klee works out his color theory. He was known for his scientific approach, but at the same time his spiritual vision on life. An example of the latter is this painting (image 10), called Eros. And on Eros he said the following, and here we should keep Plato in mind:



13

and still used. And the complementary color circle (image 13) we all once had to paint at school and which you find in every art class today, we owe to Itten.

Timeless design

Not only on color theories, but also on architecture Bauhaus was revolutionary. As mentioned before, Gropius wanted to build the future by making modern and timeless designs using advanced materials. This enabled him to build constructions that were not feasible before. Like the headquarter of Bauhaus, built in 1925, almost a hundred years ago! (image 14) As you see, he really was ahead of his



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time and revolutionary in the use of the materials such as reinforced concrete and glass. Or the bent tubular steel that he used for the famous Wasily chair (image 15) (named after Wasily Kandinsky), which is still modern today. This (image 16) timeless design could be a beach-house



15



16

in California nowadays, but instead it is a Bauhaus design on the world exhibition in Barcelona in 1929!

Ulm School of Design

Again we make a small jump in time. Bauhaus Berlin closed in 1933 due to the upcoming second World War; but this was not by any means the end of the ideology. Because 20 years later Bauhaus had its successor: the Ulm School of Design, founded among others by Max Bill, a former Bauhaus student. Teachings on the school were also guided by the principles of the Bauhaus. Former Bauhaus teachers and architects Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius visited the school to give lectures. Strongly influenced by these two was student designer Dieter Rams, often called a protégé of Bauhaus. Formed by his education in Ulm, Rams later developed his “10 principles for a good Design”.⁽⁶⁾ According to Rams a good design:

1. Is innovative
2. Makes a product useful

3. Is aesthetic
4. Makes a product understandable
5. Is unobtrusive
6. Is honest
7. Is long-lasting
8. Is thorough down to the last detail
9. Is environmentally friendly
10. Involves as little design as possible

These 10 simple rules clearly show elements of the ethical principles on which Bauhaus was based. A design that must be modest, long-lasting, honest and good for the environment bears all characteristics that benefit the totality. Dieter Rams is best known for his designs at Braun (image 17). And it is one of these designs, the taperecorder, which served as a great source of inspiration for two people in particular, namely Steve Jobs and Jonathan Ive, respectively founder and artistic director of Apple.

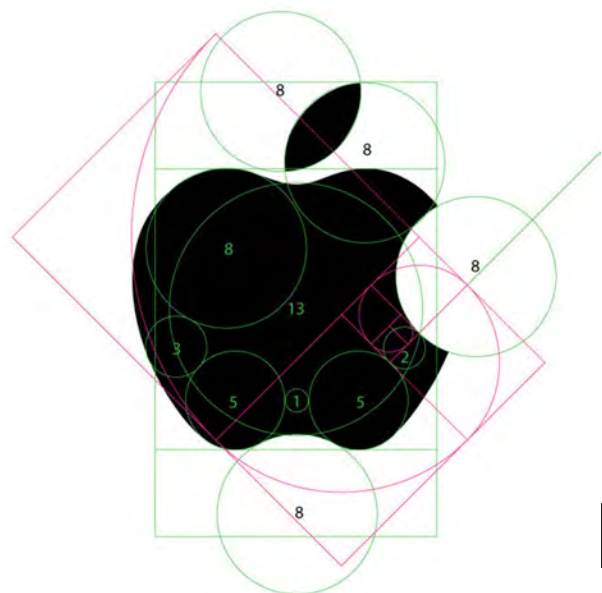
BRAUN



17



And so, we finally arrive to the iPhone I mentioned in the beginning, of which the design and logo still contain elements – such as the golden ratio (image 18) – based on universal principles of the ancient wisdom, revived and spread again in the world by H.P. Blavatsky in 1875.



18

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The bee community – part 2

Bees as symbols

In 1982-1983, the then Leader of the Theosophical Society Point Loma, D.J.P. Kok, held a series of lectures on bees. These lectures have formed the basis of this article, that describes the symbology of the bee.

In the first article on bees, we emphasized the almost perfect cooperation that can be seen in bee colonies and how the interests of the community are instinctively placed above that of the individual. Bee colonies form a close community, which, under the leadership of the queen, show the ultimate servitude (see our first issue of this year). In this second article we will see that bees were a favorite religious symbol in many ancient cultures. Subsequently, a connection will be made between the character of the bees and chela's, the highly developed people who, under the guidance of a Master, try to develop themselves to serve all that lives.

In the third article of this series, "Is there a relation between Planet Venus and bees?", we will investigate a question about which much confusion has arisen.

The best in the hierarchy: the symbolism of bees

For all living beings in nature can be said that the degree of their development is the result of experience

gained in the many lives that preceded the present one. The law of reincarnation and the related law of cause and effect is after all universal. Bee populations have achieved a remarkably high degree of perfect cooperation as a result of experiences gained in countless lives. That's why the bees have reached a high status within the insect world.

