

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

**The mathematics
of Religion**

**Why I.S.I.S. Foundation has been
named after an
Egyptian goddess**

**Is thinking never
spiritual?**

Esoteric meditation

**The scientific
approach to
classical
homeopathy**



Cover photo:

The trinity, the Source of all things, here represented by Osiris (midst), Isis (right) and Horus (left), their son.

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In this article we discuss the aim and nature of I.S.I.S. Foundation by zooming in on the symbol of Isis, and its full name: *International Studycentre for Independent Search for truth*. Reflecting on this appeals to our most noble aspirations.

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Herman C. Vermeulen
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Depiction of Isis, left, and her twin Nephthys (Neith), right. Nephthys represents the hidden, occult side of Isis.

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Editorial

We think we have been able to compose a highly varied *Lucifer*, with both scientific, philosophical and religious subjects.

The article *The Mathematics of Religion* discusses the deepest essence of religion, but it also outlines how the most noble aspect of human consciousness can degenerate. Living in a world where religion often does much more harm than good, it is extremely useful to consider the content well.

The degeneration process of religion often starts, because people believe that logical thinking and philosophy contradicts religion. In the article *Does thinking exclude spirituality?* an attempt is made to explain that spirituality and thinking are not in conflict with each other: something many people - including theosophists – often assume.

In two articles we try to shine a light on meditation. What kind of meditation leads to expansion of consciousness and what kind does not? In this issue we publish part 1, in one of our next *Lucifers* part 2.

We often get questions about the subjects illness and healing. We therefore think that many readers will appreciate the article *The scientific approach of classical homeopathy*. This article not only deals with homeopathy but also tries to answer the question what disease actually is.

Finally, we answered a number of interesting questions, asked by a reader, about human and animal consciousness. We hope that this *Lucifer* may clarify some aspects of Theosophy, so that we are all able to better express Theosophy in our daily lives. As always, we are open to your comments, feedback and questions.

The editors

Interactive Symposium *The meaning of life – Wisdom in practice*

Date: Saturday, September 9th, 2017 (Dutch and English)

Time: 10.00 – 16.15 hours.

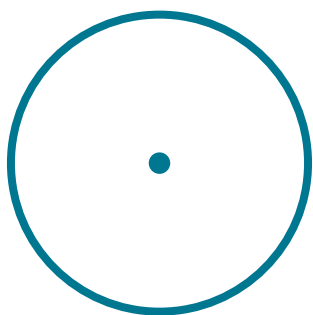
Location: New Babylon, Anna van Buerenplein 41A, The Hague

The basic principles of a life philosophy are offered in four short lectures, introducing the following issues: *What is life? Self-determination of your life: can our life be “completed”? Boundlessly learning to learn. Who am I?*

In the workshops, the participants will investigate the value of this life philosophy. Would you pursue other aims in your life, from this radically different perspective? The Symposium is also an excellent introduction to the course Thinking Differently.

For the full programme: <http://www.isis-foundation.org/symposium/program-9-september-2017/>

Livestream: <http://www.isis-foundation.org/symposium/livestream/>



The mathematics of Religion

Key thoughts

» There is a big difference between Religion and faith. Faith unites, but divides as well. Religion is universal and excludes no one.

» RELIGION, the sense of unity, degenerates gradually via religions, faiths, into beliefs of sects which stimulate the delusion of separateness and selfishness.

» Theosophia is the foundation of the future religion of humanity. Such Universal Religion – the mathematics of Religion – will be so universal that it inspires everyone. It knows no dogmas, but appeals to the noblest in the human being and is based on Universal Brotherhood.

» Dharma means Law, Duty, but also Religion. Real Religion means that you fulfill your duty with respect towards the whole in accordance with the cosmic laws. This has consequences for your personal life.

We live in a bubble. Everyone on his own island. What can bind us? Can religion bind people together and ensure cohesion and solidarity?

If you are very close to something and you are not aware of what is around you, it is often difficult to see the whole picture. It is difficult for us as well, living at this particular moment, to define the general character of our time. There are many, sometimes contradictory tendencies. Yet, if we try “to take a few steps backward”, we become aware that in our world there is hardly any overarching philosophy that is accepted by the majority. The result is that we all live on islands, separated by impassable seas.

In the Western world, this situation arose after the encompassing grasp of the Christian Churches became looser. With the increasing prosperity and the absence of an accepted central authority, individualism rose. Moreover, there is, because of the economic market forces, an increasing difference in wealth between populations, which intensifies the boundaries between people. Finally, the emigration increased considerably in many parts of the earth, because of wars, unemployment and poverty. These newcomers have to find their

place in society, which does not work in all cases.

This has led to a sense of alienation, something which is reflected in almost all Western countries. We see the other as an alien, somebody who thinks differently, acts and believes differently. There is no common base.

It used to be better in the old days?

Especially old folks talk about the good old days. They remember nostalgically that people trusted each other and that everyone shared the same values. And indeed, it seems that in the old days there was an overarching faith and values were commonly shared. But did these values apply to everyone, or were they confined to the religious or cultural group to which you belonged?

The society was divided into groups. Within those groups, there was indeed a certain kind of unity, if we may use this word. But it was rather a narrow and bigoted unity, a false unity, which often encouraged hypocrisy. Apparently, people lived according

to the morals of their group, but often in secret they did not. In addition, each group opposed the others. There were not many Catholic fathers who would accept it if their daughter were to come home with a Protestant boy, let alone an unreligious socialist. Sometimes relations between groups were so aggressive that, for example in Ireland, Catholics and Protestants were bitter enemies. If we want a sense of unity experienced by everyone in society, we must return to the days when there was only one church: perhaps the time before the Reformation? But are the Middle Ages a time we should be yearning for? Do we want to live in an atmosphere where for every search for truth, for every dissent of opinion, was a harsh, often cruel punishment of the ecclesiastical authorities? Besides, back then the unity also only covered a part of humanity, i.e. precisely that part of the world that fell under the Roman authority. The Eastern Churches – even though they were Christian – were more like enemies than brothers in faith.

Religion

Religion means to bind back or to connect again. But judging from the history, we find that religions forge just a part of humanity together, because not only among Christians did the sense of unity reach no further than to those who belonged to the same church, you see the same phenomenon in almost all faiths. Faiths unite believers, but are hostile to non-believers. The cruelest wars have always been religious wars.

The explanation for this phenomenon lies in the fact, that RELIGION degenerates via a number of stages from professing unity to something that encourages separateness and selfishness.

RELIGION is a universal awareness of unity. It is an all-per-vading knowledge that the One Life is present in all life forms. Religions try to shape this awareness in some way or another. For that purpose symbols or metaphors are used. Religions strive to express the actual unity by exercising some discipline.

Religious consciousness is the most universal within us, assuming a divine force exists behind the phenomena. It connects us to the divine source from which we all came. In other words, it makes us aware of the divine source in which we all exist. Therefore it connects us with our fellow men, yes, with all that lives. It is therefore the most sacred thing there is. Religions also answer the question: what is the meaning of our life? For what purpose do the Cosmos and Man exist?

RELIGION

Sense of unity with the SOURCE from which everything emanates.

Religions: derived from RELIGION

The first phase is to identify the abstract and unimaginable SOURCE and shape it without falling into limitations; several traditions reflect this lofty vision and talk about Emptiness, Fullness or the Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE. They inspire humans to choose and apply a way of life, with their noblest aspects of consciousness and free will, based on the Unity of Life, and to regard this way of living as a supreme Law or Duty.

Faiths: derived from religions

The original pursuit for unity and universality is abandoned. The sense of unity is reduced to an anthropomorphic deity or gods – beings in a higher state of consciousness than we are in – who should be served. We are subordinate to and dependent upon that god or those gods. Their ways are inscrutable.

Beliefs: derived from faiths

God or gods should be worshiped and served. Rituals, prayer, traditions and cultural patterns play an important role. Any kind of ratio or logic has disappeared. Man is dependent and unable to experience the accuracy of what happens to him.

Sects: derived from beliefs

The connection to the original source has been completely cut through. There is only a relationship experienced with those who belong to the same sect.

Religions are therefore the first derivative of RELIGION. They are a first garment of the Abstract Universal concept which RELIGION is. As long as religions are pure, they are sublime and fully focused on RELIGION. The original Buddhism is an example thereof. It has no prayer and no ritual to please the gods, nor does it teach that you should beg the gods for release. It asserts that the gods are just as any other living being subject to cause and effect. Faiths are a second derivative of RELIGION. They arise when the purity of a religion is polluted. They still acknowledge somewhat of the feeling of unity – the sense of the sacredness of the divine – but it is limited to those who practice the same faith. As a faith is close to the

original religion from which it arose, the adherents of that faith still experience some kinship with those who do not belong to their religion.

The third phase of the process of degeneration of RELIGION we may call “belief”. People interpret more and more religious metaphors from their petty, personal point of view, so that the universal concept is increasingly limited to personal ideas of separateness, which are, however, granted an absolute truth. This creates dogmas. You just have to believe in those dogma’s. Research is discouraged or even forbidden.

Finally the belief degenerates in a form of sectarian faith. Its adherents only experience a kind of sense of unity with their sect members, but they are hostile to anyone who does not belong to their sect.

Another significant difference between the true religions and faiths is that religions always seek the divine *within* man. All powers and qualities are within ourselves, which makes every human being equal to any other. The independent thinking, the independent investigation, is essential. The answer to the question “what is the meaning of life?” has to be found by thinking yourself.

Faiths, and certainly beliefs, however, put the divine and therefore also the answers to life’s questions *outside* the human being. Hence prayer and ritual play an important role, because they are used to please God or gods in order to get something. For that reason sacred books and priests are necessary, because unlike religions, the answers do not come from inside but from outside.

The unity which is pursued by the man of faith is shaped by all kinds of external appearances such as clothing and food requirements. In some Muslim circles, for example, there are passionate and extensive discussions about which clothes women are allowed and are not allowed to wear. There are Christians who claim Christmas and Easter as unique Christian holidays. Some schools and parents forbid children to color a coloring sheet of Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny, because it would rob Christmas and Easter from their Christian character.

When faith degenerates even more, and priests set themselves up as mediators between the divine and the human, it is the main source of evil in the world. Those priests, under whatever name they may operate, pretend to be the only ones who can interpret the scriptures. When people believe in them and in their dogmas, they are willing to do everything those priests command them to do, because they believe that their god or gods are backing them. But there will always be people who reject the priestly dogmas.

Therefore, the division among mankind increases. One group is hostile to the other. There is ongoing controversy, even within a single faith, but also between different faiths. History is full of religious wars.

In short, faith unites, but it divides as well.

Secularization

In the western world, especially in Europe, there is an increasing secularization. Churches are empty. A lot of people only visit a church during their holidays. Therefore, it is often hard for youngsters who are brought up without any faith, to imagine that faith has exerted such a negative impact. Yet it did.

In some parts of the world the secularization is accelerating. In a country like the Netherlands only a quarter of the population calls himself a church member and even among them there is doubt in the existence of God.

Yet there is still a certain kind of religiosity among the population, albeit often experienced in smaller groups or even individually. People shop around in religious matters. They join a course on yoga, or during their vacation they go on a sporty but also a kind of religious pilgrimage.

But there is no widespread religious awareness, not even a common religious belief. Therefore, the current Judeo-Christian faith does not ensure social cohesion, unless it returns to its own core, so back to the original Religion which it once must have been, before the process of degeneration started.

Cohesion: mutual attraction.

Social cohesion: people in a society have something in common and are therefore attracted to each other. They have, as it were, one heart.

Clash of civilizations

Everywhere in the world people try to get a grip on their lives by boosting their own cultural and religious customs. Worldwide, there is a tendency for countries or cultures to retreat within their own borders, which they want to protect against foreigners with walls as high as possible. Pessimists even claim that the coming decades will be characterized by what they call a *clash of civilizations*. People find their cultural and religious identity so important, that they do not accept that other groups have different values. This inflexible intolerance leads to the

fact that different religious and cultural groups are hostile to each other, which has resulted in the Middle East in brutal wars, which last for decades.

It is therefore very necessary that we come to certain core values which can be accepted by everyone. There should be a common basis for a society that does not want to fall apart. Royalty, sports heroes, movie and pop stars or other substitutes give only a temporary sense of community, but they are not based on spiritual and sustainable laws and therefore satisfy only for a short time and just a limited group. Moreover, they do not answer the questions of life: what is the meaning of life and death?

Religion does. We think, therefore, that only Religion can ensure a sustainable social cohesion in a society. The currently existing faiths, however, have strayed quite far from their original meaning. Because the metaphors in which these faiths wanted to communicate certain truths, are often interpreted literally, and because this literal interpretation is contrary to scientific facts and theories, they lose more and more authority.

Nevertheless, virtually anyone – even the atheist – asks himself the question of the meaning of life. Many wonder what our place is in the cosmic order of which we are vaguely aware. That vague feeling has to be supported by Religion, which provides enough spiritual nourishment to consolidate and strengthen that feeling. Moreover, Religion must be so universal, that everyone can find truth in it.

THEOSOFIA – Religion, Philosophy and Science

Is it then not high time for RELIGION, which is above any personal interpretation, in line with the scientific facts, which resists the critical mentality of the current population, which is logical, and especially, provides answers to life's questions of people in all ranks of the community? It is obvious, that this Universal Religion does not exclude Science and Philosophy. Science explores *how* the world works. Philosophy wonders *why* this is so. Both aspects cannot and must not be contrary to Religion, which answers the question *to what end* life leads and what its meaning is.

Now, Theosophia, the wisdom of the gods, is the synthesis of Religion, Philosophy and Science. It is as old as mankind. Again and again, attempts have been made to

disseminate the theosophical doctrines. More advanced humans, Elder Brothers, Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, were behind these efforts. The last major effort was the foundation of the Theosophical Society (TS) in 1875. In a letter to A.P. Sinnett, one of those Masters gives a record of a conversation with his Chief – the Mahā-Chohan – in which he gives in plain language his views on the purpose of the TS, especially regarding Religion and achieving social cohesion among people.

