

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

Symposium 2024: The mystery of MAN

*We are more than our
bodies*

- Introduction
- Never did I not exist
- The mystery of Man
- I am because we are

**Where are we at
home?**

**The mystery of the
Monad**

**The elemental and
divine kingdoms**

Work on with Nature

The mystery of MAN



We are more than our bodies

The three fundamental propositions of Theosophy

As far-reaching as the Theosophical teachings are, they are based on three fundamental propositions. For a proper understanding of Theosophy, it is necessary to consider them carefully.

The first fundamental proposition: Boundlessness

*An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. (...) One absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being.**

And although unknowable, this absolute reality is the foundation for all life.

The second fundamental proposition: Cyclicity

*The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically 'the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing', called 'the manifesting stars', and the 'sparks of Eternity'.**

All beings are imperishable 'sparks of Eternity', passing alternately through phases of active life and inner rest (sleep or death), in a ceaseless cyclic process.

The third fundamental proposition: The essential equivalence of all life

*The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul – a spark of the former – through the Cycle of Incarnation (or "Necessity") in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term.**

The same One Life flows through the hearts of all that exists. Everything is alive. There is no dead matter. Therefore, everything is essentially equal. Everything latently possesses the same faculties as the greater whole of which it is a part (Over-Soul) and gradually unfolds these inherent faculties, re embodying itself continually (second proposition). This growth of consciousness always takes place in interaction and is boundless (first proposition).

* Source: H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*. Volume I, p. 43-47 (pagination original edition).

For more explanation, see our website:

blavatskyhouse.org/about-us/what-is-theosophy/

Interested in our lectures?

Watch them on our YouTube channel:

[youtube.com/
@theosophicalsociety-tspl](https://www.youtube.com/@theosophicalsociety-tspl)

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On September 8, 2024, the Theosophical Society Point Loma held a symposium on “The mystery of MAN — We are more than our bodies”. This topic is challenging because it is an impetus for self-inquiry that can open up whole new worlds for us.

Herman C. Vermeulen

Never did I not exist

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This lecture addresses in an accessible and concise manner the question that everyone who wants to understand life asks themselves: who am I? What is it that works behind our bodies? We focus on the essence of our human-ness.

Renate Pico

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By gaining insight into the inner human being and the processes that occur in our thinking, we can actually give direction to our lives and contribute to the whole. Important topics are: how did we become what we are today? And, how can we become more than we are today?

Iljitsj van Kessel

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In this final lecture we will address the question: how can we as human beings learn to further express our deepest essence, that ‘spark of eternity’? It turns out that our fellow humans – in fact, the entire living cosmos – play a key role.

Mariska Zwinkels



Where are we at home?

An inspiring example of a society in which people know themselves spiritually, mentally and physically ‘at home’

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Migration is a topic that is in the news a lot right now. For all sorts of reasons, people are looking for a better life elsewhere. One question you can ask in this regard is: Where is a person actually at home?

Erwin Bomas

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What is a monad? That question is easier asked than answered. Nevertheless, this article attempts to provide an answer, knowing that the answer is at most an approximation and certainly not the last word on the subject.

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Editorial

Who are we? Are we humans more than a physical body? And what potentialities lie within us? Our views on these issues influence almost every decision we make. Therefore, this was chosen as the topic of our latest symposium, which we organized on September 14, 2024, online. The title was ‘The mystery of MAN – We are more than our bodies’. This issue of *Lucifer – the Light-bringer* contains all three symposium lectures, which attempt to present in a very accessible way the Universal Wisdom on this issue and show how it can be applied in practice. You will find in it a great wealth of theosophical thought.

In this issue, you will also find two other articles. The first one, ‘Where are we at home?’, addresses the fact that at present, worldwide, large groups of people are trying to migrate. They do so sometimes out of necessity because their homeland is dangerous. In all cases, these people are looking for a place where they can live their lives in peace and develop their spiritual, mental and social potential. Is not this aspiration fundamental in every human being? This simultaneously raises the question: where, viewed from the standpoint of Unity, are we ‘at home’?

The second article ‘The mystery of the monad’ deals with the deepest essence of our being, often called ‘the monad’ in modern Theosophy. The teachings on the monad are profound, far-reaching and inspiring. This article explains some of the main tenets in a logical, easy-to-follow way — emphasizing from the beginning, that we certainly will not ‘speak the last word’. This study encourages us to go beyond the limits of our outer thinking.

This *Lucifer* concludes by answering three questions, which we are often asked during lectures.

We hope that these articles give you the spiritual peace to stay calm in these confused and troubled times, so that we do not get carried away by the currents of selfish turmoil going through the world. We can quickly be tempted to focus our thinking on criticizing, on ‘being against such or such person, such or such behavior’, instead of building up images of broader understanding and our own possibilities and responsibility. If you are caught in a criticizing thought spiral by the daily news, recognize what you are doing: you are connecting with it, and you open your mind to the very characteristics that you find so objectionable. H.P. Blavatsky wrote about this:

Sage.—There is a very important thing you should not overlook. Every time you harshly and unmercifully criticize the faults of another, you produce an attraction to yourself of certain quantities of elementals from that person. They fasten themselves upon you and endeavor to find in you a similar state or spot or fault that they have left in the other person. It is as if they left him to serve you at higher wages, so to say.⁽¹⁾

But we don’t have to! We can continue to see with open eyes what is happening in the world, and at the same time, we can create ideas on how to understand and remedy the problems and their *causes*, based on theosophical principles. Then, we send thought-elements into the world that are uplifting, compassionate, with ennobling character. This is how we help build up a society, in which the idea of unity is central. We put our thought energy, so to speak, into spiritual, mental and social ideals.

And to promote *this* is the reason for the existence of our magazine *Lucifer – the Light-bringer*. We trust that this issue will also greatly contribute to that.

Editors

Reference

1. H.P. Blavatsky, ‘Conversations on Occultism’. Article in: H.P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings. Volume IX*. Wheaton, Ill., USA, The Theosophical Publishing House, 1986, p. 126. The article originally appeared in the journal *The Path* in 1888.

The mystery of
MAN



We are more than our bodies

The mystery of MAN – We are more than our bodies

Introduction Symposium 2024

The symposium

On Sunday, 8th of September 2024 the Theosophical Society Point Loma (TSPL) held a symposium, which I am going to introduce below. You will find the texts of the lectures in this issue of *Lucifer – the Light-bringer*, while you can find the lectures themselves on our TSPL website.⁽¹⁾

The theme of the symposium *The mystery of Man – We are more than our bodies* and especially the subtitle *We are more than our bodies* is a really challenging step, because it is an impetus for self-examination. It is a step that can unlock completely new worlds for us and be a starting point for a new way of seeing, through which we can begin to understand many things that concern ourselves. These three lecture texts are the result of a working group that has worked hard to present the universal theosophical knowledge on this subject as principled, logical and understandable as possible. The speakers and writers have worked even harder to put it all in a theosophically sound order, in such a way that you not only learn to understand what a human being is but discover the entire logical

structure of Theosophy: the universal structure that applies not only to a human being, but fundamentally to *every* living being, without exception. Using this knowledge, you can learn to fathom, answer and thus solve all life's questions.

This is also where the statement above the temple at Delphi comes from: “Man know thy Self”. If you know your Self – with a Capital letter – then you also know the universal structure of the Cosmos. So that is the challenge we face, and the beginning of a new path.

We have tried to formulate the texts as clear and simple as possible. Nevertheless, there are, you might say, some unfamiliar thoughts in them, which you should give yourself time to ponder. You have that time. And via our website you can play these presentations as many times as you like and at the speed you wish.

The symposium consists of three lectures: three steps we take to set forth this universal logic. The challenge for you, the reader, is to see if you can recognize these principles in your everyday life. If they are, as we say, universal principles, that should be possible, without doubt. To explore

this is a step-by-step process that takes time.

In this respect, I think we have a very interesting *Lucifer*. And if you say, “well, I found it interesting, but I still have many questions”, then you can always send them to the editors of *Lucifer*, and we can answer them anonymously in our magazine in the Questions Answers section.

The structure of the symposium

The first symposium article is about: *Never did I not exist*. The challenge is to form a picture of that, and I guarantee you, a world will open up for you.

It is very refreshing to build and understand a vision that starts from the basic idea *that we have always been there* — although not always in this same form. The outer forms keep changing as we develop, as we evolve (used in its theosophical sense). We learn to express our latent abilities more and more, in an unending process.

We have tried to bring together in this article all the elements needed to come to an understanding of this, so that at the end of this article you can join the author in the conclusion that you have always been there, and you will always be there: however, not always in the same form — fortunately! After all, inner growth and learning is a dynamic process. And these articles put us in an excellent position to engage in that ‘growing’ and ‘learning’.

The second symposium article discusses: *The mystery of Man*. In it, the principles of the first lecture are focused on the big question of what we humans are, and how we can become what we want to become, by means of our minds — echoing Marcus Aurelius’ statement, *our life is what our thoughts make it*. Or as Plato put it, *ideas rule the world*.

The third symposium article is called: *I am because we are*. This is a very mystical statement that comes from Africa’s Ubuntu tradition. It indicates that no one can exist in isolation. Our existence is one grand collaboration with many thousands and thousands of other beings, who in turn can exist because of the collaboration with us.

I wish you all a very inspiring symposium.

Reference

1. The videos of the symposium lectures can be found at: [blavatskyhouse.org/symposium/archive/symposium-2024/videos/YouTube channel](https://blavatskyhouse.org/symposium/archive/symposium-2024/videos/YouTube%20channel)

The mystery of
MAN



We are more than our bodies

Never did I not exist

Introduction: what is a human being?

In this symposium, we will address what a human being is. It is an intriguing and essential question, because when, as we mentioned in the introduction, we gain insight into who or what we are, we also gain insight into our task as human beings, into how we can cooperate with each other and how we can get answers to the deeper questions of life. In this lecture, we will start with the question ‘who am I?’ and will focus on the very essence or foundation of what a human being is.

‘Who am I’ or ‘what am I’ are life questions that every person who wants to know himself better, will ask himself at some point in his life. These questions require active consideration by ourselves, in order to arrive at answers.

Many profound thinkers have pondered this question, and also in ancient times, people tried to get to the heart of it. In the Greek mystery school of Apollo at Delphi, the exhortatory text ‘Man, know thyself’ was written above the entrance. With good reason, because when we truly know ourselves, we know the universe — which is an ancient wisdom. Which also hints that all the answers are within us.

Are you a body or do you have a body?

We begin this search by asking whether we *have* a body or *are* a body. The answer to this is all-important. Because the view we develop on this question, will either limit or expand the view we have of ourselves.

Let us look at our body, because with that we may sometimes identify to a great extent. Through our body we gain all our sensory experiences and are able to express ourselves. When we identify with the body, for example during experiences of heat, cold, or hunger or thirst, we say ‘I’ to it. We then think we are the body, for that moment. However, the body is subject to incessant change throughout life. It goes through all kinds of stages of growth, development and decay. Our body is therefore no longer how it was when we were a child. And while every seven years almost all the atoms in our body are replaced, at the same time there is also something in us that continues to recognize itself and persists in that change. So, what is it in us that operates behind the body?

Force behind the body

All wisdom traditions, when answering the question of whether you have

a body or are a body, point to the idea that there is a force behind the outer manifestation. H.P. Blavatsky in her book *The Voice of Silence* gives a valuable clue to this, by saying, “But within thy body – the shrine of thy sensations – seek in the Impersonal for the ‘eternal man’ ...”.⁽¹⁾

We will elaborate on this in this lecture. To obtain true insight into who man is, we will have to transcend the senses, go beyond the outer form of the body, to gain greater insight into *the force at work behind the body*. To do so, we will search for the most essential inherent part of us.

Three fundamental propositions of Theosophy as the basis of everything

To do this, we start with the most all-encompassing picture, the three fundamental propositions as defined in *The Secret Doctrine*, on which everything in Theosophy stands. You can find these basic thoughts in many ancient religions or philosophies of life. With these three foundational thoughts everything in life can be explained.

For by getting to know these three basic propositions, we gain insight into the basis of everything that exists and come to realize that we are a part of the greater whole, and also that there is an overall developmental process underlying this whole. By these propositions we can better understand not only ourselves but also the whole.

The first fundamental idea is *Boundlessness*: an Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE, which precedes all manifested and limited being. And though unknowable, this absolute Reality is the very foundation for boundless Life.

The second proposition is *Cyclicity*: everything comes and goes in an infinite dynamic movement of activity and rest. And here H.P. Blavatsky brings up a very important notion: *the eternity of the pilgrim*, which she calls the monad in a footnote. We will touch on that a lot.

The second proposition explains a very important basic concept, by stating:

The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane [this is the boundless Life; RP]; periodically “the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing”, called “the manifesting stars”, and the “sparks of Eternity”. “The Eternity of the Pilgrim” is like a wink of the Eye of Self-Existence.

This second proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* concerns the general validity of the law of periodicity, of ebb and flow, of decline and rise, which natural science has

observed, and described, in all areas of nature. An alternation, such as between day and night, life and death, sleeping and waking, is a fact so common, so completely general and without exception, so easy to understand and so prevalent, that we do not realize that we are dealing with one of the truly fundamental laws of the universe.

The third proposition is: *As above so below, eternal growth and hierarchical cooperation*. The higher or the more developed beings lay the foundation for the lower ones, which means that we encounter the same laws at all levels. All life develops and strives to express more and more of the boundless, by means of hierarchical cooperation.

