

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 Mystery School
of the future**

**Ahimsa, the art of
nonviolence**

**Katherine Tingley's
books available**

**ADHD: how to
control it?**

**How to answer
children's
questions?**



Cover photo:

On the Greek isle Samothrace was once a Mystery School active. On the shore, clearly visible from each passing ship, stood the magnificent statue of Nikè, more than 2 meters high. Nikè symbolizes victory, in this case the victory over the own lower self. As you see, the statue shows a winged woman without head. This is symbolic too: the head or core of our Higher Self is beyond the scope of our human consciousness.

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Katherine Tingley’s original books once more available

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In recent months the I.S.I.S. Foundation managed to offer all the books of one of the most important theosophical pioneers, Katherine Tingley, online at our website. I.S.I.S. Foundation will soon also offer these books in print. This can be seen as another step in making available the essential theosophical literature in its original form as approved by the author. The extreme importance of this for all students of Theosophia, worldwide, is elaborated in this article.

Editors



Pyramids of Gizeh, seen from above. The great pyramid was a Mystery School.

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Editorial

Theosophical teachings can shed light on all areas of human thought. This second issue of *Lucifer, the Light-bringer* of 2017 is a wonderful example of that fact. It demonstrates the richness of Theosophia.

In an article about the Mystery Schools, we travel back to the past when the Mystery Schools exercised a lofty influence on society. But we also look to the future. The question is asked whether the Theosophical Movement will assume the function of a Mystery School in the nearby future.

In the article about nonviolence – Ahimsa – it is shown that you never have to accept injustice. You can always work actively and nonviolently for a just and harmonious society. The means however should always be as noble as the goal you are pursuing.

The article about ADHD addresses the growing problem amongst today's youth, that they are no longer able to concentrate. Or is this really a problem?

In the article "Questions children ask" Gottfried de Purucker provides some valuable suggestions for answering intuitive questions from children.

Finally, we have good news to announce, that the I.S.I.S. Foundation has recently posted the books by Katherine Tingley on the web.

We hope that this issue of *Lucifer, the Light-bringer* will contribute to a better understanding and – most importantly – a better application of the theosophical teachings.

We look forward to your questions and response.



Seal of the Esoteric School.

The Mystery School of the future

Key thoughts

» In the ancient world there were always Mystery Schools, where students were initiated into secret or esoteric teachings. For the masses there were exoteric teachings in the form of ritual and imagery.

» Behind every Mystery School there is the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion.

» If students are no longer loyal to the Teachers and ethics, the school disappears from the outer world.

» Nowadays the Theosophical Society is the exoteric side of the Mystery Schools.

» If Theosophists cooperate in unity to give Theosophia its rightful place in the world, the Mystery School may appear again in the outer world and exercise an uplifting influence on the world.

The Theosophical Society must become the cradle for future Religion, true Philosophy and for spiritual Science. This requires, as in bygone ages, that a Mystery School exercises its ennobling influence on society. But what are Mystery Schools? Do they still exist today? And what is the relationship with the Theosophical Movement?

Of the great civilizations of the past, with some exceptions such as the Pyramid of Cheops and several megalithic remnants, no physical evidence is left. Yet, modern materialistic science has never been able to completely eliminate the idea that in the past, beyond known history, civilizations have existed that were much more dignified and more noble than the current one. Historians indeed tell us that human civilization began some 11,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, when the first form of agriculture arose, but an inner, ineradicable voice tells us that in the distant past, long before recorded history, there have been golden ages where people in all kindness and harmony interacted with each other and where the general focus was not so much at selfish materialistic wealth and fame, but on the collective wellbeing of everyone, and where the development of the spiritual had a pivotal role.

Where were the Mystery Schools situated?

Such noble civilizations did indeed exist, says the Theosophia. And their sublimity came from what is now called Mystery Schools or Mysteries. The leaders and teachers of those schools – *the Priest-Philosophers* as H.P. Blavatsky once called them – had an uplifting impact on their students, and through them on the whole society, even in such a way that H.P. Blavatsky remarked:

All that is good, noble, and grand in human nature, every divine faculty and aspiration, were cultured by the Priest-Philosophers who sought to develop them in their Initiates. Their code of ethics, based on altruism, has become universal.⁽¹⁾

Did such schools really exist? If so, where were they situated? Well, history has preserved some names of these Mysteries, such

as Eleusis and Samothrace in Greece; Ephesus in Asia Minor, now Turkey; Thebes, Luxor, Memphis, Abydos, Abu-Simbel and Karnack in Egypt; Sippar and Nineveh in Assyria, Lagash and Ur in southern Mesopotamia, places now all part of the territory of Iraq. Furthermore: Ecbatana in Media, the western part of modern Iran and Babylon were also Mystery Centers. But these spiritual institutions were not only located in the Middle East. Shigatse, in Tibet, was an important center. The cave temples in India were often the seat of Mysteries, such as those in Karli. In Central and South America and Africa there were Mystery Schools as well. Moreover, such centers existed long before recorded history, though we cannot blame the reader for not believing this, because from those prehistoric civilizations only remnants are left in fairy tales and myths.

We know hardly anything about the Mystery centers, even about those from the somewhat familiar antiquity. It can only be speculated about what took place in those institutions.



In ancient times, the Indian cave temple Karli was the location of a Mystery School.

We do not know what was taught in those schools. The schools themselves were not necessarily situated in one of the historic temples, of which only ruins remain. Sometimes even these ruins are no longer there and we only know of their existence, because they are mentioned in ancient documents. These temples were sometimes attached to the Mystery School, but the religious practices that took place there, were not the Mystery Teachings. The temples were the public place where a small part of the teachings was taught to the masses, but the pure mystery teachings were not discussed there.⁽²⁾ They were, so to speak, the counter where one could gather information about the Mystery School.

However, sometimes a Mystery school was active while there was no temple or building at all. The Druids in Western Europe came together in the vast forests, although they also made use of artfully constructed structures such as Stonehenge in England and Newgrange in Ireland. During these secret meetings of the Mysteries dedicated for the few – that is, for the admitted students of the Mystery Schools – esoteric teachings were studied. They were not only discussed, but also applied in the higher grades of the school. More on that later.

The students of the school had to make a vow in which they pledged not to unveil anything of what they learned to the uninitiated. That is why later historians can only guess what the mystery teachings really were.

So, the teaching of the Mystery School was not accessible to everyone. To us, living in a democratic society where transparency and public access to information is self-evident, this seems odd. What was the rationale?

The origin of Mystery Schools

To answer this question we have to go further back in time than the days of Eleusis and Samothrace or Memphis and Ur. Humanity exists far longer than is generally assumed. The center of consciousness which we now call a human being, has always been there and will always be there. It has gone through many stages. In Boundlessness there is no absolute beginning.

The “human stage” began some 18 million years ago. Thinking – the typical human characteristic – was then stimulated into activity by more advanced beings, which also activated a kind of fundamental ethical sense and primary knowledge, since then the property of man.

In that distant past, there was intuitive knowing. The laws and principles of the cosmos were accepted as truths, without an intellectual processing of that knowledge.

When humanity developed further and descended deeper into matter, which was accompanied by a strong selfish desire, knowledge was increasingly abused for selfish ends. Because craving for luxury and especially the exertion of power dominated human thought, the knowledge that had flowed to man from the higher realms, the divine realms, could no longer be taught freely. After all, knowledge in the hands of a selfish man is dangerous. Who will teach a child how to fabricate a weapon? Who will teach a child in a gunpowder factory how to make fire? It was at that time that the Mystery Schools were established.

However, not every man let himself be dragged into this downward spiral, in which the focus was increasingly concentrated on the material side of nature. In fact, from the beginning of human evolution some people were ethically and spiritually far ahead of the majority. They formed the Mother School, the Great Mystery School. From this Mother School sprouted branches, which had their representatives, their local schools in all parts of the world. These Masters – the *Priest-Hierophants* – were the leaders and teachers of the various Mystery Schools. They gathered their students: human souls that had not yet achieved complete mastery of their nature, but who nevertheless had an unselfish purpose and therefore acquired the right to hear the esoteric knowledge.

Esoteric teaching in all religions

From that distant past, during the great cycle which is called 'Atlantis' in modern Theosophy, there have been Mystery Schools: centers of spiritual knowledge, to which only those candidates were admitted, which already had an unselfish goal and an intuitive sense that this outer world was nothing but the veil behind which a much grander reality was hiding.

Countless myths and legends refer to these esoteric schools and their policies. In the Christian New Testament, in the Sermon on the Mount, a Mystery School is described. The devoted disciples of the Christos – who symbolizes both the outer and inner Teacher – are brought along on the mountain – a symbol of a more spiritual state of consciousness – where, among other things, they are taught that they should not throw pearls (esoteric teachings) before the swine (the uninitiated). Furthermore, they are taught the most noble ethics. Also the Buddha takes – according to countless *sutras*, holy scriptures – his more dedicated students up the mountain. The esoteric teaching in India was so common that we hardly need to dwell upon it. Each Guru had his disciples, who were given



Stonehenge, England.

secret instructions. The Jewish religion had its own secret branch, the Kabbalah. And also the Islam had an esoteric movement, which goes back to the Prophet Muhammad himself who taught his initiated disciples on the porch of the mosque in Medina.

We could provide dozens of other examples of world literature, clearly showing that esoteric teaching – secret teachings for the few – was the norm in the olden days.

Esoteric and exoteric teaching

If the teachings were secret and only intended for the few, how is it possible that a Mystery School had such an ennobling influence, as H.P. Blavatsky clearly states in the above quote?

The answer lies in the original purpose of any Mystery School. The purpose was never the spiritual development of the individual members, but to bring humanity as a whole to a higher level. The students, and especially those of the higher degrees, had committed themselves to live for the benefit of mankind.

These disciples were noble people, widely respected. In the higher grades of the school they had to prove that they had fully understood the ethics. By means of initiation, they could gain first-hand knowledge of the more inner parts of our solar system. They died fully conscious, and fully aware they travelled along the inner circulations of the cosmos to the heart of our solar system. If the initiation was a success, they could teach from their own experience about life and death.

It is known that even in the declining years of the Mysteries of Hellas, almost all philosophers such as Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, Eudoxus, Euclid and many others were initiated into the Mysteries. This is one of the reasons why the population held them in high esteem.

The desire for the spiritual was kept awake in the masses by what one might call the Less Mysteries: the exoteric

teaching. That exoteric teaching represented the doctrine in symbols, myths, rituals, legends, paradoxes and fairy tales. The key to all these stories stayed with those initiated into the Great Mysteries, but these remarkable stories and thought-provoking paradoxes made the people intuitively suspect that “something” was hiding behind it. These stories stimulated their spiritual aspirations, so the sense of the spiritual-divine background of all expressions of life was never lost. From the myths and rituals of the Less Mysteries developed, and sometimes in a very distorted way, the religions, philosophies and sciences of the civilization on which the Mystery School exerted its influence. One thing the Mystery School never kept secret: how one could be admitted to the school. The ethics were in fact known to everyone. Everyone knew the standards one had to meet in order to be admitted into the Mysteries. The right knock on the gate of the school was – and is – an unselfish and compassionate attitude.

The greater the respect the initiates of the Mysteries enjoyed of the population, the more the Mystery School was held in high esteem, the more sublime was society. That’s why there were in the distant past, during times that are only described in fairy tales and myths, such noble civilizations.

Closing down of Mystery Schools

Never think of a Mystery School in terms of a building or a temple, without which today’s educational institutions, such as universities, could not exist. Certainly, the students of a Mystery School, of higher and lower grades, could gather in a building; but that was never decisive for the authenticity of the Mystery School.

The hallmark of authenticity was given by the Mother Lodge, the great Order of Wisdom and Compassion, which consists of the most developed individuals of the human race, who by their spiritual, intellectual and ethical development, directly or indirectly, are in contact with beings more advanced than humans. It is that Mother Mystery School, that can never be closed, no matter how ignoble and barbaric man is and how degenerated his religion might have become. Why is that not possible? Because that Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion is a branch on earth of the Universal Order of Wisdom and Compassion and therefore the link between the human world and the world of the gods.