The intellectual portions of mankind, so he says, seem to be swiftly dividing into two classes: a group surrenders to bigotry and superstition, which should lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle. The other group surrenders to animal propensities, which leads to degradation.

The latter group, rejecting the literal interpretation of the Bible as illogical, believes in nothing else but the material world. For them, all religion is opium. H.P. Blavatsky would later formulate this phenomenon with the phrase: *the atheist is the bastard son of the church.*⁽¹⁾

This analysis of the situation at that time applies equally to the current situation.

However, the Mahā-Chohan does not just make the diagnosis, he gives the solution as well.

The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner stone, the foundation of the future religion of humanity. To achieve the proposed object a greater, wiser, and especially a more benevolent intermingling of the high and the low, of the alpha and the omega of society, was determined upon. The white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations, to call the poor despised “nigger”* brothers. This prospect may not smile to all. He is no Theosophist who objects to this principle.⁽²⁾

This quotation shows that the Religion of the future should be practiced wisely, so that it leads to a merging of all layers of society.

The mathematics of Religion

It goes without saying that in the future RELIGION must be professed completely different than it is now. Of course, there must be a certain form, a language in which the Universal Source is expressed. However, the universality

* We know that this word is a no-no word in the US. For the sake of clarity, we therefore emphasize that it stands between quotation marks. It was the intention of the Masters that the white race, which had colonized India, should show respect to the dark Indians and to regard them as equivalent brothers.

itself cannot be compromised in any way.

The latter is the case with the currently existing faiths, which, after all, often just bring together some people, but they separate those people from others. Religions must focus on the Core. That Core of RELIGION is a kind of mathematics, but then mathematics of RELIGION.

What do we mean by that term?

Well, mathematics is the universal science which, based on some axioms, describes patterns and structures. It assumes a small number of axioms or theses. By strict logical reasoning, mathematical allegations or conjectures are substantiated. Mathematical allegations of which the accuracy has been shown, are called statements. Thus one gains knowledge, which can then be used in all kinds of situations (applied mathematics). Similarly, on the basis of only a small number of principles, we can formulate a number of religious statements that each human must be able to recognize and experience. In fact, there are only three such essential axioms: the boundlessness and infinity of life; the cyclicity of life; the progressive growth of life. Each being is a part of infinity and is therefore infinite itself and has basically the same possibilities and powers as any other being. The same laws are everywhere, what is concisely formulated in the phrase “as above, so below.” Each person must examine these axioms for themselves and if you want to do that correctly, you need Science and Philosophy.

Of course, people differ in spiritual development. That means that some might be better able to perceive the deeper consequences of these principles than others. There are people who have pondered deeply on the leading forces in the cosmos and human beings. They have studied the religious literature and meditated on it. Others, on the other hand, have hardly thought about spiritual matters. Nevertheless, the mathematics of Religion can inspire everyone, because the axioms can be understood and applied at all levels.

How do faiths and religions relate to the mathematics of Religion?

Are the different religions contrary to the mathematics of Religion?

Our answer is: yes they are. In fact, those faiths are degenerate forms of religions and thus very limitedly applied forms of RELIGION. The adherents of a faith assign more truth to the specific form, the special ritual, the metaphors and language that is used, than to the Universal Truth, which is the deeper background. As soon as faiths deny

the original religious-mathematical basis, the degeneration process has begun.

Nevertheless, no faith is absolutely false. After all, it is derived from a religion and that is the first form of RELIGION. When a faith is still close to its source, it can give the believers some insight into the principles of mathematics of Religion, and hopefully inspire them to be better humans. For example, a simple myth can give a humble, illiterate person a limited religious experience and inspire him to live an ethical life. Perhaps someone who better understands the universal axioms of the mathematics of Religion, does not need such a myth to live ethically, but that does not mean that his vision is fundamentally different from those who are inspired by that myth. In other words, you can pick out of a specific religion the truth that corresponds to your state of development. Different religions can therefore coexist peacefully side by side. Minimum requirement is, however, that concepts as charity, respect and equality are taught as applications of the mathematics of Religion without any concession. If the mathematics of Religion lives more strongly in society, this will lead to an ever greater deepening of religious life. It will encourage adherents of religions to study their religion more profoundly and to find out the true meaning of the myths and rituals. By doing so, you become more and more aware of the underlying equality, yes, even of the basic unity of all religions.

Religion: the divine is within you

The religion of the future must be fully in line with the mathematics of Religion, so that it inspires everyone; both the “beginner” and the “advanced”. Anyone can, in accordance with his spiritual status, give it his own interpretation.

In this regard, the wording of the Master’s letter is very interesting. This letter was never found in the original form, however there are several copied versions of it. One of those versions states that the TS is the basis for future religions (plural) instead of religion (singular), as we quoted above. It is impossible for me to determine whether in the original letter was written religion or religions, but if the latter were the case, then the Mahā-Chohan apparently already took into account the degeneration process that has taken place in all religions. A religion always has restrictive features that RELIGION does not have, even though it is much purer and less limited than a faith.

If there is RELIGION per se, then it is much more about a mentality, which can take many forms and which is not

bound to one system of thought. Love or compassion have also many expressions, such as the love of a mother for her children or the love for your country. However, when you love more universally, the limited forms of love disappear, because you love everyone equally. In fact, you also need to get rid of all the restrictive features that characterize a specific religion.

These restrictive factors include the fact that a book, a doctrine or a human being is attributed absolute authority. The truth is not experienced but taken on the authority of something or someone. This leads to what is the greatest difference between Religion and degenerate religions or faiths. Religion puts the divine always within man, while faith seeks it outside man. Therefore, the faithful man assigns to ritual and prayer an almost absolute value. But, from the perspective of RELIGION, ritual is just a tool for the weak who has not yet learned to concentrate on his Higher Self. Just like additional training wheels can be useful when learning to ride a bike, ritual can help the beginner to focus on spiritual matters. It does not have more value than that.

Search for truth?

The mathematics of Religion knows only axioms, no dogmas. In dogmas you believe; axioms, you investigate. Nobody is so wise that he does not have to investigate anything. No human being, even when he has reached Buddhahood, is omniscient. How foolish it is then, if someone assumes that he knows exactly what another has to believe and imposes dogmas upon him.

Therefore, the mathematics of Religion is not based on a book, a supposed revelation, a spiritual teacher, an avatar or even a god. The highest authority on which the Universal Religion appeals, are the spiritual qualities within humans. And that is precisely why it can be accepted by everyone. The only thing is that some people have a broader, grander impression of it than others.

Is that a problem? Not at all, provided that the more religious man does not impose his vision on others, which he would never do if he really is more religious. *There is no compulsion in religion*, we read in the Qur'an (2: 256). Nobody should impose something on another, especially not religious matters. Whether something is true or not, can only be decided by an individual. Of course, he can talk to others about it, but only his own "heart and mind" determine if something is true. Everyone will therefore experience Religion in his own way, with as a result that even the least form of sectarianism ceases to exist.

But if religion is practiced individually, then nobody is committed to others. What is the unifying element?

Well, the unifying element is that anyone who professes the mathematics of Religion – or perhaps you'd better say; who studies and lives Religion – realizes that there are inseparable links between humans, and between humans and the universe in which we live. In other words: the only "article of faith" is the recognition of the Universal Brotherhood of all that lives. We are brothers, how different our vision of truth may be.

Living the concept of brotherhood, makes Religion in all respects a cohesive or unifying element. It connects us with the divine, causative Consciousness from which the great variety of life expressions comes from. And that's why it connects us with each other.

The mathematics of Religion will therefore primarily promote ethics. Prayer, ritual and dogmas are very important in faiths. In the future, however, they won't have any value, or at least much less. Then, Religion only makes sense when it stimulates humans to compassion, charity and community spirit, so when it makes them better humans.

Dharma

A concept that beautifully represents this mathematics of Religion is the Sanskrit word dharma.

Dharma is usually translated as law or duty, but also as religion. There is nothing wrong with these translations, but you perceive the real meaning of Dharma still better, if you know that the word is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhri*, which means to bear, to support. At cosmic level, it means that dharma is the cosmic lawfulness, the universal law of compassion, which is the basis of all cosmic life. Every human being is part of that cosmic lawfulness and must try to make a contribution to that 'cosmic building'. That's his duty. Not a duty imposed by others, but a duty deriving from one's own unique character (*Swabhāva*).

But why does dharma also mean Religion?

Because for the fulfillment of your duty, you must always have a vision of the larger whole of which you are a part. You must actively form an image of what you have to work out in this life in relation to your fellow human beings, yes, to all that lives.

In a country where everyone follows his dharma, justice prevails, because everybody perceives that what he finds on his path, is there in accordance with the law of cause and effect. It is therefore his duty to cope with it in such a way, that it is in the interests of everyone.

Dharma is exactly the opposite of the sectarian feeling that

faiths cause. Therefore, Dharma can never be limited. If you understand it correctly, it always connects.

Satyān nāsti paro dharmah, is the motto of the Mahā-rajā of Varanasi. It was taken over by the founders of the Theosophical Society. It means: there is no Dharma higher than Truth. Usually it is translated as: there is no religion higher than truth. It is this Religion, we believe, that the Mahā-Chohan meant when he gave his vision that the TS is the foundation of the future Religion.

The example of Ashoka

The cynics among us will undoubtedly oppose that this universal Religion will always be a dream. They would say that human beings are unable to practice it. We always refute this by pointing out the spiritual, religious aspects within the consciousness of every human being. There is no argument whatsoever for the opinion that those aspects cannot be developed and that a generally accepted universal Religion can never be realized.

In addition, we can also find historical evidence that such universal religion can surely flourish.

First of all, we note that, before the monotheistic religions claimed possessing the monopoly on truth, people were used to finding their own path to enlightenment. In antiquity there was no institutionalized religion that pretended to be the only way to salvation.

You see the same in the Oriental countries, such as India and China. Those countries did not have one church, but different paths, and although these paths emphasized different aspects of the teachings, they never contradicted but rather complemented each other. India has six Wisdom Schools, the *Śad Darśana*'s, which all lead to enlightenment. In China, Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism could live peacefully side by side.

One can object that there were still different religions. That's true, but they were not contradictory but complementary to each other.

In those days there was, just like in our days, no perfect situation, because some humans granted themselves privileges and thus violated the essence of the mathematics of Religion and the idea of brotherhood. The saddest example of this is the degenerate caste system. Yet there have also been periods in which the idea of universal religion was accepted by large parts of society. That was the case during King Ashoka's reign. Ashoka ruled from 268 to 231 BC over lands which now belong to India. He is called a Buddhist king and he was definitely inspired by the wisdom doctrine of Gautama the Buddha. Never-

theless, he did not disseminate the Buddhist *faith*, but rather the *dhamma*.

Dhamma is the equivalent of dharma. It is a language of the people, and Ashoka expresses himself in that language while communicating with the people.

Ashoka had his vision of Religion (Dhamma) engraved in rocks and memorials. Thus he communicated:

Dhamma is good, but what constitutes Dhamma? (It includes) little evil, much good, kindness, generosity, truthfulness and purity.⁽³⁾

It is certainly true that he built Buddhist monasteries, organized conferences, inspired monks to compose holy texts. Buddhism spread to all corners of the land during his reign. But he also helped Vedic monks and Jains. Never was the dhamma interpreted sectarianly, nor did it divide the people. Never it was based on an external authority. On the contrary.

For example, read the following inscription by Ashoka:

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, [*Ashoka*] honors both ascetics and the householders of all religions, (...) that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions. Growth in essentials can be done in different ways, but all of them have as their root restraint in speech, that is, not praising one's own religion, or condemning the religion of others without good cause. And if there is cause for criticism, it should be done in a mild way. But it is better to honor other religions for this reason. By so doing, one's own religion benefits, and so do other religions, while doing otherwise harms one's own religion and the religions of others. Whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought "Let me glorify my own religion," only harms his own religion. Therefore contact (between religions) is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desires that all should be well-learned in the good doctrines of other religions.⁽⁴⁾

In fact, the only religion he recognized was the dhamma and that is exactly what we call in this article the mathematics of Religion. There were various forms of that dhamma, such as Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism. However, there were no essential differences.

Needless to say, that at the time of the monk-king – as he was called – there blossomed a beautiful, righteous civilization. Among the people of that vast empire was a strong

sense of community and social cohesion. For example, if there was a lack of food in a part of the immense empire, it was brought from another part. For this purpose, huge warehouses were built. The brotherhood even reached the plant and animal kingdom. Already in that remote time, they dealt wisely with logging, and all along the way there were hospitals, for humans and animals.

Hand of fellowship

What can we do now to flourish a similar mentality, so that in our global village the dharma is experienced everywhere?

Well, it is striking that the Mahā-Chohan appeals in his letter to the white race. That had to do with the fact that his letter was directed at an Englishman, who lived in a country colonized by England. We are writing 1880-1881. Christianity was much more than now the dominant faith. Maybe not even in numbers of believers, but it was the faith of the leading nations in the world. It was the European nations who colonized the Asian, American and African countries. In those countries, either the local religions were eliminated, as happened for example in South and Central America, or the religion of the colonized country was tolerated, but was considered inferior, which was the situation in India and Sri Lanka, where Hinduism and Buddhism were considered “pagan”, or even “devilish”, and where missionaries zealously tried to convert people into Christianity. Not without reason, the missionaries were hostile to the TS, and did not hesitate to slander especially H.P. Blavatsky and to accuse her of fraud.

It is therefore understandable that the Mahā-Chohan says that the white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations.

