

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

We are always in balance, but is it the balance we want?

The Mystic relationship between disciple and Teacher

**The secret behind the Sermon on the Mount - part 2
Do not resist evil**

Can astrology predict?

**LAWS and laws
How do we translate cosmic Laws into human laws?**



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/

Cover illustration:

The Buddha is teaching his disciples. Gandhara, 2nd-3rd century AD.

Source: Ethnological Museum, Berlin.

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Part 1 of this series demonstrated that the ethical ideas in the Sermon on the Mount originate from a Buddhist sutra. It also discussed the Beatitudes, which turned out to be qualities that disciples should attain in their inner world. Furthermore, it showed that the God in the Sermon on the Mount is the highest aspect in every human being.

The article below delves deeper into the task of the apostles, the disciples on the path of consciousness expansion.

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In *Lucifer* we published a series of five articles on the theosophical background of astrology. This article is intended to help readers to form a coherent overall picture of it.

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Editorial

Our era seems to be addicted to violence. Even if you only skim the newspapers, you are confronted with all kinds of violence, ranging from cage fights and violent crimes to wars that claim hundreds of thousands of victims. How can we stop this violence?

Twenty centuries ago, we already received teachings on how to do this. It is explained in the second article on *The Sermon on the Mount*. Never try to overcome evil with evil. The law of karma, which is undeniably intertwined with this ethical principle, makes it clear that this is the only way we can break the cycle of violence.

The law of karma is a very important key to ethics. Because every cause always leads to a consequence that is similar in nature, we are always in balance. But is it the balance we want? The article *We are always in balance, but is it the balance we want?* provides the answer.

Karma is not the only universal Law. There are more cosmic laws. How do they relate to the human laws that are meant to ensure a just society? The article *Laws and laws* sheds some light on this.

In this issue of *Lucifer – the Light-bringer*, you will also find the fifth and last article on Astrology. It explores whether Astrology can teach us anything about the future. Furthermore, the question is raised as to whether it actually makes sense to know future events.

Following this article, a coherent, concise overview is provided of the main theosophical teachings which have been applied in the five articles on Astrology that we have published in our magazine.

The article on the Sermon on the Mount is, in fact, an example of how a Teacher instructs his disciples. Throughout the ages, the great sages in the Mystery Schools have always taught their disciples according to very ancient principles. Who was eligible for such instruction? And why is the relationship between disciple and Teacher so special? The article *The mystic relation between disciple and Teacher* explores this topic in depth.

Finally, in our QA section, we answer the question of what theosophical education entails.

Those who carefully study the articles in this issue of *Lucifer* will come to realize that the violence so characteristic of our current world can be transformed into peacefulness. A peaceful and just world is not a utopia. To achieve this, however, we must transform our thoughts and actions and, based on a sense of unity, develop a compassionate mindset.

The editorial staff of *Lucifer – the Light-bringer* considers this its highest goal.

We look forward to your comments and questions. We respond to every email.

Editors



Photograph: Carla Kogelman.

We are always in balance, but is it the balance we want?

Key thoughts

» Karma, the Law of cause and effect can also be called the great Law of balance. The power of Nature reacting upon the impact of our energy, brings about a balance. But we may not always be happy with this balance. Yet it is a balance we have built up ourselves, which we are at that moment.

» The challenge is to learn immediately from the small signals – the small counterforces we experience – and to restore the harmony.

» *We ourselves* must do something if we want to change the position we are in. Ascending to higher planes in our consciousness, means that we must overcome all imbalances on the lower planes. We need to ennoble our lower aspects.

» Through our thoughts, we are constantly influencing the balance. Thinking, therefore, is not toll-free.

Karma is the great law of dynamic equilibrium. What do we mean by that? And what important conclusions can we draw from it? If we are not satisfied with the balance we have created, how can we give that balance a different, nobler character?

Karma, the law of cause and effect

Karma is one of the most well-known laws of Theosophia, the Universal Wisdom. In Eastern wisdom traditions and in many other traditions as well, it is a familiar concept: the law of cause and effect.

Evidently, karma has also become a popular term in the West over the past 100 to 200 years: this word is used in almost every language and is listed in many Western dictionaries. Whether it is used in the correct sense, is a valid question. It has become so popular that many people use it as a catchphrase when something unexpected happens to them: then it is 'my karma' or, in someone else's case, 'your karma'. It is often a synonym for: 'I do not know why this is happening to me.' But we can say that in the West – and unfortunately in many other cultures as well – karma has lost much of its meaning, or perhaps never *had* a deeper meaning, from the beginning.

The word 'karma' represents an insight, a universal law. If we really understood this universal law, we would behave differently in many cases. See the article 'Do we force people into selfishness? – Yes... but let me explain why' in *Lucifer – the Light-bringer* of June 2025.⁽¹⁾

The most well-known explanation of the word is *the law of cause and effect*: every action has a consequence. Every consequence we experience, has a cause. Every event, everything that happens, is the result of a previously performed action.

This is the most simple explanation we know. This way of thinking is also followed in science. Through research, scientists try to determine cause and effect. They want to find the cause of each phenomenon, to be able to record it in a formula.

Even this simple explanation of the concept of karma can give us much to think about. It encourages us to reflect on the actions we take, because we realize that a consequence

will follow. Often, we know that consequence as well: if we crack an egg into a frying pan and bake it, we know we will get a fried egg. But unfortunately, many people are not yet convinced that this same law applies in all areas. We find a much more complete explanation of karma in G. de Purucker's *Occult Glossary*:

This is a noun-form coming from the root *kri* meaning 'to do', 'to make'. Literally *karman* means 'doing', 'making', 'action'. But when used in a philosophical sense, it has a technical meaning, and this technical meaning can best be translated into English by the word 'consequence'. The idea is this: When an entity acts, he acts from within; he acts through an expenditure in greater or less degree of his own native energy. **This expenditure of energy, this outflowing of energy, as it impacts upon the surrounding milieu, the Nature around us, brings forth from the latter perhaps an instantaneous or perhaps a delayed reaction or rebound.** Nature, in other words, reacts against the impact; **and the combination of these two – of energy acting upon Nature and Nature reacting against the impact of that energy – is what is called Karman, being a combination of the two factors.** Karman is, in other words, essentially a chain of causation, stretching back into the infinity of the past and therefore necessarily destined to stretch into the infinity of the future. It is unescapable, because it is in universal Nature, which is infinite and therefore everywhere and timeless; and sooner or later the reaction will inevitably be felt by the entity which aroused it. (...) Karman is in no sense of the word Fatalism, on the one hand, nor what is popularly known as 'Chance', on the other hand.⁽²⁾

For a deeper understanding, I have highlighted a few principles in bold above. I will elaborate on these principles to arrive at as the most accurate picture as possible. We are thus the result of an infinite series of causes and effects, of actions and reactions. Through our reactions, the consequences in turn serve as causes, and so on. How we react to the consequences we encounter, determines whether we break a self-repeating chain of action and reaction or not: we do the latter by stepping out of our habitual patterns and by looking at the situation differently.

A closer look at karman: the great law of balance

If we read the above carefully, we see that action and reaction – the energy of the personal action and the energy

of Nature's reaction to it – maintain a balance. Because, whatever situation we find ourselves in, it is always the exact result of what we have done. So, it is the balance between our own action and the reaction of the environment surrounding us. In fact, this is how everything is kept in balance. If this were not the case, we would get a highly unbalanced situation because then our actions would not be followed by corresponding reactions, which are necessary to be able to learn.

The power of Nature mentioned above, which through its reaction provides a counterforce to our action, brings about a balance. That balance occurs not only in the external realm, but also in the other realms of our *being* where we are active, such as our mental realm. As you may know, Theosophy often uses a threefold model. We humans consist of a spiritual part, a mental part and a physical part: three realms that work together and in which we produce actions and reactions. It should be clear that these three parts are not separate from one another: they are inextricably linked and influence one another. So, we must not look solely at the physical or perceptibly manifested part. The mental realm is in fact much more important.

Two important ideas can be derived from this. There is *always* a balance through action and reaction, between man and Nature. And this balance through action and reaction applies simultaneously in multiple realms of consciousness.

But we may not always be happy with this balance, because it does not meet our personal expectations. Yet, it is a balance we have built up ourselves, which we *are* at that moment. To give an example: someone repeatedly goes to bed far too late because he loves spending time with his friends in a café. As a result, his resistance weakens and he catches the flu. Catching that flu is a state of balance that this man has created himself by constantly going to bed late, and which forces him to take bed rest.

If we realize that karma as 'action and reaction' is an inevitable process – something that occurs at all times and under all circumstances – then we realize that we cannot escape the consequences. We can, however, postpone these consequences through our actions. But even then, you do not escape them: you merely temporarily push back the consequences. That is not wise because this will always cause additional consequences. As a result, the situation becomes more difficult, and the consequences will have an even greater effect. We have learned nothing from it and continue to create the same causes, thereby generating more of the same consequences.

What do we mean by balance and harmony?

In light of the above, we often speak of the balance, the *equilibrium* (derived from the Latin, from *aequus* ‘equal’, and *libra* ‘balance’) of action and reaction as a dynamic equilibrium. But this equilibrium in causes and their effects is not the same as a physical or mechanical balance (the precursor to the scales) as it was used in the past. It is much more than that.

To explain this, we recall the theosophical principle: our consciousness, our thinking, is the force behind the outer human being. Our thoughts determine our actions. So, when we speak of a dynamic equilibrium, we must look above all at the characteristic(s) of the *thoughts* that have led to our outward deeds. What consequences do they have? Bear in mind that karma, action and reaction, also takes place in the mental realms and not only in the physical realms. That makes the comparison much more complicated. The question, then, is: what do we influence with our thinking in the *mental* realm? Our power of thought is not held back by physical walls or doors. Its influence extends to all beings active in the same realm of thought, consciously or unconsciously.

As thinkers, we have built up a *dynamic harmony* within our composite nature, in relation to the environment of which we are a part. We can compare it to this: perhaps you have seen a picture or a video of a steel ball floating between two magnets. That steel ball hangs at exactly such a distance from those two magnets that the ball is in equilibrium with the forces exerted by the magnets. If you try to move the ball, you feel a counterforce that keeps the ball in its place.

We can call this a dynamic equilibrium, or *dynamic harmony*, which involves our threefold nature, comprising a spiritual, mental, and physical aspect. The dictionary offers the following explanation: *harmony is consonance, the fitting together of elements that form a pleasant whole; harmony of colors and forms*. We must make this remark, however: the dictionary gives the word harmony a positive connotation, but we may also find ourselves in a situation that we experience as harmonious, yet which is not so in light of the law of cause and effect. For example, we may feel good when we have accumulated a lot of material possessions, but we will certainly lose those possessions sometime. Or, for instance: in a country, wealth is very poorly distributed. There are the super-rich and people who are poverty-stricken. But this unjust situation is the result of the fact that both the poor and the rich, in their thinking and actions, regard the status quo of that country as an un-

shakable given and see no need to change it. The unjust caste system in India is a clear example of this.

How do we deal with this knowledge? When we realize that a reaction is coming – call it a counterforce – then this counterforce of Nature gives us the message that we are going against the greater harmony of Nature. The big question is: what do we do with that signal? We can draw the conclusion from that small counterforce that we are disrupting the balance. Then we see it as an important lesson that gives us the opportunity to improve ourselves. If we do not improve ourselves and continue the same path, the counterpressure will increase. The price we must pay to maintain that situation will increase. For example, if a colleague makes a few comments about your behavior, you can ignore them. Then the problem becomes bigger. You can also take those comments to heart.

Therein lies the challenge: to learn immediately from the small signals, the slight imbalance, a bit of disharmony, and to restore harmony. *Learning lessons* is another way of saying: *growing* — preferably *spiritual growth*, improving our insights, thinking differently. For after all, our thinking is the basis for all our actions and lays the foundation for who we are.

Examples of balance, ‘rising’ and ‘descending’

To better understand the concept of balance, we wish to give a few practical examples. Examples can be dangerous if taken absolutely but let us give it a try.

Think of a hot air balloon floating in the air or a diver floating in the water: both are examples of balance. If we want to rise, we must become lighter; we must drop some ballast; and if we want to descend, we must ensure that we become proportionally heavier. The point is to understand that *we ourselves* must do something if we want to change the position we are in. We must then bring about a different balance. This always involves consequences for our *entire* composite being. We cannot gain deeper insight without overcoming some of our attachment to the lower realms.

The hot air balloon and the diver are just examples. One can think of many more examples. The point is to recognize that, as far as our Karma in our field is concerned, we are *constantly* in balance. That can be a tough conclusion to accept, especially if we are unhappy in our current state. What, then, must we do to get out of that state? We do so by making ourselves lighter, from a karmic perspective. This sounds simple, but often it is not through deliberate

self-conscious actions that we came in a heavy karmic state. This stresses the importance to get insight in the thought process and the different thinking characteristics of our mind, and to monitor our thinking. There are many theosophical resources available to gain further insight into this, including our public lectures and our course *Universal Wisdom* (see our website: blavatskyhouse.org).

Changes in the karmic balance never happen in leaps and bounds. Karmic reactions do not suddenly become twice as heavy. This is a gradual process. And here is the key: what small, subtle signals have we missed?

Greater insight into our situation makes us realize that we may have much more work to do than we first thought. This is because our insight has grown. It is a favorable sign. We see more, but we are still in the same karmic situation.

What happens if we become more unselfish or more selfish?

Any change in the current equilibrium we occupy, in our karma, has certain karmic consequences. If we become more selfish, we ‘descend’ as it were, in our example of the balloon or diver. Then we make ourselves coarser. If we

become more unselfish, we ‘ascend’: then we become lighter, more spiritual. In the latter case, we build a new balance on a higher, more spiritual plane.

Ascending to higher planes means that we must first have overcome all imbalance on the lower planes. To maintain control over our harmony, over our balance, while *ascending* (that is, gaining more insight, becoming less self-centered), we need to ennoble our lower aspects. The opposite is also true: when we ignore our insights and become more selfish, we will thereby simultaneously diminish our active use of our higher aspects, by closing ourselves off from them, increasingly. Both changes have major consequences for who we are.