As long as the Mother Lodge supports a Mystery School, its purity is guaranteed. But if the school degenerates, if ethics are no longer practiced, the Mother Lodge with-

draws from it. Then the Mystery School ceases to exist, at least on the outer plane.

The decay of a school is therefore always from within. So when the initiates take ethics no longer seriously and the dedication, duties and loyalty to the Teachers diminishes, and when the School and the Teaching are renounced, then the end is near. That runs parallel to the state of the country in which the Mystery School is located. Mankind then attaches no value anymore on wisdom, insight and truth, while dogmatism and fanaticism kill every spiritual striving. Then there is no place any longer for a Mystery School, since it has no opportunity to express itself.

Such a situation occurred in the first centuries of our era. Christianity had become the state religion and the “pagan religions”, including their mystery teachings, vanished more and more. Theodosius II banished paganism in the 5th century. The Mysteries of Samothrace and Eleusis, which had already greatly degenerated in the centuries before and hardly or no longer kept the old doctrine pure, were closed. Finally in 529, Justinian, the Christian emperor of Byzantium, shut down the Academy, the one originally founded by Plato and the last esoteric school in existence. Interestingly, the initiative for the closure of the school came from seven Initiates of the mysteries themselves.⁽³⁾ They knew that the Mysteries were strongly desecrated and degenerated and that it was better to close the school instead of allowing the corruption to continue, because then the damage to society would be even greater. It was certainly no coincidence that after the closure of this last esoteric school the dark night of the Middle Ages fell on European civilization. Dogmatism and an almost absolute ban on independent thinking became the norm. In Antiquity, no one was punished for his views on life. Everyone might find his bliss in his own way. But as soon as the narrow view of one party seeks to eliminate the inherent free will of man, there can be no place in the exterior world for a Mystery School. Then a period commences which Pythagoras called a period of spiritual barrenness.

A moderate revival of the mystery teachings

If something has not functioned for many centuries, one cannot expect it to be operational again within a short time span. Just as a patient who has been lying in bed for months must learn to walk again, equally so after a period of spiritual barrenness, it will take a long time before some spiritual progress can be made again.

The Renaissance in Florence was in fact the first, still

tentative attempt to shed some light again in Europe. The mystery writers of antiquity, such as Plato, Plotinus, and *The Corpus Hermeticum* of Hermes Trismegistus dating from Egypt, were translated in Latin, the scientific language then. Pico della Mirandola celebrated the greatness of man claiming that, because of his free will, he could opt either for matter or spirit. He had everything in his own hand. The impact of the Renaissance seeped through the society. Completely new developments in art, with painters such as Botticelli and free thinkers like Leonardo da Vinci, emerged.

From that time on the fettered free will yanked its chains in an attempt to regain his freedom. Protestant churches split from the Roman Mother Church, who replied with the burning of heretics: her sophisticated way of “arguing”. Old patterns of thinking are never broken easily. The Protestant churches largely copied the intolerance of the Catholics, but nevertheless in the 18th century Enlightenment emerged and liberty gradually increased. At the end of the 19th century the churches and materialistic science, the child of the Enlightenment, opposed each other, while a small group of spiritualists caused astonishment and also triggered among some scientifically educated people the idea that there might be something more than just “matter” after all.

Theosophical Society: portal of a Mystery School

It was in these mental circumstances that in 1875 the Theosophical Society (T.S.) was founded. More than ever in recorded history, the principal founder of the Theosophical Society, H.P. Blavatsky, made mystery teachings public: teachings which, when the Mystery Schools still existed on the face of the earth, only a small group of insiders were allowed to study. Yet the Theosophical Society is not a Mystery School, because anyone can join and study Theosophy. *The Secret Doctrine* and other standard theosophical works are freely accessible, for instance on internet.

Nevertheless, one could call the T.S. the portal of a Mystery School. It is intended to attract the Mystery School – which never ceased to exist in the inner realm – into the outer world.

In order to promote this further, H.P. Blavatsky founded in 1888 the so-called Esoteric Section. This section was intended for those members of the T.S. who would bind themselves by vow more closely to the work of the T.S., by making Theosophia a living force in their lives. The

Esoteric Section had the structure of a Mystery School: it was hierarchically organized with H.P. Blavatsky as head and intermediary between the members and the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, who were the real leaders and teachers of the school.

In order to revive also the composition and structure of a Mystery School, Katherine Tingley founded in the early 20th century a community at Point Loma where life, work and study were in accordance with the ancient principles of a Mystery School.

People in the outer world determine the Mystery School

As already mentioned, a Mystery School never ceases to exist on the inner plane. Therefore, it is solely dependent on the people – and of course in particular those who have a spiritual attitude and attempt to live a compassionate life – whether that school can also function in the outer world. To what extent is a group of people willing to take the Theosophia – divine wisdom – seriously and actually live up to it? To what extent can the Theosophia take its rightful place in the world? Only when a core of people is prepared to live the esoteric teachings unconditionally and to uphold under any circumstances the teachers who brought these teachings, the cornerstone of a Mystery School can be laid.

In this respect, the history of the Theosophical Society offers two examples where these conditions were either or not fulfilled. When H.P.B. was staying in India and had gathered a group of co-workers around her, there was a call for more esoteric knowledge. Such an aspiration, however, always entails trials. And indeed these came, more violent than anyone could have imagined possible. H.P.B. was accused to have written letters of two Masters to A.P. Sinnett. Moreover, she would have caused some occult phenomena by trickery. She was put forward as a great imposter. Suddenly it was no longer so “cool” to be associated with her and many of her students and co-workers dropped her like a stone.⁽⁴⁾

A few years later, in the mid-eighties of the 19th century, a couple of young adults gathered around H.P.B. in London. They were hard workers and loyal in all respects. And behold: in 1888 the Esoteric Section of the T.S. was founded in London.

Unity

As mentioned before, it is extremely difficult to set up a Mystery School in the outer world in one go, during the

lifespan of just one generation, if it has not existed for some 20 centuries.

Only a couple of years after the Esoteric Section was founded, members broke their vows and shared writings that were confidential. As a result of the breaking of vows the Esoteric Instructions of H.P.B., and later those of G. de Purucker, intended for members of the Esoteric Section, are now accessible to everyone and are even found on the internet. Moreover, relatively quickly after the passing of H.P.B. a split in the T.S. occurred. This is not really advantageous to the establishment of a Mystery School. A prerequisite for the functioning of a Mystery School is the unity of the students. In an impassioned speech addressed to the US members, H.P.B. emphasized that only through unity the T.S. can play its role on the world stage successfully.⁽⁵⁾ As soon as students give priority to their personal preferences, interests and ideas, by which they factually place themselves in opposition of others, it becomes impossible for the Masters to use that organization as a tool through which they can work. Unfortunately, we must note this has occurred in the past too often among all theosophical organizations.

The Theosophical Movement: the exoteric side of the Mystery School

As said before, a Mystery School has two sections: a public or exoteric one and an esoteric or secret one, where only those are admitted who have demonstrated to *live* Theosophia, to live to benefit humanity. A vow prevents them to share publicly what is taught and what they have experienced in initiations.

But also those who live an unselfish life and give more priority to the happiness of others than to their own happiness, can be co-workers of a Mystery School, even if they have no indication to be one. Their dedication and vigor can be decisive for opening the doors of a Mystery School in the outer world.

In this regard, we have certainly made some progress in the reintroduction of Mystery Schools in our world. Worldwide, Theosophists are active in spreading theosophical ideas. Basically this means that the exoteric work of the Mystery School is now being carried out by the Theosophical Movement. That is, if the Theosophical Movement really does for which it is founded. In lectures, workshops, international conferences, in magazines and books an attempt is made to awaken spiritual aspirations and to turn the attention of the people inward, by making them understand that this outer life is only a passing phase

and that it is much more important to connect yourself with your own inner spiritual-divine powers, which should lead to a compassionate lifestyle. Nowadays, it is not so much rituals and myths but rather teachings based on logic that should awaken people spiritually. It is another approach, but that doesn't involve an essential difference. Times and people have changed. Cycles come and go. The degree of success of all this work is decisive for the question whether the Theosophia gets its rightful place in the world. And that does not mean that everyone has to become a Theosophist, but that everyone knows that Theosophia exists, so that everyone can find the gate behind which is the portal that leads to the Mystery School of the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion. Although Theosophists in many parts of the world do their utmost to ensure the rightful place of Theosophia in the world, we must conclude that this is not really successful yet.

Success and failure: it is in our hands

The creation of a Mystery School is thus in our hands only, that is in the hands of the members of theosophical organizations and of those who sympathize with Theosophy and try to apply that in an active way.

Success as well as failure is possible. If we are dedicated, fulfilling our duty and loyal to the Teachers, then we succeed. But if our commitment is too small, if we neglect our duty and are no longer loyal to the Teachers, the Masters have no choice and will withdraw. Master Koothoomi leaves no doubt in that respect:

If, for generations we have “shut out the world from the Knowledge of our Knowledge,” it is on account of its absolute unfitness; and if, notwithstanding proofs given, it still refuses yielding to evidence, then will we at the End of this cycle retire into solitude and our kingdom of silence once more. ...⁽⁶⁾

The Masters will never descend to the level of present-day man. That does not help us. We must be prepared to elevate ourselves – climb the figurative Mountain – and enter their world. That is always possible for each individual. But as long as this does not happen collectively, there will be no *nucleus* of Universal Brotherhood formed and the Mystery School cannot function in the outer world. But if it does happen, the Mystery School can open its gates. By that we do not mean that the more esoteric teachings will be immediately accessible for everyone, but

that everyone knows where to find the real theosophical teachings. At the time of Eleusis, all Athenians were aware of the annual festivities in honor of the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone. Most likely they knew – or had a strong suspicion – that this myth about the cycle of life should not be taken literally and did not mean that goddesses outside of mankind needed to be worshiped, but that they had everything to do with the mysteries of life and death of every human being.

We must, to my opinion, not assume that if a Mystery School becomes operational on our plane in the 21st century, it will function exactly the same as for instance during the heyday of ancient Egypt, Greece or Asia. Nowadays, ritual celebrations inspire us less than at that time. We will have to use more logic-based ideas.

The outer world is also different compared to 3,000 years ago. Presently, we live in a *global village*. Internet and aviation have shrunk the world. The Mystery School does not have to be tied to only one location, one “temple”.

The Future Mystery School

Should Theosophists work together in unity and fraternity, and, if such a cooperation is sustainable, this will lead to a world in which virtually every country, or at least every major region, will have access to the more inner school which is always active on the inner planes. Worldwide, there will be people who are prepared to offer their time, money and energy on spreading the Theosophia in a non-personal way. In the first place of course by applying the teachings in their own lives, but also by establishing centers where people can receive this wisdom of life and may study the content together.

Is this an Utopia?

Not at all. Throughout the world there are people who are already practicing this. When they are prepared to do their work according to the guidelines laid down so clearly by H.P.B. and the Masters, in cooperation with others, and setting aside personal opinions, then a germ of a Universal Brotherhood has arisen. Such a germ is the portal of a Mystery School.

The influence of the Mother Mystery School, the Great White Lodge, will spread steadily among men by these centers. The focus on immediate economic gain, power and prestige – in short, on the exterior of things – will shift gradually to other types of values: understanding the laws of nature, developing art and science, real Philosophy and Religion, and spiritual development. Cooperation and mutual assistance become the norm. More and more

people will approach their fellow men from a compassionate perspective.

A splendid vision for the future. The responsibility of Theosophists is great. If we dare to take this, the reward for mankind is accordingly.