If we try to discover the universal scope of this remark, then I think it means, that primarily the rulers, the rich, the elite, have to launch those ideas of unity, and above all, to draw the consequences with regard to their own lives. That means that they must renounce their own privileges. Of course, this does not mean that those who have less earthly wealth must just sit and wait. On the contrary, they too should try to apply the concept of unity. Universal Religion is not an optional game that is only periodically played. It only benefits, if the ethics inherent in it are understood and applied. If brotherhood is a fact in nature, it is obvious that we must use our wisdom, knowledge and material achievements for the greater whole. We do not do that when we exclude people, when we build walls around our country, when we place border

posts far beyond our borders to prevent those who have less of the fat of the land than we have, to come to us. Then we should not think that our culture is better than that of others.

If the richer nations – and the rich in one nation – are unwilling to share their wealth with the less fortunate, the disturbed harmony will nevertheless have to find, one way or another, its balance again. Then revolutions and wars will follow, which in themselves will be the source of new disharmony, because the mentality of the people will not have changed.

It's only true Religion that can break this vicious circle. Universal Religion, together with Science and Philosophy, form the three facets of human thought. Only the synthesis of these three, Theosophia or the actual Dharma, is able to establish a sustainable cohesion among humanity.

There are different trends in our society. Some want to put themselves, their own nation, in the first place. There is a counter-movement. It seeks connections and cohesion between all humans in a nation and between different nations.

That counter-movement will increase in strength, if it is inspired by the mathematics of Religion.

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The trinity, the Source of all things, here presented by Osiris (midst), Isis (right) and Horus, their son.

Why I.S.I.S. Foundation has been named after an Egyptian goddess

How did I.S.I.S. Foundation get its name? People ask this often, in some cases referring to the similarity with IS or ISIS, which is acting in such a fanatic and violent way, even though it lost recently almost all of its land. Although similar there is a clear difference in notation: the name of our foundation is consequently written with four dots.

In this article we discuss the aim and nature of I.S.I.S. Foundation by zooming in on the symbol of Isis, and its full name: *International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth*. Reflecting on this appeals to our most noble aspirations.

What is and does I.S.I.S. Foundation?

I.S.I.S. Foundation is inseparably connected to the Theosophical Society Point Loma, as it is an instrument of it, so to say. The foundation carries out all of the society's public work, administers all its possessions and performs all its juridical transactions. The foundation is run entirely by volunteers, men and women who cooperate in an *above*-personal way to explain Theosophia to other people. They do so without receiving any remuneration. With Theosophia we mean the universal source of wisdom from which all great thinkers and reformers have drawn their inspiration and spiritual knowledge. The deeper aim of the foundation is to be a spiritual center with a magnetic attraction to all idealists and

truth seekers in the world, regardless of their skin color, gender, age or social position. So they too can become acquainted with the universal wisdom, and able to use it for the benefit of the world.

The five principles of the I.S.I.S. Foundation are mentioned in the adjacent textbox. The name I.S.I.S. was chosen at the time of foundation since it precisely explains its aim and character. It is the acronym of *International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth*, and at the same time a universal symbol as well. In one form or another, all great religions and philosophies have their "Isis".

We will start the article by taking a look at the symbology. With this knowledge we can then proceed on our own undogmatic, independent search for truth.

Key thoughts

» I.S.I.S. Foundation is inseparably connected to the Theosophical Society Point Loma as the "instrument" of public work.

» Isis is the goddess of wisdom, the source of wisdom *within* us. The symbol also refers to the Hierarchy of Compassion.

» A study of the Theosophia can only be fruitful if we test each thought ourselves: is it universal, compassionate? Do all teachings create a coherent picture?

Isis as universal symbol

Almost everyone has heard about the Egyptian goddess Isis, consort and sister of the supreme god Osiris. Isis is also the mother of Horus. Just like all divinities in the ancient myths, Isis as well is a symbol. All these gods represent particular attributes or forces of the Kosmic Life. They are *characteristics*, that we can recognize in our own consciousness as well. They are also entities: entities that express a certain characteristic.

Isis is an inseparable part of the trinity Osiris, Isis and Horus. Sometimes Isis is pictured next to the goddess Nephthys. This goddess represents the more hidden side of Isis.⁽¹⁾

Osiris-Isis-Horus is an Egyptian form of a world-wide symbol: Father-Mother-Son as the source of a Kosmos. This trinity denotes three aspects of the ONE Kosmic Life.

We come across this trinity in a large number of religions and philosophies over the world. We could present a really long list of examples. In Christianity it has taken the form of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of which the

Holy Spirit was originally presented as a *female* symbol. The philosophically minded Greeks called it the first, second and third Logos, or “Word”. In their mythology we come across Chaos (Mother) and Gaia (Child), while the unknown Source (the Father) remains unmentioned. In Hindu scriptures we find for instance Parabrahman, Brahman and Brahmā, or Brahman, Pradhāna and Brahmā. A completely different way of depicting this was: Divine Thought, Voice (or Sound, *Vāch*) and as son, the Word (*Virāj*). The Buddhists have a trinity in their philosophy as well: Ādi-Buddha, Dhyāni-Buddha, Mānushya-Buddha.⁽²⁾ The three propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky’s book, describe the trinity in a very profound way.⁽³⁾

Osiris-Isis-Horus in us

The Father-Mother-Son symbol can be applied to an entire Kosmos, but also to each smaller hierarchy of that Kosmos. Each hierarchy, regardless whether it is relatively spiritual or material, has as its origin a Father-Mother-Son. In this

article we mention three examples: the individual man, a Planet and a Kosmos. The Kosmic meaning is obviously the most universal one, but all three have a direct and significant relation to us human beings.

We will start with the individual man, as this trinity is easily recognizable. Osiris-Isis-Horus is the symbol of our immortal core, the reincarnating part in us, that part that builds up a new body at each reimpodiment. This intransient center of consciousness has three aspects, called *ātman*, *buddhi* and *manas* in Sanskrit. If we try to describe these words in English, we may firstly speak of the unity principle (*ātman*, Osiris) that incessantly radiates

inspiration, secondly the wisdom principle (*buddhi*, Isis), which gives form to this inspiration in the shape of images, and thirdly the thinking principle (*manas*, Horus), which translates these images into plans, into practical action. Our thinking faculty is the child or son of our ātmic core and its buddhic instrument.

The symbol Isis *within* man represents our power of understanding, our insights, our source of spiritual

images. We are talking here about abstract images, far above all concrete forms like those of a chair or table. It includes our insights of the connections between seemingly unrelated events, and our insights into human character. Naturally, it includes compassion, mildness and forgiveness. It is in and by our buddhi that “the light dawns upon us”. We oversee a complex issue in one coherent image. Isis symbolizes a faculty above our intellect — the last being our specialist in the study of *separate* pieces of information. This is confirmed by H.P. Blavatsky, who explains that Isis is the goddess of wisdom, in one of her significances. “Sophia” of the Gnostics, and “Metis” of the ancient Greeks are counterparts of the Egyptian Isis.⁽⁴⁾ Isis is *manifested* wisdom, as all images created by our faculty of comprehension are reflections of the one boundless TRUTH, and each image is limited. Behind each image lies a deeper truth, a larger and more universal image. It is always susceptible to growth. A wise man keeps growing too ... That’s why Isis, although spiritual of character, is nevertheless the *material* side of Osiris, the ONE TRUTH.

The five principles of I.S.I.S. Foundation

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

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

In short, the function of the Isis principle in us is to form the channel through which our sense of unity can become an active force in our minds and daily life, so, an active force in the world. Every time we manage to focus our thinking on the fundamental unity of all that lives, we create an open channel for a ray of inspiration which will enlighten the living sphere of humanity.

The significance for our Planet and humanity

Our second application is on a Planetary level. The Earth in which we live is not a lump of dead matter but the body of a living being, as everything in the Kosmos is ensouled. It has a spiritual, mental and physical sphere. These spheres interpenetrate each other. Presently, the physical sphere is the only sphere that we humans can self-consciously observe.

Gottfried de Purucker offers us an inspiring explanation of the trinity which is the spiritual origin of humanity. In this case, the Osiris principle is the highest Planetary Spirit. The Isis principle is the instrument through which this highest consciousness works: his radiation or impact *in the hearts of men*. In this context Isis represents universal wisdom, the Theosophia, the body of insights that has given all nations, in all times, their aspirations and ideals. It also represents the beings that embody this wisdom: the Hierarchy of Wisdom, Compassion and Peace. The Horus principle is the product of both: the enlightened intellect, the “transformator” in us that enables us to translate our unselfish wisdom into actions.⁽⁵⁾ Doing this, we can inspire many other people to live more compassionate too, to search for deeper truths as well.

This divine wisdom in her original, pure form (Osiris) is within reach of *all* people. But only those people who have developed their power of understanding (Isis) to some degree, are able to catch these rays, and live accordingly (Horus). Just as a speck of dust in the air will start glowing when it is hit by a ray of sunlight.

If we think about this, we will gradually realize that humanity fulfills a very special function within planet Earth: we are the *wisdom organ* of the Earth. Only through human minds, the universal wisdom can exert its exalting influence on the large mass of our Planet’s less developed entities: the animals, plants, et cetera. Each human being can and should fulfill this role.⁽⁶⁾

Osiris and Isis as cosmic symbols

Kosmically speaking, Osiris represents the hidden, in-

effable Source of a particular Kosmos: pure, boundless consciousness. We experience this principle as *the One*. It permeates everything. So, it cannot be pinpointed anywhere in particular. The Mother, Isis, is that *all* that emanates from the Father. It is the relatively material side of the Kosmic Life, the world in which the Father works. So there are two poles of Kosmic Life. Traditionally, the leading pole is called masculine and the receiving pole feminine. But furthermore we can forget any connection with real men and women, as both this Father and Mother principle lie at the roots of each entity. Men and women do not differ from each other, here.

Everything that appears in the world of forms is bipolar, has a consciousness side and a matter side. And both these poles arise from a Unity. Being born simultaneously from ONE parent, the primordial father and mother are described in all myths as *brother* and *sister*.⁽⁷⁾

The interaction of these two poles produces the Son (Horus), which is *embodied, individual* consciousness. The number of Kosmic entities is almost endless. Yet, within our Kosmos, there is one first and highest being, from which all other entities emanate. It is the most universal entity of *our* Kosmos, being the channel from which all other beings flow. So, the Son can be looked upon as the “spiritual Sun”, the *spiritual heart* of a Kosmos. That’s why Horus is a solar deity.⁽⁸⁾

We can compare this divine trinity roughly with rays from the sun which in spring, when it is time for a new lifecycle (Father), warm up the waiting, fertile earth (Mother), propelling the seeds (Son) to germinate. The Ancient Wisdom does not know the idea of a creation out of nothing. What happens is: all entities that were in a deep spiritual sleep, and were temporarily absorbed in the ONE, *wake up again*.

The symbolic meaning of I.S.I.S. Foundation

So, the symbolic meaning of I.S.I.S. Foundation comprises several things, over which you can ponder a long time. The symbol points to the source of wisdom of our Earth, which in Theosophia is called the Hierarchy of Wisdom, Compassion and Peace, the hierarchy of spiritual Teachers of humanity. And it also points to the source of wisdom in ourselves. This reflects the principle aim of the foundation: *to spread the universal wisdom of the messengers of the Hierarchy of Wisdom in its pure form, by appealing to the understanding, compassionate faculty in all human beings*.



In the symbolism of ancient Egypt, Isis can be recognized by her headdress. Sometimes she wears a throne, as this illustration shows, or she wears the horns of a cow with a sun disk in between.

The force of undogmatic thinking

Who reflects on these theosophical ideas, will recognize the great possibilities lying in an undogmatic, independent search for truth. This is the explicit aim of I.S.I.S. Foundation.

Undogmatic investigation is in fact the *only* way to find more truth. When we draw “unpassable” limits to our thinking, we close the mental entrance for each *universal* idea that might entirely change our view of life. Who looks for a greater truth, should be ready to give up the smaller truths which he believed in — if only temporarily, to give other views a fair chance. Inner growth requires an undogmatic attitude. So, the first step is being open-minded and curious, interested in the views of other thinkers, just the way children usually are.

Why does I.S.I.S. Foundation put so much emphasis on an undogmatic approach? The reason is that complete, ever valid TRUTH is *boundless*. We human beings can only build up some conception of it, as far as our inner development goes. And this principal limitation applies for buddha’s and gods as well, how incomprehensibly grand their conception of things may be.

This means that we are continually able to improve and enlarge our views, making them more universal, by training our ability of understanding. We can continually enter new and wider fields of thought.

I.S.I.S. Foundation stands for this characteristic. During the lectures and courses that we organize, all interaction is aimed at finding *the most universal* view. An apt English phrase for such an approach is *creating a community of inquiry*. We bring the Theosophia as a hypothesis which is worth a calm and thorough investigation. Each participant can contribute, as each person can see a facet of

truth. And whether someone contributes by asking or by answering, is equally worthwhile.

The *community of inquiry* of I.S.I.S. Foundation is, by the way, an international one. This explains the first “I” of I.S.I.S.: “International”. The foundation works worldwide, currently even in quickly expanding degree.

The force of independent thinking

The second “I” in “I.S.I.S” means, as mentioned earlier, Independent. An essential point, behind which lies a world of thought.

We humans are *thinkers*, that is, we are in possession of self-consciousness, of free will. At each crossing on our life’s path we must choose, and each choice has consequences for our fellow men and for ourselves, as we know from the teaching of karma. So we create our own future, and are held responsible for all causes that we set in motion. If you realize this, you will see the need for an independent search for truth. If you follow blindly the advices of other people, thinking that “such or such authority knows better than I what I should do”, you will soon find yourself on a path that you cannot morally approve. Then you act like a fool who puts on a blindfold while he can see himself. If you wish to get a stronger hold on your life, the safe and natural way is training your own inborn powers of discernment and understanding, your own conscience. That’s why I.S.I.S. Foundation emphasizes in all its public work: “test each theosophical principle, and all moral consequences flowing from it, before you accept it”. This means: giving yourself the time to reflect on new ideas, and full freedom to accept or reject them. Only then we create a sphere in which spiritual ideas can awaken, and can grow to become enduring and trustworthy principles in our lives. The persuasiveness of theosophical ideas lies *in the ideas themselves*.