The disadvantage of the examples given above is, that you get the strong impression that changing *yourself* is your first task, but that is certainly not the intention. On the contrary: we can also realize, in the light of Universal Brotherhood, that if we help our environment – to which we belong karmically – to improve itself with our grown insights, we will then achieve a better state *for everyone*. Improving the state of balance can be achieved by changing only yourself, thereby improving your position relative to our environment, or by trying to change the environment along with our growing insights, so that we all come



into a better balance together. In one of her articles, H.P. Blavatsky puts it very simply: “*Ask yourself with every decision you make: what does it mean for the whole?*”

Start at the source: what enters our thinking and why?

This issue of karmic balance is as old as humanity itself. That is why, in all manifestations of Theosophia (which is the origin of the many religions and philosophical systems), guidelines and sources of inspiration can be found to make us more suited, more spiritual, and lighter, so that we can help others more effectively.

Think for example of the Pāramitās and the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, and the Ten Commandments so familiar to us. If everyone would start to observe the sixth Commandment, ‘thou shalt not kill’, the world would look entirely different; certainly, humans and animals would be very grateful to us. These advises can be found in all major religions and philosophies.

Thinking, therefore, is not toll-free. Through our thoughts, we are constantly influencing the balance. Therefore, each time you have a wish or a choice to make, ask yourself what your thoughts mean for the greater whole. What force am I invoking that, in the mental realms, will find its way into the thoughts of my fellow human beings? Which weaker brother is influenced by it?

G. de Purucker describes the deeper layers of karma in this quote:

Its [Karma] action is unerringly just, for being a part of Nature’s own operations, all karmic action ultimately can be traced back to the Kosmic Heart of Harmony which is the same thing as saying pure consciousness-spirit. The doctrine is extremely comforting to human minds, inasmuch as man may carve his own destiny and indeed must do so. He can form it or deform it, shape it or misshape it, as he wills; and by acting with Nature’s own great and underlying energies, he puts himself in unison or harmony therewith and therefore becomes a co-worker with Nature as the gods are.⁽³⁾

References

1. Herman C. Vermeulen, ‘Do we force people into selfishness? – Yes ... but let me explain why.’ Article in: *Lucifer – the Light-bringer*, number 2, June 2025, p. 59-62. (Source: <https://blavatskyhouse.org/magazine/magazine-archive/>; visited on June 17th 2026.)
2. G. de Purucker, *Occult Glossary*. 1st edition. Point Loma, Theosophical University Press, 1933, p. 89-90. (Source: <https://blavatskyhouse.org/literature/gottfried-de-purucker/>; visited on June 17th 2026.)
3. See ref. 2, p. 90-91.



The Mystic relationship between disciple and Teacher

The great Sages have always educated disciples in their Mystery Schools. Who were these disciples? And what made their relationship *mystical*?

Key thoughts

- » Learning is the unfolding of faculties from within, that are already latently present.
- » Through inspiration, trust, and by being the example, the Teacher creates the necessary sphere in which this process can take place.
- » When compassion is the sole motive, the process of development can take place accelerated under the guidance of a personal Teacher or Guru.
- » This mystical relationship has everything to do with the disciples' own inner Teacher, whose active presence must first manifest itself in the disciples' consciousness before the outer Teacher appears.

Throughout the history of its evolution, humanity has never been left on its own. There have always been great Sages, world Teachers, who have served as guides, pointing humanity in the direction where to find the knowledge and wisdom within ourselves to make our evolutionary development as harmonious as possible.

These Sages in their turn are not alone in this endeavor; they never act on their own and do not appear out of nowhere. For they are, in fact, messengers sent from the Great Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion. This Lodge is a spiritual hierarchy consisting of a cooperation of noble beings, Bodhisattvas, and Buddhas who have attained profound wisdom and knowledge, not for themselves, but to pass this wisdom on to humanity. Out of compassion, they turn around on the Inner Path, sacrificing their own progress to teach those following behind, encouraging them to go the same upward path. This spiritual cooperation comprises of many degrees of Teachers and disciples at all levels or realms of consciousness. Like a chain of

interconnected links, they form the channel through which the Universal Wisdom is passed on from the symbolic Heart of the Universe to humanity. And every link in this line simultaneously serves as both Teacher and student. As a student, when he is focused upwards in that stream to receive instruction from a higher consciousness, and he serves as a Teacher, when he passes on downwards what has been received. As you can imagine, this is not just any teacher–student relationship as we know it in daily life, but one that, in terms of profound wisdom, devotion, unconditional loyalty and responsibility, rises far above it. Therefore, one can truly speak of a sacred and mystic relationship.

What is learning?

But before we delve further into this, let us first take a closer look at what learning is, because understanding the learning process is essential to grasping the relationship between Teacher and pupil. In short, learning is the unfolding, or development of inner faculties. Faculties that are already latently present within us, oth-

erwise, we would never be able to un-fold them. Learning is therefore not a matter of adding something from outside, but of developing *from within* through one's own effort.

Socrates expressed this beautifully with his statement that learning is not the filling of a vessel, but the kindling of a flame.⁽¹⁾ This flame is part of an infinite inner fire, of which we currently express only a little spark.

But we have to do the work ourselves: no one can become wise for someone else; no one can give you vision, logic, or insight. This is something we must build up one hundred percent ourselves. If we do not do this, and blindly accept what someone tells us, without thinking it over or testing it, it is simply a matter of blind faith, and we will not learn anything.

And even though we must do the work ourselves, we can still get help, provided it is done in the right way. And that brings us to the role of the teacher, because what is that right way? In other words, what characterizes a true Teacher?

How do you recognize a true Teacher?

First of all – because a true Teacher knows that growth comes from within – his approach will always be entirely focused on the development of the student's own inner qualities. This means he will never demand from him to accept something based on authority. Nor will he ever try to persuade, but he will always appeal to the student's own independent thinking, so that he has the opportunity to develop his own insight and wisdom.

Socrates therefore called himself a 'spiritual midwife', aiding his pupils with the birth of the soul. He did this by asking the right questions, by which he merely pointed his students in the right direction where they could find the answers within themselves.

But in order to be such a spiritual midwife, it is essential for the Teacher to be the living example himself. If he wishes to awaken certain inner qualities in the student, he must possess or embody these qualities *himself*, to make it resonate in the other as well. A Teacher may know and say a great deal, but if he is not the living example of what he teaches, it will have little effect, because it will not resonate. And this resonance works best when sender and receiver are attuned to one another. The better the Teacher is able to attune at the student's level, the better the communication and transference of what is being taught.

And perhaps most important of all is that a true Teacher has inner confidence in the student's potential, knowing

that everything is already latently present within the student. It may take a shorter or longer time, but the Teacher knows that which is fundamentally present within, will manifest itself eventually.

And because the Teacher's confidence is sincere, the student will also experience it as such, thereby allowing the Teacher to create the all-important atmosphere for the student. As a result, the student will feel completely at ease and to ask questions and speak out freely, without fear of making mistakes. The Teacher does not reprimand but instead helps and encourages the awakening of the student's insight.

Do we need teachers?

But... you might ask yourself, if all growth comes from within, do we then really need teachers? The theoretical answer to this question would be: no, in potential we have everything within us, and as we gain experience and learn our lessons throughout our lives, these potentials would eventually come to expression over time. However, this



A painting from China's Qing Dynasty, in which Confucius (right) shows Gautama the Buddha (Buddhism, which is relatively young in China) to Lao Tzu.

would take an eternity. Take for example someone on a deserted island who has to figure out the Earth's position in the solar system without any education. He might eventually succeed in this through his own observations, but that would, of course, take much longer than if he received help with it.

Without teachers, the unfolding of our inner faculties would take infinitely longer, which means we would remain that much longer ignorant, which in a certain way implies that much longer of suffering. This last point in particular is an important reason why, from the motive of compassion, the theosophical answer to the question of whether we need teachers is: yes, we do need Teachers. Moreover, from the perspective of compassion – based on the unity of all life – teaching is the most natural thing there is. It is the innate urge of those who are more advanced, to help those who are less advanced to keep up, to be able to follow their steps. Teaching diminishes differences and fosters greater harmony.

That is why we find teaching as a universal principle at all levels: from the animal kingdom, where parents teach their young how to find food, all the way up to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, about whom we read in the scriptures that they too have their teachers, of an even higher level. Celestial or Dhyāni-Buddhas, who in their turn also

have teachers of again a higher level, and so on, to infinity.

Interrelation between our inner faculties and outer Teacher

But between these two – our inner, still dormant faculties and the outer Teacher who stimulates us to awaken them – something remarkable is going on. For there is a close interaction or interrelation between both. To explain this interaction, it is important to look first at what we exactly are as human beings, and where our latent faculties come from. For we are in fact more than what we in general refer to as 'I'. And those inner faculties do not just emerge out of nowhere, but they are derived from or rooted in the more inner parts of our constitution.

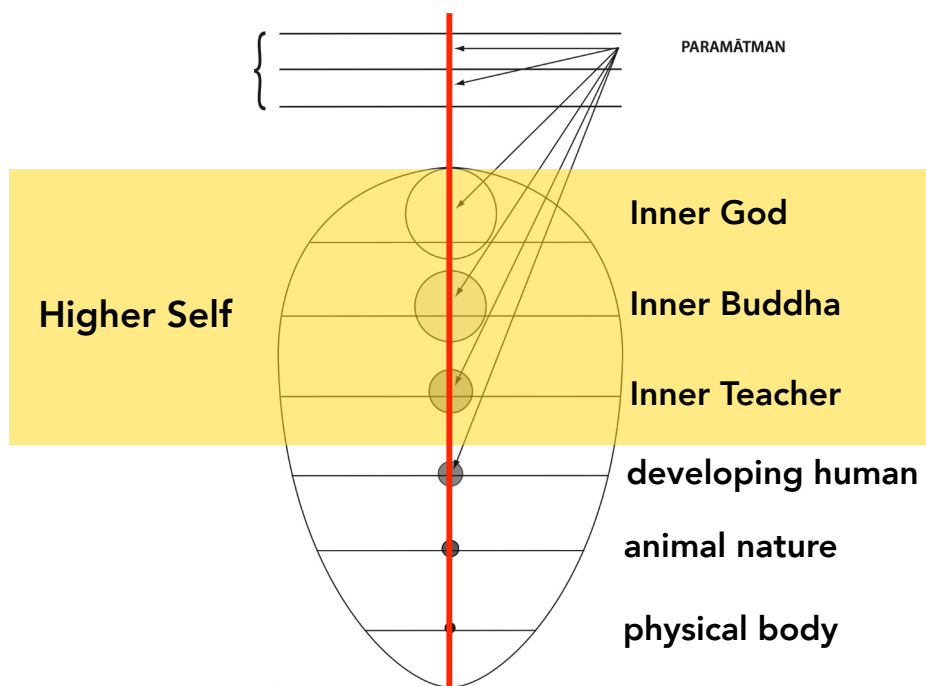
The image below is a schematic representation of the composite constitution of man. The first and most fundamental idea in this diagram is that we are, in essence, an infinite stream of consciousness. The red line running through the center, has no beginning or end, because we are boundless in essence. On this line, you see various centers depicted, representing spheres of consciousness. As complete human beings, we are a cooperation of various spheres of influence within us. Each such center or sphere within us, represents a certain quality or range of consciousness. Keep in mind, however, that a diagram is al-

ways limited, because the various spheres are depicted one above the other, but in reality, they completely interpenetrate one another.

The bottom sphere represents our *physical body*, which is not who we are, but rather what we *have*. We have a body that we use as an instrument to express ourselves in this outer world.

We also have an *animal nature*, the sphere just above the physical, which consists of our desires and emotions of a more *instinctive* nature. Very useful as a tool for sensing our surroundings, but less so when this part takes over when we lose control of ourselves and, for example, get lost in emotions like anger or fear. But this part of us already reaches further than our physical

Composite constitution of man



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body, because it allows us to sense the atmosphere in a room or building and perceive the emotional states of others. We also see this ability in animals to pick up impressions from a distance; for example, when you have to take your cat to the vet and he suddenly is nowhere to be found, because he can sense exactly what is about to happen.

Then we have our everyday thoughts, tendencies, desires, and ideals as *human beings*. This is what we express right now, as thinkers, as evolving human beings. That which we refer to as 'I', attributing reality to the emotions and thoughts connected to the physical world we identify ourselves with.

Now it gets interesting. Because further up in our stream of consciousness we see higher centers of consciousness, which we essentially are as well, only not yet self-aware. Just as our organs and cells live within our human sphere of consciousness, we as growing human beings are part of more highly developed consciousnesses, which we collectively call our *higher Self*. And this higher Self consists of three centers or spheres, or beings, who have unfolded an ever-greater scope of consciousness and accordingly, an increased wisdom and realization of unity.

The first of these three – which we call the *inner Teacher* – has a sphere of influence that encompasses the entire inner Planet. For our living Planet, just like us, consists of different inner spheres.

Next above or within, we have our *inner Buddha*, whose range of consciousness encompasses the entire Solar System. Again, this concerns not only the physical planets, but the entire inner life of the Solar System, its soul. And finally, the *inner God*, the highest, most universal part within us that encompasses the entire inner Galaxy and as such, links us with the boundlessness. For the stream of consciousness that we essentially are, goes on and never stops.

What is important to realize now, is that we, as evolving human beings, *continually find ourselves within the sphere of influence of our higher Self* and can therefore also become aware of this influence. All our noble and ethical qualities of compassion, understanding, insight into the unity and interconnectedness of life, our conscience: all are a reflection at our level, originating from these more inner parts of us. In their own realm they are fully active, just as we are here in the outer world. They continuously radiate their influence. But it is us developing human beings, who are still asleep and not yet able to consciously identify with it and express these inner qualities.

So, when we speak of learning, of growth or evolution, the unfolding of inner faculties, it is exactly this what we need to do: to awaken or activate those qualities that our higher Self already expresses.

Relation Inner Teacher and outer Teachers

As said, a true Teacher stimulates this process of awakening the pupils' still-dormant faculties. But here it comes: the inner Teacher of the pupil plays a key role in this inter-relation. It is the manifesting influence of the pupils inner Teacher that has everything to do with the *mystic* relationship between the disciple and his Teacher. The following quotations give a hint:

When the materials are all prepared and ready, the architect shall appear.⁽²⁾

When the pupil is ready, the Teacher is waiting.⁽³⁾

Two quotes that express the same mystical idea, which has everything to do with the interaction between the inner and outer Teacher. *When the pupil is ready, the Teacher is waiting*. The question then is: when is the student ready? This is the moment he is able to receive the direct, deeper teachings of the Teacher.