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Ahimsa, the art of nonviolence

Former US President Obama held in early March 2015 an impressive speech in Selma, Alabama, to commemorate “Bloody Sunday,” 50 years ago. In 1965 the black population in Selma was systematically humiliated and harshly discriminated. The white government did not care about their voting rights. After a nonviolent protest march was violently beaten down, a new march followed led by Martin Luther King and then there was ultimately revolution. However, “The march is not over yet,” Obama warned.

How do we learn to understand the beauty of *ahimsa*, the art of non-violence? When do we recognize the truth of “there is no way to peace, peace is the way”?

Key thoughts

» Ahimsa is an *active* attitude. *Passive* resistance against abuse is a nonviolent way to take action.

» A very powerful tool for practicing peace is dialogue. Nobody is perfect. Neither are we. Speak to the one you (still) do not love, be compassionate to the imperfections of the other.

» The most powerful way to break through a chain of cause and effect is *thinking differently*.

» A practical exercise is to build a vision of a peaceful society.

Why do people use violence against their fellow men? It is the focus on ourselves, either as an individual or as a group, and the fear of losing what we have. All we want for ourselves – and deny others – and everything in which we feel threatened, can be traced back to these two aspects. We live our lives in an us-versus-them mode: the illusion of separateness. Selfishness and fear create disharmony, but if they lead to violence then the ability is lacking to remedy the situation. Or perhaps even the will is missing to seek peaceful opportunities to do so.

The sad series of violence in the world of today stresses that many people see no other way than that of armed struggle. We will in *Lucifer* not cease

to reveal an alternative route. Barend Voorham recently wrote in *Lucifer*, in relation to violence from the Islamic State (IS), that *violence leads to more violence, only through peaceful means is peace realised.*⁽¹⁾ In this article the concept of *ahimsa* also emerged: complete nonviolence, in other words a situation in which no violence – either in thought or in action – exists. Excluding the option to use violence is for many too big of a step. If you are attacked, you do have the right to defend yourself, don't you? If you are forcibly wronged, you may surely defend yourself against that? Yes. But here the question arises whether we have not only the power, but also the will of looking for a nonviolent solution in such a case.

In the concept of the violence spiral we recognise the law of cause and effect that violence leads to only more violence. Many people do recognize this mechanism and hate it, but see no other solutions. To get to a peace spiral, there must be an opposite process. How do you realise that and from which perspective do you want to do that?

The dialogue

Theosophia teaches the essential unity of all life, the spiritual Oneness that connects us in the depths of our being. “Us” and “them” are not only seemingly opposing interests, they are ultimately illusions. Illusions that we are dealing with in this life in a very realistic way, but nevertheless illusions in their core. A philosophy of life that is based on unity offers a huge incentive to work towards a peace spiral. “*Love is the cement of the universe,*” as Gottfried de Purucker puts it.

A very powerful tool for practicing peace is dialogue. Nobody is perfect, neither are we. Speak to the one you (still) do not love, practice compassion to the imperfections of the other. That certainly does not have to be in a sentimental way. We can open up to each other’s ideas and work together to find out what unites us, but on the other hand we should never go along with the errors of others. The wisdom to engage discussion with a positive attitude towards the other is of course not restricted to students of Theosophia. This is certainly true for ahimsa, the practicing of a completely nonviolent lifestyle. Moreover, the absence of violence does not mean passivity. Ahimsa is an *active* attitude. *Passive* resistance to abuses is a nonviolent way to take *action*. Some well-known examples from the past hundred years show from which insights and backgrounds great people practice ahimsa.

Gandhi and Tolstoy

Mohandas K. Gandhi was known as Mahatma Gandhi for his nonviolent struggle for an independent India and introduced in this way ahimsa and *satyagraha* (holding on to truth) as terms for nonviolent activism in the West. In 1910 – when Gandhi was 41 years old – the upcoming Mahatma had a brief correspondence with Leo Tolstoy. Count Tolstoy, known from amongst other works for *War and Peace*, preached out of his vision on Christianity to peacefully refuse to serve or obey “sinful” governments. In his last letter to Gandhi, shortly before his death, Tolstoy writes:

... Which I think is very important – namely, what is called

passive resistance, but which in reality is nothing more than the doctrine of love, unblemished by false interpretations.⁽²⁾

Gandhi would later put it this way:

It is not nonviolence if we only love those who love us. It is only then nonviolence when we love those who hate us. I know how hard it is to follow the great law of love (...).⁽³⁾

Gandhi applied the ideas of Tolstoy on opposition to “sinful” government in 1930 effectively, when on March 2 he extensively reported to the British Viceroy Irwin how much the tax on salt – the British had a monopoly on salt production – was a form of exploitation of the poor Indian population. He invited Irwin respectfully to smooth out the path “for the immediate lifting of this evil”, but if the call would not appeal to his heart, Gandhi would disregard the provisions of the Salt-law with civil disobedience.⁽⁴⁾ What followed was the now famous Salt March. Between March 12 and April 5 Gandhi walked from his Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi on the coast, a distance of 320 kilometers. His group of followers grew en route to several thousands of people. In every village Gandhi spoke to large crowds. And on April 6, he took a handful of salt from the sea. His civil disobedience as a means to fight for justice got massive result and became an increasingly significant factor in the struggle for independence. Obviously, the act of Gandhi was purely symbolic; the road to independence was still very long. The process itself was also certainly not without violence. But the Salt March was one of the examples where Gandhi showed what it means to undertake nonviolent action without inner fears and doubts and out of love for truth and justice.

Martin Luther King

Selma, a small town in the US state of Alabama, became the scene of nonviolent protests led by Martin Luther King in 1965. This was already ten years after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man and sit in the back as the law in Alabama at that time prescribed. The civil rights movement in the southern United States further increased; there was more than enough reason. The right to vote for the black population existed only on paper because of racial discrimination and Selma’s violent white sheriff belittled and provoked his coloured fellow human beings wherever he could. Reverend King, leader of the *Southern Christian Leadership Conference* and activists of the *Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee* decided

that Selma was the place to demonstrate in a nonviolent way for the right to vote. Shortly afterwards a young black supporter was killed. King preached ahimsa at his funeral in the *Brown Chapel* of Selma: “We must not become bitter and nurture ideas to retaliate with violence.”⁽⁵⁾ The incident triggered the protest in the form of a March in Montgomery. On March 7, a relatively small group of peaceful demonstrators walked in dead silence over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. There they were admonished to a halt and within two minutes beaten up by a police force. There were dozens of wounded. Reactions didn’t fail to appear. The images of the merciless charges were big news across America. President Johnson, hitherto uncompromising in his conversations with Martin Luther King, held an insistent plea for civil rights one week later and came up within five months with a new ballot act which guaranteed the rights of the African American population.

Dr. King led a peaceful march on March 21 of 80 kilometers to Montgomery in which 30,000 people participated. In Montgomery King said that the goal was not to defeat the white man or humiliate him but to “win his friendship and understanding” and to achieve a society “that can live with its conscience”:

I know you are wondering today: “How long will this take?”
And I say to you this afternoon that no matter how difficult the moment is, how frustrating even the hour, it will not be long before the truth that is weighed down shall rise again.
How long? Not long, because no lie can last forever.
How long? Not long, because you will reap what you sow.
How long? Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but finally he bends toward justice.⁽⁶⁾

The recent movie *Selma*, about the events of that time, shows very adequately how King struggles with the responsibility to call on others into nonviolent resistance. He felt almost literally the pain of the truncheon that struck them. And despite the success that followed, just as with Gandhi, the goal was not yet achieved. Racial discrimination is prevalent to this day in the United States, as shows the latest sad example of the events in Ferguson, Missouri. But Martin Luther King showed what you can achieve with a peaceful protest. And he explains in the above quote also why he was ultimately optimistic.

Katherine Tingley

What is the justification for thinking nonviolent, to be it?

To live in such a way that we may truly speak of ahimsa as the noble art of nonviolence? How can we not only be nonviolent and preach nonviolence, but also show that this is in accordance with nature?

Love – compassion – for humanity as a whole, Gandhi and King experienced out of their religion. A universal love which – according to the Theosophia – arises from recognizing and experiencing the essential unity of all life. Awareness of *us*, without the existence of *them*, without feeling separateness.

In a peace spiral, the karmic process of cause and effect is supported by Nature itself. Karma is the law that restores balance and harmony. Violence evokes violence and never leads to a sustainable situation, because it always brings disharmony. Nonviolence appeals for peace — and if that call is answered, it brings harmony.

That harmony, we must cultivate in our thinking. Karma also means that the characteristics of causes always return in the characteristics of the consequences. Hence in our thinking we should never fight evil with evil. That’s why we only achieve sustainable harmony through deeds and thoughts that benefit the totality.

In 1926 *The Gods Await* was published by Katherine Tingley, the third leader of the Theosophical Society Point Loma. In this masterpiece from theosophical literature she explains in plain language why nonviolence and compassion arise directly from the essential unity of all that exists — and that violence is the nail in our own coffin. Fortunately we now can read it online in its original version.⁽⁷⁾

Tingley writes in *The Gods Await* on war, peace, patriotism, crime and punishment. Emphatically in relation with the divine core within each of us. And she does absolutely not mince her words. The following quotes will give you an impression:

The world now longs for universal ideals. As never before, we must understand that we are responsible not only for ourselves, not only for our country but for the whole human family.

There is only one true and legitimate battlefield: the mind of man, where the duality of our nature keeps us constantly at the only rightful war there is – the war of the god within us against the lower self.

We should no longer seek, as we have done for centuries, to arm ourselves against our neighbour countries. Our only concern should be to protect our neighbours from our own lower self.⁽⁸⁾

Fourteen years old, Tingley had learned to look violence in the eye. During the Civil War she cared for soldiers in an army camp nearby in Virginia. It was essentially her first nonviolent protest against violence that would so much embody compassion for the rest of her life.

Dalai Lama

Examples of Gandhi, King and Tingley indicate how fruitful nonviolence can be applied in various situations of violence: occupation and oppression, discrimination against minorities and even war. Obviously, at their core these situations do not really differ. The Theosophia gives us insight into the universal law of cause and effect. What we sow, we shall reap. So it's actually quite easy to understand that violence can only lead to violence. But if we once again hear the news about a terrorist attack, we often still don't know what to do.

The Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of the Tibetans, lives in exile in India since 1959 after Tibet was occupied by China. This Buddhist leader is a lifelong active practitioner – and advocate – of a nonviolent attitude and knows in his statements often to summarize the simplicity of the idea:

Some of you will say that it is very praiseworthy that the Dalai Lama is an opponent of violence, but that his attitude is very difficult to hang on to in practice. It's actually much more naive to assume that problems caused by man can be solved through armed conflict by man.⁽⁹⁾

The aforementioned *Lucifer*-article "Violence leads to more violence" gave an example of a violent chain of causes and effects. In recent decades in the Middle East, a chain of hatred and violence was kindled, which certainly can be traced to greed, fear and separation. The causes were obviously established earlier; the consequences will take place for a very long time. One of the painful *triggers* in this spiral of violence was the lack of education. "Many have never learned to think independently," noted Barend Voorham. Education is an incentive to develop our above personal characteristics. It is for good reason this was a spearhead of Katherine Tingley as a theosophical leader. The fighters in the Middle East carry the fire of violence with temperament. They are angry and frustrated by the lack of experience of a more righteous life. The Dalai Lama recognizes this, but as a Buddhist he is also very practical:

Whether or not we are able to realize world peace, we have no other choice but to work towards that goal. If our mind

is dominated by anger, we will lose the best part of our human intelligence – wisdom and the ability to decide between good and evil.⁽¹⁰⁾

Obama?

Ignorance, anger, hatred, greed, fear: we cause misery to each other. Some "jihadists", maybe or maybe not manipulated by pseudo-religious ideas, whether or not blinded by an injustice somewhere in the world, even translate their confused feelings into a glorification of the struggle. How can we as a society turn the tide?