Of course this does not mean we cannot learn from other people. On the contrary, we human beings cannot progress on the path to wisdom without continuously sharing the truths we have unveiled with each other.

What I.S.I.S. Foundation is and what it is not

It should be clear by now that I.S.I.S. Foundation has nothing to do with the IS or ISIS mentioned in the intro. Our I.S.I.S. Foundation strives for the opposite: showing our fellow men the path to their own Higher Nature, to an understanding of the actual *interconnectedness* and *equality* of all humans. And we know no method more

stimulating than studying the Theosophia, the wisdom of the gods, and applying its moral consequences in our lives.

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In response to the terrible terrorist attack in Barcelona, one of our readers sent us this poem.

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

To all young idealists

I had an ideal.

I wanted to build an ideal state.

I followed the orders of others without wisdom.

Why didn't I listen to my own conscience?

Why is it that, now I want to listen, I don't hear my conscience anymore?

I consciously took the lives of as many as I could,

Mothers, children, young people like me,

For no strategic reason at all

And even bragged about this.

What was the strategic value of these killings?

Governments were not weakened by it, only more determined and united.

And the terror I tried to spread, turned into aggression

And many families in the Islamic quarters of the cities: Paris, London, Barcelona,

Were attacked by angry mobs.

What is left of my ideal?

The destroyed lives of my victims are haunting me already my whole life,

And will haunt me also thereafter, if I take the Prophet's teachings seriously.

Is this what I wanted?

Is this what I was working for?

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

And what to do to make it right?



Is thinking never spiritual?

Should you stop thinking if you want to develop yourself spiritually? This article attempts to answer that question.

There are spiritual movements and teachers who claim that thinking hinders the development of spirituality or even makes it impossible. They say that when you think, you are not spiritual.

Especially with regard to certain meditation methods, it is said that you have to kill your thoughts or at least you should ignore or forget them. But is this even possible? It is in any case very difficult.

A common complaint from people who start meditating is, indeed, that their thoughts disturb their concentration. They try to focus on something, but unwanted thoughts creep like thieves in the night into their consciousness and prevent the spiritual development.

Some Theosophists also believe that you must turn off or destroy thinking, if you want to come to spiritual development. They often quote this phrase from *The Voice of the Silence* of H.P. Blavatsky:

The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.⁽¹⁾

If we want to deal with this issue in depth, we must ask ourselves what is mind and what is thinking. Furthermore, we will also have to ask ourselves what thoughts are. If we have found the answer to some extent, then we can examine the question whether or not we need to destroy our mind.

What is mind?

Anyone who tries to investigate and describe human consciousness, will be confronted with the fact that we don't have a generally valid vocabulary for the often subtle mental and spiritual aspects within us. The word "mind" for instance has many meanings. The online dictionary of Merriam-Webster gives among others the following meanings: *recollection, memory; the element or complex of elements in an individual that feels, perceives, thinks, wills, and especially reasons; the conscious mental events and capabilities in an organism; view; mood.*⁽²⁾

There is quite a difference between these words. Each translator who

Key thoughts

- » The human soul is his mind.
- » Thinking is the observation of living beings.
- » The mind is twofold: it keeps us caught or it frees us.
- » The mind must control the mind.

translates ‘mind’ into another language, must therefore study the context in which it is used, disregarding as much as possible his own views and then choose a word that best expresses the specific meaning of the word “mind”. Not an easy task! Therefore, there is not always consensus on what is the best translation.

So we must ask ourselves what Madame Blavatsky meant by “mind” in the above quote. We can try to figure it out by examining how she used or defined that word in other articles and books.

In her article *Occultism versus the Occult Arts* she defines mind as the Human Soul.⁽³⁾ Also in the *The Key to Theosophy* she states in several places that the mind is synonymous with the soul.⁽⁴⁾

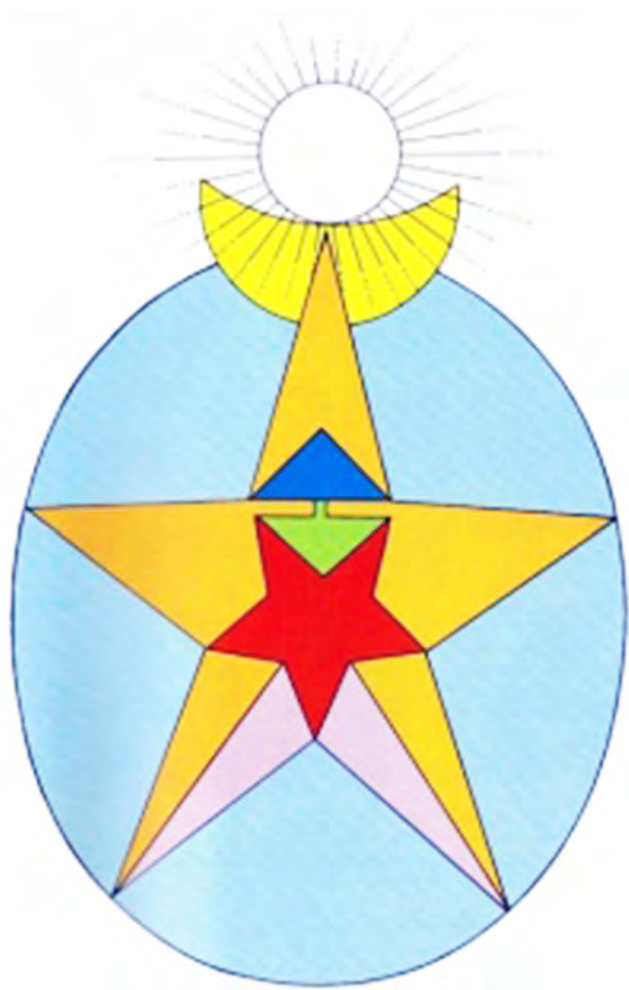
The “mind-principle” is what is called in Sanskrit *Manas*. In this Sanskrit word you can find the root word “man”, meaning thinking, mental activity or mind. Furthermore, H.P. Blavatsky says in the above mentioned article, that *mind alone (is) the sole link and medium between the man of earth and the Higher Self*.

A link has two ends. In other words, our thinking is twofold or bipolar. There is a part that is rooted in that spiritual nature (*Buddhi*), and a part that is in connection with the “terrestrial” matter. In other words, the mind can focus itself on the spiritual side of life. It will be characterized by aspiration to noble objects, divine love, wisdom. And there is a thinking that is characterized by animal passions, earthly passions. Therefore H.P. Blavatsky concludes:

It is thus the mind alone, the sole link and medium between the man of earth and the Higher Self — that is the only sufferer, and which is in the incessant danger of being dragged down by those passions that may be re-awakened at any moment, and perish in the abyss of matter.⁽⁵⁾

This double-sided aspect of our thinking is a theme that frequently appears in the work of Blavatsky. Not without reason she makes a distinction between lower and higher *Manas*.

The wisdom we have due to the lower *manas* is obviously of a completely different nature than that of the higher *Manas*, the “wisdom from above”. This is quite clearly expressed in the article “The dual aspect of Wisdom”, in which she states that one aspect, the “terrestrial, psychic, or devilish wisdom” is focused on matter and the personal man; and the “divine or noëtic ‘Sophia’, Wisdom from above” – what she calls *Buddhi-Manas* – reaches beyond



Schematic illustration of the principles of Man. The mind is twofold: thinking focused on unity, the higher mind (dark blue triangle), while the lower mind is symbolized by the green triangle. The link between these two is called the Antaskarana. The higher mind arises from our spiritual-divine core, depicted as the sun and the moon.⁽¹⁵⁾

the temporary nature of this outer world: thinking which is illuminated by spirit.⁽⁶⁾

Finally, we would note that the term “mind” is not exclusive to humans, although thinking is what characterizes a human being. But there is also something called *Mahat*, the Cosmic Mind. However, this is not the place to elaborate on this doctrine. We just want to indicate that the concept of Mind is much wider than is often suspected. In short, mind is not a singular concept. It has at least two significantly different aspects.

What is thinking?

In our materialistic oriented world, thinking is understood as the effect of the physical brain. Brain cells connect with each other and that would be thinking.

It is obvious that Madame Blavatsky does not agree with this. In a footnote in *The Secret Doctrine* she says that it would be absurd even to assume that a thought is movement of matter.⁽⁷⁾ How could material particles ever generate mental consciousness? How could moving electrons ever produce a logical argument, a desire, a philosophical idea or universal vision?

Although every thought causes a change in the brains, Blavatsky writes, it has also a (transcendental) objective aspect.

That transcendental aspect – which is beyond our sensory perception – has of course to do with the mind. Thinking cannot be disconnected from the ability to think, just like driving is always related to a vehicle such as a car; or like writing is related to writing utensils, such as a pen.

What characterizes the ability to think?

We can only get an answer to that question, when we reflect on what a thought is.

What is a thought?

The various current definitions of thoughts explain practically nothing. A thought is defined as something of which one is aware of. What that *something* is, is not mentioned. The English Wikipedia honestly says that it does not know what a thought is.

Though thinking is an activity considered essential to humanity, there is no general consensus as to how we define or understand it.⁽⁸⁾

Now, thoughts are not purely cerebral activity. They are things which, in the words of Master Kuthumi, one of the teachers of Madame Blavatsky, *have tenacity, coherence, and life, — that they are real entities.*⁽⁹⁾ H.P. Blavatsky confirms this.⁽¹⁰⁾

In his letter to Sinnett, the Master put forth the fact that thoughts are living beings, in order to explain that a human is attracted to ideas he has wrought, or shaped himself. Distorted and degenerate thoughts about hells and purgatory, about paradises and resurrections, the Master argues, exercise a strong attraction to people who have helped to create and strengthen those thoughts. But this applies of course to all thoughts of any quality whatsoever that any man has thought.

It might be hard to imagine that thoughts are living beings, but that's because we only focus our consciousness on this outer world. We only lend reality to the world of senses. But our mind is not made up of the substance of the outer world. Thoughts are therefore not beings which we can perceive with our outer senses.

If it is true what Theosophy asserts, that everything is an expression or manifestation of consciousness, then things we cannot perceive with our senses, are *consciousnesses* too. Then everything is a living, growing and changing entity. Because there are different, yes, endless hierarchies of life however, there are also varying degrees of living beings. Thought-beings belong to the mental sphere, the world of thought. This is a world or sphere between the spiritual and the material world, in which the human soul or mind belongs to by nature. They fulfill in that world the same function as the molecules on the physical plane. Molecules help to build up and shape the material vehicles. In the same way, the human mind can use those thought-molecules in order to shape mental images. And this applies as well for the spiritual and divine realms. There are also living building blocks which shape the spiritual and divine expressions of consciousness of the beings who belong to that sphere.

Would any being ever be able to live without the help of those building blocks; would it be able to manifest itself without them? That would be impossible. Everything works together. The more advanced beings make use in all spheres of less developed beings. And those less developed beings need, for their existence, the more developed ones. They need each other. No being can live without the cooperation with much less evolved beings. If man would kill all his thoughts, he would deprive himself of the opportunity to express who he is.

The sphere to which humanity, according to its degree of development, belongs, is the thinking sphere, the world of thought. And just as the mind, this sphere has at least two different characteristics.

Again: what is thinking?

When we assume that thoughts really are living beings, then it is easier to determine what thinking is: observing these thought-beings.

Observing thoughts, however, is not without consequences, as is apparent from the above-quoted letter from Master Kuthumi. We think a thought, when we perceive that extremely primitive, completely unself-conscious living being, that appears, as it were, on the horizon of our consciousness — our mind. But perceiving such a thought also keeps it alive. When we think a thought, we energize it with the power that comes from our mind.

To put it simply: by thinking a thought, we nurture it. And the more strongly we think a thought, the easier it is to be captured by others. Thus, we reinforce a particular



Naar Heinrich Kiepert, Berlin 1859

Map of the earth as a flat surface. This map is drawn in the 19th century, on the basis of a text written around 700 CE by an unknown clergyman in Ravenna, Italy, called the “Ravenna Cosmography”.

characteristic in the sphere of thought, which makes it easier for others to think that type of thought. Let us illustrate this with an example. In the Middle Ages in Europe, the idea that the world was flat, and that you could reach the end of the world, yes, even that you could fall off it, prevailed. The idea of a round Earth was not thought, or at most only by some enlightened people. That’s why it was so difficult for most humans at that time to think that thought – which is: to perceive that thought – that the Earth was round, rotates on its axis and revolves around the sun. As more people thought that thought – and thus strengthened it with their consciousness – it was easier for others to think it as well. In short, thinking is perceiving thoughts and by doing so, you strengthen those thoughts.

Quality of thoughts

No two living things are the same. That certainly includes thoughts. Thoughts differ therefore qualitatively

from each other. There are so-called everyday thoughts, but there are also lofty thoughts. From the fact that there is a lower and higher Manas, as was previously stated, it appears that there are two different types of thoughts, or two types of wisdom; one that has to do with the material world and one that has to do with the spiritual world. Man – the thinker – stands, as it were, between those two worlds. He can choose: does he choose for thoughts that naturally belong to the spiritual sphere — thoughts of understanding, love and compassion? Or does he choose for thoughts which belong to this material sphere, which tend towards selfishness, greed and self-interest?

This freedom of choice reflects the deepest human characteristic. If you take away this human freedom – and you do so by prohibiting or preventing him from thinking independently – you take away all human dignity. Even when a man tries to turn off his own thinking, he deprives himself of what makes him human.

If, therefore, the freedom of thought vanishes, a dark night of ignorance and barbarism will fall down on society, as was the case in the Middle Ages. Renaissance roused humanity from this nightmare. Plato’s philosophy was once again studied. It was in the late 15th century that again, and especially by Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) in his treatise on human dignity, free will was regarded as most essential to humans. Thanks to this free will, human beings can turn into a divinity, and perceive the Reality of Being.

A human is essentially a noble being. It is because of his developed free will that he is able to focus his independent thinking on noble thoughts and thereby come to understand the purpose of life.