We have presented these fundamental propositions, but it is important to examine these propositions for ourselves. By finding examples and facts that confirm these propositions in our lives, by experiencing for ourselves that they are correct and seeing their logic, we build our truths. Just as we have given a few examples of the second proposition *Cyclicity*, which is one of the easiest basic truths to recognize. The more we start experiencing the truth of these propositions, the more our vision of life grows and the better we can govern our lives.

The monad, the eternity pilgrim

To summarize we can refer to the three propositions as follows: Boundlessness, Cyclicity and Hierarchical cooperation. To further develop our picture, we will lead you to the most essential level of existence. That is the Spark of Eternity just mentioned, the Pilgrim, also called the monad.

Starting from the boundlessness, the monads are a reflection of this boundlessness. As a reflection, the monad is the most universal that exists, which means that the monad holds and can express all the faculties that are present in the boundlessness. The monad is the inner core of all that is. There are countless monads, which can be seen as the essential, most spiritual building blocks or elements in the Universe.

All these latent boundless potentials and qualities are expressed cyclically by monads in cooperation with other monads, during what H.P. Blavatsky calls the ‘obligatory pilgrimage’. The whole process of cyclicity is also symbolized as the dewdrop that emerges from the ocean, and after many and many wanderings finally slips back into the ocean.

Thus, if the monad is the basis for any form of life, then the basis of a human being is a monad, being the immortal and eternal part within us, our innermost, universal,

spiritual core, rooted in the boundlessness.

A logical consequence is that our core in the boundlessness has always existed and will always exist. We therefore have a path of infinite growth and development behind us as well as before us: *never did I not exist*. We are a reflection of the totality, we have all the qualities in us, but not yet all developed.

It is good to realize that really everything is a monad, so the smallest particle, a plant or a firefly, a human, a divine being, a sun or galaxy or bigger, all are monads. And all together walk the pilgrims' path of limitless inner growth and development. Here again we see the universal process reflected at all levels, applying to all beings. Which also shows that everything is essentially equal, of equal worth. A powerful thought, which if we follow it through, carries profound ethical conclusions.

Activated consciousness through cyclic cooperation

The cyclicity to which the monads are subject means that the monads go through cycles with alternation of activity and rest, of rebuilding cooperation with other monads, and releasing them again, what we call life and death. This is a ceaseless movement to which all monads are subject, with active cooperation taking place in manifestation, in temporary longer or shorter events. Think, for example, of the temporary rotation in the ocean that creates a whirlpool. Or an iceberg, created by a compaction of water.

In all the mutual cooperation between monads, consciousness is being activated. Consciousness is therefore one of the important faculties of the monad. Consciousness, simply put, is *being-conscious*: the ability to perceive, the experience that we exist. In other words, it is *being* that is aware. Consciousness is therefore, as Plato points out when describing living beings, the important ability to act and react: to act and respond to the actions of other beings. Perceiving, acting and responding does each being on its own level. ⁽²⁾

It is good to realize that consciousness can only arise through *dynamic mutual interaction*, that is, through the interaction between living beings. In this dynamic process, many experiences are gained, creating a growth process. All growth is aimed at expressing latent abilities and qualities, from the inside out. Behind growth is the inner drive of every monad to express itself. All growth, therefore, comes from within.

So, growth is the 'un-winding', the expression of what is

inherent in the core, of what is latent.

And although all monads are essentially equal, not every monad has brought out the same qualities — *not yet*, because potentially, of course, there are boundless qualities to develop. So, all monads differ in their development: they perceive, act and react in different degrees, and thus cooperate in different ways. How can we see this process?

Development in a dynamic hierarchical structure

Development takes place in mutual cooperation in a dynamic hierarchical structure, with the higher, more advanced monads inspiring, not forcing, the lower and less advanced monads. The atmosphere emanated by the highest developed monad forms the ground pattern to which the less developed monads are attracted, thus starting a cooperation: a process we call *emanation*.

Why are they attracted? This is caused by corresponding characteristics: this particular atmosphere provides the appropriate environment for them to develop. Each monad experiences and learns at its own level, in its own area, within a higher sphere through the cooperation it has with other monads. Because the higher needs the lower to express itself in, to experience and learn, and the lower in its turn needs the higher to be inspired and grow, to learn to express the higher in itself.

We can see this as the rungs on the ladder of life, in which each monad has its appropriate place, and is able to develop in the whole. Looking at our hierarchy, we humans are just one group of beings with more or less corresponding qualities, within the grand sphere of life of the earth and the sphere of this Solar System, in which we live. This structure continues, with the Solar System at its turn being part of the Milky Way, and so on. It shows that there is always life within a larger life. So each hierarchy is within a hierarchy that is higher, in an infinitely ascending sequence. This hierarchical cooperation of the monads, in its totality, gives them the experience needed to evolve.

Stages of consciousness

In this development process of the pilgrimages that the monads are making, the monad progresses on its path, from one stage of consciousness to the next, in cooperation with other monads. Consciousness expresses itself in countless successive degrees and variations. At each stage of consciousness, certain aspects are developed, and at the same time the appropriate forms or bodies through which consciousness can express itself. It is its particular develop-

ment of consciousness, that makes a rose a rose, a horse a horse, and a human being a human being.

In the beginning – beginning is of course relative here – consciousness is still very primitive. It develops through many phases of ever-growing consciousness, in which more and more a sense of self arises, until it has developed to the point where self-consciousness can be expressed. Self-consciousness is the awareness of oneself and oneself in relation to all other beings. But consciousness can become continually broader and more universal, to eventually become identical with its source — with the top of its hierarchy. This is the ‘I-Am’ consciousness, enriched by all experiences.

The development of consciousness takes place in cooperation with the higher consciousness in which we live, as we just said, by first unconsciously and reflexively following the habitual patterns of that higher consciousness; think for example of the atoms in our body. Then more self-consciously, with the consciousness increasingly developing through self-guided efforts, into a relatively fully self-conscious collaborator in this hierarchy. The urge of the monad itself to express itself and know more and more, is the driving force in this evolution. And to know something, you have to become it, you have to *be* it.

Being human in this totality is just one stage in the whole process of life of our hierarchy. It is the conscious level of unfolding *self-consciousness*, that we have developed so far. This is an important stage, actually, because as human beings we go through the transition from becoming actively aware of ourselves, to fully *understanding* and *being* the larger whole in which we live. A development which then continues, for the unwinding of inner faculties is a process that has no limits.

Man, pilgrim of eternity

We have now seen the big picture and examined the universal processes using the three propositions Boundlessness, Cyclicity and Hierarchical cooperation. All these processes we have examined from the consciousness point of view. So what is a human being?

In boundless Life, where everything is connected to everything else, human beings are inseparable parts of all that lives. We perform a function in this great totality. We live, move and have our existence in the boundless Life.

We have seen that everything is essentially a monad, with the monads working together in a hierarchical structure based on cyclical processes. With this, we can say that a human being is a collaboration of almost countless differ-

ent monads, of those levels of expression and qualities that we have an affinity with. From the highest developed monad, our innermost, universal core, which is the source of all intermediate layers, to the lowest layer, the physical body with its organs, cells and atoms. We express ourselves, we experience and learn through cooperation with all these monads. Are we then our bodies, to return to our initial question? The answer is: we *have* a body. We are a composite being and have a cooperative relationship with all the monads that make up our constitution.

MAN *per se* is an invisible entity.⁽³⁾ Our deepest core is the boundless eternal Pilgrim, our monad: *never did I not exist*. In this part, man always exists and will always exist. We do this by expressing, life after life, more and more of the inner capacities of our deepest core.

On the universal pilgrim path, which all beings go, man once emerged as an unselfconscious god spark. In cyclical stages of growth and development, man is now becoming a self-conscious being.

We have only expressed part of this. We can express much (infinitely) more of our Self. And this is what our inner monad will always urge us to do. How our self-consciousness develops and what our steps and opportunities for growth are, will be explained in lecture two ‘The mystery of Man’.

Who am I?

Following what we have told, we will draw some conclusions. If we now return to the initial question ‘who am I?’, we can conclude that we are much more than what we usually say ‘I am’ to. As human beings, we are a copy in miniature of the universe. By getting to know yourself, you get to know the universe, because we are built in the same structure.

As human beings, we are an essential link in the whole, and with this understanding, we human beings can perform a valuable role in the totality, at our own place.

By understanding the structure of the universe, we know that we can develop ourselves further, and can restore all things that do not harmonize with the whole. We will elaborate on this in detail in lecture three ‘I am because we are’.

Never did I not exist ..., we can identify with the imperishable within us and thus change and deepen and enlarge our vision of the world. In our interactions with our fellow humans, and all life, we now know that they are all eternal pilgrims, with whom we walk the shared path of inner growth. This understanding brings respect for all life.

Cooperation is the most important key. Thus, we have seen that only through cooperation can we grow and develop. We exist only through everything else. We can always contribute to the development of the whole, because in the light of Unity, we *are* the other.

References

1. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*. Fragment II, 'The two paths'. Washington, Theosophy Trust Books, 2014, p. 20. (Source: https://theosophytrust.org/Online_Books/Voice_of_the_Silence_V1.4.pdf).
 2. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 245c-e (universal Plato pagination).
 3. G. de Purucker, *Golden Precepts of Esotericism*. Theosophical University Press, Point Loma, California, 9th impression, 1931, p. 69.
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The mystery of
MAN



We are more than our bodies

The mystery of Man

Man: a dynamic consciousness centre

In lecture 1 we have seen that man is essentially Boundless. A dynamic consciousness center that has always existed and always will exist and that carries within all the possibilities existing in the Boundless.

In this lecture we take a closer look at the mystery of man. And with mystery we do not mean that man is something mysterious or incomprehensible, as sometimes is meant with this word, but that there is a deeper truth or meaning behind than we initially think to know. And this is because we are now mainly focused on the outer man, and behind that outer man is the inner man in which a number of important processes are taking place. By gaining insight into these, we can give guidance to our lives on a much deeper level and contribute to the totality as a whole.

Man is a thinker

In lecture 1 we also saw that action and reaction form the root or basis of the development of consciousness.

If we now consider what makes us human beings, it is because we, as human beings, have in common that we have reached the level of *thinking*. Hence, the word 'man' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Manas'

which means 'thinking'.

And because we can think, we have the ability to perceive thoughts and have an interaction with them. The ability to think is a conscious process that allows us to imagine something or to form our vision of reality. By thinking, we are able to compare things in relation to each other and make choices based on considerations. And by expressing our thoughts in words, we can exchange thoughts with each other, which can be seen as sending and receiving thoughts.

In this capability of thinking, however, we are by no means perfect. We are, so to speak, still very young and beginning thinkers. In many cases we are still very much focused on ourselves and lose sight of the connection with the whole. Something we can also see when we observe the problems that arise in the world.

Self-consciousness is a specific aspect of our thinking

A specific aspect of our thinking, of us as thinkers, is that we have *self-consciousness*, and self-consciousness means both that we can have thoughts about ourselves and that we can see or perceive ourselves in relation to everything else.

When we identify primarily with ourselves, it is what we call an 'I am I' orientation, also called an orientation based on the personality. We then place ourselves at the center of our thinking and relate the experiences we have to ourselves. And the other way around, when we identify ourselves with the whole and relate our thoughts and actions to it, saying 'I' to the whole, it is called an 'I am' consciousness. We then focus on the inner man and connect with much higher and broader areas of consciousness that include ethical thinking, compassion, wisdom thinking and unity thinking: areas that we are often not self-aware of in this phase of our development, but which we can develop within ourselves.

This is also what the Great Teachers show to us without exception. They are men who are far ahead of us in wisdom and ethics and have become so at one with all that lives, that they have made it their mission in life to teach and guide us on this path. Examples of such men are Plato, Lau Tze, Jesus the Nazarene and Gautama the Buddha.

Our composite nature

Now that we have built a picture of our thinking and self-consciousness, we are going to explore how we are composed as human beings. To do this, we can make different classifications and for this lecture we will make a threefold division. Namely:

- A spiritual/immortal part

- A learning part
- A transitory or mortal part

The *spiritual immortal part* in us is the monad and forms the core of our consciousness. All the faculties and qualities that are available in the cosmos are also available in our core. The immortal part is aware of the unity of all life and has such a complete understanding of the laws and patterns of Universal life that it is completely one with it. From this relative highest self in us flows a constant stream of consciousness and inspiration. It is the source of our noblest impulses. Our receptivity to these impulses is often called intuition. These are flashes of reality, the immediate realization of the deeper connection and essential background, by which we come to a greater understanding.

The *learning part* is the part of our consciousness that learns to increasingly express the inner abilities of the immortal part. This is the part in which we are active with our self-consciousness, the part to which we say 'I', in which we learn, have our experiences and grow. Because this is continued by us life after life, this part is also called our reincarnating part or reincarnating ego. And one of the highest aspects of the learning part is called the storehouse of the ethical lessons we have learned during the many lives we have already lived as thinkers and represents our conscience.

And then there is the *transitory or mortal part*. The instrument or vehicle in which we express ourselves, experience

Composite nature of man

Spiritual immortal part

Learning part

Transitory part



and learn, and of which the body is a part. This part is called mortal because after a period of activity, that is, when we withdraw ourselves into the inner realms, this instrument will fall apart and will have to be rebuilt all over again in the next life.

The dual character of our thinking

If we now, from this threefold division, zoom in on the learning part, we see that this part can focus both on the spiritual/immortal part and the transitory/mortal part.