If there is disharmony, we need to change the characteristic of the causes. Answer hatred with love, violence with nonviolence, that is what the great examples teach us. Fortunately, there are many more wise men than we have mentioned here, but do they also inspire the billions of world citizens and their leaders? How wise are some of the leaders? Did Obama for instance inspire us to nonviolence? Barack Obama was a typical leader who sometimes with his statements provided hope on better times, but who was also trapped in the karmic web in which the use of weapons is called legitimate. This is understandable in light of the well-known thesis that every nation gets the leadership it deserves. The American people are divided — as we saw again during the latest elections. But an important part does not tend to nonviolence. For example, many Americans value their right to carry a weapon. And the glorification of violence in Hollywood is a characteristic that we can see on television and in many movies.

Obama was in the run-up to his election as President of the United States also in Selma because he, as a black presidential candidate, was obviously aware of the historical significance of the place. During the commemoration in March 2015 he stood once more on the Edmund Pettus Bridge and praised the brave men of the day. Obama went even so far as to admit that nonviolence can be effective:

The Americans who crossed this bridge, made no physical impression. But they gave courage to millions. They were not acting as elected officials. But they led a nation. (...) What they did here will resound through the centuries. Not because the change they realized was predestined, not because their victory was complete, but because they demonstrated that nonviolent change is possible and that love and hope can defeat hatred.⁽¹¹⁾

Obama held one of his characteristic inspiring speeches. If you listen to him, you will have a mind to put your

shoulders to the wheel, to do your very best. In such a speech he offers hope for a better future. Obama is also the first to warn that you should not sit back, the first to recognize that there are still shortcomings that need to be addressed. “We know that the march is not over yet.” And: “We must all, as they did, recognize that change is dependent of our own actions, our attitudes and the things we teach our children.”

Obama may be called a social conscience president. But despite his fine words in Selma he did certainly not preach nonviolence. He had no reservations on military action if he thought things could not be accomplished otherwise. The latter is obviously very subjective.

Can it be accomplished otherwise?

Ahimsa, the noble art of nonviolence is based on the divine essence of man, of all living beings. Life after life, we learn to develop our limitless spiritual possibilities, to realise them. *Ahimsa is the characteristic of that development.* The path of spiritual development is going up, not down. So it cannot be otherwise: there is no way to peace, peace is the way.

So if we look at the raw reality of today, is there no trace of understanding for the idea that military intervention in some situations is a must? From humanitarian perspective, because otherwise much more suffering will follow? Hence an act “because there is no other way”?

Perhaps there are times when we as a group or as a world community, we must recognize that we have failed to prevent violence in time. That we lack in the development of vision and righteousness. We have done too little on education, care for primary needs and, not least, to create opportunities for people to develop themselves, to shape in their life something of that urge for spiritual growth that we all have.

The history of mankind knows a lot of violence. The karmic implications make it difficult to use only non-violence as a response in times of excessive violence. But if we develop the vision that ahimsa is ultimately the natural characteristic of the world community of human beings, then we can always work towards it. Hence also decisions for military intervention “because it cannot be done otherwise” — or perhaps more accurately, because we see no other way, can and must be combined with efforts to establish a dialogue and an active program for people to help them find the way back to peace when they have lost that, for whatever reason.

The first question to ask people who have lost the way

of peace, perhaps could be: “Why do you use violence?” Why don’t the examples of Gandhi, King, Tingley or the Dalai Lama inspire many people? In other words, how do ordinary people come to the conclusion: “Yes, we want nonviolence as a life-style.” What insights do we need to achieve this?

General answers

In his book *And my partner at the dinner table is Plato* the Dutch philosopher and journalist Rob Wijnberg explores answers to the question why people use violence.⁽¹²⁾ An unequivocal answer is not there, he notes, but there are three general answers that he recognizes. First, the instrumental explanation: people commit violence “because it works.” In this view, violence is seen primarily as a means to an end. As a second statement Wijnberg mentions the concept of ideology. “Here violence is also a means, but in this case to achieve a certain ideal. He finds it ironic that the goal of ideological violence is usually a nonviolent society. Thirdly, the biological explanation. “Violence is in the nature of man.” But also: “Nevertheless, there have been as many thinkers who regarded nonviolence correctly as the essence of man.” Striking in this list is the pragmatic approach to the problem. Many people will think along these lines. Only the conclusion that nonviolence can be considered as the essence of man, makes way for a more spiritual vision.

Pragmatism is rather part of the problem than a statement of the problem. Along with materialism it can be a license for violence if we do not recognize the essence of the man himself.

Uncontrolled thoughts

Theosophia teaches that life is boundless consciousness. Everything is essentially consciousness. We call this the spiritualistic principle. There is an essential unity underlying all life that connects us on the deepest level of our being. Each core of consciousness is developing more and more of the unlimited opportunities that it carries within itself in cyclical manifestations.

After an endless series of reïmbodyments, man is at a stage that he develops thought — a stage which also brings *self-awareness*. We are human because we can think, also about our own thoughts and actions as an individual.

However, the evolution of our mind is – for the average person – not nearly as advanced as many suspect. We think quite a bit, but objectively, we often let our thoughts flow without control, like drops of water. And so in us

simple thoughts of a certain colour are bubbling up, a certain characteristic where we are not really *aware* of. In general we are not critical of ourselves when it comes to what thoughts we allow and do not allow — and follow. Thoughts are living beings: consciousnesses that are much less developed than humans, but nonetheless living beings that have their own characteristics.

Let's say that if we look at the individual human being for the causes of violence, then we can see a variety of personal thoughts that places us *in opposition* to others and ultimately brings us in a state where violence plays a role. We often think ego-centric, self-centred. We want to have a lot — from “happiness and health” to “comfort and property”. And again, we are afraid to lose what we have got. This is “thinking in separation.” We think we stand apart from others and feel ourselves quickly threatened in our “own little world”.

We may also be disappointed in life, frustrated by everything that is against us, by injustice which we experienced ourselves or for others. Our vision of life is a dominant factor in our daily streams of thought, even if we do not actively occupy ourselves with that vision.

Aspects of thinking

How do we then process all those thoughts? These lower forms of consciousness which in such large numbers and sometimes so chaotically flow in and out of us? Why do we not choose to bring in only compassionate, peace-loving thoughts? Thoughts that exclude violence?

The answer lies in the thinking faculty itself. Therefore we have to consider humans as a compound being. We are in essence a spiritual, imperishable being. The persona, the I, gathers experience life after life and learns in this way more and more to master the noble, selfless qualities lying in its spiritual core.

The Theosophia recognizes in the human complexity seven universal principles, which can be separated into 3 groups, from transient, to learning, to imperishable parts. We see this reflected in the development of the thinking faculty. Hence in our thinking we recognize seven aspects, each of which has a specific characteristic.⁽¹³⁾

For this moment, we will limit ourselves to three of these aspects: emotional thinking, intellectual thinking and insightful thinking.

The emotional thinking forms part of the range of emotions we experience: these can be quite positive or negative. Many violent thoughts reside in the emotional thinking. But also, for example, “compassion” in which we mourn

with those we find congenial. For those we find not so sympathetic we often have other feelings. ...

The intellectual way of thinking we can apply either for ourselves or for the benefit of others. The Theosophia makes a clear distinction in the manasic principle (Manas means mind) between selfish, personal thinking and unselfish, impersonal thinking.

The lower Manas belongs to the more transient part of our complexity; the higher Manas to the more imperishable. With insightful thinking, also called the Buddhic aspect, we are able to see the coherency of things. It is almost always associated with an unselfish attitude. Here we recognise the notion of “compassion”. The root of a loving attitude toward all life.

Oriented thinking

This short explanation clarifies how much our thinking depends on the extent to which we handle it consciously. If we realize through which impulses and by which “colors” we let ourselves be lead, we can also actively say yes or no to it. We can for example – by using our Buddhic aspect – better nurture a positive, compassionate thought, although we have to set aside certain emotions in order to achieve that. Because we consider the situation in a larger perspective. Or we can put thoughts of fear or hatred into perspective, sidelining them by replacing them by a different, better thought.

Thus, we can train ourselves to redeem our personal thoughts of selfish tendencies and put them increasingly in the service of the whole. This means “working” on our character, as Theosophia teaches us: “Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character”.

By avoiding negative emotions and stimulating spiritual thoughts, we also work on our own health. Negative emotions harm the human being as a composed being. This is eventually reflected in all kinds of psychological and physical problems. Committing both physical and psychological violence – started as a negative thought – is also reflected in our constitution. And in those of the victims, of course.

Group thinking

In many expressions of violence large groups of people are standing against each other. The world is still full of disharmony and violence, despite the examples of the wise that show how beneficial nonviolence is. Groups of people are often inclined to regard the history of their country,

their people, their religion and culture – seen from their lower thinking aspects – as their “property”, and – in case of tension – to hold that against the “ownership” of another group, whereby the uniqueness of their own heritage is also seen as superior.

The fear of losing such a unique position, the threat that such a thing may happen, is a typical example of this separateness way of thinking. What is missing is a vision of life in which we recognize that everything is interconnected, that *we* and *they* is in essence an illusion. *We are* with each other, so *we cannot* live without each other. Therefore, each group should be given the chance to develop.

If groups are facing each other and dialogue has failed, the ways of diplomacy have offered no solution, then armed conflicts can ignite where the motivation fits into the instrumental statement Wijnberg pointed out: people commit violence because it works. That is, at least, what they think.

It is ironic to think that applying violence is effective. Does history not prove the contrary? Violence leads to more violence. That is the simple and understandable conclusion of the old rule, “what we sow we reap.” It is essentially a translation of the law of cause and effect, karma. However not all causes have a literal and immediate boomerang effect. To set a positive example: a plant also does not grow in winter, but at some point in time it turns into spring. Hence at a certain moment there will be circumstances in which a thought, an action will have its effect.

Karma is a universal law, in which the *characteristic* of the cause corresponds to the *characteristic* of the result. Nature is strictly just and therefore neutral. What we may deduct from this is that thoughts that lead to violence will never lead to nonviolence and harmony. I.e.: negative – selfish – usage of our thinking aspects never leads to harmony.

The dialogue is always a very powerful tool for practicing peace. Being open to each other’s ideas, searching for what unites people, without having to go into the errors of others. There is always a possibility, if we consciously focus our thoughts on peaceful solutions.

Even in these turbulent times, we see particular examples of conflicts in which ideology and religion play an important role. The second answer to the question why people use violence that Wijnberg also recognizes. The causes of these conflicts sometimes carry far back into the past. Groups of people, nations, generations which have long been dominated, exploited and belittled; people who for generations have been deprived of decent living conditions and good education: they have not had a chance

to learn to think independently and balanced, to explore the power of unselfish thought. In short, they haven’t had an opportunity for spiritual development. Their despair translates into violence that they legitimate with what they understand of an ideology and religion. There they seek – quite understandably – an ideal image. Verily the situation in the Middle East and in parts of Africa are examples of this.

Consequences of violence

The spiral of violence is a chain of cause and effect. More and more suffering, more imbalance makes it harder to turn the tide and to unleash a spiral of peace. In the actuality of recent years, we see a big increase in the number of people that flee the violence in the Middle East and Africa. The reactions in our society – in Europe – on the issue of refugees show most recognizable examples of both selfish and unselfish thinking. It is also quite clear that some people simply let their minds be guided by populist “leaders” who preach discord, fear and hate — hence ultimately violence. But this need not be necessary. With more insight into our thought patterns, with more conscious thinking, wiser leaders would also have more followers. The saying goes: the nation gets the leaders it deserves.

Solutions

The most powerful way to break through a chain of cause and effect is *to think differently*. Thoughts are living beings. Negative, violent thought-elements threaten us. Do we let them in or is the protection wall of our mindset positive and powerful enough? Our thinking acts both as a transmitter and receiver. The thoughts that we send and the thoughts that we receive have the same frequency range. To continue the metaphor: if we *fine tune* – very focused thinking – we save a lot of noise coming from thoughts that we do not want to broadcast or allow in.