Do thoughts distract of truth?

By thinking, we can choose consciously for the spiritual side of our nature. If this is true, why are there people who think thoughts that distract you from truth and spirituality?

An important reason for this is, I think, that a lot of people associate “mind” and “thinking” with thoughts directed on matter; thoughts that belong to the lower manas.

The lower manas is also called the brain-mind. Because *this* mind identifies itself with the ever-changing and perishable physical world, it knows no rest. If a man lives in his lower – or personal – mind, thoughts jump over each other like puppies. One thought almost immediately evokes another one. Here, thinking is accompanied by vitality, desire and anxiety.

In the Christian Gospel this type of thinking is symbolized by the figure of Martha, sister of Mary. Christ pays both sisters a visit. Martha is busy with all kinds of things to please Christ. Her sister, however, flatters herself at the feet of Christ. Christ says to Martha, who complained that Mary was doing nothing, that Mary has chosen the better part of him, which will not be taken away.⁽¹¹⁾

The symbolism is clear. Mary is the higher Manas which focuses on the spiritual side, on the Christ-principle or *Buddhi* within the consciousness, while Martha symbolizes the brain mind, which is always busy, always restless, it does not have itself under control and always seeks help outside itself.

Thoughts: source of suffering and bliss

If *The Voice of the Silence* states that the mind is the slayer of the Real and that we must destroy the destroyer, then it is obvious that what is meant here, is the lower manas. That’s something we can all recognize.

Suppose you have a wonderful and lofty ideal you are trying to focus on. Or imagine that you are listening to a lecture, reading a spiritual book or are trying to meditate quietly in your room. What keeps you from doing this? What makes you lose your concentration? Your thoughts. The thoughts you have created yourself. They may be very trivial thoughts, such as that you still have to do the laundry or that you should not forget to send an email. Those thoughts come forth from and are evoked almost always by the personality or the personal ego, e.g. the lower manas. They are your own, unself-conscious children, returning to their “creator”.

It is our conviction that H.P. Blavatsky is pointing out these type of thoughts, or this lower aspect of our mind, when she says that we should destroy our mind. Moreover, we believe she does not mean this in the literal sense of the word, but more in the sense that we must learn to control our mind. We must destroy its dominance.

When meditation techniques require that we should

stop thinking, then this is only true if they mean the “Martha-type of thinking”: thinking with the lower manas. Destroying personal thinking, however, is an almost impossible task, especially when you try to do that consciously. That has everything to do with the fact that we ourselves created and nurtured the thoughts we think. Any attention one gives to a thought, reinforces it, even when it is negative attention. So when you concentrate on *not* thinking, the thought of which you want to get rid of, will only get stronger. The more negative attention you give, the less control you have over your mind and thoughts.

Suppose you try to meditate, but there is a fly in the room. Your attention is drawn time and again to the fly. Does it help when you think that you should not think of that fly? Of course not! It helps somewhat when you observe as a spectator your own thoughts. Then you take a neutral stance. Then you do not feed the thoughts that come along, but you do not ennoble them either. You do not have any alternative. But when you are completely absorbed in an exalted mental image, your thoughts coalesce with that lofty image and you do not even notice the fly.

So how do you control your thoughts? The answer may sound paradoxical, but it is the mind that must control the mind. In other words, it is the higher Manas that should take the leadership and master the lower manas. The higher Manas is characterized by impersonality. We must self-consciously think supra-personal thoughts. We do this by pondering on universal laws, meditating on supra-personal ideals. We must immerse ourselves in the noble within our consciousness and nature. We cannot do that without thinking.

Therefore, thinking is both the slayer of the noble within us, and it is also the path to accomplishing this nobility. It is the lower mind which binds us to this mortal world. It is the higher mind which is our link with the spiritual, imperishable life.

This doctrine also explains the first two verses of the Buddhist *Dhammapada*, which state:

All the phenomena of existence have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader, and of mind are they made. If with an impure mind one speaks or acts, suffering follows him in the same way as the wheel follows the foot of the drawer (of the chariot).

All the phenomena of existence have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader, and of mind are they made. If

with a pure mind one speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his shadow that never leaves him.⁽¹²⁾

Could this be said any clearer or simpler? We are what we think. We are always the result of our thoughts. Thinking precedes suffering or happiness. Seeing the Reality is therefore not the result of the cessation of thinking, but is the result of *right* thinking.

Destruction of the *Antaskarana*

In the duality of Manas lies many of the mysteries of human consciousness. It explains on the one hand why thinking inhibits us to connect with what we essentially are, but on the other hand thinking is also the only way through which we can reach our essential Self.

It is good to realize that the lower manas is the emanation or the product of the higher Manas. In other words, the truly spiritual human, the supra-personal Mind, is the source from which the personal man comes forth. The original thinking is pure, noble and radiant. And because the lower manas, the personal man, arises from the noble thinking, and has therefore in itself the qualities and capabilities of pure thought, even the personal thinker is in its core not evil.

Why then is alleged that the lower manas muddles or pollutes thinking?

That's because it has forgotten its source. If it is left to itself, it does not know where it comes from. In other words, the personal man, living in, yes, so fully identifying himself with the lower manas, considers himself as the center of the world and lends only reality and truth to the material world, which is perishable like a mirage. That world is an illusion, a shadow of a more real world. That is the reason for the turmoil in the personal man, who gets caught up in the illusion and is constantly darkening and veiling his consciousness.

But this is a passing phase. Eventually every human being will perceive the illusory nature of the world of phenomena and will return to the original consciousness of pure thought, pure Being, albeit enriched with the experience gained in this and many subsequent outer lives.

When a man has totally united himself with his higher Manas, the bridge between the lower and higher mind can be disposed. That bridge is called *Antaskarana*. In *The Voice of the Silence* it is stated – and we paraphrase slightly the words – that we have to destroy the *Antaskarana*.⁽¹³⁾

In an explanatory note Madame Blavatsky says that the *Antaskarana* is the lower manas, and that it functions as

a link between the personal man and the higher Manas, the Human Soul.

If you want to reach your own spiritual core, then it is obvious that you eventually have to turn off this channel to the external world, because all sorts of sensual thoughts can be thought by it and distract the searcher of truth from his goal.

Five minutes' thought may undo the work of five years.⁽¹⁴⁾

Thus Madame Blavatsky warns us to guard our thoughts. In fact, this is something we all know very well. If we have lived a whole day according to our most spiritual and selfless ideal, and we fall back for a brief moment in a level of personal thinking, because of an annoying incident, an insulting remark of a colleague for example, or by a sudden irritation about something that does not want to succeed, then all of a sudden the merit of that whole day can be destroyed. Only one thought can already achieve that.

Therefore, we must ensure that the influence of the lower mind does not prevail.

Master of the mind

However, if we use compassion as a driving force in our lives, we should not disconnect entirely from the phenomenal world, but in one way or another stay in contact with it. Now you may ask, why it is necessary to keep in contact with the outer world, when you have transcended it. However, this only applies if you strive for your own bliss, your own nirvānic state. But if you want to use the accumulated wisdom for the benefit of others, then you have to keep a channel open, allowing you to continue to communicate with your fellow human beings.

In fact, this already occurs among beginners on the path of spiritual evolution, because they too will have to continue to speak the language of their fellow men, and therefore have to continue to use the mental images of their fellow men. They will need to know what is going on in the world. And this is the case only when you know which ideas prevail. Everything in the human world is thought, is built out of thought. Reading a newspaper is observing the thoughts of today. Getting informed on what is happening in your city, what trends there are, is thinking thoughts. However, the point is that you will not be controlled by those thoughts.

Therefore, instead of destroying or even killing the lower mind, you'll better master it. That means that thoughts may only come into your consciousness when you 'invite' them consciously. Moreover, even everyday thoughts will

always be influenced and controlled by the higher mind and they will be overtaken by the impersonal characteristic of the higher Manas.

Let us illustrate this with an everyday example. In order to do your daily work in society, you have to think quite a few thoughts. You'll get up in the morning, have breakfast, go to your work by bike, car or public transport and so on. For that you have to think a lot of everyday thoughts, for the basis of any action is a thought. But it is not necessary to be controlled by those thoughts. If you think, "I'm going to leave home earlier, so that I'm not stuck in traffic", then you do not need to think that in an annoyed way. You are not governed by that thought. All such thoughts you may think from a personal motive or form a supra-personal motive. In the first case the personal 'I' is always in those thoughts. You do it always for your own personal comfort, your personal ambition, pride, or even your personal disgust, or any other personal motivation whatsoever. In the second case, you do it from an underlying ideal of brotherhood, love and universality. So you can think all those thoughts in two ways. Do you do it in a personal way, then you are more or less the slave of that thought. You cannot do without it. You are dependent on it. Do you do it in a supra-personal way however, then the thought is as a device for you, of which you make use, in order to fulfill your task in the world. The latter is actually a state of continuous meditation. In the background of your consciousness is always a strong mental image of Universal Brotherhood, by which all the other thoughts that you think, are colored and ennobled. If you practice this, the moments of quiet contemplation and meditation will be much easier. The thought that you still have to put out the garbage, or what do your colleagues think of your new clothes, don't sneak into your mind when you quietly concentrate on a spiritual or even divine image. You have become the master of your mind. This mentality will eventually lead to the situation, that even when you are so highly evolved that you cannot resist the attraction of the spiritual world, you have taken some measures so that your compassionate influence will remain in our earthly spheres. In the last fragment of *The Voice of the Silence* this teaching is explained. But that is another subject on which we want to elaborate in detail in a next article in *Lucifer*.

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Esoteric meditation – Part 1

Meditation is not a goal in itself but a means for spiritual growth

In this article we focus on what we call esoteric meditation. We investigate what esoteric meditation means, what you should do and what effects it entails. But mostly, we also seek answers to the question of why you would practice meditation and what you can accomplish with it for yourself. We hereby base ourselves on the Theo-sophia as presented by Gautama the Buddha around 500 BCE and was then called the Dharma or the LAW.

Key thoughts

- » Consciousness determines what you are.
- » Everyone must develop himself.
- » Meditation is an instrument, a tool.
- » True meditation is the “Way of the Middle”.
- » There is only one true motive for meditation: developing Wisdom and Compassion.
- » The purpose of meditation: learning to be what you recognize as wisdom.

Meditation is no longer an exclusive oriental affair. The image of the skinny yogi dressed in loin-cloth with legs crossed in the lotus position, has been joined by many Western varieties. Many traditions have been established which adapted to the prevailing culture. Mastering meditation techniques is often the goal to be achieved. But if we get to the core of meditation, as explained in the Ancient Wisdom or Theosophia, we come to the conclusion that meditation is only a means, a training method.

Basics

In order to understand meditation as seen in Theosophy, it is necessary to keep in mind the principal ideas on which Theosophy is based. We thereby assume: 1. Infinity and Boundlessness; 2. Cyclical movement or the periodic appearance and dis-

appearance of universes; and 3. The fundamental identity of every being with that Boundlessness. There is continued growth in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law. This is a concise description of the three propositions that are defined much broader and more philosophically in the original text.⁽¹⁾ If we dwell on these three fundamental ideas, we soon come to the conclusion that each of us can develop limitless possibilities. The question is how you want to achieve this. A very essential idea is at stake here, namely that consciousness is leading the outer form, the manifestation. Consciousness determines what you really are. We call this the spiritual principle. Meditation is by excellence non-material in nature, or it should be. If someone is quietly sitting in a certain posture, with eyes closed and fully controlled, what happens? That per-

son seems to be asleep but at the same time keeps himself physically well under control. Is he in a trance? Or is he focussing his thoughts on spiritual planes and is at that moment not or hardly aware of the external world?

Finally, the Seven Jewels of Wisdom are of importance. This system of wisdom is found in Hinduism and in the various Buddhist schools. They are the first practical derivatives of the three fundamental propositions of the Theo-sophia. The core of each Jewel may be summarized with one or two words:

1. Reincarnation
2. Karma (Cause and Effect)
3. Hierarchies
4. Self-becoming
5. Progressive evolution
6. The Two Paths
7. Knowing the core (Self-knowledge)

Particularly Cause and Effect or Karma, Hierarchies, Self-becoming and The Two Paths are Jewels which can be applied to meditation. If, for example, there would be no hierarchy of consciousness, there would be no room for growth. Then there is no need for training. The Jewels of Wisdom show that there are indeed all kinds of possibilities for development.

Gautama the Buddha on meditation: the composite nature of all things

Just before he left this outer world, Gautama the Buddha talked about the fact that everything is composite. Then he called on the people to work out their own “salvation.”⁽²⁾ What did he mean by that? That we all need to develop our true Self out of that composite nature. No one else can do that for you. This is the general line we encounter in Buddhism.

The Mahāyāna Buddhism stream adds something to this. It says that you must be committed to the whole.⁽³⁾ This means that any development that you achieve is for the benefit of your fellow beings in the broadest sense of the word. You not only work for the human kingdom, but also for that of the gods, the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom and the mineral kingdom. That’s not as strange as it may sound. For, if you consider the unity of all things, as in the Mahāyāna Buddhism, everything is connected to everything.

The comparison of the droplet and the ocean depicts this

very clearly. The droplet, which represents a being, flows back into the ocean. It becomes aware of the unity. When that drop goes into the ocean, the individuality is not lost as we are inclined to think, but it gives its taste, color, and sound to the totality of which it is part. So it makes its contribution to the whole. Which brings us to the concept of compassion. He who realizes that all is one, and that everything is connected with everything else, will live for the benefit of the totality he essentially *is*.

What does our composite nature mean exactly? Each being is essentially composed of parts, which are qualitatively different from each other. The constituent parts or principles are fundamentally the same for each being. The most physical is the body or vehicle. That stems from the model-body, which is slightly less material. All beings have Prāna or life energy. Then there is the Kāma-principle: desire. Followed by Manas. That is the thinking faculty, which is what people express. In general this is the “lower” part, the thinking which is focussed on the personality, the self. But we can also think unselfish thoughts. Then the “higher” part of Manas is active. The two most spiritual principles are Buddhi, which means enlightenment, and Ātman or the SELF. The SELF is the core of the core in *every being*. The difference between beings is in the extent to which the principles have been developed.