When we focus our thinking on our immortal part, we focus on the core or source of our consciousness. It is impersonal thinking because it transcends our personality. This type of thinking bases itself on unity and interconnectedness, is characterized by insight and understanding and is also called wisdom thinking.

Our thinking can also focus on our mortal part, which is also called personal thinking because the personality is the midpoint or centre of this type of thinking. It is good to remember that, for example, taking care of the body and personality is not a problem in itself, but when we focus too much on it, we lose sight of the bigger picture and we become separated and selfish. This, however, is unfortunately the characteristic we see a lot in the world today.

These two orientations of thinking are also called the 'higher' and the 'lower thinking' in man.

How did we become who we are?

This basic structure consisting of an immortal, a learning and a mortal part is present in every human being. We all possess the capacity for higher and lower thinking and therefore we all possess the same potencies or capabilities. At the same time, every human being is different. No human being can be found who deals with these capabilities in exactly the same way.

Let us now ask ourselves why it is that we have become who we are. Why we express ourselves in exactly this way and that we are not different. The answer to that may not be too surprising anymore. We are thinkers. We develop through our thinking and in doing so we have become who we are. Every thought we have had in the past has contributed to being who we are: from the preferences and tendencies we have, to the way we act and react; and from how we react to something emotionally to the shape of our physical body. These are all the result of our thinking. It was therefore the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius who powerfully expressed this thought in the following words: "Your life is what your thoughts make it."

Consequently, everything we do is preceded by a thought. You cannot perform an action without a thought or a series of thoughts preceding it. By the actions we are repeating we form habitual patterns, and the sum total of these habitual patterns form our character.

This can be represented by the following sequence: thought – action – habit – character.

Our character, then, is not something we have built up in this one short life we are living in right now. It is the consciousness that we have developed throughout many and many lives that we have already lived, and that we will continue to develop, further and further, both in this life and in future lives. This also explains why we can have talents such as musical aptitude, skillful painting, insight in gardening or Universal Wisdom. Everything we develop easily, is in fact a recapitulation of what we have already mastered in previous lives. And analogously, we can say that aspects for which we must make an effort to manifest them out of ourselves, are new to us. These form the field of our growth.

Character is derived from the Greek word *kharássein* which stands for 'scratching in', which shows that character is the total structure of our expressed consciousness, which is constantly taking shape in a cyclical process. Our character is dynamic. New characteristics are born, old characteristics die out, and the basis for this process is always our thinking.

By thinking new thoughts, revising old thought patterns or not thinking them anymore by replacing them for new ones, we form a basis for acting differently from which new habitual patterns can develop, leading to changes in our character. Now, this will not only have an effect in this life, but also in the ones to come. The direction of our thinking is always the determining factor of our growth.

So, we can say, you sow a thought, you reap an action, you sow an action, you reap a habit, you sow a habit, you reap a character, you sow a character, you reap an incarnation.

Sending thoughts

In addition to this, there is another important aspect to be recognized regarding our thinking. It is often thought that thinking thoughts is toll-free. That we have no influence on others through our thinking, but nothing less is the case.

As thinkers, we are also senders and receivers of thoughts. When we share thoughts with others, we transmit thoughts, but also when we are thinking and do not share them directly, we also transmit them and contribute to the

thought atmosphere or thinking climate in the world. Just as there is a certain influence from the weather, there also emanates a certain influence from this thought atmosphere.

Receiving thoughts

In addition, we are also receivers of thoughts. Thoughts of the most varying quality are broadcasted during the whole day, and the thoughts we receive from this mass, especially when we are not conscious of it, make an impression on us, however slight this may be. These thoughts find home in us and especially when this takes place over a longer period of time, it can have an impact on our character.

Contributing to harmony or disharmony

So, with our thinking we not only give direction to our development but, because we are part of the whole, we also contribute with our thinking to the development of the whole. And with every thought we think and every action we perform we are contributing to it.

We thereby are responsible for our thinking. When we are so self-centered in our thinking and actions that we lose sight of the whole, or in other words, when we are attuned to our character with a small c, then we are separated and contribute to disharmony. However, when we think and act in such a way that in everything we do we are in alignment with the whole, or in other words, when we are in alignment with our Character with a capital C, we contribute to the harmony of the whole. Therefore, we do not ever need to think that we have no influence or that what we do does not count. In fact, everything always contributes to everything. Just as one ray of light can illuminate a room, or one particle of salt can change the taste of food, so too can one impersonal thought bring change in the overall perspective of the thinking collective in the world.

How to become more than we are now?

Our goal: moving from personal to suprapersonal thinking

Now we have indicated that we form our habit patterns and character with our thinking. These habit patterns and our character in their turn form the basis for our thought process and when we are not attentive or alert to this, we continue to reinforce our habitual thinking and get stuck in a kind of 'loop' so to speak. Especially when the thinking is of a personal nature, we can become so identified or so entangled with it that we can hardly imagine that other ways are also possible, and consequently our growth will

be obstructed.

To transcend such habitual thinking and habitual acting, we need a wedge to open the molds of our thinking. To step out of the ingrained pattern of thinking. To become more and more self-aware of our thinking and the influence it has on our environment. Doing this, we can shift the center of our consciousness from personal to impersonal thinking.

To stimulate this development, in the following part of this lecture we will give you a number of steps that can help us to form a new paradigm of thinking. By applying these steps daily and consistently as a continuous process we can weave these steps as a habitual pattern into our character.

Forming a vision

The first step is to form a vision of life based on Universal principles in which we focus on the unity and equality of all life. When we build this vision, we strive to make it so inspiring that it becomes for us worth everything to commit ourselves to it, to make it a living power in our lives.

In doing so, we can, for example, build a vision of the ideal society. What could this world look like? And in doing so, we should remember that we are not doing this in negative terms by saying, 'there will be no more poverty or no more disease'. We do this in positive terms. For example, by forming a vision of how people would then cooperate with each other and cooperate with the other kingdoms of nature, or how problems that we encounter in life will be solved and what principles we apply by solving them. Step by step, we can develop our vision further and further.

A next step could be not only to look at the outer world but also to examine how the inner processes in life take place. When, for example, we gain insight into the processes of life and death or examine the processes of cause and effect, we can acquire more and more wisdom about the inner life or the inner processes of Nature by which we can increasingly develop or perfect our vision of life.

And when we focus on our vision of life, when we reflect on the inner processes of Nature or on how problems we see in the world can be solved, we make our thinking more receptive for our intuition, and we connect more and more with our impersonal part.

Building a vision of life is a boundless process that can be worked on repeatedly. For now, we will leave it for a moment and move on to step 2, but at the end of this symposium we will come back to this subject and inform you on what can be done to build a vision of life and in

what way our organization can support you in this.

Activating

Well, we worked on it. We have formed a vision. Then the second step is to activate this vision every day. For as sublime our vision of life may be, it would only remain of limited value if we would not make it into an active power in life. For this purpose, Katherine Tingley, the third leader of the Theosophical Society, recommends that every morning immediately after awakening we focus our thinking on our ideal and set aside everything that has to do with lower thinking, so that our thinking is not drawn to external matters and our ideal vision can become the keynote for the day.

Applying

The third step is aligning our thinking and acting throughout the whole day on the keynote we have formed in the morning. Not to *strive for*, because then we make it into something we place outside of us, but *assuming* it. So that everything we do during the day, breathes the sphere of our vision of life. In the broadest sense that we can imagine: in the choices we make, the thoughts we have, the conversations we have or the questions we face during the day. That we are constantly a living expression of our vision of life.

This is not a process we can do alone. Growth and learning we do primarily in interaction – in acting and reacting – on and with each other. Everything in the Universe is based on cooperation, and cooperation is therefore the best way to overcome the personality, because in cooperation we learn how to support the whole in the best way we can.

During the day, when we encounter difficult choices or dilemmas, or when we are moved up and down between our personal and impersonal part, these are typical situations where ethical questions arise and our conscience can speak up by giving us a sign. By listening to our conscience in these situations, we are able to do the right thing then and restore harmony.

Looking back

At the end of the day we make space for the fourth step. Before sleeping, we look back on the day. We look for things we could have done better or possibly failed to do. We do not do this to make up a balance, but we do this to learn from and to build upon, and after that we end the day with an elevating thought. Then we draw back into

How to become more than we are now?

Development of character in four steps:

- Forming a vision
- Activating this vision, focusing our thinking on our ideal
- Applying the vision, turning it into action
- Looking back

the inner realms during sleep and wake up strengthened the next day.

Thus we go through a process by which we grow from the personal to the Universal Man. Thereby we increasingly experience ourselves as a self-conscious part of the whole and contribute to a society based on Brotherhood as fact in Nature.

The four steps presented above are based upon the book *The Wisdom of the Heart* by Katherine Tingley, p. 51-68. This concerns two chapters entitled 'Keynotes on the path 1 and 2'.

(Source: blavatskyhouse.org/literature/katherine-tingley/).

The mystery of
MAN



We are more than our bodies

I am because we are

Intro

In the first lecture, we addressed the question ‘Who am I?’, ‘*Am I a body, or do I have a body?*’ We showed that we, like all life, are essentially *sparks of eternity*; monads: boundless, cyclical and eternally growing; dynamic centers of consciousness, which have always existed and will always exist.

In the second lecture, we discussed ‘the mystery of Man’. And in it, we showed that in our *human evolution*, we are thinkers and develop self-consciousness. And that we can direct our development, by focusing more on the spiritual, imperishable part in our composite being which consists of a ‘spiritual’, a ‘learning’ and a ‘vehicular’ part.

An essential conclusion so far is that *every human being* has an infinite higher nature, and that we fundamentally carry all possibilities within us. It has been noted here that we have de-veloped from an un-self-conscious *spark of eternity*, into a self-conscious human being. As self-conscious humans, we will increasingly learn to express our deepest essence, that which is always there, and to express it in the world we live in.

But we are not there yet, there is a long way to go.

The ideal of universal man

Therefore, in this third lecture, we want to address the question: *how can we as humans learn to further express our deepest essence, that spark of eternity?* How to express that boundless universal core that we essentially are? Or in other words, how can we truly become Humans with a capital H? *Universal Humans*, or divinely human you could also say. How can we express ‘the spiritual side’, the monad, through our ‘material side’, our vehicle.

To answer this question, it is important first to make clear what the characteristics of a universal human being are. How do you recognize the characteristics, the qualities, of what we are in our deepest essence?

The heart of it is the *sense of oneness*, the inner seeing and knowing that everything is one and inseparable. Consequently, you will be a living expression of that unity. It is a sense so powerful that you have completely transcended the idea that you are separate from others. This means that you also continuously act from that sense of oneness. You do not act for your own benefit, but to enhance the whole. You consistently think impersonally, as Iljitsj van Kessel called it in his lecture.

And this universal, impersonal thinking from a sense of oneness also implies living morally *according to your highest ethical insights*. Indeed, if you proceed from oneness, there is no spirituality without morality. Everything you do or think, you do from that sense of oneness. So from that vision of oneness it follows that you are selfless by nature, just by nature, compassionate by nature, patient et cetera. In short, all the virtues we encounter in the various world traditions from East to West, from Plato to Buddha. So, these virtues are not randomly invented, but arise from an inner recognition of the fundamental oneness of all life. All this means that ethics is not an invented or human construct, but a fundamental reality in the universe, a Law of Nature.

So who we essentially are as human beings is therefore also a thoroughly *ethical* question. The true universal human being is one who knows himself to be ONE with the whole and acts ethically. This human being always acts for the common good and in the service of the whole.

All growth comes from within

Everyone, whether young or old, has an intuitive awareness of this to a greater or lesser extent, yet we also all know how difficult it is to actually live up to it. Why is this so and what do we need to do to grow towards it?

Now we said in the first lecture that all growth comes from within. There is an *inner source of inspiration*. Nothing we learn is added from outside. We can only develop through our own effort. Yet our environment plays an important role in this. So what about that, if everything comes from within: what is the role of our environment in our character growth, in expressing our (universal) human characteristics?

Karma and reincarnation

You can only understand this properly if you assume karma and reincarnation. In the first lecture, we already talked about the universal principle of cyclicity. The boundless consciousness, which every being essentially is, goes through cycles with alternation of activity and rest, of life and death. Everything reembodies itself. Applying that to the life of human and animal consciousness, which dresses itself in a body of flesh, we are talking about the law of reincarnation.

Karma, or the law of cause and effect, is inextricably linked to it. *Reincarnation and karma cannot be explained without each other*. How and where we incarnate proceeds entirely according to the law of cause and effect. In the second lec-

ture, we told how every action is preceded by a thought. How repetitions of thoughts become habits and thus collectively form our character. And how that works out over several lifetimes as well. We reincarnate and harvest in subsequent lives what we have sown in this and previous lives. So, nothing just happens to us.

Every incarnation we reattract those things with which we created connections in previous lives, whether positive or negative. Because both love and hate are attractive forces. Which character traits we have, where we are born, in which country, to which parents, how healthy our body is, it all flows logically from this law of cause and effect.

Environment and circumstances are a mirror

These laws of reincarnation and karma directly show us the relationship of ourselves to our environment. Indeed, our environment is not accidental. Karmically, we are exactly there, and in those circumstances, to which we have drawn ourselves, in this or in a past life.

This means that our circumstances are nothing but a mirror for ourselves. A feedback for our previous behavior and actions.

This understanding allows you to see your circumstances as exactly that *learning material*, that impulse, that is needed for you to grow as a human being, to come more and more into harmony with all other life. Sometimes they act as limitations we have to overcome. Sometimes they act as opportunities or talents we can use for the greater good.