All insects play a role in the totality of nature. Some insects are destructors (cleaners): they remove waste and rotting substances. But bees contribute only constructively. They are such masters in this that they only add, they rarely destroy anything. In the world of insects, they act as role models, so to speak. They are positioned at a high place in a hierarchy whose basis is formed by less advanced insects.

At the head of the colony is the queen. She is the top of the hierarchy within the bee colony. That is why, as we mentioned in the previous article, her servitude is the furthest developed of all.

Bees are a beautiful example of the

Key thoughts

» Bees and honey are in many cultures a symbol for sages and wisdom.

» It is not without reason that chela's on the Path of Compassion are called Bees.

“wisdom” they are capable of at their level. They distinguish themselves so much from other insects, that honey and bees became symbols of respectively wisdom and those who were the owners of it.

Chela’s – pupils on the Path of Compassion – are often compared to bees, because they have a highly developed sense of unity and inspire people through their wisdom and example to collaboration and brotherhood. Over the centuries, bees have been the subject of study by great thinkers, philosophers and mystics. In many cultures, the symbol of a bee appears to refer to spiritual richness.

Bee symbols in ancient cultures

Both in the holy scriptures of India, the Vedas, and in the Egyptian holy books, the bee is used as a symbol for gods and kings.

The king of Lower Egypt was depicted as a bee around 3500 before our era. Honey and bees were related to life after death. Reliefs on beekeeping have been found on temples and in tombs. More than once, the bee is mentioned in descriptions of Egyptian rituals. For example, Am-Tuat’s book states that the soul was compared to the buzzing of the bee. And from the tears of the sun god Ra, who is considered the creator of earth and sea, bees would have arisen: here, the bee gets divine connections.⁽¹⁾

In India’s oldest sacred writing, the *Rig-Veda*, the god Indra is called *Madhava*. This means “the one born from nectar”. Furthermore, the more recent gods Vishnu and one of the avatārs of Vishnu, Krishna, also possess this title. Their symbol is the bee. Vishnu, for example, is depicted as a blue bee resting on a lotus flower floating on waters. The lotus flower symbolizes the earth waiting for the sun to awaken him. Through its rays, the flower opens and “frees” the bee from her dungeon. The bee is thus the symbolic image of birth itself. Krishna is often depicted with a blue bee on the forehead. Blue is considered the color of the aether from which this god embodies itself. In the *Laws of Manu* and the *Upanishads* we also find references to honey: the chariot is called the “madhuvāhana”, the honey carrier, and the whip is called “madhukasa” which can be translated as “dripping with honey”.⁽²⁾ The “honey-wisdom” (madhu-vidyā) is a doctrine that seeks to describe the Spiritual Self in the *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad*. Honey is brought up as a symbol. In this way, a link is made between honey and the spiritual monad (see the box “Honey wisdom”).⁽³⁾

Also, in Greek and Roman mythology bees and honey or nectar play a role. Of the supreme God Zeus it is told that

Honey wisdom

A very clear mystical reference to bees and honey can be found in the *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad*. It contains the doctrine of the “honey wisdom” (madhu-vidyā), which seeks to indicate the interconnection of all things. All beings support each other, “feed each other” and are therefore like honey for each other. In this text, therefore, honey has the general meaning of food or energy, of any kind.

In the first fourteen verses, the cosmic elements of nature are presented as honey for all beings, and vice versa all beings as honey for these cosmic elements. In each verse, the macro-microcosmic correlation is brought to the attention. The power of the Upanishad is the constant repetition, always in relation to one of these elements, of what Brahman is: the immortal, the All. This section ends with five verses in which the description of Brahman is further explained.

Below you will find some of these nineteen verses:

1. This earth is (like) honey to all beings and all beings are (like) honey to this earth. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this earth, and the shining, immortal, corporeal being in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

4. This air is like honey to all beings, and all beings are like honey to this air. (The same with) the shining, immortal being who is in this air, and the shining, immortal being who is the vital force in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

12. This truth is like honey to all beings, and all beings are like honey to this truth. (The same with) the shining, immortal being who is in this truth and the shining, immortal being identified with truth in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

15. This Self, already mentioned, is the ruler of all beings, and the king of all beings. Just as all the spokes are fixed in the nave and the fellow of a chariot-wheel, so are all beings, all gods, all worlds, all organs and all these (individual) selves fixed in this Self.

Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad, book 2, chapter 5.(5)

as an infant he was cared for in a cave, by nymphs who fed him honey. Homer's work shows that the priestess Pythia of the Temple of Apollo in Delphi was called "the bee of Delphi". Melissai means "Bees" in English. According to G. de Purucker, this is a descriptive name given to female prophets and seers because honey symbolizes "wisdom gained from life's experiences".⁽⁴⁾ It is meant that people, just as bees collect honey, gain experience from life and digest it so that they mentally and spiritually come to wisdom. With each new manifestation (reincarnation) something is added to that wisdom. This explains why Adepts or Pupils of the Masters in ancient Greece were also called Bees.