You become what you think

Humans develop the Manas principle. Man is a derivative of Manas. We are becoming more and more human as we develop our thinking. So the Jewel of Self-becoming plays a role here. Thinking is also composite. We have already mentioned the lower mind. By this we mean the four lower principles. The three higher principles together constitute the unselfish thinking. Usually we focus our thoughts on the everyday things such as groceries, colleagues or vacation plans. But we can also develop more universal thoughts. Then it is not just about our own petty “me”, but about life in its noblest form. We might for instance think of brotherhood and world peace. Those kinds of thoughts make you rise above the everyday level and bring you much closer to the core of the universe. Then you contemplate the *inner* life. In Theosophy we say that you become what you think. Your thinking consciousness creates the image of yourself and your surroundings, and you’re going to live in accordance to that image. So it matters what you think, which aspects of your thinking you develop.

Exoteric and esoteric meditation

As the word exoteric already implies, you focus on the external, the form. You can train your mind to focus your attention on any one topic that you find interesting in one way or another. But in esoteric meditation you deal with the hidden side, that is to say, not the side one can perceive but the underlying forces. You focus your thought on the heart, the core of things, the power acting behind the visible form.

The difference between exoteric and esoteric is the difference between the eye-doctrine and the heart-doctrine as the Buddhists call it. The eye-doctrine involves the formulas, the rules. The heart-doctrine involves acquiring deeper knowledge and understanding. Part of esoteric meditation is Compassion and Wisdom. Not instructions on proper posture and breathing. This may be useful as a tool, but it is not the core of meditation.

The heart-doctrine we find in particular in the Mahāyāna Buddhism. We can show that by going deeper into the Buddhist words Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

These words have both an exoteric and an esoteric meaning. In Buddhism you make a vow to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. If you look superficially, exoterically, you think that by the Buddha is meant Gautama the Buddha, by the Sangha, the monastic community, and by Dharma the Law that Gautama preached.

But if we want to know the deeper, esoteric meaning, the Buddha is not that outward Buddha. Here we apply the Jewel of the Hierarchies. That outward Buddha was only a representative of the cosmic, spiritual current behind which much higher consciousnesses operate and of which he was an expression on this external level. He was inspired by those underlying forces who are in fact the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion. The Lodge periodically sends messengers and Buddha was one of them. In the Mahāyāna tradition the forces behind the outward Buddha are called Amitābha or Kwan-yin; they are the expression of Cosmic buddhic forces and pass on the wisdom of those consciousnesses.

The esoteric Dharma is the Law. But we are not talking about the laws of physics, such as the laws on the rotation of the planets around the sun, but about great spiritual laws. In fact, the laws of physics are only a very small derivative thereof. Laws are in essence nothing more than the habitual patterns of the cosmic beings, the cosmic Buddha and higher. To us those habitual patterns are so

absolutely consistent and pure that these are Laws: laws that physical science relies on and that form the basis for predictions for many tens or hundreds of thousands of years (which indeed turn out to be reasonably accurate). With the Sangha we do not mean the monastic community, which is the literal meaning, but esoterically we are really talking about that grand collaboration of those beings which Gautama the Buddha belonged to. And of which you may also belong to. Because in essence you *are* a spiritual being, you only need to learn how to express it. Then you realize that you also cooperate with that great partnership that passes on the thoughts that we find in the Theo-sophia. Each in his own way and on his own level. To accomplish that, the Buddha promoted a way of life he called the “Middle Way”. This means on the one hand that you do not yield to fanatical ascetic practices; these are completely useless. And at the same time you train yourself in a powerful way of thinking, based on the right principles. Because that leads to corresponding behavior.⁽⁴⁾

Meditation in the West

Before we immerse ourselves further into the principles of esoteric meditation, it's good to get a picture of what we in the West understand by meditation. There are a lot of Buddhist terms in circulation and also from Sanskrit a thing or two have come to the West.

If we consult the dictionary, we learn that the word meditation has a Latin origin. It is derived from the Latin “meditatio”, which means: contemplation, reflection, consideration, trying to experience the deeper reality by internal considerations. A variation on the word meditation is transcendental meditation. This is a meditation which aims to free the spirit from the body. It is about transcending the outward. In the West, meditation is also understood as an inner prayer in which some or other religious value is subject of consideration.

We must realize that this definition in a dictionary is based on frequent social use. In this way it is a reflection of what our society means by that. Whether this also corresponds to the fundamental meaning of meditation, whether it does justice to the tradition from which meditation comes, is therefore not guaranteed.

Meditation in Buddhism

In the Buddhist tradition, meditation is based on four elements. First: mindfulness. “Mindfulness” is very difficult to describe. It comes close to “thoughtfully occupied with something”. You don't let your actions just happen

“without any thought about it”, but you’re focussed with your thinking on the actions you perform. Mindfulness is consistent with the seventh step of the Eightfold Path of Buddhism. The Buddha described therein the path leading to salvation from suffering. Mindfulness is a Sādhāna: Sādhāna is to act consciously, deliberately with regard to a spiritual goal. Mindfulness integrates in one word a number of terms that we use in the West.

Closely related to this is the second element: one-pointedness. I.e. to be focused on an idea, a topic or a problem, and holding on to that, not letting it go.

Concentration emphasizes the great attention that conscious action requires, and finally, of course, we act with Wisdom.

Together these four elements describe the proper attitude required for esoteric meditation. The terms initially seem very similar, but if you think them through, you come to the realization that they are all aspects of directing consciousness.

Dhyāna: inner vision, self-direction

In Buddhism, meditation is part of a particular way of life. It is “Dhyāna”, one of the Pāramitās. These are precepts or virtues. They help anyone who wants to develop spiritually. ⁽⁵⁾ The word Dhyāna is a Sanskrit word derived from the verb stem *dhyai*: to meditate, to immerse in, to sink into meditation, inner vision.

What exactly does that inner vision mean? It means that we direct ourselves, we are in control of the process of meditation. People are composite, just like all living beings. Therefore, not every condition of trance needs to be meditation per se. If you get into the condition of a trance without applying the techniques of meditation, then you let something happen to you without controlling it. You do not control the situation but let something pass through you that you do not govern. In real meditation you are always in control of what happens.

Dhyāna also means to ponder and to immerse in. What should we picture here?

Again, it comes down to the direction that you choose yourself. If you pose a very spiritual question, then “immerse in” means that you’re trying to look at that issue from all sides. You let go of your prejudices and views that you have acquired in the course of time and hence create the space to get as close to the truth as possible. You try again and again to look at it with a fresh view without old thought patterns emerging.

Difficult? It’s not so tough. Think what might happen if

you read a book for the second time. Let’s take *The Secret Doctrine*. If you decide to have a fresh look that second time at what is really meant there, then you will see that in nine out of ten cases you are able to extract a fresher, more refined vision from it.

This way you can regularly reflect on a topic and slowly but surely build up a different vision until you come to understand how it all fits together. You wonder why you have not noticed it before, because actually it is so clear! But it was necessary, through the process of thinking about it, the process of spiritual contemplation, to get rid of the superfluous ballast that prevented us from grasping the core of the matter.

Resources for meditation

The first necessary step that must not be underestimated, is to calm yourself. If you’re annoyed by problems at work then it’s not easy to shake off all the emotions of that situation. If you’re not trained, you will need time to unwind. As long as you can’t bring your thinking to rest, you can’t build up a calm or a good way of thinking that will give you insight into concepts like Wisdom and Compassion. So you must first learn to control yourself, to direct your thoughts and to keep unwanted thoughts out. Only then you can focus your one-pointedness and your concentration on a piece of wisdom you want to understand.

Do not underestimate this. In the West we are not at all trained to undertake this sort of thing. We live in a society where doing something is valued many times more than *not* doing something. We generally look upon people who do nothing as not very interesting people. But that need not be true when you consider that these people deal with inner wisdom and try to train that.

It’s easier to get into that state of calm after a good night’s sleep, when the issues of the previous day have been processed to some extent and you are fresh and rested.

Theo-sophia or the Dharma offer some other interesting guidelines. It is very important that you suppress useless thinking. We are almost constantly exposed to all kinds of useless thoughts and images. Just think of television programs or newspapers. The majority has nothing to do with good spiritual information. We should realize that our society is nothing but a mirror of the thoughts and ideas that prevail. Indeed, much of our thinking goes along the lines of: “What would have happened if I hadn’t said this but that?” This kind of thinking is fruitless. So

it is useless thinking.

What can we put in its place instead? Spiritual contemplation, hence *Dhyāna*. This allows us to come into a state of consciousness called *Samādhi*. Then you are free from all prejudices and barriers. Instead, your spiritual aspirations are strengthened and you are aware that everything, including suffering is impermanent. You realize that suffering is caused by ignorance. You feel a great compassion for those who suffer and you want to do everything to liberate them from it.⁽⁶⁾ You choose to commit yourself to them. The Jewel of the Two Paths is about the choice between self-interest and serving the totality.

Furthermore, the place where you meditate is important, especially in the beginning. You learn the technique of one-pointedness, of concentration, easiest in a quiet room. If that space is only used for study and concentration, the disruptive influences which come to you from outside will be minimal. If spirituality is a force, if thinking is a force, then we also influence our environment with our thinking. So if we train our thinking in the same room and on a regular basis, then by that power, by that way of thinking, that space will be painted and wallpapered spiritually so to speak. It is therefore important that you reserve a space and a fixed time for your exercises.

Regularity ensures that you form a habitual pattern, a cyclical movement. For example, you can make it a habit to read every morning at eight o'clock, before you leave, a spiritual book and then take fifteen minutes to reflect, to meditate on what you have read. Because of this habit, you get the great advantage that the cyclical movements help you to build those forces and those thoughts. Then you are better able and more successful in dealing with such a subject. Just like the sun rises every morning at a fixed time, you can train your own spirituality every morning. Thus you give the day a particular color. You take the mental images that you build in those fifteen minutes with you into the society, for example your office. You are thus in-

creasingly able to meet everyday problems with calm and wisdom. This is how the jewel of Cause and Effect works; you “reap” what you “sow”. Therefore, the object of study is so important. If, let us say, you are thinking every morning about football, you’re not practising what we mean by meditation. Meditation is about spiritual topics like brotherhood and compassion.

Purpose of esoteric meditation: Buddhi-building

The most important element in meditation is your motive. After all, you focus your energy or spiritual strength, your spirituality on something. In doing this, you unlock abilities in yourself and that brings about certain results. Therefore, from the Theo-sophia perspective, there is only one correct target, just one motive for meditation,



and that is to develop Wisdom and Compassion. That you can also get into a nirvānic state – that state of all encompassing knowledge – is actually no more than a side effect. What matters is that you develop understanding, intuition. Insight means that you grasp how events are related. You look upon them as gears interlocked. You realize the causes that underlie the events and with what solutions they may be influenced. The “two-times-two-is-four-thinking” has nothing to do with it; insight is a high spiritual quality. You soar like a bird above the landscape and you see how the rivers flow, how the forests stretch out, what animals live in it and how it all works.

So if you go into meditation, you simply learn to look upon unity from the perspective of an objective outsider. If we achieve this, then we are much better able to understand the great Laws and to oversee things. And then we are also able to understand our place in society and to deduct our task from it.

So the purpose of meditation is that you learn to control your thinking in the direction of what is insightful, inspiring: that experience of unity. You learn to lead your way of thinking away from desire, vitality, and the physical. For example, If you notice that your leg starts to tingle, then that is a sign that your thoughts slowly but surely descend to those areas. Then you need to send your thoughts to that universality once again.

Is everyone able to learn to think that way and to come to understanding? Yes, because everyone is intrinsically universal and therefore has all the potential in himself. Everyone can learn to meditate in a theosophical sense. This means that you train yourself to be in constant concentration, in a continuous mindfulness of mind, regardless of what you're doing.

That means that you have to watch where your thoughts are going. And that is something other than assuming that if you're in the right position at the right place at the right time of day and in addition have a beautiful subject in mind, that everything will automatically go smoothly.

Literature can be of help to you. In the Buddhist sūtras you can find many interesting pieces of text holding thoughts, which cannot be grasped with the two-times-two-is-four-thinking. “Speed-reading” is no option here. But you may, quietly, one page at a time, thought by thought, consider it and try to look at it impartially. After all, if we are composite beings, then we have that above-personal, contemplative characteristic within us. So we actually just have to put aside our personal characteristic. For it is

our personal characteristic that colors things in a certain manner and it is precisely those universal qualities which lift us above that.

Focussing our minds on wisdom means that we transcend the ordinary outer world wisdom and, as it is called in the Parāmitās, work to reach the opposite shore.

But watch out. You may read sūtra after sūtra, Secret Doctrine after Secret Doctrine, but if you only look upon them as something interesting you can reflect upon, then what it offers is still something outside of yourself. No, if you think that what you read is correct and true, then you should really make them your own and start to reason from there. That is the real training: to become what you consider to be true.

You may contemplate endlessly about weights that you have to lift, gaze at them, walk around them. But if you never start pulling those things you'll never know whether you're able to lift them and if you fail, what training you need to undergo. Just like with your muscles you have to challenge your buddhic thinking characteristic. Just like you do in the gym, always making the weights a little heavier, you have to train your buddhic thinking elements. Start to think about simple thoughts and go a step deeper and further every time. That is not body-building, but Buddhi-building.

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The scientific approach to classical homeopathy

Why homeopathy works

Key thoughts

- » The physical body is driven by an underlying force, in homeopathy called *life force* or *dynamis*.
- » When this life force is disturbed, we get sick. The basic cause of the disturbance is explained by Theosophia, not by homeopathy: it is our thinking.
- » Homeopathic medicines are based on the self-restorative ability of the human being, and work by *stimulating* the life force.
- » This stimulation can only take place if the medicine works on a similar but less physical level. Through homeopathic “dilution” or potentiating, the latent power of the medicine is released.