A practical exercise in the development of insightful thinking – Budhic thinking – is building an ideal image of a world, a peaceful society where mutual respect and appreciation is normal. Something we can take in an easy way: it doesn’t have to be ready by tomorrow. We can exercise it “in the background” while we are doing our groceries or on our way to work. We can continually refine it, and make it a sort of constant meditation. Imagine: a world that supports you on all sides, and that you want to help build on all sides. A world where you tend to see more and more positive perspectives, a world where harmony, cooperation and peace are quite normal.

To build an ideal image requires thought-discipline, concentration and constant meditation. But also “fuel” in the form of knowledge about the basic principles of life and the opportunity for dialogue with fellow truth seekers. So education, freedom of thought, access to universal spiritual knowledge and opportunity to in-depth thinking by the presence of all necessary basic needs.

To be able to think clearly and focussed, a lucid vision on life is necessary. Theosophia offers an ocean of possibilities in this respect.

Participating in Society

So learning to think differently and, in particular, to think less selfish is necessary to break the cycle of violence. But also more immediate help is needed. What to do for individuals who have lost their way? For complete nations at war? For groups of people who are dazed by religious mania and generations of violent traditions and have descended to the blackest state of mind?

A classic example. The best remedy for bullying in the classroom is to give all concerned (bully, bullied and passive spectators and followers) ownership of something the children can handle in order to improve their self-image and self-esteem. Meanwhile, one can look at their background to see if help is needed in that respect. An integral approach which endeavours children to function fully in their growth process — and activate positive thoughts. On a large scale, this principle will also work. Participation is the key here. Offer warring parties a challenge to build something. Ask their assistance thereto, instead of punishing them. Offer them opportunities in the recovery of their life, their wealth and their self-esteem. Obviously under control — even in this scenario there need certainly be no question of naivety. Give them responsibility, but also explain how that would work internationally. Offer them an outlook on dignity and respect, a view to build their ideal image on the basis of their own cultural values in the knowledge how much these are rooted in universal values. What a wonderful role the United Nations could play here! If the first successes are visible, the snowball effect will be great. And the world will grow amazingly fast into more harmony.

Can we – after all that has been said – draw a conclusion from the biological explanation of the cause of violence signalled by Wijnberg? “Violence is in the nature of man” and “Yet there have been as many thinkers who esteem on the contrary nonviolence as the essence of man?” Theoso-

phia teaches that the spiritual above-personal side of our complexity does not know the concept of violence. Our more transient, personal side does not have it in its nature by definition. The more we focus on the above-personal, the more the concept of violence will die. The examples of people like Gandhi, King, Tingley and the Dalai Lama *may* inspire us. If we *want* to, we can do it.

Ahimsa is the absence of violence, a world in which no one even harms another person. Ultimately it is a matter of making the word violence superfluous. That is the art of Ahimsa.

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Katherine Tingley's original books once more available

In recent months the I.S.I.S. Foundation managed to offer all the books of one of the most important theosophical pioneers, Katherine Tingley, online at our website. I.S.I.S. Foundation will soon also offer these books in print.

This can be seen as another step in making available the essential theosophical literature in its original form as approved by the author. The extreme importance of this for all students of Theosophia, worldwide, is elaborated in this article.

Katherine Tingley was the third leader of the Theosophical Society in the succession line that is now known as the Theosophical Society Point Loma – Blavatskyhouse, The Hague. Like all other theosophical leaders and teachers, she had to fulfill a special role in the Theosophical Movement, and she made a unique contribution to the theosophical literature. Many who have read one of her books, will have been impressed by her ability to address our deepest and most universal intuitions in simple words. For many people her books are a source for spiritual motivation and – also in great hardships – of courage and hope.

Why online availability?

All the books containing fragments of her English-language lectures you may now download for free from the

Blavatskyhouse website.⁽¹⁾ I.S.I.S. Foundation had already put online some books by Gottfried de Purucker and Helena P. Blavatsky, with the goal that ultimately the books of all major theosophical authors remain available in an *unchanged* form.

The rationale lies in the word “unchanged”. Almost all books by Katherine Tingley were either not available (except antiquarian) or were published in revised and abridged form. So, when no action was taken, the chances would be great that the reader soon could no longer lay hands on the original material — hence would also not be able to study the original material and ponder upon it. So “unchanged” means in this case: that it has not gone through the “colored lens” of later editors, and one does not know what has been changed and what is not.

Key thoughts

» The preservation of the original theosophical texts is of major importance.

» Katherine Tingley had the ability to address our deepest and most universal intuitions in simple words.

Which books does it concern?

It involves seven books. An overview can be found in the accompanying box. On the website, you will find a description of each book. Each book is a collection of fragments of Katherine Tingley's lectures. Katherine Tingley did select these fragments very carefully, bearing in mind "what the world needs now on vision and impulses".⁽²⁾ If you read through the list of her books, you will notice that almost all books were published in the last seven years of her life (she died in 1929 at the age of 82). Between 1925 and 1928 there came out one every year. This was undoubtedly meant to preserve Katherine Tingley's unique theosophical contribution for generations to come.

Books by Katherine Tingley

Books published under her supervision

Title:	First edition:
• <i>The Mysteries of the Heart Doctrine</i>	1902
• <i>Theosophy, the Path of the Mystic</i>	1922
• <i>The Wine of Life</i>	1925
• <i>The Gods Await</i>	1926
• <i>The Travail of the Soul</i>	1927
• <i>The Voice of the Soul</i>	1928

These books are all published and printed by the former headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Point Loma, San Diego, California.

A later published book

- *The Wisdom of the Heart* 1978

This book consists of excerpts from Katherine Tingley's already published books, enriched by other material from her.

What makes the lectures of Katherine Tingley unique?

The contents of Katherine Tingley's books reflect the job she had to carry out as leader of the Theosophical Society Point Loma. She did not have the task to further explain the Theosophia (that was the job of her successor, as she was well aware), but to transform the entire Society into a powerful center of active brotherhood. Therefore, she spoke about the basic ideas of the Theosophia, with a major emphasis on the essential divinity of man, and the compassionate vision and conduct directly emerging from this fact.

As said, Katherine Tingley had a special talent to give talks "by heart" and in fact "from the heart", which very directly

appeal to the selfless, universal core of our consciousness. Katherine Tingley has given a great number of lectures in her life, both on her travels through the US, Europe and other continents, as in San Diego.

Her lectures are more mystical-ethical than scientific or explanatory in nature, and therefore constitute a unique facet in the overall theosophical literature.

Katherine Tingley's role as leader

Katherine Tingley took over the leadership of William Quan Judge in a very critical phase: the Theosophical Movement threatened to degenerate into a school for "psychicism". She was assigned to gather from over the world those members who wanted to study the original Theosophia and *live up to it*.

To this end she created the headquarters at Point Loma, California, a center where hundreds of people lived and worked for the benefit of mankind, applying Theosophia in many areas of society. Katherine Tingley had a further task to form a team of selfless, spiritual, *open-minded* and independent thinkers, which would allow the next leader, G. de Purucker, to carry out *his* task: to interpret and elaborate upon the Theosophia as delivered by H.P. Blavatsky, and to protect it from degeneration. Therefore, she trained a whole generation of Theosophists. In this connection, the *Rāja Yoga School and University* which she had founded played an essential role.

Active fraternity for the benefit of society

Katherine Tingley was averse to intellectual hobbyism, or pseudo-occultism. She described the enormous needs of humanity and that the task of the Theosophical Movement lies in offering sustainable solutions. She reminded her listeners and later her readers in the simplest words to the divine essence of all life, and that this essence is our own spiritual root, our essential core. She showed the *practical and ethical* value of the Theosophia, as a reliable guideline for solving the most pressing social problems: building a lasting peace among nations. Her peace congresses in America and Europe just before the First World War are well known. Her inspiring influence on royal families and culture bearers has contributed to the fact that the Netherlands and Sweden remained neutral in this war. In her lectures, she opened everyone's eyes to the degrading conditions in which the poor lived in cities, the need for reform of the education and the prison system. She also pleaded in the US – with substantive arguments – for the abolition of the death penalty. Through her campaigns,

this was indeed abolished in one US state, but unfortunately a few years later reintroduced at the next election. Through her undogmatic, understandable language she managed to reach a vast circle of independent thinkers.

Katherine Tingley, the greatest esoterica

Gottfried de Purucker once said of Katherine Tingley: “KT as an Esoterica is the greatest of the three leaders and teachers who have preceded me”.⁽³⁾ This he said at a meeting of a group of esoteric students, hence people who had already passed through a long training in Theosophia. This statement proved sometimes difficult to understand for subsequent students, given the undoubted spiritual vision and laboring power of H.P. Blavatsky and W.Q. Judge.

However, it is easy to understand when we realize that the word “esoteric” has the meaning of “hidden”. Gottfried de Purucker explains this himself, at a later meeting of the same esoteric group. There he says: “KT was esoterica through and through. As such, she would under no circumstances reveal esoteric teachings to the public.”⁽⁴⁾ More than with other theosophical teachers, with Katherine Tingley you have to read behind and between words, to discover the deeper teachings. Yet all her texts, as it were are ‘permeated’ by this deeper knowledge of Life. Here applies once more what applies to all mystical texts from the past: “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Special topics in Katherine Tingley’s books

Many of Katherine Tingley’s theosophical lectures cover a rich field of human life: both individual and social. While some topics are discussed in several books, you will each time discover new insights, new aspirations. We therefore recommend all of the books, and discourage none ...

Yet to some readers it may be useful to know in which of Katherine Tingley’s books a specific theme is elaborated in some more detail. Hence, we give a few examples below. The year behind the subject refers to the year of the first edition (see the book titles on the previous page).

- Theosophia and Christianity: amongst others 1922 and 1925
- Notes on the spiritual Path: 1922, 1925, 1978
- On the future of America: 1925
- About headquarters at Point Loma: 1928
- On Rāja Yoga Education and theosophical family life: 1926, 1927
- About H.P. Blavatsky and her work: 1928

- About her meeting with H.P.B.’s Teacher: 1926 and 1928
- The role that music and drama can play in the elevation of the soul: 1902, 1922, 1928
- About the brotherhood of all peoples, and the folly and impotence of war: 1926, 1928
- About the mystical background of Nature and Man: 1922, 1925, 1928
- A timeline of the life of Katherine Tingley: 1978

As said, Katherine Tingley touched often in her lectures on several doctrines, and brought these in close relation to each other: so you may encounter the mentioned topics also elsewhere in her work.

Try it yourself ...

Her words appeal to our inner self, our own inner teacher. She brought a mystical message, her style was eminently mystical. Taste it yourself! These are books for quiet moments, between the daily tasks, or just before sleep. Read a few pages, and you feel reconnected to the deeper, immortal roots of your consciousness, and with the fate of mankind.

You can find her books at the website of Blavatskyhouse: www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature/Tingley.

References

1. See: www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature/Tingley.
 2. See the foreword of Clark Thurston in Katherine Tingley’s book *The Mysteries of the Heart Doctrine* (1902).
 3. G. de Purucker, *Esoteric Teachings of the Oriental School*. 2 parts. I.S.I.S. Foundation, The Hague 1987, Part 1, p. 21.
 4. See ref. 3, Part 1, p. 180.
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ADHD: an overdose of vitality – How to control it?

Key thoughts

- » ADHD is not a disease, nor a psychological disorder or brain deviation, but a description of hyperactive and unfocused behavior.
- » Behavior is based on thoughts.
- » During childhood, the various thinking aspects reactivate. Often this process shows a certain imbalance. It sometimes happens that in a child's life the vitality aspect takes the lead.
- » By using medication one prevents the thinking characteristics from expressing themselves.
- » Our busy society provides many stimuli and incitements and stimulates hyperactive behavior.
- » Teach children from an early age to concentrate on their higher thinking aspects.

Is hyperactive and unfocused behavior a psychological disorder? How is it possible that more and more children are given an ADHD-tag? How can we control the thinking aspect of vitality?