Vergil: bees and chela's

An important source of information with respect to the mysticism around bees can be found in the book *Georgica* by Publius Vergilius Maro. This Roman poet, known as Vergil in English, lived from 70-19 before our era in the Roman Empire. As a tribute to the heir of Emperor Caesar, Octavianus (the later Emperor Augustus), he wrote a didactic poem about farming. This work consists of four parts. The last part is entirely dedicated to bees. The poet belonged to the initiates of his time and was aware of the analogy between bees and sages.

He says, that bees have "a portion of the Divine Mind and aetherial streams therefrom".⁽⁶⁾ And a little further on, Vergil then tells the wondrous story of how bees may have emerged from the cadaver of a young bull. As we dive a little bit into the animal mythology and the esoteric teachings it becomes clear what he was referring to. The bull and cow are generally considered symbols of the moon. This planet fulfills a number of very mysterious functions in relation to Earth. These include those functions relating to the neophyte, apprentice on the occult path, who must undergo formidable trials of initiation. Think of the myth of Mithras killing the bull. It is symbolically recounted here that each candidate for chelaship is tested and has to undergo trials. By defeating the bull, it is indicated that the candidate chela has resisted the influences of the moon. A chela or a "bee" is born out of this victory. We now understand that Vergil has not made bees a subject of his *Georgica* without reason. One who listens well, only needs half a word: the *Georgica* gives many keys to a more esoteric understanding of what is said about the bees.

Given the position that bees occupy in the world of insects, it is certainly interesting to correspondingly look to the place of neophytes – chela's – in our world. For bees

exhibit all kinds of capacities that a human pupil on the Path should master if he successfully wants to enter the temple of initiation, successfully wants to widen and free his consciousness in such a way that he awakens a higher spiritual consciousness in himself.

The chela and the demands which are posed upon him

The word "chela" is an old Indian term that means "servant".⁽⁷⁾ Those who, as a result of gained experiences, have developed such a spiritual, intellectual and psychological view on life that they choose to fully dedicate their life to humanity, become chela's. These people have learned to understand that the temptations we encounter are nothing more but illusions that prevent us from seeing life as it really is, namely as an inseparable part of an indivisible and boundless Principle. They are aware of the unity of life and act accordingly. In doing so, they focus on their own Higher Self, their inner master which they obey. This is in contrast to the average man who is often guided by his "I" consciousness. As a result, most of us see ourselves as separate from others, a view that subsequently determines our thoughts and actions. Chela's do not view the world from a personal point of view (anthropomorphic) but they have an overall view on it. They blend their personality into the totality and work only for the benefit of the totality, without any desire for personal gain.



Mithras kills the bull (learns to control his lower nature). Those who have overcome their lower self have become a "bee" (chela). Relief ca. 150 CE, Museum Louvre-Lens, France.



Bees forming a living bridge for their fellow workers.

Those who enter the Chela Path are aware of the responsible task they have accepted: through their way of life, they should be a living example for the living beings who do not yet fully encompass the unity of existence.

In the way bees are committed to their community we find wonderful examples of requirements that human chela's will have to comply with. Some of these we mention below.

Those who have fully dedicated themselves to life itself, live in community. They are members of the Esoteric School, which of course is not an institution that you can find in the phone book. The chela's form an invisible brotherhood committed to a common cause. Just as bees form a colony to perform a joint task.

Bees own their own home. In the human world, it is not exactly the same, but these "bees" among humans constantly communicate with each other and feel at home in this community.

Just like bees, they are united in labour in the sense that they lose themselves in that labour. They do not fulfill their duties because they want to gain personal status for themselves, but simply because the work needs to be done. They contribute in an impersonal way and their own characteristic is merged with the working commu-

nity. Collaboration based on abilities, like the fingers of a hand collaborate, is for both bees and chela's the only way of working.

The queen is the visible leader for the bee colony, although we have seen that in that capacity of highest in ranking, she is – more than any work bee – the very slave of her people. In her community she acts as a laya-center, through which she expresses the life of a higher order in her colony, her offspring. A laya-center is the mystical point where a thing disappears from one plane and passes onwards to reappear on another plane.⁽⁸⁾ This hierarchical structure exists in the chela community as well. There, a Master performs the function of the queen. This Master functions as a laya-center as well: he passes on the spiritual life to his "children", the chela's.

Purity and moderation are also qualities that make bees so special. With chela's you will find that purity mainly in their thoughts. And just like a bee would never take more honey from the vast stock in the hive than it will need for its own maintenance, a chela will not only do the same in a material sense, but even more in a spiritual way. The wisdom he acquires through collection of experiences, he contributes to the stock of wisdom that belongs to all mankind, yes, to all that lives. He does not live to amass

things for himself, but he only takes enough to live, so that he can continue his selfless work.