For many people, homeopathy still is a kind of quackery. The reason for this is their ignorance of the fundamental principles upon which this medical art is based. These principles have been laid out by the founder of homeopathy, S. Hahnemann (1755 -1843), in his life’s work *Organon of the Medical Art*. Any sceptic who would make the effort to read this insightful and scientifically underpinned work might quickly be cured from his prejudice.

Recently I heard someone say: “Diseases do not exist, there are only diseased people”. A truly interesting remark, because: what is the flue without a body showing symptoms of the flue? And why is one person affected by it, while someone else, who is exposed to the exact same contagious source, remains unaffected? Why do genetic diseases never manifest themselves 100%, and do they affect one person much more than another? These questions make us wonder what disease is and why someone becomes sick. If similar circumstances do not lead to the same consequences for everybody, is it not obvious then that the cause for the disease does not come from outside, but from *within*?

Regenerative power

It is this last thought that distinguishes homeopathy from regular

medicine or “allopathy”. Where regular medicine considers unwanted intruders to be the cause of many diseases, homeopathy states that illness originates from the human being itself. The perceptible signs of a disease are only the external symptoms, the consequences of a disturbance in the *vital energy* of the ill person. The phenomena of a disease are the results of the distorted vital force that works behind it, Hahnemann states.

And as this vital life force “ensouls” the entire physical, emotional and mental organism, the human being should be treated in its entirety in order to restore the balance. Where allopathy aims to remove material pathogens locally, homeopathy focusses on the regenerative powers of the whole person. It stimulates the life force of that person in such a way that it will *work out* the disease from the inside out.

The idea that there is a force behind the physical, visible body can also be found in the Theosophia. In fact, it is the basic thought of Theosophia, often called the “spiritual principle” or “consciousness principle”. On the material plane nothing exists by itself. Each thing is the result of a causal force (consciousness) which expresses it.

So, homeopathic medicines act on a more causal, inner plane. Their effects take place on a plane that is slightly more ethereal than the visible plane, as we will see further in the article.

This principal axiom has not gained much support in the scientific world yet. The idea that a strongly “diluted” homeopathic medicine can have a powerful effect, can not be explained from a materialistic point of view. This is the reason why homeopathy still has not been commonly accepted. In fact, it is often considered unscientific, which is unjustified because Hahnemann’s view was founded on logic, built up along scientific lines and tested and proven time and time again, based on *experience*.

Vital force or dynamis

Hahnemann strongly criticized the irrational medical practices of his time, which applied bloodletting and other excretion processes as common “medical art”. His contemporaries sought solutions in an elimination of the material cause. Hahnemann observed that fighting the outer symptoms – often by the use of toxic substances such as mercury and lead – was followed by a return of these symptoms sooner or later, often in an aggravated form. Or that the problem, by suppressing it, moved to inner, more vital organs. This made the problem more severe. One example of this, which is well-known nowadays, is an allopathic treatment of infantile eczema (“milk crust”) often evoking respiratory infections.

This made him think about the real cause of disease. Hahnemann writes: “according to common sense, the cause of a thing or event can never be the thing or event itself at the same time”.⁽¹⁾ In this way he came to the conclusion that a physical ailment must have a deeper, immaterial origin. An origin he called *dynamis* because of its invisibility. The classical Greek word “dynamis” means “potency” or “immaterial force”. This original meaning should not be confused with our present use of the term, in the sense of “energetic” or “active”.

To illustrate the existence of invisible dynamic forces, he mentions the gravity that keeps the moon in orbit around the earth, and a magnet that attracts a metal needle from a distance. The needle in its turn becomes magnetic itself,

enabling it to “infect” other needles from a distance, by this magnetic or dynamic force.

In this context Hahnemann makes an interesting remark: just as there has to be something in the needle that can be magnetically “infected”, there must be something in a human being that can be infected dynamically. He even claims that the spreading of childhood diseases like measles and chickenpox is based solely on immaterial causes. Just as there is nothing of a material nature leaving the magnet and entering the needle, there is nothing material entering the infected child. We are carrying around viruses and bacteria all the time, but as long as we are healthy, we live together harmoniously and then they will not cause any problems.

If we elaborate on the analogy of the magnet, we could say that there must be a *corresponding characteristic*, a receptivity in a person in order to be contaminated. Just like wood will not be attracted by a magnet, a person will not be affected by a disease if there is no corresponding characteristic, no causal germ present in him.

This immaterial, dynamic force in which diseases originate is the “vital principle”, according to Hahnemann. It is the self-acting vital force that enables an organism to act and sustain itself. He calls this force, as said before, *dynamis* and discribes it as follows:

In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force (autocracy), the dynamis that animates the material body (organism), rules with unbounded sway, and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purpose of our existence.

The material organism, without the vital force, is capable of no sensation, no function, no self-preservation, it derives all sensation and performs all the functions of life solely by means of the immaterial being (the vital force) which animates the material organism in health and in disease.⁽²⁾

His description of the vital force shows a remarkable resemblance with the vitality principle we know from Theosophia, often designated with the Sanskrit-term *Prāna*. *Prāna* is described as the psycho-electric veil or the psycho-electric field that manifests itself in the individual as vitality.⁽³⁾ These are the vital currents that work in the body as life-giving energies. These vital flows have their

particular functions in our bodies, like the regulation of the respiration, the circulation of blood, or the digestion of food. It is easy to imagine that a disturbance in such a prānic flow will have its effect in the physical body through which it works.

It is an interesting remark by Hahnemann that the vital force and the physical body are one. They are two expressions of the same. This endorses the theosophical principle that spirit and matter are not fundamentally different, but in essence one. They are different states of the same consciousness.

Disharmony in the stream of consciousness

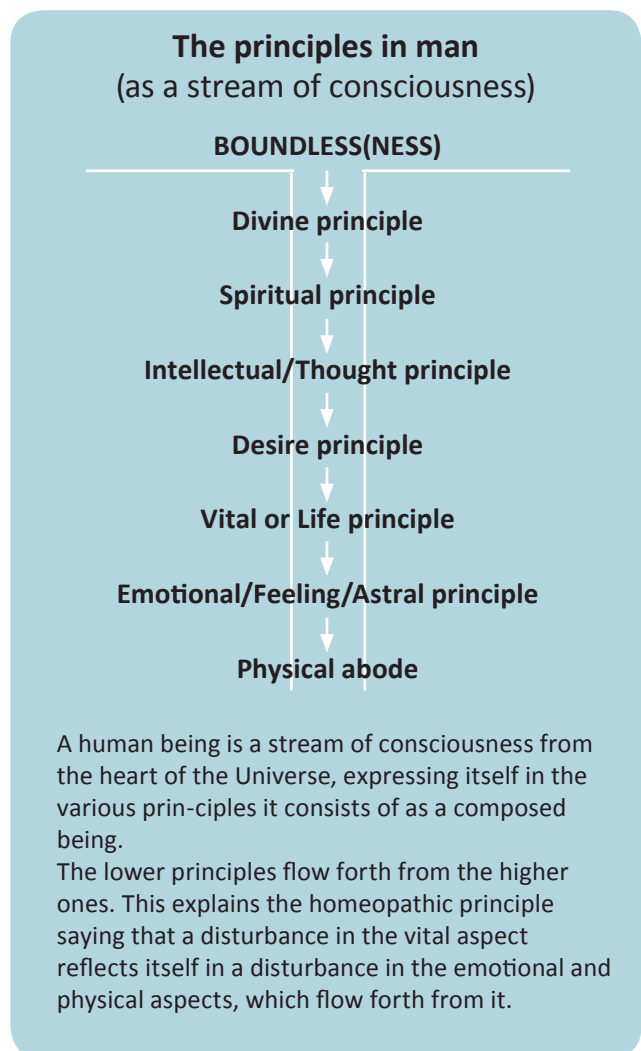
An infinite stream of consciousness, that is what man essentially is. Infinite in its spiritual core but transient in its manifestation on the outer plane. In this stream there are several communicating focal points or principles, of which our physical body is the most material one (see the scheme in the box). This physical body is the precipitate of the second principle, the somewhat less material astral body or *model body*.

These two can come into manifestation through the third focal point, the *vital principle* or Prāna, which in its turn flows forth from and is employed by our desires (focal point number 4), which flow forth from our thought (focal point number 5). Focal points numbers 6 and 7, the spiritual and divine principle that belong to our lasting nature, are the root of all five lower principles. For an elaboration on our human composition and how the focal points resonate with each other, we refer to an earlier lecture called “Material changes and changes of consciousness”.⁽⁴⁾

We speak of a healthy condition if the stream flows harmoniously between our principles. This means that the higher principles are in the lead and control the lower principles. If this is not the case, then sooner or later this will have its effect on our body and we become ill. Because human consciousness expresses itself through thought, disharmony originates in our thinking.

If we allow our lower thinking aspects to be dominating, the balance of natural harmony becomes disturbed. If we, for example, loose ourselves in an uncontrolled rage, or think unnatural, selfish thoughts – or did so in a previous life! – this must inevitably have its impact on our constitution. The *dynamis* or vital force becomes distorted or “gets out of tune” as Hahnemann calls it, and disease is the consequence.

The Ancient Wisdom also teaches that all diseases are



attempts of our instinctive nature to recover its balance. The recovery proceeds from inside out. Naturally the imbalance finds its way out through the lower principles of our constitution, until it finally works out in the physical body. It is a purifying process in which the body is the outlet for the inner tension built up on the mental and emotional planes. G. de Purucker says about this:

... Indeed, everything in the way of disease can be reduced to the same causes: an originating series of selfish thoughts, and particularly selfish emotions, continued through a length of time, eventuating in a distortion and an inharmonious interaction of the prānic currents in the body, thus producing disease; and according to the character of the emotions and thoughts, so was the disease which eventuated.⁽⁵⁾

It is this law of nature, that Hahnemann partly discovered by his meticulous observation and logical reasoning, on

which his medical practice is based. Partly, because the causality of disease is in his view – at least, in the view he publicly wrote down – localized in the principle of vitality, and not deeper, as Theosophy teaches.

What is it that disturbs the life force?

About the origin of the life force, and how it gets disturbed, Hahnemann writes:

“How does the vital force bring the organism to produce symptoms, i.e., how does it make disease? Such questions are of no value to the physician. The answers will always be hidden from him. The Master and lord of life has revealed to his senses only what is necessary and completely sufficient to cure diseases”.⁽⁶⁾

It seems that Hahnemann believes in a personal god “whose ways are unfathomable”. We should however see such an expression in the light of the conditions of two hundred years ago, when dogmatic religion was ruling and concepts like karma and reincarnation were almost totally unknown. We may interpret Hahnemann’s remark also in this way: that we do not have insight in the inner Being of things, and that we will never be able to fully know the karmic causes and the exact reason why someone becomes ill.

The fact that the disturbance in the vital force finds its origin in thinking, as the Ancient Wisdom teaches, is not mentioned explicitly by Hahnemann. However, he does mention a number of rules of conduct in which we can infallibly recognize the higher and lower thinking aspects we know in Theosophy: the higher aspects with their healing power and the lower aspects that are to be avoided. He emphasizes for example that things like resentment, anger and unnatural passions slow down the healing process or even make it impossible, and that we should not block “the voice of nature”, our *undeceivable inner sense*.

The latent force of matter

Homeopathic healing is based on the principle of the enforcement of the inner vital force of the patient. By stimulating this force, the sick person is enabled to work out the disease from the inside out, and to restore the balance in a natural way himself. To stimulate this dynamic force *the cure has to be dynamic too*, that is to say, it has to resonate with the same energetic level or have the same vibratory frequency as the vital force, to be able to influence it. This is the key of the so-called homeopathic dilution of medicine.

What sceptics call dilution is actually the process of *potentiating* or *dynamising*, as Hahnemann calls it. It is the release, the optimal unfolding of the medicinal force which, as Hahnemann describes, is enclosed in matter as a latent, spiritual force. This potentiating is achieved by shaking the dissolved substance in a certain way. The substance can be mineral, vegetal or animal. The shaking and diluting transfers the characteristic of the substance to a neutral medium such as water.

Hahnemann illustrates this with the analogy of an iron bar that *latently* possesses a magnetic force, but it has to be *dynamised* by rubbing the bar. The more friction you create, the stronger the magnetic force becomes. And just as a magnetic force can only be transferred to other metal objects magnetically, so can a dynamised medicine only transfer its characteristic “dynamically”. He gives another example of immaterial dynamic interaction: “Is it through taking substantial doses of an emetic that we feel nausea at the sight of something sickening? Is it not exclusively the dynamic action of seeing something revolting upon our imagination?”

The potentiating of a substance is repeated several times, depending on the required medicine. Each time a drop of the dilution is added to a new amount of water and shaken again. In many cases no single physical molecule of the original substance can be traced in the final dilution. Nevertheless, Hahnemann states, the dynamised potion acts much more powerful than what you could ever accomplish with larger amounts of the substance. Furthermore, diluting has the big advantage that no side effects from the material substance occur, as is often the case with regular medicine. When ready, the dynamised solution is dropped on neutral lactose pellets, which can be ingested in the form of the well-known little white balls. Besides *potentiating* using a liquid, there is the process of *trituration*, in which the same dilution process takes place but now with a solid material, the neutral lactose. In this process the “image” is released from the healing substance by grinding it in a mortar.

The level of dynamisation or dilution plays an important role in the application of the medicine. An interesting fact is that more inner symptoms need a larger dilution and a higher potency. In line with the principle of resonance, a more ethereal cause, rooted in a more inner plane, needs a more dynamic cure. Only then it will be effective on that plane. This means that for an acute physical symptom a low potency is chosen, and for a more inner, psychical problem, a higher dynamisation is prescribed.