Katherine Tingley, the third Leader of our organization, says the following about this: "A teacher may endeavor to impart the truth, but if the intuition of the pupil is not developed,

at least to a degree, the effort is useless. [...] for intuition is the real, the mystic teacher."⁽⁴⁾

In other words, there must first be a certain receptivity in the pupil before the Teacher can teach. The so-called *materials* must be prepared and ready first, before the architect can begin working with it. And that is not the case until the student has established an active connection with his own inner Teacher to a certain extent. For that receptivity is linked to the degree to which we have developed our intuition, or buddhi — which as Tingley says: is the true mystical Teacher. It is our inner Teacher, or Higher Self, from which flashes of insight and wisdom (as intuition manifests itself) originate, at the moment we have an active connection with it. This contact must first take place if the student is to be ready to be taught the deeper teachings. We must first develop the faculty of understanding within ourselves before we are able to understand; before we can receive the mysteries of the universe

and fathom them ourselves.

How does this work? How do we actively connect with our inner Teacher?

Outer Teacher 1: The World Teacher (general)

This brings us to the outer Teacher, of which there are two different types, who at different moments play a specific role, depending on the disciples' stage of development on the Path. The first is the *World Teacher*, in contrast to the second type: the disciple's individual Teacher. It is initially the general or Universal Teacher of humanity who plays an important role in helping us to self-consciously connect with our inner Teacher. Gottfried de Purucker, the fourth Leader of the Theosophical Society Point Loma (TSPL), says the following about this: "As regards the average man, he whose progress is not yet sufficient to have awakened within him the spiritual and psychical senses and faculties, which not only merit but which will indeed command the aid of a superior Teacher, there is always the wisdom of the great Sages and Seers of the ages."⁽⁵⁾

These are the Great Teachers of the various world religions and philosophies, who, as messengers of the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion, show the average man the inner Path that leads to a self-conscious connection with our own inner Teacher.

How do they do this? First, by presenting us the Universal Wisdom, such as reincarnation and karma, the fact that we are not our body, but consciousness, infinite in essence; the fact that there is a fundamental Unity, and all life is interconnected. And by revealing Universal Truths like these, the World Teachers speak to our inner heart, where this wisdom already resides.

And a second way in which they do this, is by presenting and embodying the virtues and rules of conduct that result from this Wisdom, by which they appeal to the moral and ethical aspects within us. The latter way, in particular, is essential in establishing a conscious connection with our inner Teacher. And regardless whether we adopt the virtues of the Greek Stoics, the Pāramitās of Buddhism, the virtues of Christianity, or those of the Islam, they all concern the same qualities: compassion, selflessness, justice, courage, patience, self-control, forgiveness... Each and every one of these qualities within us brings us into active resonance with our inner Teacher. Why? Because they shift our attention from our personal self to our higher Self, to which those qualities belong. The defining aspect of a chela, a disciple on the Path, says De Purucker, is: "A

growing indifference to oneself, and an increasing interest in all that is."⁽⁶⁾ And that is exactly where living the virtues leads to. In this context, De Purucker mentions two of these virtues in particular, the living practice of which, is the prerequisite for the aspiring pupil to make himself suitable for chelaship, but which, in principle, anyone can practice.

Never justify yourself

The first is: try not to justify yourself. "If people followed this rule in the world, our earth would be a paradise compared to what it is now," says De Purucker.

It is not an easy rule, but it is one of the most effective ways to make your personality – that part of us that is self-centered – less dominant. When you justify yourself, you actually place the emphasis on yourself, by wanting to convince others that it is not you but someone else who is wrong: you reinforce the sense of separation and you narrow your consciousness, limiting it to yourself alone. Whereas the whole point is to shift your attention from yourself to the world around you, to identify with it, and to expand your consciousness. And that is why the second virtue or practice is so important, and that is:

Learn to forgive and learn to love

Learn to forgive and learn to love. For that is the best way to shift your focus from yourself to the other. Learning to forgive is all about forgetting yourself, empathizing with the other person and the willingness to really understand the other. To forgive and to love is to understand. It allows you to distinguish between the act, and the one who committed the act. Because you understand that the other is always more than just his actions, more than what he showed of himself at that particular moment. True forgiveness and impersonal Love enables you to recognize the inner man behind the act, which cultivates understanding and compassion.

What does this have to do with the inner Teacher, you might ask yourself?

Applying this wisdom and these virtues leads to the process of transformation, which is necessary for the influence of the Inner Teacher to become an active force in us. As long as we put ourselves first and follow our selfish desires and inclinations, we shut ourselves off from this influence. For example, when we are *not* able to forgive and remain stuck in resentment and anger, constantly feeding those negative thoughts, we literally surround ourselves with these narrowing thoughts, thereby thickening our

mental atmosphere, creating a barrier that prevents us from becoming aware of the influence of our higher Self. For this influence is always there, but it is up to us to attune ourselves to it. And to the extent that we are able to forget ourselves in service to others, the surrounding veils of our personality become more transparent which allows the inner influence to manifest itself. Then our personal consciousness opens up, allowing the inner light of our higher Self to shine within us.

Outer Teacher 2: the individual Teacher (Guru)

And this is the moment when the *second* type of outer Teacher comes into the scene: the *individual* Teacher of the disciple, who is automatically attracted, or called upon when this inner Light of the disciple's higher nature begins to manifest itself. In the aforementioned quote from De Purucker, he spoke of the development of inner faculties, "which not only merit but which will indeed *command* the aid of a superior Teacher."

And the latter, this commanding, is because it is an occult law that the Teacher *must* respond to every inner call.

This brings us back to that dynamic interplay between the outer and inner Teacher, but this time brought about by the active presence of the *inner Teacher*. Whereas initially the general, or World Teacher, encourages us to connect to our own inner Teacher by living the virtues, it is the present influence of the inner Teacher, once this connection is active, that causes the disciple's *individual* Teacher to appear.

For this inner light of the awakened intuition is also known as the *Buddhic Light*, of which it is said that the Great Teachers of humanity constantly and carefully watch for to manifest itself in someone. Symbolically represented as a world map with all humanity on it as little electric points, like a spiritual dial. And each time this Buddhic Light manifests itself in someone, it shows on this mystic dial as a flash of light. And even if it is only a faint glow, the moment it is present, this person is observed and it is the Teacher's duty to respond. Always ready to foster and cultivate such flashes. He is drawn to it on the basis of a magnetic spiritual sympathy. That is why the earlier quote states that the student not only deserves the help of a higher Teacher, but in fact also *commands* it. It is the so-called right knock on the door of the Teacher's Heart, consisting of devotion and impersonal Love, which is infallibly heard and answered, because the Heart of the Teacher is always listening.

The disciple comes under the watchful eye of his teacher

From this moment on, the disciple comes under the watchful eye of his outer Teacher, though initially without being consciously aware of it. First comes a period of trials, before he is officially accepted as a chela. But in the background, the Teacher is already at work, watching over the inner flame, nurturing it, and stimulating the compassion awakened in the student. But of course, fully respecting the student's free will, because the Teacher, as mentioned, never forces but only inspires. And during this process, in which the disciple continues his progress under the watchful eye of the Teacher, making sure he fully dedicates his developing faculties to the service of humanity, the connection with his inner Teacher becomes stronger and therefore also with his outer Teacher.

Until, at a certain point, the time has come when the outer Teacher actually appears to the disciple. That is to say: the chela *is able* to recognize his Guru. For the Guru was there all along, only not visible to the disciple. Because there must be a certain degree of inner awakening before the student is actually able to recognize his outer Teacher as such. For you cannot recognize what you have not yet developed within yourself. Only when you have *become* it yourself, are you able to recognize it outside yourself.

De Purucker says the following on this subject: "The man who really is great inside, recognizes grandeur in other men, and bows to it because he himself is inwardly a great man."⁽⁷⁾

And regarding recognizing the Teacher, he says "Cultivate within your own selves love, and you will understand the love that he will give you. Cultivate within your own hearts forgiveness and you then will understand the forgiveness that will flow forth from him to you. Be truthful and you will recognize truthfulness when he comes."⁽⁸⁾

This is what makes the relationship between disciple and Teacher mystical, because it is based on *inner recognition*, veiled for the average person's perception since it pertains to purely spiritual-ethical qualities and inner faculties that can only be recognized by the disciple who has developed these qualities within himself.

And from the moment the Teacher has made himself known to his disciple, further direct instruction can begin to take place.

The teaching of the Teacher

What does this imply? What exactly takes place now the disciple comes under the direct guidance of his Teacher or

Guru? As mentioned, this is a mystical relationship, based on inner greatness, unconditional devotion and a shared compassion for all that lives. It is therefore said that this relationship between Teacher and disciple is “infinitely more sacred than even that between parent and child,” because, whereas parents provide the body for the incoming soul, the Teacher brings forth that soul itself.

The Teacher is, so to speak, the *spiritual* parent of the student, providing the inner nourishment that enables the student to further develop his inner, divine capacities and become what he is in his deepest essence. All of this is done out of compassion and for the sake of compassion. To prepare the student to become a Master himself, a Teacher for humanity. And when this process – the birth of the soul – takes place at an accelerated pace, we speak of initiation. The education in the Mystery School, the teachings the disciple receives, is in fact a preparation for the trials he will meet during initiation, the moment he is completely left alone by himself, to proof his inner strength.

Theosophical literature speaks of seven Great Initiations, the first three of which are also referred to as preparatory initiations, consisting of a combination of study and application in daily life, in which the disciple must demonstrate the necessary discipline and ethical conduct before the four Great Initiations can begin.

It is initially on this level of daily life, the Teacher monitors the pupil’s progress; his willingness to actually use and apply the qualities he develops for the benefit of humanity, regardless the consequences for himself. That is what he is tested on.

And here you see the relativity of the concept of Teacher and disciple, because the willingness of the disciple to pass on what he has received also implies being a Teacher himself at the same time.

The moment the disciple is accepted as a chela, he becomes an active helping force in the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion, where he takes his place in passing on the Universal Wisdom. If you read *The Mahatma letters to A.P. Sinnett*⁽⁹⁾, you get a good impression of how this works. How their chelas are constantly carrying out instructions and tasks, conveying teachings, to serve humanity

The Teacher never impels orders

And where one might expect strict guidance, the Teacher, in the initial phase of these first three preparatory initiations, allows the student above all to make his own choices

‘freely’. That may sound contradictory, but it is precisely by letting him have his way, the Teacher allows the student to prove his ability to apply the principles of Universal Wisdom in practice independently. This does not mean that the Teacher lets his attention slip, but he gives the disciple free rein, since this is the best way to test whether he can overcome all the trials and temptations of daily life, without support. For it is precisely in the temptations and challenges of everyday life that the chela must demonstrate his strength of character and which reveal his true nature. In their letters, the Masters say the following about this: “We allow our candidates to be tempted in a thousand various ways, so as to draw out the whole of their inner nature and allow it the chance of remaining conqueror either one way or the other.”⁽¹⁰⁾ “We never *guide* our chelas (the most advanced even); nor do we forewarn them, leaving the effects produced by causes of their own creation to teach them better experience.”⁽¹¹⁾ And in this last quote, it also becomes clear that these trials are not placed on the path by the Masters, but come from within, from the disciple himself.

Accelerated Karma

These trials are, in fact, the karmic consequences of causes that he himself created in the past and that come to the surface accelerated, the moment the disciple has made the inner decision to devote himself to humanity. The more intense and sincere the pupil’s desire to live for humanity, the faster his karmic consequences will come upon him. The inner light that starts to shine, awakens so to speak the dormant seeds, that now suddenly come to sprout all together. This concerns both the negative as well as the positive characteristics, with which he is able to conquer the negative ones. Karmic causes, that would normally manifest itself gradually over many lives, are now compressed into a single live. But it is exactly this intensified manifestation of karma, that offers the opportunity to accelerate the disciple’s development and to overcome the weaknesses that constrained his capacity to be a helping force. Depending, of course, on how he deals with it. These are the trials the disciple must face on his Path.

You can compare this process to cycling and the air-resistance you will experience being on the bike. The harder you pedal, the more headwind you encounter. This is a well-known law in physics: resistance increases with the square of the speed. But what we do not realize is that the same law applies to the inner planes. Laws on the physical plane are nothing but a reflection of Laws from more in-

ner realms of consciousness. Just as there is an external atmosphere that causes the experience of air-resistance, there also exists an inner atmosphere as a reality. And just as accelerated movement through the outer atmosphere causes physical turbulence, it is the accelerated inner growth that evokes an inner turbulence. And this we call accelerated karma.

The extent to which this turbulence occurs – in which karma presents itself at an accelerated rate – is proportional to the intensity with which the disciple makes the decision to be a helping force. And this accelerated manifestation of karma concerns both our better and our lesser qualities. For the moment we call upon our inner faculties, an inner force is released that enforces both sides, positive and negative, causing both the good and the lesser qualities to express more rapidly. Characteristics such as greed, vanity, or the tendency to gossip – which have always been slumbering in the background – suddenly come to the fore with greater intensity. But this also applies to the positive qualities by which the lower ones can be conquered at that very moment. With which they *must* be conquered, because they cannot both exist at the same time.

It is like the ballast weight of a hot-air balloon, which must first be released before it can take off. First, the old karma must be dealt with before the disciple can take the next step forward. And so it is this self-generated accelerated karma that causes the trial from within — the ‘test’ for the student to demonstrate his worth under pressure.

And it is always in his relation to others that he is tested, always on selflessness and compassion.

The challenge to remain calm and helpful in any situation. And as long as even the slightest bit of irritation, jealousy, or resentment arises in him, it is proof that he has not yet fully mastered his lower nature and is therefore not yet ready for the next step of receiving deeper teachings and entering higher initiations.