The bee colony: inspiration for all people

The mystery of the bee colony is the mystery of self-development. Because bees have not yet developed a mind, the process of perfection takes place instinctively. People can use thinking to place their growth process in a larger whole and build a vision. Chela's are more advanced than the average fellow man and approach the ideal of unity. That is why they can live like bees. Therefore, in Esoteric Philosophy, the symbol for an initiate is a bee and its nectar stands for the wisdom that is diligently amassed for the benefit of the whole community.

But is that exemplary life so far away from us ordinary people that it does not touch us? Are we still so far away from being a chela that we do not have to mind the example bees give us? Every man is human because he has lived many times and has gained experiences that contribute to what he is today. He can perceive and reflect a lot, not only about the *how*, but also about the *why* and *what for* of things. Those who read a magazine like *Lucifer – the Light-bringer* have questioned the true nature of being during many lives. Many of us are long since “bees in the making”, or perhaps even already “bees”. We are on our way to function fully conscious as these animals do instinctively. And with every step in that direction, we contribute to the stock of wisdom in the world.

Furthermore, it is certainly not useless to ask yourselves if you want to live as a worker bee or as a drone. If you seriously want to find answers to the big questions of life, then you need to gather wisdom and submit it to the totality and for the benefit of all living beings. Then you cannot live as a drone that, although he belongs to a community, tries to get as much personal gain as possible with minimal effort.

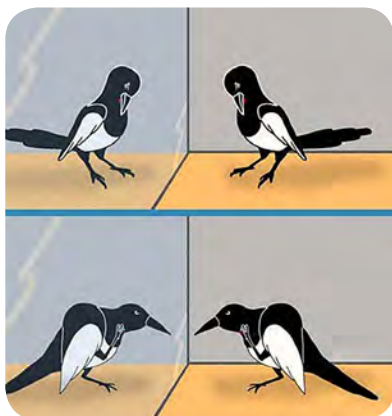
If we, on the other hand, imagine that we are acting as worker bees and put our capabilities into the joint work, then the rules of the bees are also of use to us, even if we cannot yet claim the chela title. They can help us imagine how we can organize our society if we choose to be “worker bees”. Imagine if we support the guidance of people who do not advocate power for themselves but welfare for all? A humanity that chooses such leaders will do its job because it is necessary, and will gain its experiences for the sake of the totality. That humanity can only know common property, because there is no desire for personal property, and accordingly will deal with it carefully. She

will regard all planetary life as her own borderless home and humanity as part of it. Everything would remain good, because sentiments would not be the starting point for establishing the state order. And everyone would be free, for all are part of a community where one does not want anything for themselves.

A study on bees is not only fascinating but it is also an inspiring activity. It is not without reason that bees are made the symbol for members of the Esoteric School. They show what is possible in a community of beings. To what extent are we able to keep the example of bees in mind? The bees can be a source of inspiration to us if we consciously want to be a part of a working community that only envisions the well-being, freedom and happiness of the totality of beings.

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In the mirror the magpie recognizes itself.

Key thoughts

» In the animal kingdom, there are huge differences in intelligence and social behavior.

» Within every large group of animals, there are evolutionary pioneers. The majority of that group uses these pioneers to pull themselves up.

» There are several *ladders of life*: each being develops itself in phases of growth which always reflect its own inherent characteristic.

» It is much better to “let animals be animals as much as possible” instead of stimulating them into human characteristics which they cannot yet express.

» A theosophical classification of the animal kingdom would be based on differences in the characteristics of their consciousness.

Theosophy in nature

Pioneers in the animal kingdom

Why do we find such huge differences in intelligence and social behavior in the animal kingdom, even within one group of animals? How can we explain this? This is part of a series of articles about “Theosophy in nature”.

Within the animal kingdom we see a very extensive and varied range of animal species, “from a worm to an elephant”. Broadly speaking, we see, going from jellyfish, worms, mollusks to fish, reptiles, birds and mammals a gradual unfolding of inner abilities. They show ever higher expressions of intelligence, mutual support, care for offspring, use of tools.

The more advanced animals are relatively more universal. A crow for example thrives in many situations. He can adapt easily to changes in food supply. He can live quite well in an urban environment, near man. On the contrary, a giant panda has specialized in such a way that it can hardly cope with any change in its environment.

Self-recognition in a mirror

One of the higher abilities of animals that has only recently been studied is the ability *to recognize oneself in a mirror*. Most animals believe to see another animal, one of their own species in a mirror — so not themselves. A male robin will, standing in front

of a mirror, react with impressing behavior. He will try to scare away “that other male”, which of course does not work, on the contrary.

How can the researchers find out if an animal recognizes itself in a mirror? They do this by placing a mark on the animal’s head or neck under narcosis. It is then expected that the animal does not perceive anything during this action (whether that is really true is in fact an open question). If we subsequently see that this animal, standing in front of the mirror, makes an attempt to touch and remove that mark from his body, so is the reasoning, this proves that this animal knows that it is looking at itself. This does not necessarily mean though that the animal is self-conscious, as humans are.