Examination of individual cases of disease

But how does a homeopath know which substance to apply for a certain illness? The first step is the anamnesis, an interview to inventory the complaints and obtain a clear idea of the exact symptoms. As said before, homeopathy is not confined to physical symptoms only. The emotional and mental condition are surveyed as well. Together they form the unity through which the vital force works.

In his description of a correct anamnesis, Hahnemann's scientific approach shows again. He emphasizes the importance of unbiased, common sense and perceptive observation and scrutiny. He also advises to listen to the patient without interruption, to avoid suggestion by interference of the medical practitioner.

A very important aspect of the interview is that it concerns the *individual*. In homeopathy the focus is on the human being, never on the disease. Remember the remark that "disease does not exist; only diseased people". Every human is a unique being, has its specific cause of complaints, its specific expression of the symptoms and its specific sensitivity for the medicine. That is why every case needs an individual approach and a careful adjusting of the medicine.

This individual approach as presented by Hahnemann, distinguishes classical homeopathy from the *complex homeopathy* and *clinical homeopathy* which were developed later. In complex homeopathy several substances which are often used for a specific organ are mixed in a general ready-to-use combination. It is based on the idea that there is always one that will work. Clinical homeopathy is a branch that focuses on the disease instead of the patient. It tries to connect with allopathic medicine.

From a theosophical perspective, classical homeopathy is the most valuable. Its individual approach is supported by the doctrine of *Swabhāva*. *Swa* means 'self' and *bhāva* is derived from the root *bhū*, which means 'becoming'. The term has the philosophical meaning of self-becoming, self-production. This means that every being expresses only what it has developed *by* and *from itself* during the process of its evolution. So, each being – and consequently each human being – has its own characteristic. No two people are identical, because that would make them one and the same being. Consequently, a proper treatment can only be based on the individual.

The law of similars

After all symptoms have been established during the anamnesis and the observation by the physician, the appropriate

medicine is chosen. Remarkably, the chosen medicine contains *that substance which in a healthy person causes symptoms resembling as much as possible the symptoms of the patient*.

As mentioned earlier, the self-restoring power of homeopathic medicines is based on stimulating the vital force that tends to work out the disease. And to provoke the right counter reaction of this vital force, the symptoms produced by the medicine should precisely resemble those of the disease. This is the fundamental principle of similarity or *similia similibus curentur*, "the similar is cured by the similar". In this way Hahnemann discovered that cinchona bark was a suitable medicine to cure malaria. He ran a high fever and other symptoms similar to malaria after ingesting a small dose of cinchona bark.

The dynamic action of the medicine, the artificial disease, needs to be slightly stronger than that of the natural disease, so that the latter will be "overshadowed" and disappear. Because, as Hahnemann states, there can never be two similar diseases present in one organism. The stronger one will always extinguish the weaker one. He supports this with the next example: why does the brightly shining Jupiter give no image on our retina any more, when we look at it at dawn? Because a stronger impulse, the break of day, has a dominant effect on the optic nerve.

We can recognize this same idea of relative dominance in Plato's analysis of pairs of opposites. Plato shows that the state of something can always pass into its opposite. It is therefore relative. For instance, in the case of the quality "length" something can become longer or shorter. Something that is long loses this quality as soon as something longer takes its place. In the same way a resembling artificial disease surpasses the natural disease if it is more forceful, more dynamised.

For the same reason there can never be two similar *natural* diseases. The stronger one will nullify the weaker one. When there are two natural diseases of a different kind, one will only block the other temporarily. That is why symptoms of smallpox will disappear as soon as the symptoms of measles or scarlet fever manifest themselves, and vice versa.

It would take us too far to fully discuss what Hahnemann understood by identical and different diseases, but in short he concluded after many years of research that all diseases can be traced back to three basic types: *psora*, *sycosis* and *syphilis*. These three types are based on the characteristic of the disease, the way it expresses itself. They can also be recognized on a family level, in which a "hereditary"

disease in a certain family line typically shows one of these characteristics.

Hahnemann distinguishes between a primary and a secondary effect of a force – in this case a medicine – on the vital principle. The primary effect is the direct influence of the force or the medicine itself, after which the secondary effect takes place: the opposite reaction of the vital force that tries to neutralize the primary effect, to restore the original condition. If you put your hand in warm water it will get warm first (primary effect), but as soon as you dry it, it becomes cold, even colder than the other hand (secondary effect). The other way around, a hand submersed in cold water will at first feel cold (primary effect), but as soon as it is dried the secondary effect, the counter reaction of the vital force will take place, and the hand starts to glow!

Scientific evidence

The individual character of homeopathy makes it difficult to prove its effects by standard scientific methods, where uniformity is the standard. In homeopathy every case is considered unique and asks for a specific corresponding medication. From the materialistic view that only a mechanistic law exists, a cure should always and under every circumstance have the same effect, and that is certainly not the case with homeopathy. In theory it can happen that twenty different homeopathic medicines are prescribed for one and the same symptom in twenty patients, based on the individual characteristics of each patient.

However, recently some very interesting research has been done, which scientifically proved the *similia*-principle on a cellular level. A team of cell-biologists of the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands, fascinated by the idea that a strongly diluted amount of a toxic substance can heal a sick organism, came up with an experiment to find an explanation for the homeopathic principle. And they found it!

When cells of an organism get damaged by an infection or chemical substance, a signal is sent out to activate the 'repair service' in the cell. So-called 'protection proteins' are released, which are able to repair the damaged cells. If these protection proteins are not capable to repair all the damage, administration of a small dose of the same pathogen turns out to release a new army of protection proteins, by which the cell heals itself.

Surprised by this paradoxal result, the team continued and discovered the following: depending on the toxic substance, a specific pattern of protection proteins is released. If a

dilution of an entirely different toxic substance is now added, yet one that triggers the release of a similar pattern of protection proteins, the same healing process appears to take place. This scientifically proves the *similia* principle on a physical level.⁽⁷⁾

H.P. Blavatsky, the founder of The Theosophical Society, knew about Hahnemann's creditable work and in one of her articles she gives impressive evidence for the effectiveness of the homeopathic art of medicine.⁽⁸⁾ When in 1813, after the Battle of Leipzig, an outbreak of typhoid led to an epidemic, the number of infections ran so high that the diseased were apportioned among the different physicians in town. Hahnemann got appointed 73 people, of which all but one elderly man survived, while of the other patients, who were placed in the care of the traditional physicians, 8 out of 10 died!

Building on the Ancient Wisdom

Throughout the world Samuel Hahnemann is considered to be the founder of homeopathy, but he certainly was not the first one to raise the idea of the similarity principle and a causal vital force. In the Vedas, the oldest sacred writings of Hinduism, we find a corresponding view about vital flows which have to be harmonious in order to be healthy. In ancient Greek times the *similia principle* was also described as a healing method by Hippocrates. And some two thousand years later, the Swiss physician Paracelsus (1494-1541) proved that intoxication by a poisonous substance can be treated with a strong dilution of the same toxic substance. In fact, Hahnemann's studies of Paracelsus and Hippocrates lead him to the idea to take a small dose of cinchona bark, with which he proved the *similia* principle for malaria for the first time.

Just like Theosophia, the Ancient Wisdom, was not invented by Blavatsky, but was brought back into the world as one of many impulses, Hahnemann did not invent the principles of homeopathy. He elaborated on universal knowledge, to which he gave a new impulse by his dedication and an enormous amount of work. And for the same reason that Blavatsky met a lot of opposition when she tried to break the molds of mind in her time, Hahnemann was opposed by dogmatic colleagues who did not like to abandon the familiar methods to which they owed their prestige.

The reason Hahnemann is considered to be the founder of homeopathy, is his extensive and detailed description of the methodology and principles on which the healing method is based, together with his systematic description of

the effects of the medicines. The testing of the substances and the symptoms they cause (the so-called proving) was done by himself and close friends. The symptoms, of which he sometimes described more than a thousand for one substance, and which always contained both physical and psychical aspects, are recorded in what became known as



the *Materia Medica*, the “database” which is still used and supplemented by homeopaths around the world.

Does this mean that homeopathy is the only right path to health? No. In case of a broken arm or a gaping wound, it is of little use to wait for the vital force to set the arm or stitch a wound. It is much wiser then to consult a regular physician. As for any situation common sense has to decide on the most practical approach.

And of course not every homeopath is a capable physician by definition. As Hahnemann emphasized, a good healer possesses professional knowledge, a trained eye, and an open-minded approach. He acts rationally and based on methods that have been proven in practice. In the present digital versions of *Materia Medica* you can find a match between a patients symptoms and the corresponding medicine by hitting one button. But without the physician's insight in the universal laws of nature, his work doesn't reach beyond mere fighting symptoms. One needs knowledge of what a human being is, to establish real, lasting recovery, to balance the disturbed harmony in the stream of consciousness again.

And not the least important factor in the recovery is the diseased human being himself. As it was phrased at the entrance of the temple of Apollo in Delphi: “Know Thyself”, because ... diseases do not exist, only diseased people.

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4. The composition of man is explained in: W.Q. Judge, *Ocean of Theosophy*, chapters 4-7 (several editions); and G. de Purucker, *The Esoteric Tradition*, Volume 2, Chapter 32-33. Original edition: [www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature/De_Purucker#Volume 1](http://www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature/De_Purucker#Volume%201). The composition of man is also treated in a lecture by Barend Voorham at ITC 2010, called “Material changes and changes of consciousness”. This recording can be ordered at: <http://webshop.blavatskyhouse.org/?o=title&p=I>. Scroll to “International Theosophy Conferences 2010 Video”. It is the 11th lecture of the programme.
5. G. de Purucker, *Esoteric Teachings, Volume 8, Gods, Monads, Lifeatoms*. Point Loma Publications 1987, p. 55.
6. See ref. 1, paragraph 12.
7. R. van Wijk en F.A.C. Wiegant, *The similia principle in surviving stress; mammalian cells in homeopathy research*. University of Utrecht, Utrecht 1997, p. 1-270.
8. H.P. Blavatsky, ‘ANOTHER “orthodox” prosecution!’. Article in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Volume 4. The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1981, pp. 75-76.

Questions & Answers

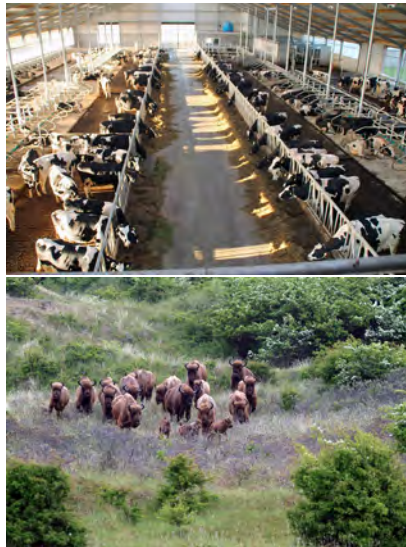
Human beings and animals

If we human beings would not kill animals for food, the number of mammals, birds and fishes would become very large and we would be dealing with plagues. Or is this not true?

Answer

Probably the opposite is true. Since many animals are raised to serve as a food source for humans, there are much more animals then if we would not keep them. We humans artificially breed enormous amounts of animals. For instance, which bird is most common on earth nowadays? It is the chicken. Worldwide there are billions of chickens. These poor animals live only for a short period. They are used as egg producing machines or as a source of cheap meat for the greedy stomachs of humans. If we would not eat birds, then undoubtedly there would be far less chickens.

What I wish to stress, is that there is a certain harmony in nature. If all beings only take what they really need, this harmony would last. When humans demand much more than they need in order to maintain their instruments (their bodies), disharmony is created. The bio-industry is an example of a terrible form of disharmony — while at the same time many animal species go extinct. Many animals in the bio-industry are fed with fish or remnants of fish. This is a major cause of the depletion of fish stocks in our oceans. In short, if we humans would intervene



less in nature, and show much more respect for our younger brothers, the animals and plants, and allow them to live according to their natural inclinations, we would reach a much more harmonious situation. In that situation, all beings would be able to progress on their evolutionary path.

Question

Which animal is closest to man with respect to its inner development?

Answer

The higher mammals like the apes, dolphins, dogs, pigs, are closest to us. They are close to us, or so to say, resemble us most, although they do not have developed the ability to think yet. There is another animal that is standing even closer to us, but which is, remarkably enough, not well known. It is the animal *within* the human being. Each human being has an animal nature — his desire or instinctive nature. Unfortunately, many people do not master

their animal nature very well, resulting in corresponding consequences.

Kingdoms of nature

If we have ten kingdoms of nature and everything is evolving, is one of these kingdoms not running low over time?

Answer

‘Our’ ten kingdoms of nature form only one hierarchy in the boundless Space. Above our hierarchy and below our hierarchy, an infinite number of other hierarchies exists. Some of these are much more developed, some are less developed than ours. So, our hierarchy is not existing on its own.

You can view each hierarchy as a school with ten grades. The highest developed beings in the hierarchy — the gods in the tenth “grade” — can reach the point that they have learnt everything that can be learnt in that school. Then they will go to another school, where they will start again at the bottom, in the first “grade”. At the same time, there is an inflow of beings from a less developed hierarchy, making a start in our first “grade”: the kingdom of elementals. By the way, these processes take place according to kosmic laws, as for instance the laws governing the life cycle of a planet. Everything in the kosmos functions orderly.

Lucifer®

Colophon

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Reactions:
The Editorial Board reserves the right
to make a selection and/or shorten
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Subscription:
This is the eleventh free sample
of *Lucifer, the Light-bringer*. For
subscription: mail the editorial office:
luciferred@stichtingisis.org.
The price of our "paper" issues will be
about € 4,60 and € 9,20 for a double
issue, excluding postage.
Payment by Internet – creditcard (see
website).

Publisher:
I.S.I.S. Foundation, Blavatskyhouse,
De Ruijterstraat 72-74,
2518 AV Den Haag,
tel. +31 (0) 70 346 15 45,
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2. By reason of this unity: brotherhood as a fact in nature.
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(Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the first issue of *Lucifer*, September 1887)