Cooperation with fellow students

An important part of this training in selflessness is cooperation with fellow disciples. A chela must completely subordinate his own interests to those of the group, which must work together like the fingers of one hand to become a useful instrument for the Teacher. Only when the disciples work together in complete harmony, they form the living channel, through which the stream of Universal Wisdom from the Teacher can have its beneficent influence into the world.



In the booklet *The Voice of Silence*, dedicated to the chela on the inner Path, Madame Blavatsky writes that the disciples who have chosen to sacrifice their own nirvanic bliss for humanity – ready to receive further teachings from the Teacher – can be compared to the strings of the vina (a stringed instrument), which must vibrate in harmony with one another, fully attuned to the Teacher's mind. And that, when this is not the case, the string that is not in harmony snaps and is cast aside. In other words, the student who is unable to devote himself to the common good is expelled from the Mystery School, or rather, expels himself. And here no exceptions are made. A disciple cannot count on any favor from the Teacher in this matter but bears full responsibility for this himself. “The Mahatmas are the servants, not the arbiters of the Law of Karma,” says Madame Blavatsky in one of her articles on chelaship.⁽¹²⁾ They cannot, and even do not wish to intervene in the karmic consequences of the disciple's actions, because that would undermine the entire purpose of the trial, which is all about the chela demonstrating his inner strength, and his infallible moral compass.

Communication between Guru and chela

As the chela progresses on the Inner Path and the responsibilities he takes on gradually increase, the inner relation between him and his Teacher also becomes stronger. Gradually, the connection between the chela and his Teacher grows on this inner, spiritual level, upon which the mystical relationship is based. Until, at a certain point, their minds are so much attuned, their thinking almost one, that direct communication and instruction can take place in the inner realm, without the need of a spoken or written word.

On our level we all know the experience of being with a family member or close friend, needing just a single word to understand each other. Or the situation in which you start saying the exact same thing at the exact same time to

each other, because you are on the 'same wavelength'. And even at a greater distance, it sometimes happens that you think of someone you haven't seen in a while, and at that very moment that person calls you. Recognizable examples that show you can be so in tune with each other that you can pick up on each other's thought-impressions. A phenomenon that makes perfect sense, simply because we are connected to one another.

However, there is a fundamental difference between these examples and that of the Guru and his chela.

First of all, in the case of the average person, this phenomenon occurs randomly, unconsciously, and uncontrolled, whereas with the Teacher and his chela it takes place in a conscious state, fully controlled, and based on mutual agreement.

And the second difference is that in the case of the average person, the communication is generally restricted to the emotional level, being experienced as a hunch, whereas the communication between the Teacher and his chela is crystal clear and takes place on the higher mental level. Through his training and concentration, the disciple is able to fully attune his consciousness to that same level of purity, the same spiritual frequency as his Teacher, en-

abling the Teacher to transmit his thoughts directly to the disciple's mind, regardless of the physical distance between them. And because this stream of thought is of such a pure quality, transcending everyday emotions and desires, there is no distortion or interference that could affect the transmission.

An example of this process is the compilation of the book *The Secret Doctrine*, which Madame Blavatsky did indeed physically write, but which was dictated to her by her Masters on the inner plane. As Blavatsky herself said, she was merely the writing machine, writing down what was dictated to her on the astral plane. Another example is the *Mahātma Letters* from the same Masters, which were written in a similar way in most cases, in which they transmitted their thoughts directly to the minds of their chelas, who then wrote them down.

The Teachers Responsibility

Finally, I would like to reflect on the responsibility that the Teacher has toward his pupil, but also that of the pupil toward his Teacher, for he *too* bears responsibility.

From the moment the Teacher accepts his chela and begins to teach him, a great responsibility rests upon him, because he becomes accountable for the karmic consequences resulting from the esoteric teachings he imparts to the disciple. As has become clear by now, this is not about intellectual knowledge and facts, but about the deeper mysteries concerning the innate forces in Nature and man, which, when misinterpreted or misapplied, entail significant dangers for both the disciple himself and his surroundings. Therefore, it is the Teacher's duty to know his student inside out, and to keep a close watch on his progress. The mystical relationship is therefore based on complete trust and openness, so that nothing of the inner life can remain hidden from the Teacher. Based on the qualities the pupil has developed on the one hand, and any possible weaknesses that may still be present on the other, the Teacher must constantly assess what teachings he can give and when his pupil is ready for the next step. And he does so – as de Purucker says – “with entire harmony and in rigid accord with the intimations arising in the chela's own consciousness of the presence of the inner Teacher,” which manifest as sudden flashes of intuition and understanding.

The disciple's responsibility

The disciple, in turn, also bears a great responsibility toward his Teacher.



And this consists in the fact that, however unconditional his devotion and loyalty to the Teacher may be, he must never blindly accept anything from him. Despite the complete mutual trust that exists, the pupil will always have to test for himself what the Teacher presents, for the aforementioned reason that learning is the unfolding of inner faculties and that true understanding always *comes from within*. The disciple will therefore always have to critically examine what the Teacher presents to him, to build his own insight through experience and to prevent the teachings from becoming a dogma. This requires continuous vigilance and independent effort on the part of the disciple. What the Teacher actually does, by being the living example himself, is to create a pure atmosphere to bring the pupil into a corresponding resonance, so that he is able to find the answers within himself at that same level, from his own inner Teacher whence the insight comes: “the real Mystic Teacher,” as Tingley said — who is therefore also called the highest Teacher.

One of the first rules chelas are taught is never to ask a question before first trying to solve it on their own. They must always first think for themselves, first try to find the answer themselves, because this is precisely the training needed, the effort needed, to develop their own intuition and make it ever stronger. There is no other way to do this. And if a question is sincere, coming from the Heart and the chela takes the time to reflect on that question, then the answer will often come from within as well.

But if this has not succeeded and the chela, after intense contemplation on his own, poses his question to the Teacher, then the Teacher is obliged to answer. But he will always do so in accordance with the quality and clarity of the question. For the pupil has no right to receive deeper mysteries of which he does not already have an intuitive idea. Hence the paradox that “the disciple is the master and the Teacher is the servant.” Because ultimately, it is the disciple himself who, based on his motive and dedication, determines what the Teacher is entitled to teach him.

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The secret behind the Sermon on the Mount – part 2

Do not resist evil

Part 1 of this series demonstrated that the ethical ideas in the Sermon on the Mount originate from a Buddhist sutra. It also discussed the Beatitudes, which turned out to be qualities that disciples should attain in their inner world. Furthermore, it showed that the God in the Sermon on the Mount is the highest aspect in every human being.

The article below delves deeper into the task of the apostles, the disciples on the path of consciousness expansion.

Key thoughts

- » The Sermon on the Mount presents a lofty ethical ideal supported by the law of karma.
- » The disciples of a Mystery School play an important role in society.
- » The requirements for discipleship are closely related to *agape* (universal love).
- » Under no circumstances should you repay evil with evil; instead, love your 'enemy'.
- » Contrary to what many people think (including Christian leaders), this ethic is not impractical. It is the only way to reverse the downward spiral of violence.

Salt of and light in the world

After the Beatitudes, Jesus points out to the disciples the function they have to perform in the world.

He says, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."⁽¹⁾

Disciples have a certain characteristic that they must live up to. You are a disciple by that *characteristic*. Not by you sitting down near the Master and listening to him. Not by your talk, your pretensions or whatever. You are it, if you live it, if you practice it in your own life. But if you no longer live according to the characteristics of the Beatitudes, you have lost your *savour* and are useless to the Mystery School and, consequently, to humanity. So this metaphor of the

salt means that if the characteristics that make the disciple a disciple, are no longer there, then the disciple himself is no longer there. He is gone. The attempt, the initiation has failed. One has failed. The salt that lost its savour is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden on.

That characteristic, by the way, must have its impact on all of society. It is also primarily about the disciples, by their lives, their attitudes, influencing the whole and making it better. That is their function in the world.

This is especially evident in the following words: "Ye are the light of the world."⁽²⁾ And that light must shine in the world. The disciples have a social mission. They must spread the teachings. So, 'do not put your light under a bushel'.⁽³⁾ And a little further on it says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your

good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”⁽⁴⁾ Again, the latter does not mean that the disciples are to glorify some otherwise unknown God, but to focus on their inner God and give him shape in their lives. They thus fulfill an exemplary function in relation to what can be called the uninitiated. They distinguish themselves spiritually from their less spiritually and compassionately educated brothers. Thus, they fulfill a serving roll for them.

To fulfill the Law

But to be able to fulfill that serving task, to be a disciple, one must meet a number of requirements. Requirements that are heavier than those for the average person. This is very emphatically expressed in the passage that follows. For Jesus says first of all that he did not come to abolish the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them.

It is generally assumed that the Mosaic law is meant by that law; the Law revealed by God to Moses, and which takes its most concrete form in the Ten Commandments. Jesus says that he will not destroy that law. It is good as far as it goes.

The laws of nature, for instance the various laws of gravity, are also good as far as they reach. Do they contain the whole truth? No, at most an aspect of it. Nor does Mosaic law contain the whole truth, but at most a part of it.

The Sanskrit word *Dharma*, which we already touched upon in the previous article in this series, also means Law. However, the *Dharma* is the universal Law, or rather, a universal pattern of habits. The universe is underpinned by habitual patterns. These Laws are the foundation of the Universe. It is therefore eternal and perfect harmony.

Remember that Jesus is speaking here to his disciples, his students. If they truly want to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, then they must submit themselves to these universal laws. They must realize cosmic unity and live according to it.

Pay close attention to what Jesus says to his disciples, “I have come to fulfill the law” – to fulfill the *Dharma*. The law as it was known in those days was at most a relative truth, perhaps good for the masses, so as not to leave them completely devoid of spiritual light. However, *for you*, Jesus says, disciples, for you who want to take the Kingdom of Heaven by force, for you who belong to be the salt of the earth, heavier demands apply. You should align your personal duty more with the Universal Law, the general harmony that exists in the Cosmos.

One must understand this well. There is no question of that Jesus – or any spiritual Teacher – is imposing de-

mands. But *if* you want to achieve your objective, become one with the inner God and enter the Kingdom, you will have to develop a number of characteristics. Everything happens on the basis of cause and effect. If you develop those characteristics, then you will naturally be attracted to those spiritual worlds and become blissful.

The requirements for the disciples: do not kill

Jesus then discusses more specifically some of the requirements for discipleship. He hangs these mostly on the Mosaic law, which was widely known at the time. He begins with the commandment of *not killing*. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.”⁽⁵⁾ So if you break this law, it says, you will lapse into judgment.

Jesus fully agrees with this, but he expands it. He says, “That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.”⁽⁶⁾ And the same applies if you call your brother an empty-headed fool or an idiot.

The meaning is obvious. It is not only actions, it is equally words, which will lead to corresponding consequences. Because thoughts lie behind both actions and words. Our thoughts are the causes of the effects we will reap one day. That is why words will lead to consequences just as much as actions. So if you are angry with someone, you also spite a brother, your fellow man, and you are actually trying to cause him some harm as well. Perhaps a small portion of common sense will stop you, or perhaps fear of punishment will keep you from targeting your fellow man – and in itself that is of course preferable – but from the point of view of cosmic law you have still created causes, which in time will bring about their corresponding consequences. For what is that court? Is it the Jewish court? No, it is the universal harmony, the law of karma, by virtue of which every cause receives its appropriate consequence.

Agape and karma

Where Jesus extends the prohibition against killing to include the disapproval of anger and the despise of others, he delves deeper into the teaching of *agape*, universal love, or as it is called in the East: *ahimsa*. It comprises refraining from doing evil in all circumstances, from doing evil to *anyone*. The Sermon on the Mount beautifully reflects the teachings of *ahimsa*. Do not harm your fellow men not only in deeds, do not do it in thought either. And in this particu-

lar context it shows the relation between the philosophy of *ahimsa* to the law of karma.

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.⁽⁷⁾

Of course, this cannot be meant literally. If that were the case, your life would not be safe anywhere. Then we would be living in a dictatorship of the worst kind, where anyone could just drag you into jail, if you were *on the road* with someone. Of course, something else is meant.

‘Being on the road’ in this context means being alive, being manifested. If you still owe anything to your fellow human beings – the other party – because of events in the past, in previous lives, make sure you resolve this. Therefore, be kind. Therefore, redeem evil with good.

The judge here is the Higher Self, the Father in Heaven. For when you are still in debt to your fellows, when you have not yet worked out selfish causes from the past, that inner Judge will hand you over to his servant. This is what you can call the executors of the law of karma. That servant will throw you into the *prison of a new personal life on earth*. You will then have to reincarnate again.

You are free only when you have paid the last token; have worked out all selfish and personal causes and have sown no more new personal causes. Then you will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Adultery and swearing

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,” the Master Jesus continues, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” That in itself is a good law, but is only good as far as it goes. For, we read further, “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”⁽⁸⁾

Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian writer and reformer, interprets this sentence to mean that it also applies to your own wife, the woman you are married to.⁽⁹⁾ He advocates chastity even within marital life.

Here too, it is the spirit and not the letter of the law that matters. It is about being focused on the spiritual side of nature. In other words, see in human beings – whether of the same or opposite sex – primarily a spiritual being. Then you will not covet physically. The disciples must

therefore lead a celibate life both in thought and in deed, as was also the custom in Buddhist monastic orders.

Next, the issue of swearing is addressed.

“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths”.⁽¹⁰⁾ This is another one of those laws that is true as far as it goes. Jesus expands it further: you must not swear at all. And that makes a lot of sense, because you must always live in accordance with the truth. Your whole life must constantly be dominated by truth.

Besides, on whom or what should you swear. Jesus is speaking here to disciples who have appealed to their inner God, their Higher Self. They recognize no higher authority than that.

Do not resist evil

The following passage is so important that we are reproducing it here, in slightly abridged form.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. (...)

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.⁽¹¹⁾

This fragment is not open to two interpretations, you might say. Never respond to evil with evil. Even if others are hostile toward you, do not adopt their mentality. Rise above selfishness, revenge and retribution. Always focus on the noble qualities in others, no matter how difficult that may be, and no matter how far they may have strayed.