This is a very interesting branch of new research. Because which species seem to be able to do this?

Which species are pioneers?

In which group of animals do you expect to find the aforementioned higher animal capabilities? Perhaps

you may expect most examples among mammals. After all, this group is high on the evolutionary ladder (according to current science) and shows, *on average*, also the highest intelligence and richest social behavior. But is it? To give you an impression of the state of the current research, we now provide you with a small overview.

The *use of tools* has been identified within the following species:

Mammals: many apes and monkeys, but also in elephants, dolphins, sea otters, honey badgers and bears.

Invertebrates: the veined octopus from the western Pacific, that likes to hide under one or two half coconut bowls (see illustration). They sometimes collect a stack of bowls near their nest: handy, you always have one available. In short, they collect these for future use.

Reptiles: American alligators in Louisiana and swamp crocodiles in India scoop up a few twigs on their mouths and then float silently. Herons looking for nesting material are lured this way.

Birds: many birds build nests with all kinds of material. These are sometimes ingeniously constructed (nests of weaver birds). Crows from New Caledonia manipulate wooden twigs just as long until they become thin, hook-shaped objects. They use them to poke in holes of tree bark to find insect larvae. This way they can get them very fast.

Fish: different species of fish use tools to open shells or to get food they otherwise cannot reach.

The following species can *recognize themselves in a mirror*:

Mammals: monkeys, Indian elephants and the bottlenose dolphin.

Birds: the magpie (see previous illustration).

Fish: the cleaner wrasse, we know recently, and perhaps the manta rays, but that is still uncertain.

Invertebrates: ants maybe, because they react different when they look at themselves in a mirror, compared to when they look through glass at another ant of the same species.

There is an octopus, so an invertebrate, that *seems to recognize human faces*. The giant Pacific octopus can distinguish between two humans. These two people were wearing a dive suit: the only difference was their face. The researchers then concluded: “this octopus can recognize human faces”.



With our theosophical knowledge, we would be a little more careful in interpreting this experiment. Factors that are invisible for us may play a role here. After all, every human being has his own astral atmosphere around him. This sphere can be observed by many animals.

All large groups have their own pioneers

Important to notice here is, that the groups mentioned above contain many more species. These other species have not all been studied, but most likely many of them are not capable of this kind of performances. For example, many birds (such as the robin) who see themselves in the mirror, will attack their mirror image or flee. They think they see one of their kind.

Either way, it is clear that use of tools and self-recognition are not only done by mammals. It rather seems that all the large groups have a small number of pioneers. The fact that the brains of invertebrates, fish and reptiles



are smaller than those of birds, and even much smaller than those of mammals, does not appear to be important here. So, the brain does not produce consciousness, science has now discovered. In doing so, she confirms Theosophy. These observations certainly raise questions. We will discuss two of these questions, from the insights of Theosophy.

Question 1. How can we explain these observations in light of the evolution of consciousness?

According to Theosophy, each being is an evolving consciousness that in its deepest essence is lasting, eternal. His inner growth takes place through reincarnation: in each incarnation, it has the opportunity to activate more of its inherent, dormant abilities.

As it goes through phase after phase, on its path of evolution, each being embodies itself in ever different forms, in an ever-higher type of body. All changes of the body follow the changes in its consciousness. It is the consequences, the physical effects, of the expanding consciousness.

If we apply this basic idea to animal beings, then we can see the animal kingdom as a large, highly differentiated realm. It is a long-term school, “from worm to elephant”. Every animal species is, so to speak, a class in that school. There are classes for beginners and for the advanced, in very many gradations. For example, an animal ego starts with the “swallow class” and is born as a swallow for the first time. By then he already has a boundless path of evolution behind him, and he is *now* ready for “the training to become a swallow”.

At first, he is a “beginner” among the swallows. If he has mastered the skills of a swallow and is capable of applying them under different conditions (thus he has become a *universal* swallow) he will be born within a different, higher developed species. Inner growth is always a gradual thing. The animals who are relatively further developed have a function in this respect compared to the animals that evolve in their footsteps. They are their pioneers, a source of evolutionary incentives. All beings are fundamentally connected with each other and can never succeed in their evolution alone. They cannot live without all their classmates. Nor can they be without further evolved beings (who play a leading role) or less evolved beings (which they need, among other things, to build their bodies). Cooperation is the foundation of Nature.

Animals that are relatively intelligent and social are thus the examples that lower animals can pull up to. In this

respect, it is just like with us humans: we too need examples of what people can ideally become. There is nothing more inspiring than a living example.

So, the answer to the question therefore is: the animals that can recognize themselves, show social behavior, use tools or exhibit other near-human abilities *are the pioneers within their class*. The octopus and the ant (and the bees, Theosophy adds) are pioneers among the invertebrates. The crows are pioneers among birds. Some fish, such as the cichlids which have a very extensive breeding care, are pioneers for the fish. The principle applies within every school of inner growth.