Understanding this makes your circumstances appear in a totally different light. Then you realize that your circumstances are totally *just*, because nothing happens to us that doesn't belong to us. Nobody but ourselves, is responsible for our circumstances. And the same applies to our future that we are making now.

We have that future, and whether it is harmonious or disharmonious, in our own hands. The fact that our circumstances stem from our own thinking and actions is therefore a very *hopeful thought*: because if you want different circumstances (both personally and in the world), then you can, indeed you must, start with yourself.

You then no longer see yourself as subordinate to fate, but you can take your life into your own hands. You realize then, that you are a human being with a task in life, that you have lessons to learn. Lessons that suit your character, to take the next step beyond the level to which you have already developed, to grow into a real co-worker with Nature.

Impersonal thinking ‘I am’

In this respect, the picture outlined in the second lecture of impersonal thinking is very important. Impersonal thinking is not thinking from the personality, ‘I am-I’ thinking, identifying with the outer Mariska as I stand here as a person, living in Delft and working in The Hague. No, by thinking impersonally we mean the universal, more abstract thinking that I am capable of as a human being, the thinking that transcends my personality. The ‘I am’ thinking. It is about identifying with humanity as a whole, from a sense of oneness. This makes us rise above our personal circumstances, such as where you live, who your family is, where you work et cetera. *The growth that comes from within is the growth of personal ‘I am I’ thinking, to impersonal ‘I am’ thinking.*

We can hold on to this impersonal thinking even when our circumstances sometimes seem not so positive, or limiting. From the perspective of our impersonal thinking, we know that we carry within us all the potential for restoration and growth. In the light of reincarnation and karma, certain circumstances do not just come our way at any random moment either. Instead, these are occasions that give us the opportunity to learn, to restore harmony. For instance, you ask a bit too much of your body, get tired or overworked and need to recover from that. If we use our impersonal thinking and reflect on our situation, we will also realize that we may have asked a bit too much of ourselves and that now is the time to take it easy and keep our head in the game or listen more to our heart.

Learning and development always happen in collaboration with the environment, across incarnations

Across multiple lifetimes, that principle is no different, only we no longer have the memory of the causes we have sown in previous lifetimes. We may be born with a physical disability and therefore be less fit than others. At the same time, this does not prevent us from developing mentally, and perhaps in doing so we develop more empathy for others who are also limited and see how we can advocate for them. Understanding this natural law of cause and effect thus means that we will not see ourselves as victims of our circumstances.

We realize then, that it is not the circumstances as such, which determine our lives, but how you experience them and then react to them. From the perspective of karma, all challenging circumstances then become moments for learning, opportunities to grow.

Consequently, we can draw the conclusion that learning and development always happens in collaboration with the environment. No human being can exist in isolation. So the answer to the question of how our growth of character is related to our environment is, that there is no real distinction between ourselves and our environment. *We are our environment.* And this also makes sense if you proceed from oneness. It is just that we often do not realize this enough yet.

I am because we are

In the first lecture, we showed that we are a *spark of eternity* in the depths of our being and now we add that we can only bring out this quality, in connection with our environment. *We are* our environment and simply could not be there without all the other life: the billions of cells that make up our bodies, the thoughts to express ourselves, the plants and animals that provide us with food, the sun with its rays that supplies the earth with everything it needs. All life, all those infinite monads are inseparable and interconnected. We can only develop our qualities as human beings in cooperation with the whole. We cannot exist without each other. A thought at the heart of all religious and philosophical traditions, but particularly powerfully formulated in Ubuntu philosophy: *“I am because we are.”*⁽¹⁾

Becoming a universal human being

And with this conclusion, we return to our initial question: how can we as humans become more of our true essence? To this end, I recall what I said earlier, about the idea that the characteristic of our deepest essence is ethical, with acting from oneness as the starting point. And with what was discussed in the first lecture, that all life, all monads, constitute the unity like the drops in the ocean. Wherein each drop is also essentially the ocean itself.

When we combine this with what we have just told you about our relationship with our environment, we hold the key to how we truly become Human with a capital H. Namely, that in all situations, in how we react to our environment, how we deal with our circumstances et cetera, we act morally above all else, *according to our highest ethical views.* That we interact continuously with our environment and all life around us, supporting that life, helping that life to develop.

Then we develop our Character with capital C and become the *universal Human.*

With the development of our thinking, we become *self-*

conscious at the human stage. This is an essential step in our evolution as consciousness, as it allows us to reflect on ourselves and *give direction to our evolution*. The paradox, however, is that just as we have become self-conscious and can reflect on ourselves, in order to grow further, we have to forget ourselves again! To become really human, we must learn to think from our higher impersonal part, must learn to develop from the personal ‘I am I’ consciousness, towards the impersonal ‘*I am*’ consciousness. Because the next step for us is to recognize that the idea of a personal self, as an entity separate from others, is an illusion. There is no such thing as a separate self, we are in everything connected to our environment and all life.

And so, it is not about developing our personal self, but about developing the whole, of which we are a natural part.⁽²⁾ The heart of it is our *sense of oneness*, which we previously named as the defining characteristic of the universal Human being.

It is therefore an illusion to think that you first have to grow spiritually or become wise before you can help others. It is actually the other way around: by practically helping others around you, living according to your best ethical understanding, you increasingly unfold your inner essence, not as an end in itself, but as a result of realizing that there is no separateness and as a result of thinking and acting from oneness. Thinking and acting from the highest part, the highest ideal we have within us.

It is not by chance that one of the theosophical teachers says: “... it must begin with our relations to and with each other.”⁽³⁾ And as one of H.P. Blavatsky’s teachers says, now in my own words: nothing makes sense to us unless it is moral, unless it contributes to the growth and well-being of humanity.⁽⁴⁾

Our responsibility in practice

Now what does this “*I am because we are*” mean in practice? How do we interact with our environment and circumstances? In short, it is about fulfilling our task in life and *increasingly developing and using our talents in the service of the whole, for the unity*, from the realization that we are that whole, that unity.

We would like to name at this point some examples that are applicable in our current society. We are currently living in a restless phase, there is war in various parts of the world, there is unrest, some people are opposing groups of other people from other cultural backgrounds, the unity of mankind has been lost sight of.

But fortunately, there are always those who focus on pro-

moting or restoring harmony, or healing the society you could also say. They are already more advanced and already proceed from oneness in their thinking and actions. Assuming humanity as a Unity, in principle, every human being is involved in every conflict in the world. We are all citizens of the world and can have an impact on humanity’s thinking, even if we live on the other side of the globe.

It is about rising above the opposing parties in disharmonious situations, for instance in the case of an occupied country. And discussing whether a just solution can be found for both parties, knowing that both parties are and remain connected in that unity.

Another example of “*I am because we are*” in practice is how to help someone who feels lonely, misunderstood or abandoned, for instance. You are then dealing with someone who is struggling with disharmony in him or herself and at that moment cannot connect with the ‘highest part’ in himself. The learning, ‘middle part’ in him has ceased to trust itself because it has forgotten its imperishable, spiritual part, or is confused about its presence. That person assumes that this ‘highest part’ does not exist (any more), or has not yet sufficiently succeeded in basing his trust (again) on it when thinking and acting. Especially in difficult situations on his life path, such as when he thinks he is approaching someone with the best of intentions, but yet somehow fails to connect or even meets resistance. He has become stuck in the illusion that he is separate from others and that he has to solve everything on his own and survive on his own. Influenced by this illusion, his thinking and actions will therefore often narrow and limit themselves to his own interests, to what seems to help and benefit himself in the short term.

How can we help people in such situations? From *understanding that situation*, in that case you can help to re-establish their connection with their inner nature and help to experience the oneness again. This is, of course, a gradual process. Just continually showing that you appreciate the presence of the other person is already an opening to connection. And every small step that a person can take as active contributor to his or her environment: such as accepting a parcel for a neighbour, caring for a plant, looking after a pet, represents a connection to oneness.

Another example is the discussion in our society about the idea of ‘completed life’, mostly among the elderly. Research has shown that a good number of elderly people, who initially thought their lives were ‘completed’, have changed their minds after becoming aware of the back-

ground of that ‘completed life’ idea, namely that what they really wanted was to continue to contribute to society and participate; with heart and soul, based on their (rediscovered) ideals. And that is realizable in all circumstances. The healing process of a disharmonious man – or better still, the whole disharmonious humanity – consists in transforming this thought of distrust in oneself into insight and trust in the Oneness of Life, in the Higher Nature of each of us, the impersonal, which is an inseparable part of the whole Universal Life. That we actually consciously realize and internalize that statement “*I am because we are*”.

That is the great challenge we face together: *to transform disharmony into a dynamic harmony*. A harmony that offers space for the contribution and growth of everyone and that remains in constant motion, that is dynamic.

Key thoughts

Finally, the key thoughts from the three lectures in a nutshell:

- In the first lecture we told you that as human beings we are essentially sparks of eternity, with infinite abilities to express.
- In the second lecture, we told you that as human beings in our infinite evolutionary journey, we are in the process of expressing our ability to think. That with that thinking we have developed self-consciousness and the ability to independently direct our thinking and thus our lives.
- And finally, in this lecture, we have dwelled on the ideal of the universal human being, the Human being we are becoming, whose main characteristic is the sense of oneness in thought and action.

We can try to be that Human being already now, by seeing that our environment is exactly the environment we have desired for ourselves according to karma and reincarnation, that we are truly one with that environment and can fulfil a function in it, and by trying to live from that key thought from the Ubuntu philosophy: “*I am, because we are.*”

And what that further means for ourselves in a practical sense, how we deal with our environment and our circumstances ourselves, that is what we will now be exchanging with each other in the workshop entitled: ‘Heal society, heal yourself!’

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Where are we at home?

An inspiring example of a society in which people know themselves spiritually, mentally and physically ‘at home’

Migration is a topic that is in the news a lot right now. For all sorts of reasons, people are looking for a better life elsewhere. One question you can ask in this regard is: Where is a person actually at home?

Let us begin with a quotation from Gottfried de Purucker, the fourth Leader of the Theosophical Society Point Loma (TSPL):

Nature and her divine, spiritual, psychological, ethereal, and physical reaches that is our Universal Home — a Home which is Universal because it is everywhere.’⁽¹⁾

‘ONE of the fundamental ideas of the primeval wisdom of mankind is that Man and the Universe are essentially one. This idea is the very keystone of the Temple of the Ancient Wisdom. If you understand it, if you feel it, if you grasp it, your whole life is changed, your whole outlook on existence is radically altered. You then recognise yourself to be at one with all that is, a partaker, in time, of all that the Universe has and is, journeying towards a destiny so sublime that the utmost imaginative efforts of mankind cannot at present sketch even a fragmentary outline of what the far distant future has in store for us. This destiny is simply the unfolding, as evolution proceeds – and unfolding is what evolution really means – of the inner unto becoming the outer, the bringing forth of what is locked up within, not only in man but in Mother Nature herself. It is Mother

At home in the universe

We humans are essentially spiritual beings, at home in the Universe. That we do not yet experience this daily is because we are composite beings and do not yet live in the higher, spiritual part of our composition. That composition is roughly made up of an imperishable spiritual part, a learning mental part and a perishable vehicular part. We are currently learning to express our spiritual essence with the mental, the thinking part. On the mental plane, the thinking part, we are able to identify with our spiritual part on the one hand and our vehicular part on the other. Because we are still developing the mental part, we generally still oscillate with our thinking between the spiritual and the vehicular part. If we identify through our thinking with our vehicular part, then our fo-

Key thoughts

- » Humans are essentially spiritual beings, at home in the universe.
- » We are at home where we deem our homes are.
- » The society of the Blackfoot provides an inspiring example of a society in which people know themselves spiritually, mentally and physically ‘at home’ .
- » From a universal spiritual vision, it is natural to work to establish a home for everyone.



cus is on the external transient life, including the physical place where our home is located. If we identify our thinking more with the spiritual part, then our real home is the Universe as a whole, as De Purucker so beautifully described above. Our planet Earth, this outer sphere, is for us, spiritually cosmic pilgrims, just a temporary way station, where we learn certain lessons we can carry forward into eternity.

Where we are at home is relative

We are at home in the place we identify with, that which we call 'our world'. For some this does not extend much further than their own neighborhood or village, for others it is a city, region or country. There are also many people who are less attached to an external place, and they are more likely to identify themselves as citizens of the world or just 'human beings'. They generally identify with the mental part in themselves that is not tied to a specific location.

Where we are at home: spiritually, mentally and physically

If we assume that people identify with their mental part, then we can subdivide the mental part again into three

parts. We can then look at where people are at home in terms of spiritual, intellectual and physical *thinking*.

In terms of spiritual thinking, we can say that we are at home where we can independently build a vision of life and live according to our highest insight and conscience. Every human being has built up their insight and conscience to some extent. Because spiritually speaking, we are not a blank sheet when we are born somewhere. We have already learned many lessons in previous lives, and after the rest period between lives, we pick up the thread to further develop ourselves in connection with others. If we unite more with our spiritual part, we realize that we are constantly connected with the whole or even know ourselves to be one with it.