Despite that clarity, only a very small minority of Christians – in the past and the present – have been willing to at least attempt to apply this teaching. Consequently, people

have suggested that this teaching is impractical, and if applied, it would result in the dissolution of society. Theologians have indulged in ridiculous and sad cleverness to debunk the meaning. The crudest of these is a widely accepted interpretation called the 'preparatory statement'. It implies that the requirements are so stringent that no one can meet them. Thus, people are made more deeply aware that they are depraved by nature and need Jesus the Christ as Savior for their salvation.

In this way, one discards the essence of Jesus' teaching. One degrades a deep ethical truth to a theory with which one can amuse oneself in church on Sundays and which is otherwise detached from everyday practice.

However, in these thoughts lies the core of the teaching of Jesus, which was the same as that of the Buddha and of all messengers of the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion. Does Lao Tzu not say that we must be good to the good, and good to the non-good, so that they may become good?⁽¹²⁾

This teaching of agape can be understood even better when you link it to the law of karma. It is, therefore, not without reason that this doctrine of reconciliation is linked to the old doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, which apparently was also interpreted literally at that time. If someone does something evil to you, then, it is said, you may also do something evil to him.

This is the downward spiral. This creates conflicts. An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. It divides the world into camps: Russians and Ukrainians, Israelis and Palestinians, Muslims and Christians, conservatives versus liberals. Hatred divides people into camps and leads to war. Agape, or impersonal love, connects people.

When people, for whatever reason, do evil to the other, sooner or later they themselves must reap 'evil,' because what you have sown you will harvest. Jesus teaches that we must reverse this negative spiral. Know that if someone hurts you, there is a cause for this suffering that you yourself have created. Be brave and face up to what you have accomplished.

Moreover, whether we call something evil depends on our mindset. The situation we find ourselves in may be painful, but those who suffer will be blessed. Suffering is your friend, because it can make you patient and forgiving. So do not see it as evil. Try to realize that the suffering that afflicts you is due to your own characteristics, which arose from thoughts and habits that you evoked with your own free will. If you are imbued with this truth, then there need be no cause for anger, nor for

retribution.

Therefore, do not resist the evil. Bend the spiral. Be kind to those who wrong you. In your thoughts and, as a result, in your actions, seek to help those who seek to harm you. Not by associating with them. Not by participating in their wrongdoing, but simply by refusing to stoop to the level of those whom, ethically speaking, you are currently trying to rise above.

If you do that – paraphrasing Jesus' words – you are further grounding the Law, the Dharma, in all its exalted universality. You settle accounts with disharmonious causes from the past, which have contributed to one being treating another unkindly and selfishly. In fact, you do not enter into that characteristic, but you place another in opposition to it, that of universality and brotherhood.

The implementation of the Sermon on the Mount

Despite the clarity of Jesus' words, and the authority that Christians in particular attribute to their Teacher and Savior, there has been virtually no sincere attempt to apply the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Why is that? Why do people think that society will collapse if we do not fight evil with evil? They may believe that the 'evil ones', the criminals, the violent and cruel ones and the dictators would prevail and finish off what they call civilization. They are mistaken.

Firstly, this rule is given primarily to disciples, those who follow their inner Christ and have climbed the symbolic mountain with Jesus, the Teacher of the Mystery School. They are humans who have fully focused on the path of compassion and are willing to take all its consequences.

But note that all those who claim to be Christians must have the intention of climbing that mountain too and therefore at least *try* to apply the ethical principles of the Sermon of the Mount. If they think it is unfeasible, let them take an example from Mohandas Gandhi, Marten Luther King and those unknown Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Atheists who prove the feasibility in the practice of their daily lives.

Secondly, the commandment 'not to resist evil' does not mean to cooperate with it, or to tolerate it. In our opinion, that can never be the intention. When Lao Tzu says that you should be good to the non-goods, he does not mean that you should indulge them and let them do whatever they want. If you do that, you are not being good to them. If you let a criminal have his way, you strengthen the evil in the world. And the disciple's task is also to protect their

fellow men.

Prior to his call for nonviolence, Jesus says that the righteousness pursued by the disciples surpasses that of the habit patterns of the world: "That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven".⁽¹³⁾ That is why they must pursue universal justice. And of course you do not do that if you give free rein to the wrongdoer. The disciples must therefore protect society. But do you do that by applying the same 'methods' as used by the wrongdoer? This kind of thinking leads to revenge, to retributive justice, to capital punishment. It always leads to even more injustice.

So it is always about loving people and helping and inspiring them. Giving alms should also be viewed in this light. And we should do that in silence and do not brag about it because "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth".⁽¹⁴⁾ After all, it is about universal love, and those who invoke it in their hearts forget themselves.

Universal love knows no distinction. It is directed to the criminal as much as to the victim. The only question is: how do you do that? Do you help the criminal by letting him have his way? No, then you only reinforce certain characteristics, which will get him into trouble anyway. Do you help him by treating him vindictively? No, then you are lowering yourself to his level.

So the point is not to punish the wrongdoer. Punishment is better left to impartial nature, to karma. By virtue of that law, every cause is brought into conformity with the appropriate consequence.

What should be done then?

First of all, protect society, that is, remove the thief from society temporarily, if necessary. And then to make that thief or murderer realize that he is going against the lawfulness of nature, and therefore to change certain characteristics in him.

You promote that process of change by forgiving him, and by answering his selfishness – for that is the source of every crime – with selflessness. If we do that, there will be a lot fewer crimes in the world and the great conflicts and wars will be a thing of the past.

Indeed, it is this characteristic that can put an end to war, to violence, to the disharmony that exists between people. Jesus was no fool, no world-weary, in entrusting this directive to his disciples.

Of course, he too knew that these characteristics cannot be developed simply, by going to a church service, or reading an article. We must brood on these thoughts, meditate on

them. We must think of ourselves as a ray from our inner God, through which we can begin to remember our divine qualities.

Such a meditation exercise is the Lord's Prayer. We will dwell on this in the third article of this series.

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Can astrology predict?

About astrology, part 5

Key thoughts

» What we reap as fate, in accordance with the law of cause and effect, we ourselves have sown through the thoughts and deeds we have thought and done in the past.

» Predictions are possible to a certain extent because all processes in the living Kosmos have a cause and are cyclical.

» Our future is determined by the combination of cosmic cycles, the laws of cause and effect and our own receptivity to certain cosmic influences.

» For many, foreknowledge is a burden rather than an advantage.

» All cosmic influences can be used by us both harmoniously and disharmoniously.

Can today's astrologers make reliable predictions? What in fact determines our future? And how useful is it to have some foreknowledge of future events in your life?

What causes our destiny?

The source of all things that happen to us can be explored and understood from the basic ideas of Universal Wisdom and our own experiences. One such basic thought is: the Kosmos is a great living entity, which is the expression of an underlying Unity. All that is alive – and there is nothing in the Kosmos that is not alive – is for this reason essentially ONE. All beings are thus essentially interconnected in one whole, in one grand 'web of life'.

And with this image in mind, we can understand how cause and effect works. *Through our choices and actions, we continually affect the cosmic balance:* the web of life in which we are one node. Put figuratively: when we press down somewhere on the surface of a waterbed, elsewhere it will rise. There is always balance. And the encompassing Whole, which has unity and harmony as its keynote, responds to every action with a counter-reaction that is equal in character, and also equal in power. This we call 'karma': the law of restoration of harmony, restoring the balance to

the disturbance. The initiated cause leads to a consequence in the life of the one who caused it. We reap, in the form of our fate, what we have sown in earlier phases through our thinking and doing. And we are certainly not only talking about any disharmonious situations, but also about all the neutral or harmonious events in our lives. For example when we receive very valuable help or tips from our fellow human beings.

In part, we can recognize the connection between our initiated causes and the resulting consequences in our lives. But in part also not, because most of us have no knowledge of the causes we have sown in previous lives. In all cases, sooner or later the restoration of balance takes place. In this respect, our incarnations can be compared to successive days: what we do today affects our future days.

Thus, we can understand our destiny: we have ourselves laid the causes for all the situations in which we find ourselves, for those situations are the logical consequences of what we have thought and done, or left undone, in the past. And that is precisely why we

can learn very much from them. After all: every being has free will. *We can always choose how we react to anything we experience.* This is an essential point. The fact that the law of cause and effect (karma) works flawlessly is very encouraging and allows us to direct our lives ourselves. Indeed, we can begin to sow nobler causes every day and thus deliberately reap situations of growing mutual cooperation and dedicated fulfillment of our duties.

Thus, in light of our subject ‘prediction’, we know for certain that every cause we enact leads to a consequence *of the same characteristic*. What form that consequence will take, and when it will occur (and in combination with what other consequences), is another question. We will return to this in this article.

One of the conclusions we can draw from the aforementioned is: if you want a more harmonious destiny for your fellow human beings and yourself, do not ‘wait until the planets are in a better position’, for we ourselves are the creators of our destiny. A second conclusion is: our fate is always completely intertwined with the fate of our fellow human beings. For those who would like to delve more deeply into the theosophical explanation of karma, we refer to the theosophical literature.⁽¹⁾

Why is predicting the future possible to some extent?

This, of course, is the ‘key question’ with this topic. Is prediction even possible? If we start from the fact that the entire Kosmos is a community of living beings, with each being constantly going through one growth phase to another and therefore changing (slightly) its characteristics every second, then we understand the importance of that question.

So why can we predict? *Because all processes in the living Kosmos are cyclical. Events, situations, return cyclically.* We really see that all around us. Tomorrow morning the Sun will rise again in the east, as seen from our position. Next

spring the crocuses will pop their heads out of the ground again. And in our society, too, we make countless appointments that allow us to know with considerable certainty that by 9 a.m. tomorrow morning most of an organization’s employees will be back at work, or that we will be able to listen to the news on television at regular intervals. But no cycle is exactly the same as its predecessor in the series. Each cycle has a somewhat different emphasis. That is because all beings grow more or less in their consciousness, depending on the choices they make. This year, for example, a farmer will sow a certain crop again in the same month of the year, but from his experiences of the previous year, perhaps in a way that promises more results or is more environmentally friendly. All beings have the opportunity each cycle to expand their consciousness and to reform things — or otherwise, they may choose to keep to their old habits.

Although we give it little thought, an important factor in the orderly functioning of a family, an organization or a country, is based on the fact that the participants *voluntarily cooperate with* the cyclical course of all things in Nature. Fortunately, as human beings, we are fundamentally connected to all humanity and *must* therefore cooperate with countless others. If we do not, we produce disharmony. Suppose that each employee of an organization could decide all of a sudden: “Oh, I momentarily feel like going to Paris, so I will quit my job now.” Then he is of no use to his colleagues. Or if all the bakers of some country can decide each morning whether they will provide for bread or not. That of course would have disastrous consequences.

Prediction and free will

Our ability to predict future events is almost always limited to a prediction within general lines. Predicting precise details is often impossible, among other causes, because every being has some degree of free will. If some rain fronts pass over our country tomorrow, we can paint a picture about it in broad terms. But exactly where the rain falls and how each person will react to it cannot be predicted. We may even be unsure *ourselves* whether we will put on our rain suit on that day and bike to work or take the car after all.

As for *kosmic* beings, they evolve over such long periods of time, that their characteristic influence from our human point of view always remains the same: also in the future. Of course, the position of all the planets, as seen from Earth, is always changing. We therefore experience an



ever-changing combination of influences. But each of those planetary beings retains its unique characteristic in the process, and so do all the signs of the zodiac.

Yet even here there is a small element of unpredictability. For example, the duration of one of Earth's orbits around the Sun may turn out to be a few milliseconds different than expected. This is an expression of the free will of the planetary being Earth. These deviations cannot be predicted.

The fact that the characteristics of kosmic beings seem 'unchanging' to us, by the way, is no reason for any fatalism. We humans have a fundamental free will within us that can never be taken away, and that is why we can *learn to control and direct* kosmic influences: the stars incline, they do not compel. This does require that we actively monitor our own thinking and when necessary, change certain patterns of thinking.

Examples of kosmic cycles

Which kosmic cycles are important to us as earthly humanity? These are all cycles which express the underlying evolutionary processes of our Solar System. Cycles such as day, year and century are much more than measurable units of time: they are *evolutionary stages* of consciousness, inner periods of growth. Each cycle can be seen as a school of learning that offers special opportunities.

There are many kosmic cycles, all running in parallel. Examples are: hour, week, lunar-month, solar year, and periods of 5, 7, 10, 12, 60, 100, 360, 2140, 5040, and 25,920 years.⁽²⁾ And there are many more, some of them lasting much longer. Those *inner* processes express themselves in *outer* cyclical movements, such as the rotation of the Earth around its own axis (twenty-four hours), the orbit of the Moon around the Earth (month), the orbit of the Earth around the Sun (1 year) and the precession of our Earth's axis (25,920 years).

One of the most important cycles for us humans is the 60-year cycle. After 60 years, all the sacred planets in our solar system are in the same position again. This is also why it is the basis of the Chinese and Babylonian calendar, among others.

An important point is: because these cycles are the manifestations of *evolutionary stages of consciousness*, each successive cycle takes place at a further unfolded level — if the beings involved have indeed used these opportunities for inner growth. Cycles are always 'spirals'!

We list some examples of kosmic cycles in the accompanying box.

When do we encounter the consequences of what we once have thought and done?

Each person creates his own destiny, as we said. Our fate is not the result of 'chance' or predestination. But when in the future do the karmic causes we initiated, manifest themselves?

That is determined by the combination of the kosmic cycles and our own inner stages of growth. Both (cyclical) processes are in fact closely interwoven, but for the purpose of our explanation we will discuss them one by one below.

We earthly humans live within the fields of influence of the planetary beings in our Solar System and of the constellations of the zodiac. The combination of the relative positions of these kosmic beings determines at each moment of our lives the *characteristic* of the force field in which we live. And that characteristic determines which aspects of our consciousness can easily come to the fore at that moment (because they are related to that characteristic) and which, on the contrary, tend to be latent (because they are different in nature). In horticultural terms, the kosmic cycles determine 'the type of soil and the amount of light and heat' during a given period. And we know that in each type of soil precisely those plants that feel at home in it, will easily germinate and grow. The same is true for humans. We reap the consequences of certain specific thought-seeds when the conditions become favorable for those seeds, and when those thought-seeds have matured sufficiently, thus becoming sufficiently powerful to express themselves.