There are several ladders of life

To deepen the image a step further, we add an important theosophical insight. Is it true that every animal being, at some point in its development, was or will become a swallow? No, it is not, because there are several parallel paths of inner growth possible. Gottfried de Purucker speaks in this context about several “ladders of life” in the animal kingdom.⁽¹⁾ All animals strive to become human, but learn their lessons in their own way, through a series of growth phases *that belong to them in terms of character*. In fact, this also applies to individual people: we all walk one Path to Divinity, but each of us must walk that Path independently and does so from its own characteristic. Therefore, there are lower and higher developed egos within each of those evolutionary ladders or routes in the animal kingdom. What the ladders mentioned by Gottfried de Purucker exactly look like, is unknown to us. Which bird species is, for example, just a little further developed than the swallow? But that is a question about details. For our understanding, the general picture is much more important, because that tells us what animals essentially are: beings equal to humans, fellow pilgrims on the great Path that ultimately leads to divine heights of wisdom and abilities.

What does this mean for handling our pets?

The thoughts above may be interpreted as an incentive to provide animals with as many human impulses as possible, in order to help them become human beings. Think, for example, of pets that are seen and treated as human buddies. It may seem as if we are accelerating their evolution in a favorable way. But, as Theosophy shows, that is not true. In fact, we achieve the opposite of what we are – perhaps with good intentions – pursuing. What happens is this: we put those animals in an un-

fortunate position. We awaken their desire for human existence, but that desire cannot be fulfilled for a long time. We make them thirsty, but they cannot reach the thirst-quenching water. We put them in an unfortunate position.

The point is that it is no longer possible for animal beings to cross the line between the animal and human realm. That possibility occurred *in the first half* of the Earth's life cycle but is over in *the second half* (which we have entered just now). Those who know this will give animals as much space as possible to be themselves, to be *animals*, to follow their animal instincts so they can learn from that at their own pace. This way we do not force anything in their development.

Question 2. Is the current scientific classification in animal groups correct when you look at it with knowledge of reincarnation and inner growth?

It is indeed possible that a classification of the animal kingdom *based on consciousness* would look quite different compared to the current classification. This classic categorization is, by the way, already firmly shifting because researchers nowadays do not only look at visible features, but also at differences and similarities in DNA. But that aside.

A theosophical classification would be based on *characteristics of consciousness*. In principle, there are seven of these and each of them can be divided into seven again. However, the current animal kingdom does not have to show all seven of these potential characteristics. In our current stage of planetary evolution, some capabilities may be still dormant. Or, what is also possible: they are dormant again. In the past, animals were in some aspects more able than today. Theosophy teaches us that the animal kingdom has already had its period of greatest bloom and is gradually withdrawing itself into the inner regions. We now go a step further: the animal kingdom always reflects – at its own level – the developments in the human kingdom. We humans are the pioneers of the entire animal kingdom. Our thoughts, the total sum of all thoughts of all people, form the *thought atmosphere* of our Planet. That sphere permeates the entire Planet. The human thoughts that have a similar character as the animal kingdom, reflect in the atmosphere in which the animals live, the so-called astral atmosphere. They greatly influence that atmosphere, and therefore animal life. This is a large and factual responsibility, which only few people realize.

When we think about this, the idea that a theosophical classification of the animal kingdom changes cyclically seems logical. Each time humanity enters a new great evolutionary cycle, other characteristics will become dominant. Such a change will have its impact on the animal kingdom. *The nature of the animal kingdom is thus changing in response to the growth phases of humans — in fact to the growth phases of the entire Planet.* Eventually this will also have an impact on the classification of animal groups.

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Questions & Answers

Mukti, Nirvāna

Mukti, paradise, where is it? Here on earth, or in spheres outside the earth?

Answer

Mukti or Moksha is the equivalent of what Buddhists call Nirvāna. It means liberation. You release yourself from all the lower elements in the composition of your consciousness. So, all the thoughts, feelings, desires that bind you to the temporary life on earth, you have conquered, you are freed from them. Nirvāna means ‘blown out’. That is the same idea. Those lower elements are ‘blown out’, extinguished; that is why bliss arises.

Compare it to someone who has overcome a certain flaw in character, for example the tendency to speak ill of others over and over again. At some point he no longer feels any inclination to gossip about others. He is liberated from that trait. That gives a blissful feeling.

Well, when you are ‘liberated’ from all your personal, selfish characteristics, you live in Moksha, you live in those spheres that are spiritually above our earthly sphere; or rather, we should say are more inwards than our earth. However, there is another form of happiness that goes beyond Moksha, and that is the refusal of that state of bliss. That, of course, is a great paradox. Yet when you realize the unity of all life and draw the conclusion from this that you must always be there for your fellow human beings, yes, for everything that lives, then you are in an even greater

state of bliss, although you voluntarily enter these earthly regions that are characterized by so much suffering. That is the paradox of happiness, and whoever fully understands and acts upon it is wise and happy, despite the sacrifice he makes.