Intellectually, then, we will express this unity and connectedness in our thinking and actions. Our thinking and actions are colored by a sense of unity, by compassion. This means that we want to contribute all our talents and possibilities to the whole. That we want to fulfill a function or a responsibility for the benefit of that whole. We want to be purposeful, and that is much more than a matter of paid work. It is about being able to fulfill our duty for the whole. And even though that work may be something material: you grow food in the fields, build houses or



make clothes, it is primarily your mindset that determines the quality of the work and whether we can do it well. Being able to offer something that the whole needs or will help further is what gives people real satisfaction in their work and what makes them feel mentally at home in society as well.⁽²⁾

On a physical level, we need a secure livelihood to continue to feel at home somewhere. But actually, this is much more a result of the work we do. When the compensation for the work is not sufficient to ensure livelihood security, we will look for other work or another place where we can achieve livelihood security with our work. Furthermore, of course, there are certain karmic circumstances that can force us to seek our livelihood security elsewhere: think of war, natural disasters, famine, epidemics or a certain development in the mentality of your country.

Many people spiritually displaced

Unfortunately, it is the case that many people tend to identify with their vehicular part in their thinking, with which their focus is on the outward transient life. They do not know the spiritual part in themselves, or are hardly aware of it. Therefore, they do not recognize the unity of all life, and think of themselves as detached loners who have to survive in the rat race. The outside world then forms a constant threat. Inwardly they do not feel at home anywhere, they are in a sense spiritually displaced.

The lack of recognition of unity and connectedness can translate into a mentality of 'every man for himself'. Work is then no longer focused on contributing one's talents and abilities to move the whole forward, but rather to meet one's own personal needs. This leads to competition in the workplace for the highest position and the best salary.

Material possession becomes an end in itself, something to derive status from, to distinguish oneself with. Not realizing that they can never fill an inner void with matter, they get caught up in a craving for more. Because of this mentality, they end up extracting value from society in the physical sphere as well, to the detriment of others who need it more.

This inequality is also seen in the grand scale between countries and is increasing. So much so, that some people can hardly build a livelihood in their own country anymore and are forced to migrate.

Meanwhile, spiritual poverty in others degenerates into xenophobia. Their emphasis on their own nationality is in a sense an affirmation that they do not know themselves at

home in the world.

How different is it if you were to grow up in a culture where being spiritually at home is the basis for your existence?

The lessons of the Blackfoot

Looking at the three spheres of thinking, spiritual, intellectual and physical, the spiritual 'need' should ideally take precedence over the mental and physical. In fact, this is also a very old idea, as the famous American psychologist Abraham Maslow experienced when he spent six weeks with the indigenous North American Blackfoot tribe.⁽³⁾

The Blackfoot assumed that every human being comes into the world irradiated with a *divine* spark, a very theological idea. They therefore treated children almost as equals, gave them responsibilities early in life and the chance to participate almost immediately.

Furthermore, they placed the development of the community, the connection with others, at the center. In doing so, they saw the provision of all basic needs - food, shelter, security, and so on - as a responsibility of the community and not as an individual responsibility. The most prosperous was the one who could give away the most. Maslow described a ceremony in which all the goods or items collected from the last year, were gathered together and distributed to those who needed them most. Consequently, they knew no word for poverty. It was taken for granted that everyone had a livelihood.

Finally, the Blackfoot focused on cultural preservation aimed at passing on wisdom. Decision-making involved the perspective of seven generations. The elders had an important role in this. They contributed their insights, but more by way of inspiration than of coercion. All decisions made were made in consensus with input from all generations.

This mentality of living together, allowed each member of the Blackfoot to know themselves 'at home' on all three levels — spiritual, mental and physical, also in that order.

Migration a natural fact of life

Being able to know ourselves at home anywhere does not necessarily mean that people will therefore not travel or migrate anymore. The Blackfoot tribe was also a migrating tribe, which according to historians did not always deal peacefully with other tribes.

Looking at the evolutionary process of man and humanity with a superpersonal view, we see that migration is a natural consequence of the unfolding of human thought, both

individually and in groups. Because of our urge for inner growth, which every human being carries within himself, we start looking for a place that offers development, or is safe enough for us to develop as individuals and as a community.

This search, which by no means has to cross national borders, will always take place. Throughout its history mankind has traveled around, always exploring areas unknown to him. The great world teachers traveled around to spread their message to people and inspired their disciples to imitate their example. Thanks to global trade routes, cultural exchange and cross-pollination took place. Expeditions could always count on great general interest and the explorers were held in high esteem.⁽⁴⁾

Migrations are a natural part of the human development process. We all seek an environment of spiritual, mental and physical quality, one that matches our inner drive to learn more and further develop, where we feel at home. We are always looking for those friends, those families, those living environments that are appropriate and challenging for us: where we feel at home and that encourage us to develop, bring out and pass on the better and higher in us.

Naturally from a spiritual perspective

Of course, we now live in a different society from that of the Blackfoot, but it would be good to think about how we could manage to make *all* members of our society, of humanity, to feel at home. However, this is not about copying habits or rules. Rather, it begins with a spiritual vision of unity and connection, a vision of man as a divine ray, a vision of being at home in the Universe. It is the most universal vision found in all countries and cultures. It is the most inclusive vision that continues to unite people.

If we would live from the realization that we are spiritually one, good collective social services would be self-evident. We would no longer argue about good care, education, housing and income for all – which we know will benefit our society – we would take care of these things together. From a sense of unity, someone who has materially more will feel responsible to share that with others. Together we can amply provide for everyone's basic needs. No one has to worry or fear that others will abandon him.

The spiritual sense of oneness will translate mentally into a much more inclusive and structural sense of community. The community in which you can know yourself at home will then not be based on limited external features, such as

skin color or dress, or on such illusory things as a particular name, status, class or faith. There is the conviction that each person has divine capabilities and can make a unique contribution to the whole. It would be felt as a collective failure if a person is not at home in the community. People are constantly ready to help and teach each other. Wisdom is there to be passed on. So that wherever people go, they can learn to find their imperishable inner home and be at home everywhere in this outer world.

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Key thoughts

- » Theosophy knows only spirit; matter is spirit in a lower state of expression.
- » In boundless SPACE, cyclic universes appear, composed of masses of monads.
- » A monad is a divine-spiritual, indivisible and essentially boundless center of consciousness.
- » Every point in a universe is a monad.
- » Monads give birth to less developed monads through cooperation. Thus a hierarchy of consciousness arises.
- » A human being is a composite being of an infinite number of monads in different degrees of development.
- » When the word 'monad' is preceded by an adjective (such as animal, human or divine), it means that such a monad expresses itself in that area of consciousness.
- » The doctrine of monads was taught by Pythagoras and was later adopted in slightly modified form by Leibniz and other Western philosophers.
- » A monad is represented as a pilgrim, but actually the pilgrim is the ray (emanation) emanating from the monad enclosed in a group of monads, which are thus reflected consciousness and are called egos. The entire group grows into cosmic consciousness.

Barend Voorham

The mystery of the monad

For thousands of years, many Teachers have attempted to impart important life wisdom. This wisdom is still often beyond the receiving humanity of then, as well as today. How to make clear something that man has no comprehension of, not even a vague understanding?

The Teachers described the mysteries of our consciousness in *adumbration*, as De Purucker calls it in his *Esoteric Tradition*.⁽¹⁾ This means that in rough draft, in a vague outline, an overview is given. This is fully in accordance with the truth, but it is put into simple understandable words and pictures. The challenge facing any teacher or parent is to teach something in a measured way and in small steps.

So is the subject of this article: the monad and *how the One becomes* (or *seems to become*) *the many*. The great challenge for the recipient is to work with this outline, with this draft, to understand it without giving it an absolute character, which has usually gone wrong in the past many thousands of years.

The subject of monad is one of the most abstract and principled, as well as inspiring, topics in Theosophia. It deals with the One, the Essential Unity of all that exists.

The concept of monad cannot be separated from ideas of unity and infinity. If you think about it carefully, it provides many answers to life's questions.

Great thinkers have thought about that Unity. The concept of the monad is therefore encountered in all kinds of cultures, religions and philosophies, albeit sometimes expressed in different terms.

Boundless Principle

To understand what a monad is, we

go first to something even more abstract and even more principled, without which the idea of monad cannot be understood. We are referring to Boundlessness.

In the prologue of *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky gives three Fundamental Propositions.⁽²⁾ The first reads:

An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. (...)

One absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being.

Monads are eternal, unitary, individual, life-centers, consciousness-centers, deathless, during any Solar Manvantara, therefore ageless, unborn, undying. Consequently, each one such – and their number is infinite – is the center of the All, for the Divine or the ALL is THAT which has its center everywhere, and its circumference or limiting boundary nowhere.⁽³⁾

Although it is inspiring to think about Boundlessness, we can never fully grasp it. Nevertheless, we can get a picture, if we realize that in that completely abstract Boundlessness, universes constantly appear and disappear. Think of the Boundlessness as an infinite Ocean of Being. In it a vortex is emerging. No drop of water is added to that Ocean, nor does one leave it. However, there is a movement in Boundless Being. Within such a vortex, smaller vortexes arise. Again, nothing changes in the amount of ‘water drops’ in that Ocean. There is some kind of compaction, like an iceberg in the sea. That iceberg, too, adds nothing.

Vortexes in vortex

The appearance of a vortex in that Ocean of Being happens cyclically. That is the second Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, which speaks of the appearance and disappearance of universes. We can compare a universe to such a vortex. It arises and after some time it is fully absorbed again into the Ocean, from which, of course, it was never separated.

As mentioned above, in that vortex there are smaller vortexes in turn. This means that when a universe appears, countless smaller ‘universes’ appear as well.

It is said in the theosophical literature that the One – the ‘first vortex’ – generates the many. That, however, is metaphor. Nothing enters the Ocean of Being. The activity of the appearance of a universe is accompanied by all kinds of activity within it, smaller vortexes, and these in turn set in motion countless ‘drops of water’. Imagine those ‘water drops’ in infinite variations, in different degrees of development and cooperating with each other. The working together of all those ‘water droplets’ is what the third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* teaches us. They are all created – that is, ‘activated’ or ‘set in motion’ – by the first vortex. Then they form certain patterns – laws – that are repeated throughout the vortex. That vortex in the Ocean of Being, the smaller vortexes in

the first vortex, yes, the innumerable drops, are monads. So all life, every being in the universe is essentially a monad.

Not created

So the first thing we can say of monads is that they have always been there. They have always been a part of that Ocean of BEING. They are foci of life, the imperishable core of one individual being. We are accustomed to Christian dogmatism which holds that every human being receives a God-created soul at birth. Materialistic science also assumes a beginning: the fertilized egg is said to be the beginning of human life.

In contrast, the ancient Esoteric Philosophy rejects the idea that anything can have begun in an absolute sense. There may be *relative* beginnings, but a monad itself has not been created, has not been formed or has not come into existence in any other way. A monad has always been there. And since eternity and infinity can have neither beginning nor end, a monad will also always be there.

Therefore, the first thing we can say of a monad is that it is an essentially boundless spiritual being; a being that was, is and will always be there.

Indivisible

How should we imagine such an uncreated monad? What more is there to say about it?

Let us look at where the word ‘monad’ comes from. It is derived from the ancient Greek μονάς, *monas*. That word means ‘unity’. And *monas* in turn is derived from μόνος (*monos*), meaning a unit, individual, atom. So sometimes monad is translated as ‘unique’, ‘only’, or ‘*indivisible* unity’. In the latter sense, it is a synonym of ‘individual’ (Latin: *individuum*), which also means indivisible.

This indivisibility causes us to think. After all, everything we know is divisible. Even the atom, first thought to be indivisible, turns out to be composed of smaller particles, packets of energies.

In the field of consciousness, the manifested field, everything we know is also divisible. Our consciousness, too, is composite. We can *divide* it into a number of states. Anyone who observes himself with a little more than a superficial glance knows that he has within him different aspects of consciousness, different properties, such as: feelings, desire, the intellect, the ability to understand. In short, in our outer world we know nothing that is indivisible.

Our world is characterized by diversity: not only between humans and between humans and animals, but, as men-

tioned, there is also diversity within a single human being. There are material aspects, such as the physical body. There are spiritual aspects, such as awareness of the connectedness and unity of all life. There are, in short, spiritual and material aspects.

In the monad, however, spirit and substance are one. Thereby you must realize that substance is in fact spirit in a lower form of expression. A monad knows no duality; it is homogeneous. It is the *One*. It is indivisible. If something is indivisible, then apparently it belongs to a world other than the one we know.

In fact, a monad exists for us – that is, it is observable – only as soon as it connects and enters into cooperation with something else. Or more precisely, when it ‘rolls’ something out of itself, emanates something, develops something out of itself, which does have a property or characteristic that we can discern. To slightly understand this, you could imagine a very rarefied aroma, so ethereal, that it appears in our field of perception only when limited by a veil or shell. That veil or shell comes from the monad itself. It is the spiritual principle *Buddhi*. However exalted *Buddhi*, the enlightenment principle is, you can attribute (very exalted) qualities to it. *Buddhi* is the realization of the inseparability of all things; the understanding that nothing is separate. *Buddhi* has that characteristic, has properties. The monad does not have those. Therefore, if the monad has not developed *Buddhi* by itself, it is so abstract to us that it is beyond our capacity to know. Therefore Mrs. Blavatsky replies to a question from a student, that *for us* the monad is not *Ātman* (the SELF, the relatively highest principle in man), but *Buddhi*.⁽⁴⁾

Yet, as abstract as it may be, a monad is not separate from our world. It is the primal ground of it.