When we compare a current primary school with one of let's say thirty years ago, we can see huge differences. Not only the teaching methods, but also the composition of the class differs strongly. While some decennia ago classrooms had a fairly homogeneous population, nowadays it consists of children who all have a specific background. Every child has its unique problems, so it seems. Many are being raised in "broken" homes or in families where there is a lot of tension. Many cope with learning disabilities or psychological problems. Because a decreasing number of children are allowed to attend special education, teachers are challenged to teach these children with special needs in their classrooms. In earlier days teachers used to mark these 'special' children in their notebooks, but today they would be better off marking those who don't have special needs. We are talking about children who suffer from depression at the early age of ten, several kinds of autism, Tourette syndrome, and, of course, ADHD.

What is ADHD?

ADHD is not so much a disease or a psychological disorder; it is rather a description of a certain kind of behavior. The acronym ADHD stands for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. This refers to someone's (usually a child's) inability to keep their mind focused on one thing at a time. They are easily distracted and this is accompanied by hyperactivity and impulsivity. They cannot sit still, are always moving and reacting to everything that is happening around them.

How can we determine whether someone has ADHD? Not by a physical diagnosis, but by counting behavior. As a matter of fact, the diagnosis ADHD is ascribed based on an almost unscientific simplicity. Lists with criteria are usually completed according to the parents' observations.

In fact, psychiatrists have drawn up criteria lists for all kinds of psychological disorders. These are compiled in a manual called DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disor-

ders). This manual is used worldwide and is continually revised. At the moment the fifth edition is in use.

Thirteen criteria have been listed in order to diagnose ADHD and if a child meets six of these criteria, it is supposed to suffer from ADHD. Some of these criteria are: often being 'busy'; talking non-stop; running around a lot or climbing on things in situations where this is inappropriate; having difficulty waiting for its turn. One can imagine that two children that comply with totally different sets of criteria will both be diagnosed in the same way.⁽¹⁾

The criteria can be applied in quite a subjective manner, especially when performed by people with little psychological experience. Please note the frequency of the term 'often' in the criteria. Does a schoolboy, who prefers a game of soccer over arithmetic, and who leaves his seat more than average during a lesson, meet the criterion of "running around a lot"? What is usually forgotten is that the behavior has to be problematic for the person as well. The schoolteacher probably suffers from it, but the boy himself hardly does. If his school results are fine, he probably doesn't meet the criterion but if he fails his arithmetic maybe he does.

In the past another type of ADHD has been described, which is usually referred to as ADD. This concerns children, mostly girls, who are not able to focus on one thing as well, but who are rather dreamy instead of hyperactive. Altogether we should not be surprised that the occurrence of ADHD has increased enormously. It is estimated that in The Netherlands alone 200,000 children have been diagnosed with ADHD, which is three to five percent of all the children in this country. In the USA it has tripled to ten percent over the last fifteen years; four percent of the schoolchildren there are now taking medication for ADHD.⁽²⁾

This use of medication is especially odd because, as we said before, ADHD is not a psychological disorder or illness. It is a description of a certain kind of behavior. Every kind of behavior is related to thinking, and thinking is related to the brain.

And although ADHD can be disturbing, certainly for others and sometimes for the person in question as well, the brain shows no abnormalities, at least as far as we know.

Misconceptions concerning ADHD

In her book *How to prevent ADHD? By not diagnosing it*, a Dutch pedagogue, Laura Batstra, points to a frequent mistake, to wit, that the busy or unfocused behavior of

a child *results from* ADHD. But ADHD is not the *cause* of the hyperactive behavior, it *is* the behavior. ADHD is the synonym for the hyperactive inability to focus and impulsivity.

Suppose that the parents of an eight-year-old boy are divorcing, which creates a tensed atmosphere. As a result the boy is easily distracted and busier than usual, which leads to lower grades and frequent quarrels with his classmates. A girl from the same class has a stable home situation, but can show the same behavior. The cause of the girl's behavior must be entirely different compared to the cause of the boy's, but both are likely to be diagnosed as cases of ADHD. Again, ADHD is a description of behavior. To say that ADHD is a cause of hyperactivity is to say that the yelling of a child is a result of the fact that the child always yells.

Although it is often stated in the media and among scientists that ADHD is related to a certain brain abnormality, this has never been proven. It has also been suggested that a smaller brain causes ADHD. But most ADHD-children don't have smaller brains, and people with smaller brains do not necessarily have ADHD. It is not a neurobiological disorder either. You are not born with it and it is not chronic. In short, it is not a disease.

Another suggestion is that ADHD is related to a shortage of dopamine in the brain. Proponents of medication in particular claim this theory. That is why they prescribe medication that contains methylphenidate (like Ritalin). This substance slows down the re-absorption of dopamine and noradrenaline. These are so-called neurotransmitters, which convey the cell's nerve impulses and play a role in the communication between brain cells. If the re-absorption is limited, then the level in our brain will increase. This controls the symptoms of ADHD. From this particular fact the conclusion is drawn that ADHD is due to a shortage of these neurotransmitters. Laura Batstra counters this conclusion with a sound argument:

If someone who is very silent by nature becomes very talkative after a few pints of beer, does this mean that his silent attitude is caused by a lack of alcohol?⁽³⁾

In short, there is no evidence whatsoever that behavior that is labeled with ADHD has a physical cause.

What is behavior? Thoughts

Does behavior have a physical cause?

Looking at a human being from a materialistic perspective

we would probably answer this question affirmatively. But the spiritualistic point of view, which is the perspective of the Theosophia, states that consciousness is the basis of matter. So there is a ‘conscious force’ working through the physical body. We do not act automatically, like a machine. Humans are not a clockwork that ticks away the seconds and hours. Every act is based on a thought – an expression of free will. Every thought is evoked or thought by the conscious being.

Of course the brain is related to thinking, but not in the way that it *produces* thoughts; it *facilitates* thoughts. In other words, the brain is an instrument that is used by the consciousness – the thinking faculty – exactly like a driver uses a car to get around.

Of course, a driver can be severely restricted when his car is broken. The same applies to consciousness that has to express itself through a damaged brain. Which, as stated before, is not the case with ADHD. That is why the cause of this kind of behavior must be found in the way one thinks.

Aspects of thinking:

- Perception of unity – inspirational thinking
- Understanding – insightful thinking
- Intellect
- Force of desire
- Vitality
- Emotions - senses
- Physical thinking

Composite thinking

Anyone who observes their own thoughts closer than just superficially, knows there are different kinds of thoughts. These different kinds of thoughts correspond to the various types of consciousness of a human being. We can divide the human consciousness into seven layers. Human thinking corresponds to these layers, so there are seven thinking characteristics: inspirational thinking, insight, intellect, the force of desire, vitality, emotional or sensory thinking and physical thinking.⁽⁴⁾

In a human life, these aspects express themselves in reverse order. At first, in a newborn baby, there is only physicality. The baby wants to eat and sleep, nothing else. But soon enough emotional thinking appears, which is accompanied by the development of the senses. Then vitality awakens: the toddler can hardly sit still and is continuously in motion. Not much later, the child starts to express ‘a mind

of its own’ and around the seventh year the intellectual faculty manifests itself. Around puberty the more spiritual aspects – insightful thinking and the perception of unity – become activated. Of course it is not the case that one aspect must be entirely developed before the next one takes its turn. The various aspects develop more or less simultaneously, but usually the different aspects are emphasized in the chronological order just given.

Reasoning from the doctrine of reincarnation, we would like to remark here that every human has already learned to express, develop and control at least something of those aspects during former lives. Therefore we should consider the first years of a human life as the developing (unwrapping, unrolling) of inherent qualities that were active at the end of the most recent life. As a child, one has to get acquainted with a certain situation. Parents, teachers and other adults play the part of “older colleagues”, showing a new co-worker the ropes. The new colleague – the child – needs time to get used to the work and has to develop the skills needed in order to get the job done. That is why growing up frequently goes hand in hand with a certain degree of imbalance. The adolescent human has to learn to control different kinds of thinking.

If we let the four lower aspects run free, they tend to “take over” things. They will rule human thought, and then, as a result, human behavior. That is why one of the objectives of education is to enable children to control their lower nature. In order to learn this they need “practicing material”. The child’s environment - parents, school, and friends – provides that kind of material.

Young children need to learn to control their emotions, for example by accepting disappointment, or losing a game. They must learn to control their desires; you cannot have everything you wish. Moreover, the force of desire can also be directed to unselfish goals, like being helpful to our fellow human beings. In the same way, adolescents should learn to control their vitality.

Vitality

If you look at ADHD through a pair of theosophical glasses, then this behavior is nothing more than an abundance of vitality, or Prāna, as it is called in Sanskrit. Prāna is characterized by *thirst for action, acting for the sake of acting itself*. It is not so much about the result of acting, but about acting itself. You want to act, in whatever way. That is why you want to do it *yourself*. You want to move, be active, be vital, take action.

This prānic overdose is not to be found in children only.

Many adults want to do something about everything. Some people change the interior of the living room every other week, clean a still shiny car, tidy up a closet without any necessity, spade an entire garden for no reason, and risk a speeding ticket for driving way too fast even when they have plenty of time. Not being able to keep your hands still, tapping your feet, playing with your hair; these are all examples of prānic activity.

Vitality is one of the aspects adolescents must learn to control. Some children are more successful in doing so than others. They have developed this ability in former lives. But most young people or children do not immediately succeed in controlling vitality, neither does one succeed to accept losing a game (control of emotions) or to refrain from having things your way at the expense of others (control of desire) at once.

By “control” we do not mean to ignore or suppress an aspect of thinking. We should not do that, because all of these aspects make us human. If you were able to remove one of those aspects, your mind would be crippled. Instead, we have to learn to master them. This means that consciousness is in control and can evoke that aspect which is required in a certain situation. This a challenging task not only for children. Which adult would dare to state that they are fully in control?

Often, the children themselves suffer most from their hyperactivity, especially because the people around them do not really appreciate their behavior. How must it be for a young boy to be punished all the time because he cannot sit still, while he is honestly trying not to move. But he just doesn't succeed; he has to react to whatever happens around him.

A boy with ADHD once said that he was reprimanded and punished so often for his behavior, that he had become immune to it. He simply didn't notice it anymore. One time, his mother was reprimanding him and in the middle of it he interrupted her and asked: “Can I have some candy, please?”

Children have yet to learn to channel vitality and to use it when it is possible and required. And those who succeed least at this should not be considered bad people. They may have many other qualities. Still they have to learn to restrain the vitality-aspect of their thinking. Every educator or caregiver knows this is difficult. But it is not altogether impossible, as we will explain later. By the way, most children do largely succeed in controlling vitality. As they grow older, their ADHD-symptoms decrease. In other words, consciousness gains a grip on it. Some cannot

control it sufficiently, and they will show some ADHD characteristics also in their adult life.

Medication: pushing aside symptoms

During the first phases of his life a human is enabled to gain more control over his lower nature, especially over the vitality aspect of it. So, in a way ADHD is a natural phenomenon that can be observed in a human being that has not sufficiently learned to control their lower nature. This does not mean that parents or teachers should let this uncontrolled vitality run free and that they should let the children do what they want. If they do so, the lack of control will only increase. But the opposite, to entirely push aside the symptoms with medication, will deprive the child of the opportunity to “deal” with its hyperactivity. Nowadays, after ADHD is diagnosed, medication is prescribed almost every time.

As mentioned before, medication containing methylphenidate, such as Ritalin and Concerta, delays the re-absorption of dopamine, which results in more brain activity and a reduction of ADHD symptoms. In this respect it is known as a “brake-substance”. In our article *How medicine works*⁽⁵⁾ we explained, by means of the ‘piano-model’, that when you insert a certain substance in a body, this substance may have a slowing or a stimulating effect on certain characteristics which are present in our consciousness. A piano string is either dampened, or the damper is removed. In the case of alcohol for instance, the damper may be removed. Latent characteristics such as exuberance can flow forth from an otherwise modest and quiet person, when they have used alcohol. In the case of methylphenidate – which by the way works in the same way as the illegal drug cocaine – some characteristics that are present in our consciousness can no longer express themselves. The behavior will no longer show hyperactivity. Of course it is still there, but through medication there is no possibility to manifest itself. This medicine works like a brake or a damper.