Remedy against hard stubbornness

When I watch the daily news on television, the following question often comes to mind: can we human beings not be taught? Are we humans so stubborn or are there other reasons why we keep making the same errors?

Answer

You probably mean that we humans often learn by hitting the same wall not once or twice, but many times more before we start looking for doors that lead outside. However, the pace in which we learn, is entirely up to us. An inspiring example is the life story of Siddhartha, the Indian prince’s son who became Buddha. In his youth Siddhartha is raised in a palace, where no discord is heard, and where all life’s problems are banned. But when, as a young man, he finally gains a small number of experiences outside the palace, he comes to a conclusion that bears witness to profound compassion and wisdom. He notes that all external life is accompanied by suffering, and that it is therefore of the utmost impor-

tance for someone to try to identify the causes of that suffering and, if possible, to discover how they can be removed. In short, how fast we learn depends on each individual. Therefore, we cannot make any statements about the whole of humanity. Yet, on the basis of Theosophy, we can identify three general causes that either lead to “learning through harmonious growth” or “learning through trial and error”: the nature of thoughts, the lack of a philosophy on life, and third, our motives.

As far as the nature of thoughts is concerned, it is not easy to change habits that have been ingrained in the past. The thoughts that make up these habits keep coming back. In the past we have given them attention and thus energy. Sometimes even a lot of attention and energy.

Those old patterns are therefore not suddenly gone when we decide to give our lives a different direction. The thoughts and tendencies return cyclically, even when we are working hard to build up a different thought pattern. This is something that everyone will experience. It can sometimes require a lot of perseverance from us.

What is closely related to this is this: people often learn so slowly because they do not have an adequate philosophy of life that, without being dogmatic, serves as a guideline for their life. They do have a vague ethical awareness, but they cannot substantiate it through a logical and inspiring philosophy. That is why they lack the motivation to live a life in which they do not always make the same mistakes. If they did have such a

vision of life based on selflessness, they would have given all their attention to this new vision.

The fundamental remedy for unwillingness to learn is therefore this: give the better, newer insights energy instead of the old tendencies. Strengthen your ideals, let them be leading. And give the “lesser” thoughts as little attention as possible. Think of them as old memories that no longer have any value, because you have grown in the meantime. Think of yourself as someone who sees through them, who stands above them. Just as you can look back on the illusions you had as a child, such as with some childhood anxieties. And persevere in this, “stand up inwardly” every time you notice that you are getting back into the old track. Sooner or later the new vision will become leading. The old thoughts no longer find a breeding ground in us and disappear. The speed with which we build up understanding and knowledge is also determined by our motives. Selfishness narrows our thinking, while selflessness, true interest in the ups and downs of all our fellow human beings, continuously broadens and enlightens our thinking. Someone who is inclined to look at everything from the perspective of “what is in it for me”, narrows down his objectives and thoughts to a tiny little piece of cosmos: one person (himself) and then in fact only the outer side of himself. Anyone who realizes that no being can exist on its own, that there is such a fundamental collaboration everywhere that our fate is inseparably linked to that of our fellow human beings, will constantly try to do more for the community. Within the communities in which he lives and works. Through his interest in his fellow human beings, he will, as it were, reap the fruits of experience from hundreds of lives. After all, he is constantly open to the

wisdom and experiences of hundreds of fellow human beings. Someone who is able to do this will learn very quickly!

Vivisection

Hurting animals for medical research (vivisection), in order to help people, do you really help people with that?

Answer

The answer is an unequivocal ‘no’. Sacred goals require sacred means. Of course, it is a noble goal to try to heal people. But there is an iron law of karma, which means that any cause is followed by its matching effect. If you sacrifice or hurt any being, the negative consequences of that act are always larger than any good consequences. And that certainly applies to an intelligent being like an animal, which according to recent research has the same feelings as humans.

In addition, one has to conclude very soberly, that testing of medicines on animals often – if not always – does not provide any certainty at all. The animal body functions differently from the human body. A body is a living instrument, consisting of billions of living beings, the cells and atoms. It is part of an underlying consciousness. The consciousnesses of an animal body – the cell-beings – and the consciousness of the animal that uses this body, correspond to each other, exactly as is the case with each individual human being. But each consciousness is unique. One person is already very different compared to another. Therefore, he will certainly also differ from an animal. A human being is *thinking consciousness*; an animal has not yet developed its thinking. That is why his living body is of a completely different nature than that of a human being and the testing

of medicines does not provide certainty. Furthermore, the essential characteristic of a substance depends on the way in which it is produced. We humans place our own mark on it. And what characteristic do we give to medicines that are produced by great suffering? The suffering of animals sacrificed in the vivisection is not necessary in our opinion. Today’s scientists are not looking sufficiently for other methods to investigate the effects of a particular substance. Automatically and thoughtlessly many people think that a substance can only be tested in an animal body. Finally, the real cause of disease lies in human consciousness and not in the billions of cell-consciousnesses that make up his vehicle. There is, of course, an interaction between human consciousness and the body, but his consciousness is the causal factor. That consciousness is unique. That is why there are in fact no diseases, but only sick people. Of course, it is our duty – and especially that of doctors – to help the sick person in his healing process, but that should never be at the expense of others.

