

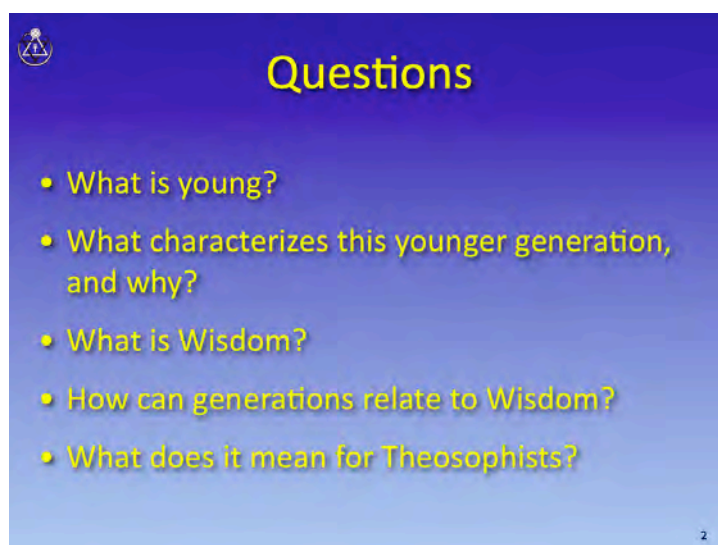
Abstract:

*Our modern world sometimes seems full of (young) 'wise guys', but empty of truth. How can the Age-old Wisdom appeal to current and future generations to come? Building on theosophical ideas such as boundlessness, reincarnation and the composition of man we can put the younger generation in perspective and find answers.*

For many theosophical organizations attracting 'young' Theosophists is a concern. Naturally, because young people can profit the most: learning about Theosophy at a young age means that you will have a universal philosophy of life that provides meaning, answers to all life's riddles and courage and hope for the rest of your life. And of course, much and much more young people could still learn about Theosophy.

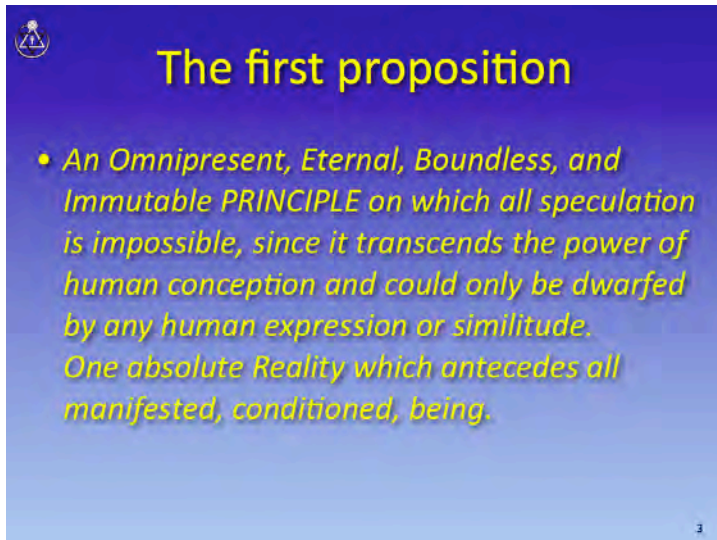
But one could ask the question what is 'young' versus 'old'? Do generations differ, does a young generation exist and if so, what aspects could characterize it? And could Theosophy - Divine and Universal Wisdom - possibly be more popular to certain generations or not?

These are the key questions to answer:



However, before we can answer the question 'what is young?', we first have to answer the question 'what is man'? And before answering that question, we will summarize some of the fundamental thoughts that have also been presented in previous lectures.

To start with, the first of the three fundamental propositions that form the basis of Theosophy:

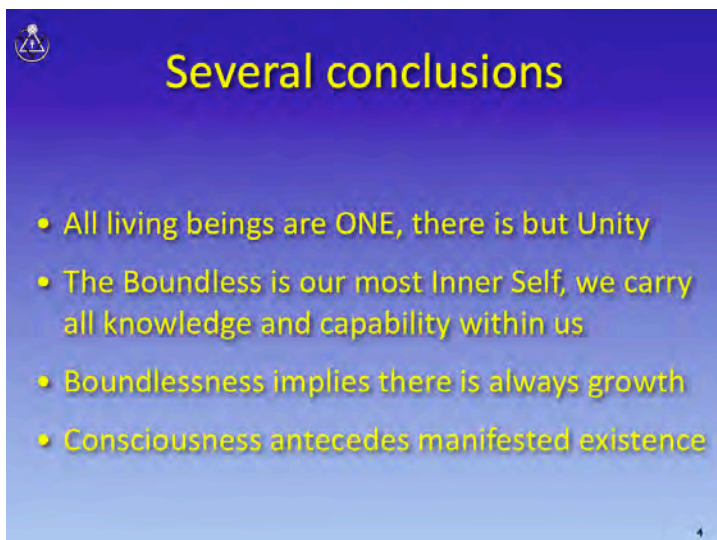


The slide features a blue gradient background with a small circular logo in the top left corner. The title 'The first proposition' is written in yellow. The main text is in white and italicized, describing an omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle that transcends human conception. A small number '3' is in the bottom right corner.