Every psychiatrist knows that medication does not cure ADHD. The symptoms are only eliminated temporarily. The characteristic is still present in the consciousness and when medication is terminated it will express itself again. The medicine often loses its effect after a couple of years. It seems that the characteristics are so strong that medicine can only stop them for a certain amount of time. Medication can even have an opposite effect. A boy with ADHD told that when the effects of the medicine started to run out, the symptoms always returned more

heavily. Perhaps medication results in a kind of laziness. You don't have to train yourself and concentrate, because the pills temporarily relieve you of this 'task'. You are not taking control yourself.

Consequences of using medication

One may wonder whether it is bad thing to force characteristics back into the consciousness of a child. In doing so you may buy some time, in a way. At least for a while there is some peace in the mind of the hyperactive child. But one can only hope that the youngster has matured when he has to face the symptoms again later, and then has more grip on their vitality.

However, there are some really serious disadvantages in the use of methylphenidate. Inserting this substance must have its effects on the body. It is well known that there are some severe side effects, especially in the beginning: insomnia, decreased appetite, belly- or headaches, nausea, dizziness, rashes, heart palpitations and a dry mouth. What the long-term effects are, we do not know.

But maybe even more severe is the fact that an emotional imbalance may emerge. Children using ADHD medication can end up feeling anxious and depressed. From the theosophical view this emotional imbalance is easily explained. The medication prevents you from expressing your inner characteristics. This obviously must create tension. According to the doctrine of *Swabhāva* (which is Sanskrit for 'becoming what you are' or 'becoming yourself') everyone will express or show in their outer nature what they are inside, in their inner nature, in their character. So if our way of thinking is vital, if our thoughts behave like fireworks on the 4th of July, our behavior will follow accordingly. However, medication for ADHD prevents this. That is why children behave differently compared to how they would behave if they were true to themselves. They remain themselves of course, but are unable to express that in their vehicles. They miss themselves, for the hyperactivity or dreamy unfocusedness belongs with them. It is as if a strict teacher prevents you from being who you are. I once spoke with a girl who was given medication after she was diagnosed with ADD. Before she started taking her daily pills she was a cheerful girl. Now she complained: 'I don't really like living anymore'.

ADHD – a new phenomenon?

If growing up is the outflow of the several thinking aspects, and if this is accompanied by a certain degree of imbalance, hyperactive behavior in children must have

been observed in earlier times as well. Why then is there such an increase of cases of ADHD in recent decades?

There is a simple answer to that question. Before 1980 this behavior was not diagnosed as such. It was not conceived as a problem. It was accepted as behavior that occurs in children. Boys were running around, there was nothing wrong with that. And girls were often dreamy, which didn't cause any problems either.

The fact that ADHD is considered a problem now, has to do with changes in the structure of society rather than with the growing up of children. If you grow up in the country as a boy and you are allowed and challenged to use your energy, your vitality surplus will hardly cause any problems. Compare this to living in a small apartment in the city centre and not being able to play outside because of traffic. If parents cannot afford to get their children in a sports club either, this energy has to be expressed in another way.

Furthermore, another big change is the huge exposure to all kinds of stimuli. In many homes the television is on day and night. Sometimes there are several televisions playing in different rooms, each showing a different channel. Social media, Internet games and cell phones constantly demand children's attention. How can you focus when a new text message is received every other minute?

We live in a fast world. And children are not the only ones who are busy. Children imitate grown-ups. If adults never take the time to be calm and deliberate this will have its effects as well.

People in our society can hardly focus on one thing. There is no unity in their goals. Opinions are rarely based on principles. One day a politician states something; the next day he states something completely different. Society in its entirety is characterized by lack of focus. Why are we then surprised when children, who are regaining their thinking consciousness, show the same characteristic?

How to cope with ADHD?

ADHD, as said before, is not a psychological disorder but a description of a certain kind of behavior. This behavior may not be a problem to the child itself, but often it is to the environment. Parents are worrying. Teachers are severely obstructed in their work because children are so easily distracted and are hardly able to listen to instructions and explanations. We certainly do not deny these problems. We know from experience that most parents allow medication for their child, not because it would give them some peace – which is sometimes stated – but

because they sincerely think it is best for their child. Which is of course suggested by the medical world.

However, it is much better to teach children to focus. And we cannot start early enough with that. Problems are solved much easier when they have not yet emerged! So we should help children practice concentration and self-discipline from the day they are born. It is possible! And children love it.

In fact the education for a child with ADHD is the same as for any child. All children need orderly surroundings, rest en regularity. Only, for someone with ADHD, this is needed in a higher degree. Children with ADHD really do not need to be treated differently.

When you succeed in controlling your own vitality, you can even benefit from ADHD. A 21-year old boy, who learned to control his sensitivity for stimuli thanks to the strict guidance and a very firm structure offered by his parents, stated that he now only benefits from his ADHD because he can do three things at the same time. Of course he had to develop self-discipline in order to accomplish this.

Theosophia offers a tested method for developing self-discipline: Rāja-Yoga. It would take far too long to elaborate on this right now.⁽⁶⁾ We only want to point out here that by stimulating the higher thinking aspects the child learns to control the lower thinking aspects. That is why attention should be focused on all kinds of activities that appeal to insightful, intuitive, understanding aspects of thinking from a very early age. This can be done through the arts, like music and drama, but also through gardening, getting acquainted with nature serves this purpose. Of course children have to be able to express themselves physically. But instead of emphasizing competition – I am number one! – cooperation should be at the center of attention. Teach children to bear responsibility at an early age. In all this, adults should be the living examples of such a selfless mentality.

But we live in an imperfect world. So we have to make the best of what we've got. But what we have we can use. And we are endowed with more talents and possibilities than we usually suspect. We are not helping children by branding them with an ADHD diagnosis.

If we do not succeed as parents or teachers we can always call to external help. Fortunately, parenting courses and counseling exist. And even though schools have to cut back continuously, there are still educational specialists who can offer the child extra help and advise teachers and parents. Punishing children for their behavior doesn't work. It is

much more effective to reward positive behavior instead of disapproving of negative behavior time and time again. The unique character of every child must always be considered in this process. In searching for the most suitable help, customization is needed, since highly active children can differ enormously from each other as well.

However, it is of utmost importance that we feel responsible for our youth. We could be a bit more compassionate at least. Children are part of our society and they are vital. Some adults tend to overreact when children are loud or overly active. But it is a necessary part of their learning process to control vitality. Children offer us a mirror. And if we dare to look in that mirror we will learn as much from them – even in a hyperactive state – as they learn from us.

References

1. Find a full list of criteria at: <http://www.help4ADHD.org/documents/ADHD> and the DSM 5 Fact Sheet 2.0.pdf.
 2. Laura Batstra, *Hoe voorkom je ADHD? Door de diagnose niet te stellen*, [How do you avoid ADHD? By not diagnose], Uitgeverij Nieuwezijds, Amsterdam 2012, pp. 7 and 63.
 3. See ref. 2, p. 22.
 4. See: <http://www.theosophyforward.com/theosophy/39-articles/theosophy/509-the-heart-doctrine-how-to-escape-from-platos-cave>.
 5. SC, 'Hoe werken medicijnen?' [*How do medications work?*] Article in *Lucifer – de Lichtbrenger* (Dutch), number 1, February 2009, pp. 11-17.
 6. See: *Lucifer - The Messenger of Light*, number 2, November 2015.
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Questions children ask ... and how to answer according to Gottfried de Purucker

Who is God? Where do we go when we dream? Two examples of children's questions Gottfried de Purucker discusses in the first two chapters of *Questions We All Ask*.⁽¹⁾ Such questions reveal intuitive knowledge and they should be granted with an answer just as intuitive. But how to give such an answer? De Purucker provides some valuable suggestions in the chapters 'Some Questions That Children Ask' and 'The Wisdom Of Little Children'.

Key thoughts

- » The often profound questions children ask, are signals of the recommencing expression of the immortal, reincarnating part of man.
- » Children's questions which contain some wisdom, need a wise answer that keeps their wondering attitude alive and gives them a hint towards further investigation.
- » Stimulating the awakening thought process is much more important than a complete answer. By giving an incomplete answer, you give the child an open field to train its inner faculties.

In the first Dutch issue of *Lucifer – de Lichtbrenger* of 2015 we announced the renewed availability of the original works of Katherine Tingley, which can be downloaded from our website for free.⁽²⁾ In this same project of online publication of the original works of great theosophical teachers, the books of Gottfried de Purucker, the fourth leader of The Theosophical Society, become available on the website on a regular basis.⁽³⁾ The most recent addition is the two volume series *Questions We All Ask*, the report of a special series of lectures which De Purucker held in the Temple of Peace in Point Loma from June 1929 until June 1930.

The first two lectures in this series are dedicated to questions children ask. For the editors of *Lucifer* this is sufficient reason to discuss this interesting subject, especially bearing in mind the latest symposium,

which was entirely dedicated to Rāja-Yoga education. Where do children's questions come from? What is the best way to answer them? Based on some questions that children ask in everyday life, De Purucker gives some important suggestions on what educators should and shouldn't answer, based on the principles of Rāja-Yoga.

Inner wisdom shining through

Rāja-Yoga education is based on the fact that all faculties are already present in the child. It aims at leading out once again the character that was built up in previous lives, and to stimulate the expression of latent, inner faculties (for an elaborate explanation of Rāja-Yoga education, see the latest symposium report).⁽⁴⁾

The questions children ask play an important role in this, because they indicate that what is present on an

inner level, is beginning to express itself, is unveiling. It is sometimes stated that a question is an answer in embryo, and this truth can be retraced: there already has to be something present that invokes the question, a vague kind of understanding, a certain recognition. A four year old boy that I heard ask a while ago if the sun shines on Mars as well, has realized in a way that the sun that shines on our Earth might possibly be shining on another planet in our solar system as well.

The typically simple, but sometimes very profound questions flow forth from the lasting, reincarnating part that expresses itself again on the outer plane and which evokes questions in the child about the background of life, the causal side. They are fundamental, intuitive questions that follow from a spiritual hunger for knowledge and truth. Questions to which parents themselves have hardly any answers, because they rise above the more or less automatic, day-to-day way of thinking. Children's minds are still pure and unbiased, not yet enwrapped with facts and alleged truths as is often the case with adults. It is not yet "sophisticated", as De Purucker calls it, and that is exactly why the questions children ask are sometimes so very wise; because they concern the *essence* of things. The answers to such questions are of great importance because on the one hand they can stimulate the process of developing faculties, but on the other hand they can slow it down completely. For instance, an answer like "you will never know that" is very undermining for the investigating mind of the child. De Purucker mentions that the answer of a mother to her daughter was showing a lack of knowledge of child psychology, when during a concert she answered to her question what the music was telling: "nothing, it is just pretty music".

The right answer does not exist

When we as educators are taken by surprise by such a profound question, we usually do not have an answer ready. What can you do in such a case? First, there is no such thing as *the* right answer, because it simply doesn't exist. There are, however, a few basic principles you can apply to keep the momentum of the question and the process of the awakening, thinking mind alive. A good answer in fact works like a guidepost, pointing to Universal Wisdom inwards, where the child can regain its spiritual knowledge and in this way, step-by-step become itself again. But how to provide such an answer?

One of the Rāja-Yoga principles to stimulate the awakening of inner faculties is to never give a complete and

rounded answer. Don't give more than just a few hints in the right direction, to encourage further thinking. Often just a single remark satisfies the child and it will come back if a follow-up question has arisen after some thinking labor. This is how De Purucker answers the question where we come from: "from the past life", that's all. Enough to ponder for a while until the child, through logical reasoning, concludes that there must have been a life before that, and before that again ...