For example, if we once had a fleeting desire to understand more of life, this cause will at some time pop up again. And if we, at that moment, do not neglect it but pay it much attention, we will make this thought-seed stronger. Sooner or later, this will bring about outer effects. For instance, we see a poster of a lecture about life's questions, or meet someone who has the same interest, or our eyes are caught by some book of wisdom.

Another example: because we acted impatiently in a certain situation, we got ourselves into a problem. From this we have learned the lesson to be more patient from now on. Both the 'impatient seed' and the 'reform seed' remain latent for a while, until suddenly we find ourselves in a situation in which we urgently need to practice patience. Then, we encounter the results of earlier impatience, but also remember our promise to become more patient. In all

To summarize: the manifestation of karmic consequences depends on both the kosmic cycles and our own inner growth cycles.

The astrological methods of prediction are all based on knowledge of the celestial cycles, on the laws of cause and effect and one's susceptibility to certain kosmic influences. Regarding the former, each celestial influence or force has a certain *magnitude or strength*, as well as a certain *direction* to which that influence or force is directed. Two opposing kosmic influences can neutralize each other. By taking into account both the magnitude and direction of the various influences, the total effect of all the kosmic influences can be mapped out by the forecaster.

Method (a): calculate the future position of the celestial bodies and compare it with a person's birth chart.

Based on the astronomical observations made over the past centuries, it is possible to accurately predict the position of all the planets and stars at a certain hour, on a certain day in the future. The further you look into the future, the more the accuracy decreases, but for predictions of the next few years you can make safe assumptions. That means you can determine the mix of kosmic influences at that future time quite precisely.

But then you are not there yet. We can only experience those influences of the star beings and planetary beings who have a character that corresponds to something in our character. Because only then does that influence resonate in us. Only then will it evoke an emotion, inclination, aspiration or understanding in us (depending on the characteristic of the influence).

So a prediction for a specific person is directly dependent on the question: how receptive is that person to those influences? To give a simple example: it is not so difficult to predict that a highly emotional person will become restless at the coming full moon. And if he also has a tendency toward depression, that period of the full moon will be a black time for him. But a person can also have such a character that this same influence does not affect him at all and thus completely passes him by unnoticed.

January 2026		Tropical Midnight Ephemeris										Time Zone: EST (05:00 East)																
Day	Th	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	F	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	F	Sa	Su								
01	10	45	50	17	21	18	10	56	28	58	09	28	12	51	21	20	26	11	27	57	29	31	02	44				
02	Fr	11	49	50	24	53	07	24	44	00	30	10	44	13	37	21	12	26	14	27	55	29	31	02	45			
03	Sa	12	48	09	53	50	17	20	07	02	02	11	59	14	23	21	04	26	18	27	53	29	32	02	47			
04	Su	13	50	15	24	42	01	45	58	10	28	03	35	13	15	09	20	56	26	22	27	52	29	33	02	49		
05	Mo	14	51	09	09	50	11	14	10	22	05	14	30	15	55	20	48	26	26	27	50	29	34	02	51			
06	Tu	15	52	11	23	11	08	01	01	06	15	14	15	46	16	21	40	20	26	27	49	29	35	02	53			
07	We	16	53	09	06	45	13	21	16	17	08	14	17	01	27	28	32	36	24	27	48	29	36	02	55			
08	Th	17	54	19	51	26	15	16	17	10	49	48	17	17	18	14	20	24	26	38	27	46	29	37	02	56		
09	Fr	18	55	02	04	34	06	47	12	19	11	23	19	32	19	00	20	16	26	42	27	45	29	38	02	58		
10	Sa	19	57	12	14	55	21	00	49	10	20	12	57	20	47	19	46	20	08	26	46	27	44	29	39	03	00	
11	Su	20	58	17	22	02	03	01	47	19	14	13	33	22	03	20	33	20	00	26	50	27	42	29	40	03	02	
12	Mo	21	59	19	08	59	14	14	55	10	16	08	23	18	21	19	19	52	26	55	27	41	29	41	03	04		
13	Tu	22	00	19	20	50	16	26	45	10	17	14	24	34	22	22	26	59	47	20	40	29	42	03	06			
14	We	23	01	02	02	41	16	08	37	10	08	19	21	25	49	22	52	19	35	27	47	29	39	43	03	08		
15	Th	25	02	14	35	07	20	34	12	10	20	58	27	05	23	39	19	27	09	27	40	38	42	44	03	10		
16	Fr	26	03	16	26	35	07	29	36	00	25	22	36	28	24	25	19	19	27	13	27	37	29	45	03	12		
17	Sa	27	04	08	08	15	43	14	51	13	09	43	24	14	29	36	25	12	19	11	27	18	37	36	29	47	03	13
18	Su	28	05	08	21	01	27	14	33	09	35	25	32	52	00	51	25	58	19	03	27	23	35	29	48	03	15	
19	Mo	29	07	11	03	30	30	09	48	14	28	27	32	07	26	45	18	56	27	28	28	34	29	49	03	17		
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(and thus receptivity) by looking at his birth chart, which after all reflects his characteristics at the time of his birth. If in a person's horoscope Saturn and Jupiter have a conjunction, and on the day to be predicted there is also a conjunction of both planets, that will generally exert a very great influence on his life. But it is an *approximate* estimation, for a person may have developed in consciousness in the meantime in such a way that he has become more or less sensitive to such a characteristic influence. And in addition, there is always the possibility that someone does experience that cosmic influence strongly but nevertheless reacts to it quite differently than he normally does, using his free will.

In practice, this method appears to lead to realistic predictions, because most people do not change their habitual patterns very quickly. Of course, its reliability always depends on the abilities of the astrologer.

Method (b): this is the same principle as (a), but using the idea that the years of our current incarnation are reflected in the first days after our birth.

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hours tell us something about our first year of life, the positions during the next 24 hours tell us something about our second year, and so on.

This method also appears to lead to certain, recognizable clues. In fact, the astrologer here uses the hermetic (and theosophical) principle: as above, so below. Consider the following: during one twenty-four-hour period, as the sphere of Earth rotates once on its axis, all twelve signs of the zodiac appear one by one in the sky. And during one year, as the Earth makes its orbit around the Sun, the Sun appears successively in each of these twelve signs. Therefore, there seems to be some analogy. This implies that the first days of our outer life, give a kind of ‘preview’, ‘musical beginning chord’ of our coming incarnation.

Method (c) includes several different forecasting techniques, all based on the idea that each natural cycle has a ‘ruling planet’ and/or ‘ruling sign’.

These methods are called in English: *time lord techniques*. In one of its variants, each year of our lives is interpreted from the dominant role of one of the twelve Houses.

The basic idea behind it, we also encounter in the theosophical teachings. Thus G. de Purucker makes it clear that each hour of the day is under the special ‘supervision’ or ‘characteristic influence’ of one of the seven sacred planets, and that the sacred planet that ushers in a cycle of twenty-four hours, which is the planet that rules over the first hour of that day, puts its stamp on that entire day. In fact, the names of the days of the week, in almost all cultures, are a striking example of this: each of the seven days is named after one of the sacred planets in a universally accepted sequence.⁽³⁾

Even when we speak of much longer cycles in the evolution of humanity, this principle applies: for example, one sign of the zodiac is dominant, during each period of 2160 years. This is also common knowledge. Based on this knowledge, we have now recently entered the Age of Aquarius.

When applying these time lord techniques, however, we must realize that we as humans do not suddenly become different persons ‘because a new kosmic cycle starts’. For example, of the cycle of Aquarius of 2160 years. After all: nothing changes in our character, nothing becomes more noble in our way of thinking and reacting, unless we, *from our own willpower*, exchange those habits in us that we consider ethically or reasonably ‘below standard’ for more truthful, more understanding habits. All character reform is done by own exertion, never by outside forces, although

these can sometimes be stimulating. It always remains our free choice how we respond to the kosmic influences, which are always neutral: do we resonate with the universal, beneficial aspects of the influence, or with the egoistic, instinctive aspects of it?

How reliable is modern astrology?

We have touched upon this question in every article in our series on astrology because it is such an important point. All current astrologers, from whatever cultural tradition, who are not initiated members of the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion, know only part of all the kosmic cycles and generally understand little or nothing of the *spiritual* evolution of kosmic and human beings. Who knows, for example, that each human being himself also has a twelve-fold zodiac, as we touched upon in part 2 of the series, and what that means?⁽⁴⁾

The great Sages, the initiates, can predict relatively accurately — if they want to. The modern astrologers can only predict broadly and not too far into the future. To give a practical example: a good modern astrologer could predict, prior to the year 2020, that that year would start with a worldwide disruption, but could not say in advance that it would be a viral epidemic (Covid-19) and exactly which practical consequences it would bring about in the various countries (psychological, economic, medical).

Are the spiritual Teachers trying to foresee future developments?

The great Sages, those who, moved by compassion, have sacrificed their own interests in order to be able to work for the welfare of all humanity, have joined together to form a very close alliance, the *Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion*. They have so strongly unfolded their capacity for understanding, and therefore have such a deep knowledge of the laws of the Kosmos and the history of mankind, that they can accurately know how all present developments in humanity will work out in the future. For instance, these Sages can foresee which groups of people will reincarnate on Earth in which periods, and so, when the past cultures will be reborn.

In doing so, do they also make use of their knowledge of ancient Astrology, about the nature of the kosmic spheres? About this, the teachers of H.P. Blavatsky, the Masters, have told us this: *yes, they do indeed*, but always only for the benefit of mankind; for instance, to be able to prepare mankind already before some new cycle starts, as much as possible, so that the new cycle would become less danger-

ous for the people. H.P. Blavatsky writes in *The Secret Doctrine* about a book in which the events of humanity for the next 5,000 years are described.⁽⁵⁾ That book, she wrote in 1888, was almost finished. Gottfried de Purucker explained, that Initiates can make very reliable predictions based on their profound knowledge of the kosmic cycles and the mathematical relations between human consciousness and these cycles.⁽⁶⁾

How useful is predictive astrology, speaking generally?

Those interested in astrology use predictive astrology quite often. *How useful is it?* We can legitimately ask that question. That question is justified, if only because everyone knows people who live their lives in a controlled, thoughtful and alert manner, who understand how things work out in our society, and thus can make valuable contributions to the community, without resorting to any astrological predictions. And in asking whether prior knowledge of the future is useful, we are of course not talking about the countless practical and useful habits such as ‘in our country all cars drive on the right (or left)’, because that kind of foreknowledge is clearly indispensable to a well-functioning society.

The point is: knowing in advance the (approximate) nature of what awaits us can easily lead us to look at those possible events through colored glasses, through the glasses of our present limited personal views and emotions. We build up images of the predicted future that may not be correct at all. And we will tend to base our present behavior on those false premises. While we can also ap-

proach all life-events with an *open mind*, simply at the moments they occur.

So, the big question is: how do we *interpret* a prediction? There lies the pitfall. Whoever still thinks from considerations revolving around his own personal well-being, will quickly interpret the neutral (!) influences of the planets and signs from his ego-centered point of view and will become, for example, afraid of an event, or on the contrary, blindly optimistic. Whereas spiritually seen and understood, every event is an opportunity to mean something to others and to become a step wiser.

A similar challenge occurs with the astrologers themselves: how do they describe their predictions to their clients? The astrologers interpret – as best as they can – the celestial positions in their own way, and it is not easy not to attach any personal color to it. They may also be tempted, because their clients request it, to focus on what a kosmic influence may mean for the more outward side of that person’s life: for his possessions, his relationships, his emotions, his outward success in society.

In practice today, such predictions very often evoke selfish thoughts and actions in the client, whereas the wise person knows that situations that we initially perceive as ‘difficult’ or even ‘critical’ very often end up being the greatest stimuli to deepen our vision and compassion, making our lives more harmonious, composed, and peaceful. In retrospect, these difficult periods often turn out to be spiritually more valuable experiences than periods when everything seems to go smoothly. *For these reasons, for most people prior knowledge of the future is not an advantage but a burden: morally and psychologically.*

In short, all types of kosmic influences (and their combinations) are neutral, no matter how powerful they may be. One is not ‘good’, the other is not ‘bad’. The choice is: you can use them for your own benefit or for the benefit of the whole community.

How will we see the future if we assume the law of cause and effect?

What changes in your view of the future, when you think from the basic principles of Universal Wisdom, from the law of cause and effect?

You then realize that your future is the strictly logical and just outcome of the character of the relationships you have established with your fellow human beings in the past. Your future is never foreign to you. You realize that everything that happens to you constitutes the *karmic field of action* in which you are given valuable opportunities to



Photo of the approaching conjunction of Jupiter (left) and Saturn (right) that took place on December 21, 2020 (as seen from Earth). The conjunction of these two planets almost always heralds significant changes in the world. It is not easy to predict exactly what those changes will be.

give present disharmony a more harmonious character, and to deepen and broaden present harmony.

Your destiny is therefore your spiritual and moral school of learning as well as the place where your present duties to the community lie. We can become wiser every day. In a deeper sense, every day from which we have picked up nothing of lasting value is a lost day.

To live this way, do you need foreknowledge of certain events? No, for the simple reason that, as mentioned above, you can go into each day with an *open mind*. And by *open mind*, here we mean primarily an unclouded view, open to the light of your conscience, your reasonable thinking and your love for all that lives: a view colored as little as possible by personal presuppositions, fears and wishful thinking. Whoever thus views every day, every encounter with his fellow men, every situation, continually appeals to his own Higher Self and will strengthen his own capacity for understanding.

In fact, by your growing discernment you will increasingly see the true *inner character* of all the actions and misfortunes of your fellow men. This will enable you to assist your fellow men from a true understanding of what is going on.

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Every cosmic being emanates a sphere of influence. We live within the sphere of influence of the sacred planets and the Sun.

Core thoughts on astrology

In *Lucifer – the Light-bringer*, a series of five articles was published on the theosophical principles of ancient Astrology, which was (and is) a profound part of the Theosophia, the Universal Wisdom.⁽¹⁾ To help you as reader to get a clear idea of the overall picture, in this article we provide a structured overview of the core thoughts from the entire series.

To properly understand astrology, we must first study some of the basic *thoughts* of Theosophy.