### The first proposition

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

From now on we will refer to it as 'the Boundless'.



The slide features a blue gradient background with a small circular logo in the top left corner. The title 'Several conclusions' is written in yellow. The main text is in white and italicized, listing four conclusions drawn from the first proposition. A small number '4' is in the bottom right corner.

### Several conclusions

- *All living beings are ONE, there is but Unity*
- *The Boundless is our most Inner Self, we carry all knowledge and capability within us*
- *Boundlessness implies there is always growth*
- *Consciousness antecedes manifested existence*

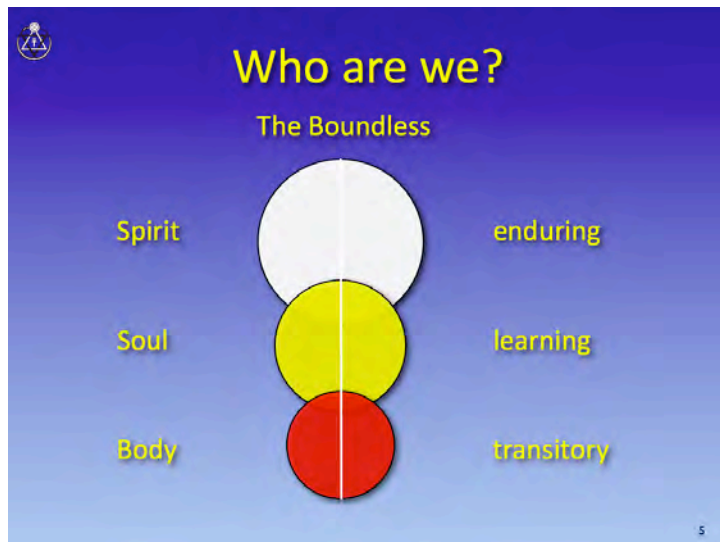
There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the first proposition. These conclusions can bring us a step further in answering our key questions:

The boundless does not exclude anything, so all living beings are ONE, there is but Unity. So in the Heart of the Heart of our being, we are the Boundless. Like Mrs. Plocki said before, by knowing your Self it is possible to gain knowledge about our Universe, the Cosmos, the Boundless All. Because our most Inner Self *is* the Boundless. That means we carry all knowledge within ourselves and have endless capability, but yet partly developed.

Boundlessness implies there is no beginning and no end, which means there is always growth possible.

It also means that there is a driving force behind every manifested being, a force we can call Consciousness.

Now we will show what this means for ourselves, trying to answer the question 'Who are we?':

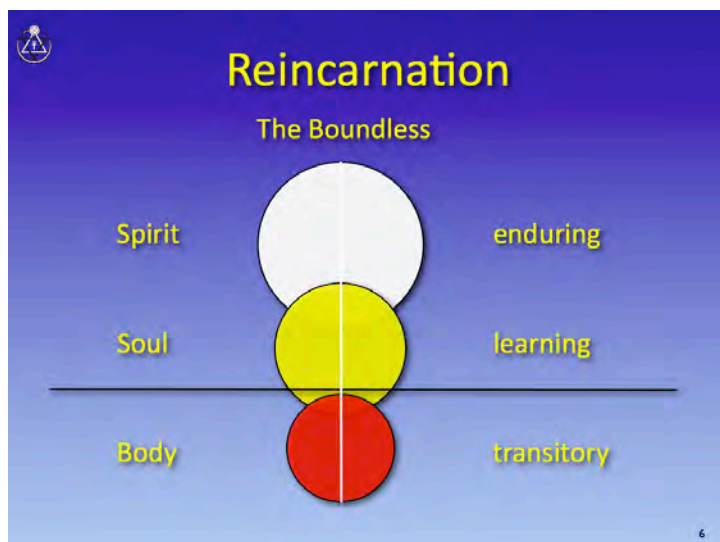


In this scheme the several components of man are roughly sketched.

So man is a composite being, a stream of consciousness, indicated by the white line that stretches from the boundless to the most material of our being, our outer body.

We tend to think about everything with a certain starting point and a certain final fixed destination, not in the last place about human life. However beginning and end, day and night or birth and death are opposites of the same thing, there are always transitions between them. And these transitions take place in the boundless, sometimes escaping the reach of our senses. This is because consciousness is composed of multiple parts, from the boundless to the manifested.