Pythagoras: on how the One becomes the many

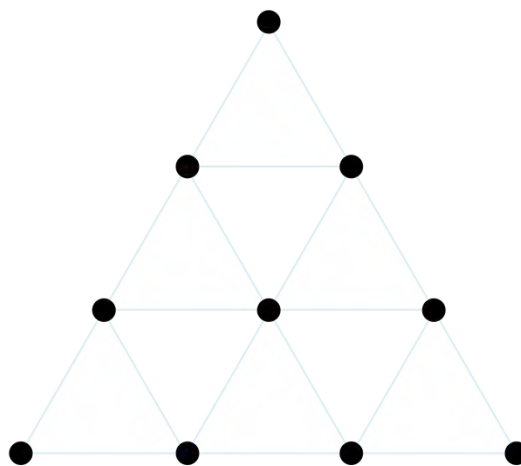
It seems that the Greek sage Pythagoras was the first to use the word ‘monad’. His followers, the Pythagoreans, developed an entire cosmology based on this concept. The origin of the cosmos had its origin in the monad, for it was, they taught, the first thing to appear. The monad was thus the primal ground of all that exists.

Indeed, from the monad arose the duad (the duality), from which all vibrations or numbers arose. All those numbers represented lines or bodies. Thus, from the One came forth the diversity.

This teaching took symbolic form in the famous Pythagorean triangle, also called the *Tetractys*. That trian-

gle consists of ten points. The top is the monad, the one. From that flows the duad (the two) and so on. The ‘points’ that flow from the monad are in turn monads. Later, we will explain further this *emanation process* — the flowing and attraction of life from one another. By the way, the Tetractys contains much more esoteric knowledge, but that falls beside this article.

To understand the teachings of Pythagoras, it is necessary to realize that this Greek sage taught that everything is number. H.P. Blavatsky speaks of motion in this context.



That sounds curious, but it may become more understandable if you realize that vibration is number. And is not everything that exists a vibration? Vibration can be expressed in numbers. Every being is a certain vibration and therefore a certain number. Compare it to the tones in our musical system. Or consider the example of the vortex, where only the movement of the water particles build the phenomenon.

Therefore, when Pythagoras says that all numbers arose from the monad – the ONE – he means that everything that exists has its origin in the monad. So, the indivisible monad underlies the variety of life. The keynote produces an endless variety of overtones. Or as Iamblichus, a Neoplatonic philosopher of the 2nd century, puts it: the monad *is the non-spatial source of all numbers; (...) the beginning, middle and end of all things.*⁽⁵⁾

The concept of non-spatial should give us food for thought, although it is very difficult, if not impossible, for us to imagine something that does not occupy space. If a monad is non-spatial, it means that it does not occupy any location and position. Everything we know, from atom to star, does occupy a certain place, although in the case of atomic particles it is very difficult to determine exactly what place they occupy. The monad, on the other hand, cannot be located. It eludes our frame of reference.

Therefore, for us, it is an abstraction. It is therefore described as a mathematical point of consciousness: the circumference is nowhere, and the center is everywhere. In other words, *a monad is essentially boundless, knows no limitations, no size and occupies no place.*

Essential unit

The Pythagorean depiction of a monad is certainly not unique in the religious-philosophical world literature. On the contrary. One finds this doctrine everywhere, albeit often expressed differently. The *Tao Teh Ching* states: from the one comes forth the two, from the two the three, from the three the ten thousand things. Plato and Plotinus speak of the One, from which springs the multiplicity of manifested life. Plotinus in particular hangs all of his philosophy on the One. In the *Upanishads* from India you see the same picture, albeit that the One there is called Brahman.

Now words like Brahman and the One, or the Source, easily conjure up the image of a particular location: a place in space from which life flows. And that is a false image. As has been said, the monad does not occupy a place, and the life that flows from it is equally composed of monads.

Here we approach an essential aspect of monadic doctrine, namely that one monad is the source of everything in a universe, while everything in that universe is equally a monad. H.P. Blavatsky considers this point so important that she says, “Those unable to seize the difference between the monad — the Universal Unit — and the *Monads* or the manifested Unity, (...), ought never to meddle in philosophy, let alone the Esoteric Sciences.”⁽⁶⁾

There is, in other words, a supreme monad in a universe: the source from which other monads – which are copies of the first – arise. The first monad is hidden, dwelling in the immeasurable darkness of the unmanifested, while the ensuing monads in their egoic garments make a pilgrimage through the many manifested realms. (More on that pilgrimage later.)

In any case, we can say that according to Esoteric Philosophy, everything that exists, at its deepest background, at its deepest core, has a monad. Better put: everything that exists, every entity *is* a monad. You can therefore say that every point in a universe – no matter how big you imagine that universe to be – represents a monad. In doing so, you should not think of a universe as consisting only of the matter we can see or otherwise perceive. A universe consists of many worlds differing in etheric degree. And all those worlds are formed by, composed of monads. That is why monads are also called *cosmic atoms*; they build, form and *are* the infinite numbers of worlds and universes in the boundless SPACE. More about that SPACE later.

Leibniz

There are countless beings, countless phenomena, in all shapes and sizes. Therefore, there must also be countless monads. This doctrine was taught by the Western, highly intuitive philosopher Gottfried W. von Leibniz (1646-1716) in his most important book, *The Monadology*.⁽⁷⁾ It is not known where Leibniz got his ideas from. Some suspect that he adopted them from Giordano Bruno (1548-1600). It is also possible that he found the doctrine of the monad among the Pythagoreans themselves.

Leibniz argues that everything consists of units of different degrees of consciousness: monads. There is, he claims, an innumerable multitude of monads pervading the universe. Within that monad are properties that determine the past, present and future of each thing. Monads stand on their own but are in constant interaction with other monads. Moreover, Leibniz distinguishes *types of* monads: some are in a dreaming, numb state, others express a higher state of consciousness. We clearly see here a divergence of thought



from Theosophia. As will be shown below, Theosophia speaks of animal and human monads, for example. Those adjectives show what a monad expresses. It is at a certain stage of development based on karma, its self-created causes.

Nevertheless, Leibniz's importance to Western philosophy is very great. Indeed, the corollary of his teaching is that everything that exists is a living being. Leibniz recognized the multiplicity of life, and that multiplicity was rooted in, or emerged from, what Leibniz called the *Monas Monadum*, the Supreme or Divine Monad. The first monad is said to have created all the other monads. Those monads are copies or reflections of that universal monad. At this point, Leibniz does not completely break away from Christian dogmatics, for almost immediately the question arises as to where this Supreme Monad comes from.

Leibniz argues that the order of all those monads was predetermined by God, which he calls the *harmonia praestabilita*, (predetermined harmony). Our world, consisting of those countless monads, would therefore, according to him, be the best possible world, something later ironically mocked by the great French philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778). The question is, however, whether Voltaire understood Leibniz correctly, for this philosopher, as well

as Giordano Bruno, were far ahead of their time.

The Boundless

We cannot blame Leibniz for falling back on the Christian, creating, eternal and omnipotent god as a fallback to explain how those monads had come into existence. However, this idea is a philosophical incongruity, for how can you create something – in the sense of making something out of nothing – if you are eternal and infinite? Infinity logically implies no ends, no boundaries, and if you create something that was not there before, then obviously there was a boundary.

It is precisely the uncreated nature of monads that makes the doctrine of monads much more logical and acceptable to both the heart and the head. Nevertheless, that still leaves the question of how the cosmos could be formed by those innumerable sheaves of monads.

More than 150 years after Leibniz, this became clearer with the appearance of H.P. Blavatsky. In the prologue of her masterpiece, *The Secret Doctrine*, she posits in the first Fundamental Proposition that there is an omnipresent, eternal, boundless and unchanging PRINCIPLE. That PRINCIPLE is not a god, not a being. There is nothing concrete to say about it, because it is not something; *not anything in particular*. It therefore has no properties or qualities. It is the causeless cause of all that exists. It is the boundless, abstract, timeless SPACE, extending in all directions. Not *a* space, but SPACE per se. Even a word like 'extending' is wrongly chosen, because SPACE does not extend, but simply *is*. Everything that exists belongs to it. Every phenomenon, every being, every thing *is* IT.

Disappearing and appearing universes

That boundless SPACE, the second Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* teaches, is periodically the field of appearing and disappearing universes. Those universes can be imagined as vast as your consciousness can reach. Think of clusters of galaxies, or if you find that *too* incomprehensible, think of solar systems: a sun with its planets. Or think of a planet. It does not matter. As long as you realize that each such universe is the expression of a *monad*. So that monad alternates periods of activity and passivity. We speak of activity when a universe in that boundless SPACE manifests itself. And when it withdraws from the world of phenomena, we speak of rest. Activity and passivity, however, are relative concepts.

How do monads relate to the boundless SPACE? They fill SPACE. In a certain sense, they are SPACE.

We can gain some understanding of this if we realize that every universe is the expression of a monad. Indeed, a universe is a living being. And every being is a collaboration of monads, in which there is a hierarchical relationship. The top is formed by the monad that is most highly developed. You can therefore say with equal justification that each monad is a universe. Or perhaps better expressed: the deepest background of a universe is a monad. On top of that, every universe is made up of other universes – also monads – as we hope to make clear later.

The process of the coming into existence of a universe can only be expressed in metaphors. You can compare Boundlessness to an eternally burning cosmic fire. Each monad in that comparison is a spark of that fire. When that spark jumps of the fire, that universe appears. Although this comparison gives somewhat of a picture, it does not quite hold true, because in reality that spark never detaches from the fire. It remains a part of it. It is a flame that is eternally part of the cosmic fire, although it is constantly changing and growing.

Before this we already compared the boundless with an Ocean, and as soon as a vortex arises in it, there is the appearance of a universe. Realize that no drop is ever detached from the Ocean and is therefore as boundless as the Ocean itself. Yes, it *is* essentially that Ocean. There cannot be two boundlessnesses. Therefore, if every being is a monad, then every being at its heart is boundlessness itself.

Cooperation between monads

In SPACE, then, a monad, a universe, manifests itself. But that universal monad immediately enters into cooperation with countless other monads. It could not exist on its own. We can therefore fully agree with Leibniz when he speaks of the interaction of monads. This thought is the core of the third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, which speaks of the cooperation and interrelationships, the laws between all the monads in a universe.

Let us illustrate it with the example of our solar system. As soon as the solar monad prepares to manifest itself – we are talking about the birth of a star – it forms an electromagnetic field through which countless other monads are attracted. Think of the planets, which belong to that sun. Think of all the living beings that belong to a planet but also think of the atoms that compose the outer body of a solar being. That interaction and attraction between all those monads has to do with a similarity in characteristic, which attracts monads to each other. This is the process of

emanation we talked about earlier.

Hard to imagine? Apply the whole process to a human being, a human monad. When a human being is born, he draws to himself trillions of cells, all of which have a monad as their background. After all, all the living cells and atoms that compose his vehicle are monads. These living building blocks of the body belong to man. They have a corresponding characteristic. Monads can never manifest themselves as isolated entities. They always need others.

So every universe is composed of monads. And although there are countless numbers for our understanding, their number *within a universe* is nevertheless limited. Again, take our own body as an example. We cannot conceive of the vast hosts of living building blocks – monads – that compose our body, but their number is limited. Even more difficult is to imagine all the monads in a solar system or a galaxy, but again their number must be limited. Galaxies and suns may be eternal to our perception, but they too have a beginning and an end. Only when we speak of boundless SPACE are we talking about infinity and boundlessness, so also infinite numbers of monads.

Monads in different degrees of development

Now we talked above about solar monads and human monads. That is actually a wrong way of expression. Strictly speaking, we should be talking about a monad going through the expression phase of being human, or going through the sun phase, and so on. We have defined monads as centers of essentially limitless consciousness, but any manifested being, even a sun, is limited, no matter how broad its consciousness may be. So when you read in the theosophical literature about divine, spiritual, animal, vegetable monads, those adjectives do not indicate the monad *itself*, but the stage it is in. So monads are essentially identical to each other, but in expression they differ in degree of development.

This difference in development allows monads to manifest. Namely, the less developed monads function as vehicles for the more developed. Consider again man and his body. The human monad can enter this material world thanks to cooperation with those countless material monads that compose his body.

Now we use the word ‘manifest’ for lack of a better one, because actually the monad does not manifest. It can not. It is a mathematical point of consciousness, occupies no space, and every being, no matter how small or large, occupies a certain space.

In the process of appearance, a monad remains in its own monadic territory, but it emits a ray. That ray forms a vehicle, a body, or actually we should say bodies, which in themselves are also monads. So there is a wonderful cooperation. The monad uses those bodies for a while, until it no longer needs them and casts them aside. We then speak of death. The body disintegrates into its constituent building blocks, all of which, by the way, are also monads at their core. The monads themselves, however, do not die. They cannot die. How can a spark of eternity die! Only the cooperation between different monads stops for a certain period of time.

Monads give birth to other monads

The connection and cooperation between monads, as well as the fact that a monad projects from itself a stream of consciousness, means that a monad gives birth to other monads. Of course, those other monads are not *created*; after all, they have always been there. You could compare it to the seed that, once it becomes a tree, produces other seeds. Or seed of a flower that lies deep in the soil and is germinated by the sun in spring and grows into the outwardly visible plant. It is this process of emanation that can be found in the Tetractys: the *one*, from itself, gives rise to the *two*, from this comes forth the *three* and from this again the *four*, or the variety of external life. From a monad springs a multitude of other monads, like the branches on a tree. Each of these other monads is in turn the source of monads.

This creates a hierarchy of monads, identical at their core, but at different stages of development. The relatively highest monad could be called the parent-monad from which the child-monads derive their existence. But these child-monads in turn give birth to other monads and are thus also parent-monads.