- The first one is the *unity* of all that exists. Every being in this unity is an expression, an integral part of a Boundless Principle of Life. Everything is alive and is boundless at its core. All beings are fundamentally interconnected and are in constant interaction with each other.
- Each being is a core of consciousness that evolves in a *cyclical* manner, alternating between periods of spiritual rest (death) and outer activity (during an embodied period).
- Thanks to their interaction, ALL beings have the opportunity to continually develop their potential. This happens *in a grand co-operation* in which all beings are essentially equal in terms of their potential abilities of development, and in which more highly developed beings direct the development of less highly developed beings. This coopera-

tion can be imagined as a cosmic web of life (see the three fundamental propositions on the inside cover of this magazine).

Ancient Astrology helps us to understand the workings of the totality of cosmic players and the nature of their influences on us humans. The theosophical keys to understanding more about Astrology deal in particular with:

The characteristic influence that every being radiates

- Everything is alive. *Behind all external forms, consciousness operates* as the guiding force. So: galaxies, stars, planets, human beings, plants, atoms, and so on, are living beings.
- Each being *radiates a force field that carries its own character*, dominated by the 'keynote' of that being. By this field, he influences all other beings in the web of life, to a larger or smaller extent. His present character is precisely that which he has developed, activated, from his

boundless potentialities so far. No two beings in the kosmos are exactly alike.

- Each being carries all twelve fundamental characteristics of consciousness, all twelve kosmic forces, within him. Therefore, each being has its own twelvefold zodiac (in which one or more characteristics dominate).

The interaction between kosmic beings and humans

- We humans live and evolve within the force field of a hierarchical group of kosmic beings, each of which has its own 'keynote'. To what extent we are affected by a particular kosmic influence, depends on *our specific receptivity* to it. This depends on our pattern of thought (character).
- Every human being fundamentally has free will. Therefore, the *stars incline, but do not compel*. We choose whether to go along with a kosmic influence or not. For example, during a day full of turmoil, we can keep our thinking focused on controlled, clear composure.
- Important astrological 'key actors' for earthly humanity are: the celestial zodiac, the Solar Being, the twelve sacred planets and the planetary being Earth. We are attracted to *their* spheres because it is exactly here that we find the appropriate stimuli and environment, which awaken (through resonance) our own unique character. Only here can we learn to unfold our potential.
- The relative strengths of the kosmic influences surrounding us, manifest themselves in countless possible, dynamically changing proportions.

The backgrounds of the birth chart

- Our human life path is interwoven with the life and cycles of these kosmic beings. Therefore, we are re-born on Earth at that specific moment, when the position of the planets, the Sun and the zodiac – and thus their combined influence – corresponds to our own character.
- We are constantly, through the thoughts we are thinking now, developing – hopefully ennobling – our character in a particular direction. Our birth chart is thus a snapshot in time.

The background of predictions

- The law of cause and effect (karma) works infallibly: what we as humans reap as fate, we have always sown

ourselves through the thoughts and actions we have thought and done in the past. So: NOW we can sow the seeds for a more harmonious world: after all, sooner or later they will bear fruit.

- What we experience of the influence of kosmic cycles, entirely depends on our own (self-created) receptivity to these kosmic influences.
- Predictions are possible to a certain extent, because all processes in the living kosmos have a cause and are cyclical. Events, situations, always return cyclically, but always with modifications to a greater or lesser extent, because all beings grow in consciousness, more or less, through their free will.
- The reliability of modern astrology is limited: in general, the practitioners are far from knowing all kosmic cycles and the more spiritual characteristics of kosmic and human beings.
- For most people, prior knowledge of the future is not an advantage but a burden: morally and psychologically.
- One can use all types of kosmic influences (and their combinations) for one's own gain or for the benefit of the whole community. There are no 'good' or 'bad' planets or signs *per se*.

Ethical conclusion

- The Theosophia explains that there are celestial influences and how they work out. In this, man's free will is fundamental.
- How astrology is applied depends entirely on the selfishness or unselfishness of the person applying it. One can use astrology to think deeply about our responsibility to further and lesser developed beings.

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Key thoughts

- » There is a boundless unity that underlies everything that exists.
- » Cosmic Laws arise from the operation and interaction of consciousnesses and wills.
- » Cooperation and compassion are characteristic patterns of behavior in the Cosmos.
- » Founders of religions and Sages have translated cosmic Laws into human laws.
- » In the ideal state, the cosmic Laws of cooperation and compassion are 'transformed' into human laws.
- » Degeneration in a democracy occurs when the country no longer adheres to its own laws that guarantee equality and justice.
- » It is the duty of every citizen to form a vision of an ideal state, in which everyone can contribute.

LAWS and laws

How do we translate cosmic Laws into human laws?

Worldwide, governments do not always adhere to their own laws. The institutions that create the laws, or oversee them, are even being called into question. International agreements are also being violated or declared null and void.

Human laws prove to be anything but stable. This stands in contrast to the Laws of the cosmos. Is there a connection between the two? And would we arrive at better legislation that everyone would naturally adhere to, if we were more deeply aware of those cosmic Laws? Then, perhaps we would not need human laws at all.

Cosmic Laws and Laws of Nature

Before we can study the relationship between human and cosmic Laws, we must first define what a cosmic Law is. This term is not commonly used in science, where laws of nature are well known. These refer to the fundamental, observable patterns in nature, as described in physics and astronomy. After repeated observations and experiments, a basic mathematical pattern is described. For example, Kepler's laws describe the movements of one celestial body around another. And Ohm's law expresses the relationship between voltage, resistance, and current. For materialistic science, all these laws pertain to the physical aspect of nature.

Theosophy acknowledges these physical laws. But it states that they are the result of conscious forces operating behind or within them. So,

behind these physical laws there is a causality, and this causality is consciousness.

Furthermore, Theosophy recognizes a number of laws that are not (yet) acknowledged in science, and which relate not so much to the external world, but to the inner or causal world, to the aspect of Nature that pertains to consciousness. We could call these laws cosmic Laws. To give an example: underlying everything that exists is an essential Unity. Another Law teaches that every conscious being grows toward perfection within the realm of nature to which it belongs.

For most people, these cosmic Laws have not been proven yet, but if we treat them as hypotheses it will become clear that they can explain many phenomena.

What are cosmic Laws?

It is remarkable that science gives so

little thought to what the laws of Nature actually are. They are expressed in quantities that can be used for calculations and predictions. But the vast majority of science rarely asks *what they actually are*. For example, science can calculate perfectly well with gravity, but what causes it remains unanswered.⁽¹⁾

As mentioned above, Theosophy asserts that there is consciousness behind these laws. But how should this be understood? Perhaps the following analogy can help you form a mental image.

Suppose that every morning after breakfast you scatter breadcrumbs in your garden. For the birds, that pattern is a 'law'. If they were capable of it, they could describe it as a rule. However, the fact that it is a human being who scatters the crumbs in the garden does not appear in that description.

Extend this thought, and you will understand that it is *beings* whose habitual patterns form the cosmic Laws for us. They are not abstractions, not mechanical phenomena; no, they are the habits of beings. And because those beings have a cosmic scope, we call them cosmic beings.

Cosmic Laws arise, in other words, through the hierarchical operation and interaction of consciousnesses and wills. They unfold over such a vast span of time that they appear to us as immutable laws. But it is not the laws themselves that act. It is therefore not the law of gravity that draws planets toward one another. It is the living consciousnesses working within or behind the planets that are drawn to one another. We can describe that pattern and call that description a law.⁽²⁾

In this respect, there is no difference between cosmic and human laws, for the latter, too, come into being through the interaction of human consciousnesses and wills in a given realm.

Unity, cooperation, commitment, and compassion

The universe has by no means revealed all its secrets to us, but what we do know is that order and regularity prevail. Where does this order come from? Theosophy provides a clear answer to that question.

First of all, it must be said that the basis of the diversity of cosmic beings – indeed, of all that exists – is a boundless unity. On this basis, it holds true for every Cosmos that its foundations are formed by cooperation, involvement in the welfare of all, and 'being an integral part of the greater Whole'.

Beings more advanced than humans fully understand that

unity – far more than even the noblest human is capable of – and always act upon it in their lives. They are continuously motivated by compassion. They constantly express compassion and are of service to all that lives. The awareness of being part of a greater whole has become the fundamental tone of their consciousness.

The most highly evolved beings in a Cosmos create the encompassing atmosphere in which all lower beings live. That atmosphere, or force field, necessarily bears the character of their own consciousness and is thus an expression of a sense of unity. All less evolved beings express that essence in their own way and within their stage of evolution, and therefore always in a limited way.

We humans experience this overarching influence of cosmic beings as the order, regularity, and the laws that we can find and investigate in external nature. An order that is reflected by every being in its own way. The cosmic Laws are therefore the result of the interaction of all beings, whereby the general patterns are always established by the highest beings.

It is thus the cooperation between these cosmic beings that we experience in our realm as natural laws or cosmic Laws. These Laws are therefore the established customs of the gods.⁽³⁾

Ethical laws

Laws are thus the habitual patterns of beings. Our human laws are therefore not merely the result of democratically elected or otherwise appointed parliaments, governments, kings, or autocrats, or any other lawmaker. Ideas rule the world, said Plato. And ideas lead to actions. It is therefore the pattern of ideas of a people that ultimately determines the laws of that people. Some of those laws are written down, others are not.

Now, every nation, or every civilization, has its pioneers. They are those intuitive persons who have a better understanding of how a country can best be governed. In the Netherlands, they included for example Hugo de Groot (1583–1643), who laid the foundation for modern international law and advocated for free access to the seas. The Founding Fathers of the United States formulated the US Constitution in the late 18th century. The drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can also be considered to belong to this group.

But in fact, every citizen should be fully aware that their habitual patterns – their character – contribute to determining which habitual patterns (laws) exist in a country. If the citizens of a country have their nation's best interests at



The constitution of the United States of America.

heart, it would be an inspiring challenge for them to envision cosmic cooperation. They could, as it were, model their own ideal after it. This means that they envision a society in which differences in no way detract from the equality of all people — or even that of animals and plants. Of course, there are indeed differences in levels of development. In the whole universe, there are beings at countless stages of evolution, some more advanced than others. It is precisely thanks to this diversity of life forms that a harmonious society can be built.

It goes without saying that the most highly developed — those who better understand the cosmic Laws — are better able to set the guidelines for a society. Note: these are not necessarily the most intellectual people, but rather those whose consciousness is ethically most developed, and who, based on this ethical awareness, best understand the connections between all people, between the past, present, and future, and those between their own people and other nations. In short, they are the leaders of a country who take into account the common good of all life and, from that compassionate perspective, shape universal laws on a human level.

Divine Lawgivers

Some of these ethical leaders have actually done so. I am referring to the Sages and Seers, the founders of universal religions or great philosophers. They have distilled a few rules from the cosmic laws for us, which constitute a more or less adequate human implementation of them. Sometimes they even call these rules 'laws'.

As far as we know, the oldest 'code of laws' originates from India. It is the *Manava-dharma-sastra*, usually translated as *The Laws of Manu*. Manu, 'the progenitor of humanity', is

said to have received these rules from the god Brahma; he summarized them and passed them on to the sage Narada, who wrote them down. In the Hindu tradition, these Laws are therefore regarded as being of divine origin. They are of unfathomable antiquity.

However, we are not dealing here merely with a legal code in the modern sense of the word. In twelve chap-

ters, the origin and destiny of humanity and the cosmos are described. For instance, the first chapter addresses the creation of the cosmos. From this cosmic description, various duties are derived, such as those pertaining to marriage, nutrition, and the responsibilities of kings. The final chapter concerns liberation. The laws are guidelines for the duties of every citizen, which will lead not only to a harmonious society but ultimately to the liberation of humanity.

In other religions as well, the origin of laws is attributed to the divine. The Laws of Moses, which encompass more than just the Ten Commandments, are a clear example of this. Sharia in Islam is also said to contain laws that were not made by humans.

In all three of these examples, a clear degeneration has set in over the years. For instance, the Laws of Manu contain several clear interpolations — later additions. Moreover, these religious laws are often viewed as mere theory, lacking any practical value. The sixth of the Ten Commandments — 'Thou shalt not kill' — is nowadays nothing more than a paper tiger. Nevertheless, the religious stories surrounding these laws tell us that they have a divine origin. Despite the process of degeneration, to which all religions are subject, the ethical principles are clearly evident. The *Sermon on the Mount* in Christianity, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* in Hinduism, the *Eightfold Path* in Buddhism, many *hadiths* in Islam, and countless other religious texts unequivocally demonstrate that selflessness and compassion are the fundamental tones of the Universe, and should therefore also be those of our human society.

Laws as Education

The cosmic Laws should serve as an inspiring example when shaping a state. Therefore, the great task for policy-

makers is to create laws that reflect the cosmic Laws as closely as possible. If harmony in the cosmos arises because *all* cosmic beings can contribute their own character for the benefit of the whole, then one should design a society in which every human being is enabled to contribute their individual talents and fulfill duties toward their country — or, in a more universal context: toward the world. Laws must be created based on a sense of interconnectedness.

In this context, it is interesting that Plato derives the Greek word *nomos* (law) from the Greek *nous*.⁽⁴⁾ *Nous* is usually translated as ‘reason’. In Theosophy, one could call it the Higher Manas (Manas illuminated by Buddhi). In other words, thinking illuminated by the spirit.

For Plato, laws have a strong educational function. Laws must guide the lives of all citizens from birth to death. It is no coincidence that in his magnum opus *The Republic*, the Greek philosopher devotes the most attention to the education of the Guardians, those responsible for enforcing the law. He emphasizes people’s responsibility above all else.

Dharma

That individual responsibility is strongly reflected in the word *dharma*. Dharma means ‘law’. It is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhri*, which means to support. The law supports society. But the law is not an abstraction. On the contrary, dharma refers to the individual duty of everyone who belongs to society. That is why beings in Buddhist literature are sometimes called dharmas. This specific duty varies from person to person, depending entirely on one’s character, level of development, and one’s karmic ties. Nevertheless, it is everyone’s duty to make their own contribution to the whole of which they are a part, so that the whole functions harmoniously.

A harmonious society arises when each individual is mindful of the cosmic principle of cooperation. And this requires at least some sense of interconnectedness with fellow human beings.