This brings us to another main starting point we will use: the doctrine of reincarnation.



Man can be divided in three parts. Our body, a transitory part, our soul, a learning part, and our spirit, an enduring part, of which the essence is immortal.

The driving force behind these parts is Consciousness. Consciousness endures, while matter is transient.

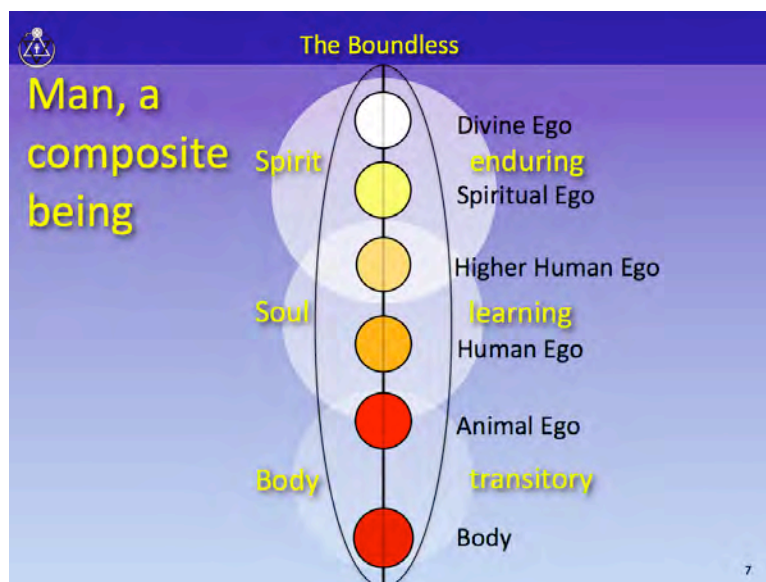
The black line indicates the division made at the process of death. When we die our spirit and our soul are separated from our body. The learning part, the inner man, is entering a period of rest of which H.P. Blavatsky said in her time that it lasted for an average period of 3000 years. After the period of rest, in which the lessons of the past life are learned, the spiritual conclusions are drawn, our learning part returns to build a new vehicle, a new body to learn new lessons in a next life.

With this short introduction of the composition of man and the doctrine of reincarnation, we can now answer the question 'What is young?'

We can define 'young' as follows: to be reincarnated later than the other.

So young does not indicate anything about the consciousness that is developed. There were people much older than Gautama the Buddha in his time, but who did not have the Wisdom he had already developed.

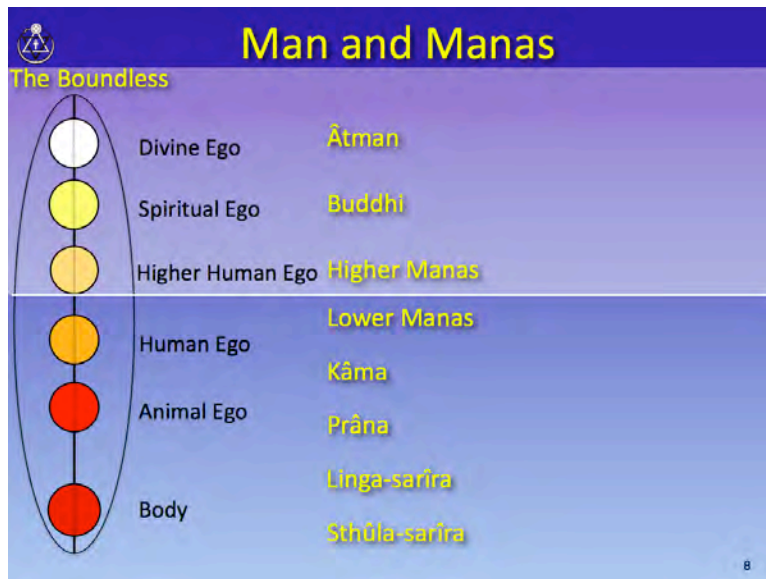
However, reincarnation is not completed at birth. A newborn baby does not show the developed consciousness of the man in his previous life yet. To explain how the process of reincarnation continues after birth, we have to look into the composition of man in a little more detail.



We again see the stream of consciousness, the line that stretches from the boundless to our most material outer body. We also see the three parts we sketched before. The transitory body, the learning soul and the enduring spirit.

Within this constitution we can identify several ego's: the Divine Ego, the Spiritual Ego, the Higher Human Ego, the Human Ego, the Animal Ego and finally the outer body.