By giving a piece of an answer, a piece of Universal Wisdom every time, you are helping the child to exercise its thinking faculty. It learns to think for itself, a mental exercise that is essential to live his life as an independent thinker later on. By letting the child discover for itself the relations between the outer world it perceives and its underlying causes, it develops intuitive thinking and the sense of being part of a greater whole.

So it is not about painting a perfect picture in exhaustive detail, which by the way never exceeds the limited view the parents themselves have on the subject. It is the process that is the key: guiding the child to find the answer himself. And the reward for the quest is accordingly: who isn't familiar with the joyful moment when the answer suddenly arises after some effort? By enabling children to experience such moments, they gain confidence, enjoy learning and are keen to grow further.

Answer in all simplicity

Besides giving a not rounded answer, it is important to keep an answer as simple as possible. An intuitive, pragmatic question needs a correspondingly clear answer. This is even more difficult than formulating a sophisticated answer, which perhaps would satisfy an adult, but which a child would see through. The challenge for the educator is to confine himself to the essence, without giving all kinds of details. In that way you will allow the child some space to use its imagination and form a picture and fill in the details itself. Imagination is an important aspect of the inner faculties and exercising it will benefit the child greatly later on in life. To overwhelm the child with facts, from the point of view that knowledge has to be put into the child from the outside in, as unfortunately is often the case in current education, will only undermine this process.

Use fairytales or myths

If a question pertains to a complex subject you can present an analogy in the form of a fairytale or myth that hides universal truths, De Purucker suggests. Fairytales appeal

to intuitive thinking and children perfectly recognize the ethics behind it. Avoid using theoretical and technical terminologies; this is irrelevant as long as the principles and universal truths that are contained in the question are addressed. De Purucker demonstrates this with the fairytale Sleeping Beauty, in which the awakening of the princess and everything and everyone around her (the outer world) after the kiss of the prince (spirit) represents the dawn of a new evolutionary cycle of the cosmos after a period of rest.

Some subjects that are discussed in Questions We All Ask

- Mind and Matter: and the Scientific Viewpoint on Atoms and Molecules
- How about this Soul of Man? Is it in the Body or out of it?
- What is Thought?
- What happens to a Man who is killed in an Accident?
- Are Sunspots connected with Historical Events?
- The Meaning of Suffering and Pain
- Who and What are the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion?
- What happens to Man after Death?
- Why do we not remember our Past Lives?

Always provide an answer

As said before it is not always easy to provide an answer, but De Purucker emphasizes that you *must* provide an answer however, a child *must* be educated. To say as an educator that you don't know, without any effort to find the answer, sends a message that not knowing is fine and that there is no reason for further investigation and further development. De Purucker clearly opposes the view that the process of development takes place spontaneously in children. He's very clear on this subject and warns that a lack of education, a living example and intellectual and moral exercise will result in a spoiled attitude in which one believes that nothing has to be learned and one is "a perfect creation", "a little tin god on wheels" as he playfully calls it.

In short, provide an answer to every question, simple and brief. And if you are not sure about your answer, be open about it. By sincerely admitting this you will send another valuable message, one of being open and modest and that it is nothing to be ashamed of to admit that your current knowledge about a subject is not yet perfect. In the rare case you really don't know what to answer you can always

fall back on universal truths, De Purucker adds, in the form of a fairytale or mythological story, like in the case of difficult or complex subjects.

Also, you can always return the question: What do you think? As explained earlier a question is an answer in embryo, there is something in the child that evokes the question. Let the child find an answer itself and then check whether it needs adjustment. An example given in *Questions We All Ask* is a boy's question why we cannot remember our past lives. When the teacher asked him what he thought the answer was, he said: "We wouldn't know which mother to love." An answer an adult would never come up with, but which shows instinctive wisdom from the heart. More than the technical details the answer of an adult might have contained, the ethical conclusion of the child itself, which shows a loving dedication to the mother, speaks for itself.

In the conclusion of his two lectures on this subject De Purucker infers that questions children ask are extremely educational, and that perhaps we learn more from children than they do from us!

More questions ... and answers

If you want to read the other questions De Purucker discusses in the first two chapters of the series, or if you are interested in the answers to questions on other subjects (of which the list on this page is a selection), then you can find *Questions We All Ask* on our website http://www.stichtingisis.org/boeken/online_literatuur.

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1. G. de Purucker, *Questions We All Ask*. 2 volumes, Theosophical University Press, Point Loma, California 1929-1930. See: http://www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature/De_Purucker.
 2. See: <http://www.blavatskyhouse.org/onlineliterature/Tingley>.
 3. See ref. 1.
 4. For more information: *Lucifer, the Light-bringer*, Symposium issue 2015 'Raja-Yoga education of the Reincarnating Child'.
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Questions & Answers

Questions about evolution

What is the ultimate goal of evolution? And how often do you reincarnate before that goal is reached?

Answer

Every incarnation offers us the opportunity to develop more of the latent faculties in our consciousness. Evolution is the process of activating our inherent capabilities, e.g. abilities that we already carry as a seed within us. Our spiritual core is a direct child or emanation of the One Cosmic Life, and we therefore carry all Cosmic powers and forces within us. And with “all” we even mean *boundless*.

In the present phase, we have reached the point of a growing, evolving, thinking, self-conscious being, so the stage of *human* evolution. This stage we are now completing, often by trial and error. It requires the awakening of all our higher thinking aspects: our understanding of the interconnectedness of all life and the role we play in it ... and living our lives according to these insights.

A human who is so far developed that he has activated all his human capabilities to virtually the highest degree of perfection, and controls them and knows how to use them coordinately, is called a “Buddha” or “Christ” or “enlightened man. He has almost finished his role as a human being. That indeed is our goal. But at the same time our human evolution is nothing but a preparation for the next school of evolution that awaits us. There we will enter a much grander and nobler

field of experience, in which we may learn to bring out our *divine* powers. So there is, theosophically speaking, no absolute goal, no “finish”, certainly not. There is always a grander and nobler phase ahead of us, because there is no limit to the expansion of consciousness. After each so-called “diploma” on the cosmic path of evolution, there is a form of higher education! Where we will use our acquired wisdom and capabilities for a higher purpose. Returning to the question how many incarnations it will take before we have become a perfect man: that fully depends on us. After all, no one is forcing us to exchange our current, limited vision for a more universal one, and act each day with a little more wisdom. Therefore, the entire process of inner growth can be long or short, take many or few incarnations, depending on the choices we daily make. We are our own spiritual engine or our own obstacle.

Question

What does enlightenment mean?

Answer

Enlightenment is the awakening of the latent spiritual light in our consciousness; in other words, the awakening of an unveiled vision of truth.

The darkness of the illusions caused by personal thinking is dispelled by the light of a greater truth. In its fullest form, enlightenment is reaching Buddhahood: perfect vision, perfect compassion, as perfect as is humanly possible.

But even now we can, if our intention is selfless, think enlightened thoughts. We recognize them, because they are always focused on the welfare of a larger whole, and therefore not on our own fortune. Such enlightened thoughts give us understanding of the purpose of life, and of the causes of the problems in the lives of our fellow humans and



The Dinogorgon was one of the many life forms that disappeared during a great mass extinction event separating the two geological periods Permian and Triassic. The forms disappeared, but the animal souls animating these forms either progressed to more developed forms, or sank in a temporary latent condition. In all cases, they did not disappear, as consciousness is immortal in its core.

ourselves, so that we can tackle those causes by the root. In this way, we can avoid a lot of suffering. These thoughts illuminate our path; they bring vision and peace and harmony ... within us and within our fellow humans.

Question

About animals and evolution: do animals go extinct? What does that mean for their evolution?

Answer

First of all, not all animal species are currently going extinct. Some species do, while others prosper. The last ones are usually the species that learned to live in a human environment, such as seagulls, pigeons and jackdaws in our European cities.

Nevertheless, we see that humans by their greed, combined with their technical ability, destroy vast areas of nature. In many places forests are converted into plantations; or worse, they are turned into arid regions. As a result, many of the local animals and plants are endangered.

Animals and plants are, just like humans, integral parts of our living Planet. They are as indispensable as humanity is. If humans, with their short-term pursuit of profit, take away their habitat, they cannot play their role in the great Earthly network.

We, the originators of this problem, will sooner or later face the consequences of the disharmony we have produced. After all, every act we perform will evoke a corresponding effect, which we will have to face (karma). In fact, we are reaping the consequences already: worldwide it is becoming increasingly difficult to get good drinking water; in some cities people pay a lot of money for it. Furthermore, the area of fertile agricultural land is decreasing, fish populations become depleted, and so on.



The Egyptian goose prospers well in urban environments. Great Britain, the Netherlands, France and Germany have self-sustaining populations which are mostly derived from escaped birds.

Suppose a species becomes extinct, what does that mean for the beings who ensouled these bodies? This depends on the cause of their extinction. When we humans cause or accelerate their extinction, we take away the opportunity for a group of animal consciousnesses to incarnate in the most appropriate body. So we hinder their inner growth. The “school” – a life form is nothing but a temporary school for a certain group of beings – closes too early, and the students lose the opportunity to enter the new school: they have not yet been taught everything in order to proceed, and are not yet ready for the next step. This leads to problems in their further evolution.

But animal forms can also become extinct because the entire planet Earth is entering a new stage of evolution. Old bodies will gradually be replaced by new ones with more potential for the next step in the evolution of the animal kingdom. There have been several worldwide extinction and renewal waves in the past: paleontologists know there were certainly five of them.

On a slightly smaller scale species can also become extinct when their group specializes: we know for example that long ago horses had shorter legs and that whales were once terrestrial animals. What are the consequences of extinction? For one group of animals it is

simply the transition from one school to a higher one. They were ready for the next stage. Another group – which was previously strongly lagging behind in their inner growth – cannot keep up with the general progress and falls asleep. They don’t find the circumstances in which they can express themselves within our Planet. Later, in another great cycle of our Planet, they will get the opportunity to continue their evolution.

Question

What happened with the Aztec culture?

Answer

Human cultures are schools for learning some lessons of life. Every major human culture has its juvenile stage, its stage of greatest strength and development, after which it fades away. The egos who built this culture are then ready for another school, another culture. We always reincarnate in the culture which provides us with the most appropriate evolutionary lessons at that time. And that changes continually!

Those who have been incarnated in the Aztec society, will in their next life continue their inner journey in another culture. Usually, this will be a culture that is similar in character to the ancient Aztec culture. After all, people develop their minds slowly. They change their habits gradually.

For all we know now, the Aztec culture in general was not a spiritual culture. The emphasis was on conquering a large territory, thereby enslaving many nations – which might have been more spiritual. The ancient mystical center Teotihuacan was for the Aztecs as much a mystery as it is for today’s researchers. Of course, the Aztec culture had some well developed talents. Just look at their agriculture, which they partly carried on rafts in their great lakes.

Video recordings

I.S.I.S. Symposium 2017

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May 20, 2017

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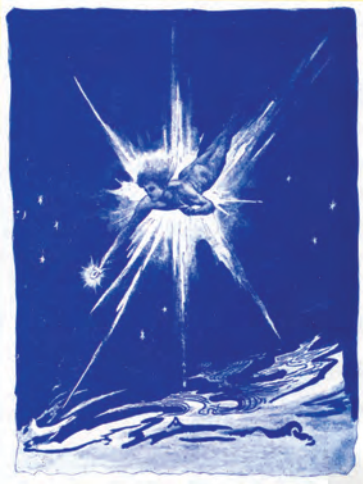
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2. By reason of this unity: brotherhood as a fact in nature.
3. Respect for everyone's free will (when applied from this idea of universal brotherhood).
4. Respect for everyone's freedom to build up their own view of life.
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(Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the first issue of *Lucifer*, September 1887)