Violation of the Law and Conscience

From what we have outlined above, it appears that in an ideal situation, laws are the best possible reflection of the cosmic Laws. But if those human laws deviate significantly from the original idea of unity and cooperation, should one still abide by them? They have originated from the mental interaction of people, who together have created a national pattern of customs. But are they inspired by the moral precursors? A country’s laws are, at any given

moment, the best expression of what a people have understood of those universal laws, but that does not preclude the possibility that they may be reprehensible.

It is up to the citizen himself whether he should accept unjust laws or oppose them. In both cases, there will be karmic consequences. Everyone must make his own judgment in this matter.

Socrates went so far in respecting Athenian law that he refused to flee after being sentenced to drink the chalice of poison, because doing so would be acting against the law. He explained that by living his entire life in Athens and sharing all the benefits and duties with the other Athenians, he had thereby, in principle, said ‘yes’ to the Athenian laws. After all, during his lifetime he could have moved to another city if he believed the laws would be better there.⁽⁵⁾ Of course, this does not mean that laws cannot or should not change. If a new law better reflects the cosmic Law, that is, of course, to be welcomed. But as long as there are unjust laws, you should determine your attitude toward them based on your own insights.

In this regard, it is good to realize that there is an ‘individual law’ that is higher than any national law. That is your conscience. Your conscience is the accumulated ethical knowledge from past lives. Thus, it is conceivable that when unjust laws are enacted in a country — laws that, for example, deny people their rights or persecute them for their faith — your conscience will warn you not to obey these laws. You are then going *against* the law of your country. This does imply that, from a karmic perspective, this may lead to friction in the near or distant future, which you will then have to face. In any case, you can never justify unethical behavior by invoking unethical laws of the country.

Government does not adhere to its own laws

Of course, it is not only the individual citizen who must abide by the law; it is the duty of the government of a country as well. A democratic country that does not adhere to its own laws is ultimately doomed and will degenerate into a form of dictatorship.

Unfortunately, we must acknowledge that there are quite a few countries whose governments pay little or no heed to what has been democratically established. The institutions that create the laws, or oversee them, are being called into question. An example: all European countries have signed and ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees, which means that they have legally committed themselves to the obligations of this convention. In practice, however,

there is absolutely no question of full compliance by all countries.

One would think that in a democratic country, alarm bells should ring if politicians do not mind that the state is not adhering to its own laws. For some politicians this is indeed the case, but others turn a blind eye and pretend nothing is wrong. Then there are politicians who believe that we should abolish the institutions that review laws. Other politicians question our legal system altogether.

It goes without saying that drafting laws is a delicate matter that requires careful consideration and cannot be rushed. Nevertheless, we see, in the U.S. for example, that rules and laws are enacted by presidential decree. As laws become more carelessly drafted and fail to serve the common good, a country's population will become more rebellious and refuse to accept any laws at all.

Dissatisfaction also arises because the legislature is not respected. There is a resistance to the laws enacted by the European Union. These laws are portrayed as if they were imposed by others, overlooking the fact that the people themselves elected the European Parliament.

Majority decisions and minority rights

It is mainly populists who criticize lawmakers and seek to undermine public policy. They often identify an enemy – usually immigrants or refugees – and accuse those in power of neglecting or even betraying their own countrymen. They justify their actions by claiming that this is what the majority of the population wants. It remains to be seen whether the majority actually do want this.

But apart from that: in a democratic country, policy is indeed determined by a majority vote, but there are also fundamental rules enshrined in the Constitution of a country. Therefore, minorities must always be taken into account. It is precisely the checks and balances – such as the press, the judiciary, and other institutions – that can help adjust public policy. A democracy in which 'half plus one' holds absolute power can be a prelude to a country where an elite or a dictator holds power. In this context, Dutch writer Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer speaks of an 'absolute democracy,' in which, in the case of the Netherlands, 76 men and women in the House of Representatives determine what happens in the country, without taking into account what the other 74 members of parliament think or want, let alone what the minority groups in the country want.⁽⁶⁾ As a result, dissenting voices are silenced. There are attacks on the press, on the judiciary, on institutions, and democracy slowly degenerates.

If a country wishes to emulate the harmony of the Cosmos, would there even be any talk of majorities and minorities? Isn't it really about the whole? Should we therefore never exclude any groups or parties? Well-meaning people, who set aside their own interests and dogmas, can undoubtedly reach a consensus, even if it may take a long time.

Does democracy lead to dictatorship?

Unfortunately, the looming demise of democracy takes place in many countries. In the United States, this process is already well underway. Moreover, that country's current regime seeks to nullify virtually all international agreements and is striving for a lawless world. The International Court of Justice in The Hague is not being recognized, and the judges who work there have been placed on a sanctions list.

According to Plato, this is the fate of democracy. People living in a democracy 'no longer care about any law, written or unwritten, just so long as they have nothing or no one above them.'⁽⁷⁾ The 'democratic' person puts his own freedom, his own prosperity, and his own opinions above everything else, even at the expense of others. Initially, it begins with what Pfeijffer calls absolute democracy: the dictatorship of the majority. It will soon become apparent, however, that even within that 'majority' there are conflicting interests, because everyone values their own freedom, prosperity, and opinion higher than that of others. Every law is perceived as a restriction on freedom and should be abolished. The chaos that ensues could then only be resolved by a 'strong man'. And voilà, a dictatorship is born.

The mentality of the People

Now, a democracy does not necessarily have to degenerate into a dictatorship. Plato, too, in his last major work, *The Laws*, paints a somewhat more optimistic picture of democracy. Although a state led by a wise ruler is the best form of government, there is also something positive to be found in a hybrid form of democracy and aristocracy. A wise leader will always listen to the voice of the people and incorporate the wishes and concerns of the population into his policies. In fact, everything depends on the mindset of the people.

The quality of a society stands or falls with the thought patterns of the people who are part of it. In addition to a sense of responsibility and justice, and the will to cooperate, wisdom is also needed. And wouldn't it be wise to

look to the cosmic Laws when shaping human society? That is the great challenge for politicians in democratic countries. Explain what the ideal society looks like. Remind people of their responsibilities. Encourage them to live their dharma; to fulfill their duty toward society. Do not flatter the people. Do not try to gain power by promising personal gain or by blaming the misery in a country on others. Do not constantly point out what others are doing wrong in your eyes.

Wise politicians are educators. They paint a universal picture, and they honestly, and with idealistic reasoning, plea for a just society. Of course, the people have a duty to uphold justice as well, to commit themselves to the common good, and to abide by the law.

Following Plato and Aristotle, countless European and Islamic writers have described their ideal form of government.⁽⁸⁾ But whatever form of government you have, it only functions optimally if it inspires all people to live for the whole of which they are a part. We hope to have made clear that this applies not only to policymakers or politi-

cians. We must help and inspire one another in this regard.

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Questions & Answers

How do you nurture the noble qualities in a child?

How do you recognize the influence of the immortal faculties and characteristics in a child, and how can you respond to them appropriately?

Answer

Before we address these questions directly, let us first provide a general overview of the purpose of education. Every human being – indeed, every creature – is the expression of a center of consciousness. Thanks to the experiences they undergo life after life, they are given the opportunities to increasingly bring forth their boundless potential. What, then, in this light, is a

child? It is a human being with a 'very long track record', who has already lived many lives in which they have partially developed a number of abilities in the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical realms. As a child, they are now beginning their current incarnation. During their childhood – up until the beginning of adulthood – they awaken the capacities, inclinations, and aspirations they possessed at the moment of their death in their previous incarnation. In a word, one could call this their character. That is why brothers or sisters, even in the case of twins, can have a very different character, because they always bring themselves with them. They become themselves again, stimulated, of course, by their environment, their parents, and all the other people around them. An environ-

ment to which they are drawn, karmically, precisely because that environment possesses exactly those characteristics that match their own.

It is the task of all the people 'around the child' to draw out his latent abilities by creating a suitable environment in which the child can discover and develop those abilities. And all of this in the most harmonious way possible, which means: in such a way that the child learns to control his more self-centered and instinctual aspects (desires, feelings). And without neglecting a single aspect of being human. Once the child has reached adulthood, and all their faculties are fully operational again, they can begin to consciously and independently expand their understanding and abilities each year.

The greatest challenge, from a theosophical perspective, is to help the child discover his own immortal nature – his selfless, helpful, thoughtful, gentle core – so that the child can learn to let that immortal part take the lead over his more self-centered, greedy, or undisciplined aspects. In doing so, you give the child an experience that enables them to overcome the difficult aspects of their entire future life with understanding, courage, and independence. How can we recognize the influence of the spiritual, imperishable part of a child, if it is present? For it can manifest in countless forms and is sometimes deeply hidden.

We can only do so if we, as parents and caregivers, have also developed those same impersonal qualities within ourselves. We must first be somewhat familiar with them, to a greater or lesser extent, in order to be able to recognize them in another person. For only then can you attune your thinking to the ‘frequency’ of those nobler characteristics and recognize them in the other person when they are at work (disguised in all sorts of ways).

Here are a few examples. Young children sometimes ask adults very intuitive questions about life; something they often stop doing as they get a bit older. The reason is this: a person’s personal thought characteristics – and by that we mean their outwardly focused thought patterns (including ‘what will others think of me,’ ‘I want to perform better than the others,’ along with all sorts of other limiting thought patterns) – *gradually* increase during childhood. They only fully manifest themselves after a certain number of years. That is why the thinking of the very youngest child is often more open to intuitive ideas.

Anyone who tries to see the deeper connections between things recognizes

the moments when young children ask an intuitive question. These are questions like: what happens when we die; where do we come from? Those who are attuned to this recognize the golden opportunities you then have to further stimulate that higher, insightful aspect of the child.

And how do you do that? Certainly not by giving some kind of definitive ‘final’ answer, or by brushing the question aside. That does not encourage the child to think for themselves and draw on the wisdom from their past lives, and you are likely steering the child in a dogmatic way. No, after such a question, you give a hint or a related counter-question that the child can reflect on further. You point in ‘a direction’. For example, we know of someone with a theosophical background who was asked by a child, ‘Where do I come from?’ and replied, ‘From a past life.’ Without providing any further specifics. That leaves the child plenty of room to construct their own image of what ‘that previous life’ might be.

Something that is very valuable now, and in fact throughout childhood, is *providing stimuli*. For example, take the child to the observatory, museums, the library, out into nature; also consider music lessons or theater.

We shall mention a few more examples of the diverse expressions of the child’s immortal, selfless core. Toddlers try to imitate what their parents do and often want to help out spontaneously. That is an expression of a sense of community. And when the table is being set, such a toddler might also try to grab a plate. Be careful not to react with the reflex, ‘Oh, let me do that; you’ll probably drop it’ ... because then you’re depriving the child of an opportunity. Children between the ages of six and twelve often have an inner drive to

build up more knowledge about the world. During this time, they often develop special hobbies. At the same time, they want to discover the *logic* of things, as evidenced by the many ‘why’ questions. That, too, is a transpersonal expression. Here, too, you can respond in a way that encourages the child to develop their own logical potential. If they have a question, you could say, for example: ‘Good question, shall we figure that out together in the coming days?’ And then you go with them to the library or head out into nature together, seeking more knowledge.

As a final example, we point to the adolescent phase. Every adolescent is different – because they have built up a unique character in their previous incarnations – but for most of them, it is true that they now prefer to follow their own, independent ideas (‘experiment’) rather than accept what adults say. They gain experiences in all kinds of youth groups and wonder what kind of world they are actually entering. Couldn’t that world be much better? Hence their resistance – however unrestrained – to ‘authorities’. It is an expression of their idealism awakening: things can and must be much better. They join *Greenpeace* or devote themselves entirely to music. As parents, you now have only limited influence, though it is essential that you are always there for the adolescent. But you can recognize those sparks of idealism and, as it were, encourage their core spirit without having to blindly go along with their reckless expressions. Because even at this stage of life, it can be important to set certain boundaries that offer the young person a degree of protection. We provide these examples to show that you can help the child ‘unpack’ their own store of wisdom at every stage of life.

Agenda

International Theosophy Conference 2026, July 23-26

**Honoring Truth through Practice
Living the Theosophical Life**

The International Theosophy Conferences (ITC) is an annual gathering of Theosophists from around the world, via Zoom. In an open and friendly atmosphere, participants exchange ideas about Theosophical principles. These principles were given to us by H.P. Blavatsky and her Masters. We help one another to understand these principles and how they should be applied.

This year, a series of lectures will explore ideas on how we can find Truth and how we can live according to the Truth. Each day, after the lectures, there will be ample opportunity to discuss these topics with one another.

Date: July 23-26, via Zoom.

The conference will be held in three languages: English, Portuguese, and Spanish.

The theme of each day is:

- Day 1, July 23: Living the Life
- Day 2, July 24: Hearing the Song of Wisdom
- Day 3, July 25: Choosing Unity
- Day 4, July 26: Compassion: the Law of Laws



All daily activities are listed on the ITC Website, www.theosophyconferences.org. You can also register through this website.

National symposium of the Theosophical Society Point Loma

The annual English symposium takes place on **Sunday evening, October 4.**

Time: from 6:00 p.m. to approximately 10:30 p.m. CEST. It will be held online via Zoom. Participation is free.

Program

18:00 - Welcome / Introduction

18:10 - Lecture

18:50 - Lecture

19.15 - Break (5 minutes)

19:20 - Workshop

20.20 - Break (40 minutes)

21:00 - Lecture

21.35 - Break (5 minutes)

21:40 - Workshop

22:40 - Preview upcoming season and closure



For more information about the lectures, please visit our Website: www.blavatskyhouse.org.

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free from dogma.

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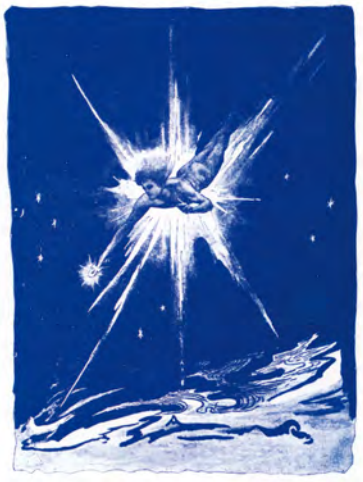
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The activities of the I.S.I.S. Foundation (International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth) are based on:

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)