Now do not take that ‘giving birth’ literally. Think of it as a magnetic field created by the parent-monad on which the child-monads can manifest.

Pilgrims

Each child-monad can, in the long, long time in which the relatively highest monad is manifested – think of the vortex in the Ocean – ‘work its way up’ to the level of that parent-monad. This is represented as a pilgrimage. This is why, in *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky calls a monad a pilgrim. She writes:

‘Pilgrim’ is the appellation given to our *Monad* (the two in

one) during its cycle of incarnations. It is the only immortal and eternal principle in us, being an indivisible part of the integral whole — the Universal Spirit, from which it emanates, and into which it is absorbed at the end of the cycle.⁽⁸⁾

Now when we think of a pilgrim, we think of a person who goes to a certain holy place. In a figurative sense, the child-monads do the same. They are on a pilgrimage to their parent, the monad who ‘brought them forth’. But always it turns out that when we talk about these highly spiritual and metaphysical matters, we simply do not have the right words to make the thought clear. Therefore, the word ‘pilgrim’ also deserves some explanation.

I think Mrs. Blavatsky chose this word because it expresses pictorially that we, human beings, in the many lives we have already lived, and the many lives we will still live, are becoming more and more aware of the unity of life. We will grow in consciousness stage by stage, evolving from one form to another. Thus we will connect, yes, become one, with the monad that ‘brought us forth’: our inner divinity.

In reality, however, the monad is not the pilgrim. How could it be? A monad is a center of consciousness that is essentially boundless. It is the ray that the monad has cast out that is on a pilgrimage. Is not that why Blavatsky speaks of ‘the two in one’? Is not that *Ātman* combined with *Buddhi*? *Buddhi* is the *two*, the projection of the *one*. And following the teachings of Pythagoras, the *two* will produce the *three*, then the *four*, and so the ray from the monad will penetrate deeper and deeper into the substance.

That projection from the monad we can call the ego or soul, or even better, the egos or souls. That ego-soul, as we said before, is in a certain stage of development. So when we talked before about human monad, we were actually talking about the egoity that has emerged from the monad. The ego-soul can increasingly bring into activity within himself the potencies, powers and abilities from the monad. When it has brought the divine aspect fully to fruition, it has ‘returned’ to its spiritual Home, where it once began its aeons-long pilgrimage as an unselfconscious God-spark — relatively begun, for absolute starting and ending points do not exist in Boundlessness.

What if we are one with the monad?

Our range of consciousness must be unimaginably grand, exalted and vast, when we have self-consciously reunited

with our monad. We will then have cosmic consciousness. We are at home in all parts of our solar system, or even the Milky Way galaxy. And then? Does the pilgrimage end? Perhaps even now it is dizzying when contemplating what monads are. But perhaps the wonderment becomes even greater if we add another element to the definition of the monad. Indeed, in his *Glossary*, Gottfried de Purucker says that a monad is indivisible *for us humans*. Speaking of the monad, he says that a monad is: “A spiritual entity which to us humans is indivisible; it is a divine-spiritual life-atom, but indivisible because its essential characteristic, *as we humans conceive it*, is homogeneity.”⁽⁹⁾

We did not want to withhold this last element from you, if only to prevent thoughts from crystallizing and creating a kind of dogmatic, supposedly absolute truth.

Of course, it is a bit of a shock when you think that you have just understood something about the indivisible, eternal and boundless monad, and then you hear that this is actually only a human perception. Again, how can we explain this?

Well, as grand and lofty as monads are, they are part of a universe, and every universe has a beginning and therefore an end. As difficult as it may be, but try to imagine the Milky Way as a living entity, an almost impossible task. The Milky Way contains an estimated 200 to 400 billion stars, has a diameter of about 20,000 light years and a thickness of about 6,000 light years. Its duration is unfathomable. Nevertheless, one day the Milky Way and the billions of star-beings that belong to it will also cease to exist on the external plane. All those monads will then ‘die’, not in the literal sense of course, but they will pass into another state. After all, our Milky Way is nothing but a ‘cosmic molecule’, a component or building block in immense clusters of galaxies. So even monads that have the lifetime equal to our Milky Way will one day leave this region. Then they will reach an even higher, even more divine stage of perfect union with the Boundless, to begin an even grander and loftier pilgrimage again after an immeasurably long period as an active individualized life or center of consciousness.

For us, that is very far beyond our horizon of consciousness. Nevertheless, it is good to realize this, because as soon as we think of absolute endpoints, our thinking crystallizes and dogmas arise. That is why the ancient Vedic sages constantly tried to express in their terms that there is always more. There is Ātman, the SELF, but there is also a Paramātmān, the Supreme SELF. Brahman is the highest deity of our hierarchy, but there is also a Parabrahman,

meaning beyond Brahman. Thus Gottfried de Purucker uses the term ‘monadic essence’, meaning even *more essential* than the monad itself. There are no boundaries in boundlessness.

Wonderment and paradox

The many descriptions of a monad may perhaps lead to confusion. That, however, is unnecessary. Instead, marvel at the mystery of the monad. This may inspire us to think further about this mystery and thus, step by step, gain more insight into the wondrous grandeur of LIFE. If you cannot reconcile certain ideas, realize that paradoxes are apparent contradictions that invite us to reflect. When we manage to go to a higher realm of consciousness, we see that everything is connected.

The definition of a monad as a mathematical point in boundless Space, whose circumference is nowhere and center everywhere, is not inconsistent with the definition that it is a divine-spiritual being. That being has learned everything there is to learn in our hierarchy and has therefore moved to a greater hierarchy. From there it projects a ray to the lower realms. The projection also consists of beings, that is, monads. These are at a certain stage of development and are therefore designated by the stage of development through which they are passing. That is why we can be called human monads.

We experience the monads as an ever-persistent, always constant, always impersonal and indivisible Unity. But as a being, a monad evolves on its own super-cosmic plane, even if we cannot imagine anything in this process. In deepest essence everything changes except for the Boundless Principle.

What is the significance?

Finally, what is the point of thinking about these metaphysical matters? How can they help us in the problems of our daily lives?

We think that a satisfactory answer to our life questions gives peace of mind. The thought that we have always been there and are constantly growing toward greater forms, toward greater wisdom and understanding, is an inspiring force in our lives. An image that satisfies head and heart, enables us to apply the universal laws in our own lives.

If you have an image of how majestic the cooperation between those billions of monads is – however imperfect that image may be – then it must have an impact on your own thought life, especially if you realize that this coopera-

tion can only exist because of the compassion and impersonal love that holds the whole of living beings together. A satisfactory answer stimulates spiritual development and inspires us to apply the actual Universal Brotherhood in our lives. Therefore, it is useful to think about this. Or to put it in the words of Katherine Tingley:

Thinking toward the unthinkable is a wonderful, spiritualizing force; one cannot think toward it without a disposition to either think more or feel more, without opening up the inner consciousness of man. And when that inner consciousness is awakened, the soul finds itself closer to the infinite laws, closer to THAT, or that Great Center that no words can express.⁽¹⁰⁾

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10. Katherine Tingley, 2 lectures preceding the *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*. (Source: <https://blavatskyhouse.org/literature/gottfried-de-purucker/fundamentals-of-the-esoteric-philosophy/>).

Questions & Answers

The elemental and divine kingdoms

There are three types of elemental kingdoms of nature. What are the differences between them?

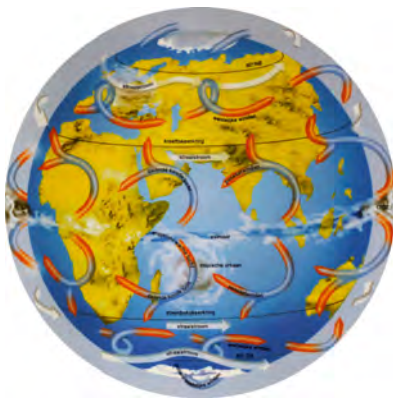
Answer

Before going into the differences between the elemental beings, it seems useful to give an explanation of what elementals are. By this we mean those beings who are on the lowest rungs of the ladder of Cosmic evolution. They are, as it were, the *beginners* on the path of development of consciousness. Therefore, in the usual enumeration of the ten kingdoms of nature, they are the three lowest, the least developed groups of beings. The further developed groups are respectively: the mineral kingdom, plant kingdom, animal kingdom, human kingdom and the three kingdoms of gods. All the nature kingdoms, by the way, are needed as essential parts within any Cosmic community of Life.

Every being, whether relatively advanced or not, is an expression of the One Boundless Life, is a 'drop' of the endless Ocean of Life, and therefore has boundless capacities within it. He makes these capacities gradually active, during his successive embodiments in the outer realms. This un-folding or un-wrapping of his dormant capacities proceeds in steps, in stages of evolution, and we call those stages of evolution 'kingdoms of nature'. So we must view these kingdoms of nature as the successive classes in a Cosmic school, which we pass through, one after the other. We cannot skip a class. We humans too

were once, extraordinarily long ago, elementals.

There is no 'dead matter' anywhere in the Cosmos, there are no 'inanimate forces', for what we call the substances and material forces of nature are the manifestations of elemental beings. We humans are constantly making use of elementals. We do so, for example, while we think – all thoughts are elementals – and during every action of our body. All electrical and magnetic forces, muscular forces, all mechanical forces take place *by means of* elementals — yet always guided and directed by higher beings. In the myths of all nations, the elementals are represented as 'nature spirits': think of the fairies, gnomes, djinns, water nymphs, trolls, and so on. If we do not guide them properly, these forces can 'get out of control', think for instance of devastating fires.



Elementals are very UNself-conscious beings. They slavishly follow the impulses of more advanced beings. That is why their behavior is predictable — think, by way of contrast, of a human being. A human is self-conscious and makes choices by using

his free will. He can react quite unexpectedly in a given situation. But an electric current or light beam behaves always in the same way, in equal circumstances.

If we want to imagine the type of consciousness of an elemental being, we must think of beings who have not yet developed anything – or hardly anything – of their dormant individuality, of their inherent individual character. They have yet no characteristic form of their own. Therefore, they can take any form and change that form at lightning speed.

The lowest elementals function in groups, somewhat comparable to the particles in a beam of light, or the particles in a stream of air or a flow of water.

They are called 'elementals' because they derive from one of the elements: earth, water, air, fire or ether (and there are two more, higher elements). The elements are the different types of cosmic substances. Do not take the words 'earth, water' etcetera literally, as if these were physical things, but think of different *characteristics*. They form the *substance* side of the Cosmos, but on more inner planes, not visible to our physical senses. They differ from one another in the degree in which they are ethereal or material. Now back to the question: what are the differences between the elemental kingdoms? They differ in the un-folding of their latent abilities. These are generally described by Gottfried de Purucker in the following way (*Esoteric Tradition, volume II*, p. 940):

- *First elemental kingdom*: ethereal and highly fluidic in type or char-

acter, with relatively unmanifest and unindividualized monadic corpuscles, or rather units, possessing a common vital organic existence.

- *Second elemental kingdom*: separation into droplets, so to say, of quasi-particularized entities which are nevertheless still held together in union by an identic vital stream or flow.
- *Third elemental kingdom*: beings yet more highly particularized, although still bound together by, and functioning in, a common vital organic existence.

Broadly outlined: the beings passing through the three elemental kingdoms become progressively less ethereal, expressing themselves more and more as separate, distinguishable particles. This development continues in the mineral kingdom, which will be the next step in their evolution.

Question

How can we recognize beings of the three kingdoms that are higher than humans?

Answer

The beings who have already fully passed through the human school of learning, and whom we can refer to as ‘gods’ or ‘dhyān-chohans’ or ‘cosmic buddhas’, are all characterized by their utterly suprapersonal, universal nature and vision. They realize, to an even greater degree than human buddhas do, that all beings in the Cosmos form a fundamental unity. They see even more deeply all the connections that exist between the beings in the Cosmos — and they live accordingly. Therefore, all their activities serve the welfare and inner growth of *the total Cosmic life*. They are the voluntary servants of the Law, the Law of Unity

and Compassion.

The scope of their consciousness is larger than that of the noblest human being: they are self-consciously active in the higher spiritual realms of the Cosmos and thus bear cosmic responsibilities that we as humans would not yet be able to bear. Like every being, the gods also operate by means of a body, but their bodies are composed of much more ethereal substance than ours. If we were able to perceive divine bodies anyway, we would experience those bodies as fields of energy, robes of light.

Can we recognize these beings? Can we as human beings interact with them and communicate with the ‘gods’? Yes, in principle we can. In fact, to some extent we make contact with our *inner* divinity, whenever we listen to our conscience or follow our noblest ethical impulses. We achieve that contact by focusing our thinking on noble, uplifting thoughts.

This contact with our inner divinity can become ever stronger, so much so that our thoughts and actions become permeated with it: that our whole life is permeated with the awareness of our oneness with all that lives. Then, the moment will come when we can self-consciously come into contact with beings of a higher kingdom of nature, comparable, for example, to the situation when we talk to a very wise person. Although, we will not ‘talk’ then, for the communication takes place quite differently.

Why is that possible? Because then we have unfolded the *divine* aspects of our thinking to a high degree. For our universal thinking aspects have the same characteristic as the consciousness of divine beings. You can compare it to the phenomenon of resonance as we know it in music, for instance: our thinking can then ‘vibrate’

with the divine tones. Although our *human* thinking is one or more octaves lower than the divine consciousness, resonance is still possible. Hence it is said that during the higher initiations, when the initiate activates his semi-divine capacities, he can ‘participate in the deliberations of the gods’. Because the equal can recognize the equal. He becomes one with his inner divinity for a shorter or longer time. It is this possibility to which Jesus’ statement “I and the Father are one” refers.