Life phase of Venus

Lastly, a technical but very interesting question: in the article on “Fohat and the electric universe” (*Lucifer the Light-bringer* 1, March 2015), there appears to be a misinterpretation. In a table of magnetic field strengths, the magnetic field of Venus is indicated as close to zero, Venus being in its 7th Round [in the last and most spiritual phase of its present life cycle; Ed.]. According to *The Secret Doctrine*, Venus was stated to be in the 5th Round of the 5th chain when the Mānasaputras

arrived, about 18 million years ago. Hence, it is inconceivable that Venus is now in its 7th Round, after only 18 million years. The fact that Venus' electromagnetic field is close to zero, possibly indicates that it is now in a "pralaya" between the 5th and 6th Round — and not in its 7th Round. When one passes from one Round to another, there is a period of pralaya, of rest and latency.

The various scientific measures taken by space probes — indicating magnetic fields and gases of the planets of our solar system — are highly interesting. While the methodological approach in the article is highly valuable, the interpretation of the results for Venus appear dubious. In fact, various Theosophical publications indicate that Plato and H.P.B. referred to the inhabitants of Venus as Fifth Rounders.

Answer

In which Round is Venus? Firstly we would like to quote *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. I, page 165:

When the present work was commenced, the writer, feeling sure that the speculation about Mars and Mercury was a mistake, applied to the Teachers by letter for explanation and an authoritative version. Both came in due time, and verbatim extracts from these are now given. "... It is quite correct that Mars is in a state of obscurity at present, and Mercury just beginning to get out of it. You might add that Venus is in her last Round ..."

This quotation from *The Secret Doctrine* from the Teachers of H.P. Blavatsky confirms the statement that Venus is indeed in its 7th Round. In our article we also refer to various publications of Dr. G. de Purucker. In *Esoteric Teachings* VII, "The Doctrine of the Spheres", he

states that Venus is in its 7th Round.⁽¹⁾ He adds in footnote 50:

We have stated that Venus is in her seventh Round, but that does not mean that the lifewaves on all the globes of the Venus-Chain are in the seventh Round. It so happens that the families of life-waves circling on Globes A and B and C, and doubtless one or two of the higher globes, are in their seventh Round; nevertheless the life-waves of Globes E, F, G of the Venus-Chain, as well as its highest globes are not yet in their seventh Round because the Seventh Round life-energies of the Venus-Chain have not completed the full Round, having passed only through the Globes of the Descending Arc and reached Globe D of the Venus-Chain, which is the Venus we see in the sky with our physical eyes.

About Venus' electromagnetic field: the intrinsic electromagnetic field of Venus is close to zero. However, scientific observations of the spacecraft Venus Express (2006-2014) also show that Venus is partially protected by an induced magnetic field caused by the interaction of the solar wind and the planet's ionosphere.⁽²⁾ But in fact it is very difficult to determine scientifically what "minimum" magnetosphere would be required to adequately protect "life" on Venus, since we have no clear image of this life. From Theosophy we know that, although Globe D of Venus is on the same Cosmic Plane as Globe D of the Earth (so we can see it), there is a difference in materiality between Venus and Earth. Venus is in the first or highest state of matter because it is on the highest sub-plane of this Cosmic Plane, while Earth is on the fourth sub-plane of this Cosmic Plane. G. de Purucker explains that

as Venus is already slightly selfluminous, Humanity at this time evolving on Globe D of Venus, is either in the sixth or the seventh substage ("Root-Race") of the 7th Round.⁽³⁾

With respect to life on Venus and correspondences with the human principles you may find that Venus corresponds to "Higher Mind" or "Higher Manas".⁽⁴⁾ And *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. I page 602 reads: "men on Venus are far more intelligent than we are, if less spiritual". In *The Dialogues of G. de P.* Vol. I page 34 you may find that the correspondence between the human principles and Venus is Higher Manas.

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4. H.P. Blavatsky, *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* Vol. XII, table II between page 532 and 533.

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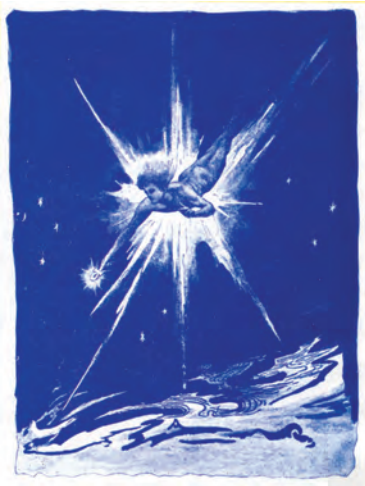
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