Can we humans recognize the distinction between the three successive kingdoms of the gods? This will be very difficult, because relatively speaking, from our human point of view, all the gods are perfect beings. Nor does the toddler see the difference in knowledge between his school teacher, the professor at the university and the Nobel Prize laureate. We do not discern the differences which do exist between gods: it is always pure light to us. Making such distinctions will only be possible when we are further along the Path.

Yet, what *all humans* can perceive from the gods is their fundamental influence on the orderly processes in the Cosmos, that we see all around us, in the form of the ‘laws of Nature’. We live and evolve *within their sphere of influence*. They form for us the basic harmonic patterns, the orderly course of the cosmic cycles, which give us the opportunities to grow in consciousness. They offer us *the chance* to evolve. So, these chances we must take ourselves: every being has free will, and this applies strongly to human beings. Each being must go the path of inner development, through all the kingdoms of nature, self-driven and self-chosen.

Work on with Nature

The Voice of the Silence by Helena P. Blavatsky states: “Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.”⁽¹⁾ There is clearly co-operation here. But what is meant by “Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance”?

Answer

In order to get a clearer picture, let us first address this question: what is the underlying principle, the essential characteristic of Nature, of the Cosmos? The Cosmos is a grand totality of living beings – every part is alive – arising from a Unity, a boundless Unity. Through all beings flows one and the same Life. And all these beings have a common purpose: to ensure, thanks to mutual help, that everyone can take steps forward in the unfolding, the *realization*, of their own inner divinity: elevating all beings from the illusions and problems of outer existence. Each time we participate in that fundamental cosmic endeavor, *we work on with Nature*.

Thus there is a unity, a connectedness, without boundaries. No being can live without all the others. There is an underlying *harmony*. At the leadership of the Cosmos are grand intelligences who, because they are relatively most advanced on the path of development, are comparatively pure expressions of harmony and universal compassion. Whoever cooperates with them, by pursuing the welfare of all that lives, cooperates with Nature.

The Law of Karma is an expression of the universal harmony mentioned before. Consider what this law of cause and effect is based on. Every action of ours, every thought or act of ours, exerts an influence on all other

beings in the Cosmos, that is, on the totality. And that totality responds by *perpetuating or restoring the balance*. The cause we have created evokes a reaction that has exactly the same character as our thought or act and is also equally powerful, and which after a shorter or longer time ‘bounces back’ on our life path. Then we can think of all possible kinds of causes and their corresponding consequences: noble, kind, wise causes evoke identical consequences. Neutral causes evoke neutral consequences, and foolish or selfish or dogmatic or aggressive causes also, sooner or later, evoke similar effects — in the form of human contacts or other situations that we will experience as disharmonious, giving us the opportunity to learn from these situations. This is how Karma works.

Which causes we create is always our own choice. We basically have free will. So our acts are our responsibility. We can always choose between unselfish ideas and self-centered tendencies. In the first case, we cooperate with Nature, because then we contribute our part *to the harmonious inner growth of humanity* — and the other beings of our Planet. In the second case, we choose to go against the harmony of Life, against our own higher Nature. The disharmony and suffering we produce in our surroundings, we once must compensate ourselves. Such is the Law of Harmony, of Karma.

If you work on a certain project in a self-forgetful way, so, if you are not concerned about the possible fame, the honor, the promotion or the praises of your colleagues, then you are not hindered by all kinds of personal obstacles. Work goes easier and you can do more for others. If you do want to get promoted or claim all

credits, you make it harder for everyone, including yourself. “Will the boss like this?” “Will I get promoted?” You can not sleep at night and it will not make your work any better. Moreover, all those personal thoughts will in turn trigger counter-reactions; you create competition. You place yourself in the headwind.

Do we work on with Nature? Then “it will regard us as one of its creators, and make obeisance.” With this somewhat symbolic expression, H.P. Blavatsky meant that by every selfless and well-considered action we have the wind in our back: we have all the forces of the Cosmos with us. This is not to say that those forces are going to solve all our problems for us – we still have to do that ourselves – but that we evoke helpful, cooperative events, for example, in the form of an inspiring book that we suddenly see lying somewhere, or a valuable hint or warning from a fellow human being, or an amount of inner peace that allows us to come into contact with our higher Self.

All this is true in all circumstances, but we must remember that we also have to work out the karmic consequences we have created in the past (positive, neutral or negative). Yet, with each inner step forward we take, we will be able to deal with all situations more wisely and harmoniously!

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Can you die before your time?

Sometimes a person is said to die ‘before his time’. But does such a thing exist, assuming karma? If someone

dies in a car accident or by suicide, is that 'before his time'?

Answer

Everything is karma. But karma is not fate. You end up in a certain situation because of causes – thoughts and actions – that you created yourself. How you act in that situation, is a matter of free will. Sometimes certain causes may lead to such consequences that your choice is limited. For example, if you are born with a deadly disease, or if you are robbed and killed by a thief.

Well, by the expression 'dying before your time', people probably mean that a person dies at a young age. To the feelings of his friends and acquaintances, he has died 'way too early'. Especially when someone is young and seems to have a promising life, but then dies by an illness or accident, it feels unjust.

Now indeed, everything is karma. As for illness, a young person may have created some discordant causes in a previous life, so that in this life he dies early because of an illness. Do not think about this in terms of good or evil, for it may be that because of excessive effort for an ideal, he became very unbalanced in his consciousness and therefore dies young in his new reincarnation. For his family and loved ones, of course, this is a great source of suffering. They deserve our support. For the person in question, such a very early death is certainly not dramatic. In his short life, a karmic disharmony has been restored and possibly an important inner blockage removed, making further growth possible in his next life. It is likely that he will reincarnate again soon. He had only few spiritual experiences in his short life. His devachan – the state after death in which spiritual experi-

ences are processed – will correspondingly be very short. But remember also: there are countless variations in causes of illness and in the length and state of the rest period after death, for each person is unique.

Another case is when someone is killed by an accident. Every person is born with a certain amount of life energy. This portion of life energy, of course, also has everything to do with the type of life you lead. You can utilize that energy in a harmonious or disharmonious way. In the latter case you will be exhausted and die sooner than in the former case. Anyway, in natural cases, a person's consciousness will only withdraw and the body consequently die, when that life energy has been consumed.

So what happens to a person who has died in a car accident or some other accident, when his life energy had not yet been fully used up? In these cases, too, a person is said to have died too soon. Such a person will spend the time during which he would have lived on earth if he had no accident, in an 'intermediate sphere' or 'astral sphere': more ethereal than the physical world, but less ethereal than the relatively spiritual devachan, mentioned before. And he would particularly reside in that part of the astral sphere, in which deceased people leave behind their lower principles, such as emotions and especially desires. We therefore also speak of that special part as the desire world: *kāma loka* in Sanskrit. The period in which such a prematurely deceased person stays there, is exactly as long as his life on earth would have lasted if he had not had an accident. In most cases he will be in a quiet state of vague dreams until the life energy is exhausted and the dying process continues.

The case is different when someone has died by execution or suicide. These people also enter that intermediate state. Unlike someone who died by accident, depending on how they experienced the situation, they awaken to a certain degree of self-consciousness in that intermediate state. The last thoughts before dying are an important factor. A resistance fighter or a victim of a tyrannical regime who thinks of his family and friends full of love, just before his execution, will experience that 'desire world' very differently than someone who dies full of resentment and hatred toward the world.

In general, death is never to be feared. It is a period in the cycle of life when the experiences and lessons learned on earth are woven into your consciousness. Thus you return to your new incarnation rested and a little wiser, to continue your pilgrimage to perfection.

Agenda

Lectures and studies on 150 years Theosophy

On Sundays from 19:30 to appr. 21.00 hrs, from April 13th 2025 CEST.

All meetings start with a lecture. This part can be followed life-stream via YouTube or via Zoom. The second part is the study, in which we exchange insights on the topic, to enlarge our understanding of Theosophy. This part can only be followed via Zoom. We advise you to sign up for the study in time, on our website blavatskyhouse.org. Then we can send you the link beforehand.

18 million years of Theosophia, 150 years of Theosophy

2025 marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Theosophical Society. At least six generations have worked worldwide since 1875 to replace old, limited visions and prejudices with new, broader, more universal visions.

Our team of speakers has chosen an active way to address this. Five lecture series in 2025 have the theme '18 Million Years of Theosophia; 150 Years of Theosophy'. They form one continuous lecture, so to speak, in which the stimulation of humanity's growth is followed step by step. From the most universal network of spiritual world reformers, to the small social improvements and freedoms, which everyone now takes for granted but which were fought for each time by a small group of pioneers.

We hope to show the organic interconnection between all these larger and smaller activities, so that you can discover for yourself if, and what, you yourself would like to contribute to this spiritual awakening process of humanity. And one thing is certain: everyone can.

The coming lecture series on this theme are:

Series 7: H.P. Blavatsky's role in transforming the world mentality

Ideas rule the world. Our thinking habits determine how we treat each other. And our thinking is determined by our outlook on life. At the time of Helena Blavatsky, the intellectual part of humanity could be divided into two



groups: a superstitious, dogmatic and fanatical group, and one that knew no reality other than the physical world and had the sole purpose of living as comfortably as possible. Blavatsky's gigantic task was to provide an alternative: a logic-based, unifying and ethical philosophy of life that answers all life's questions. One that, if applied, leads to a profoundly different, inclusive society. Introducing new thinking takes many generations. Will we succeed in keeping these new thoughts alive and spreading them further?

13-04 The spiritual heart of every being

The starting point in the new thinking is that every being has, or rather is, a spiritual core. We are a spiritual being temporarily residing in this material world. The question now is whether we should believe this or that we can experience it? Are we able to know this ever-present, eternal, infinite essence within us? The Theosophia, as brought to us by H.P. Blavatsky, gives us instructions on how to experience our true essence.

20-04 From: the infinity of Life – To: vegetarianism, cremation, abolition of capital punishment

Thinking about the infinity of life opens up philosophical and religious horizons. It brings a spiritualizing power. This inspiration however, must be 'translated' into everyday practice. All our habitual patterns will change because of it. We will look differently at life and death. Death will no longer instill fear, and yet we will respect life more than ever. Not only human life, but also that of animals.

27-04 Universal Brotherhood

Universal Brotherhood is not a human sentiment but based on the spiritual background of all that lives. In all Wisdom Traditions, of all cultures past and present, this is the core message being taught. Everything is ONE in its spiritual core. Therefore, it is not a matter of becoming one but expressing the idea of Universal Brotherhood.

How can we activate this Universal Brotherhood within ourselves and make it a living power in the world?

04-05 From: humanity, a unity – To: Peace Conferences, United Nations, decolonization

Universal Wisdom shows that humanity is a unity. Keeping this idea alive is the challenge. If we could reinforce the idea of humanity as unity, peace conferences and the UN would also become more effective and we would be better able to work toward lasting peace. Then the ideal of nations would no longer be their own self-interest, but the world's interest. In this lecture, we want to discuss how we can sustainably secure the spirit of the idea of humanity as unity.

Series 8: H.P. Blavatsky's role in transforming the world mentality

11-05 Freedom of thought and conscience

The theosophical movement has always promoted independent thought and freedom of conscience with great vigor, in the world. Prove all things, hold fast what is good! But an 'I wish to be able to do just what I like'-mentality continually leads to disharmony and breaking down of community awareness. So, what is wise freedom?

18-05 From: the equality and unique function of all beings – To: animal protection and abolition of slavery, racism, caste system, child labor

What is the true cause of all modern forms of oppression and superiority, such as racism and the greedy exploitation of people and animals? Inspired by the Universal Wisdom that H.P. Blavatsky gave to the world, how can we eliminate those causes? As individuals and as community? Equality and the unique function of all beings, as these are explained by Theosophy, will prove profound keys to another mentality.

25-05 From: consciousness as the cause of the phenomenal world – To: a new foundation for science

That life or consciousness is the cause of the phenomenal

world – the basis of Theosophia – is still not commonplace to this day. Although there are exceptions, this is certainly true in the domain of science. Yet this basis is promising, as many phenomena can be more fundamentally and easily understood. But, even more importantly, it also provides a basis for morality. True science assumes the unity of all life and strives to improve its well-being.

01-06 Compassion as a universal way of living

The teachings that Helena Blavatsky brought, can sometimes seem complicated and abstract. However, appearances are deceptive, for without exception they can be traced back to the core: compassion. Compassion is always central. It is the keynote and *raison d'être* of the Theosophical Society. But where does compassion come from? Why is it more than sympathy, more than simply 'being kind to others'? For those who fathom the depth of what compassion really is, it will naturally become a universal way of living.

Series 9: Contributing to 2000 years future of Theosophy

08-06 Keeping the IDEALS OF HUMANITY ensouled

15-06 Keeping the FUTURE OF HUMANITY protected

22-06 The mission of H.P. Blavatsky
And how do WE continue her work?

29-06 Theosophical Society Point Loma (TSPL)
The magical power of working in a group

This information can also be found on our website,
<https://blavatskyhouse.org/lectures/>

International Theosophy Conferences (ITC)

Announcement of the theme of the 2025 conference:

Celebration of 150 years of modern Theosophy

Date: 8 August 2025 – 12 August 2025

www.theosophyconferences.org

I.S.I.S. Foundation

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

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



Why this journal is called *Lucifer*

Lucifer literally means Bringer of Light.

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

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

For these people this journal is written.

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

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

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