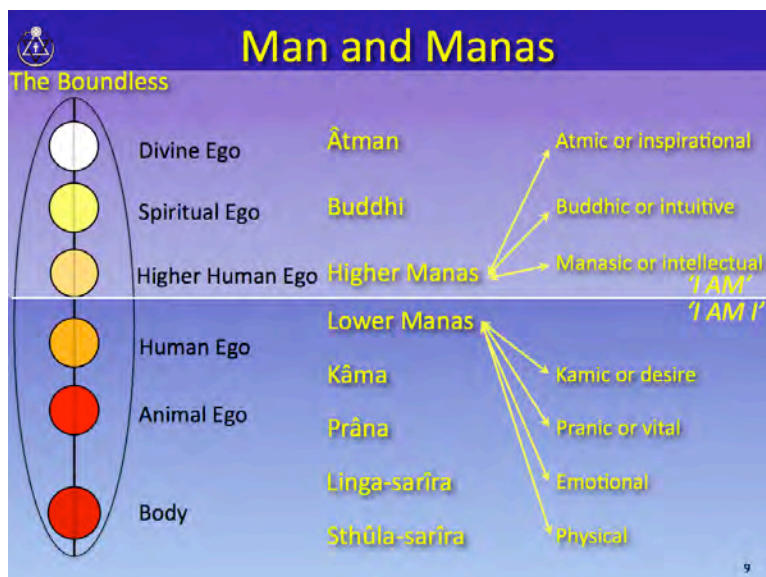
We, as human beings, identify with the Human Ego. The consciousness we have developed is concentrated in the learning part. In the next slide we will show the characteristics of our Human Ego.



There are seven principles. Ātman is the divine principle, Buddhi the principle of intuition; intuition not in the sense of a vague feeling but of direct and clear understanding, that what we can also call insight. Manas is the principle of thinking. Kāma is the principle of desire and Prāna the principle of vitality, the urge to act. The Linga-sarīra is the model-body and the Sthūla-sarīra the outer body.

As indicated before we identify with the Human Ego. We are developing the consciousness of thinking or Manas. The word 'Man' also comes from the Sanskrit word 'Manas', meaning 'thinking'. Thinking is the aspect developing in the Human Ego and completely developed by the Higher Human Ego.

We can divide Manas into the Lower Manas and the Higher Manas.



Each of the aspects of Manas or thinking corresponds with one of the seven principles.

The Higher Manas is directed to the higher principles:

1. the atmic or inspirational thinking: experiences of unity
2. the buddhic or intuitive thinking: thoughts of insight, visions and ideals,

3. manasic or intellectual thinking: the logical '2+2 equals 4' type of thinking.

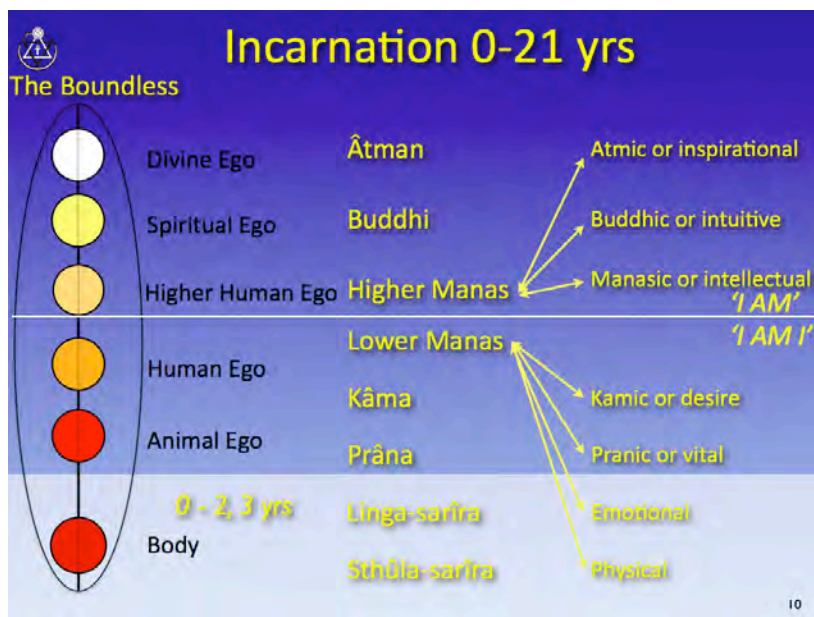
The Lower manas is directed to the lower principles:

4. kamic thinking: thoughts of desire
5. pranic or vital thinking: the 'acting just to act'
6. the emotional thinking: thoughts about anger, grief, ecstasy, etc. and last,
7. the physical thinking: thoughts about being hungry, thirsty, tired etc.

Consequently, there are two main moral directions of our thinking: unselfish, above personal, identifying with the whole, thinking 'I am' as in 'I am the company I work for, the society I live in', until even: 'I am the boundless'.

Secondly, the path that leads to the transitory, the illusory, the idea of our personal ego as the most important, surviving and enriching itself separate from the whole, the self in us that thinks 'I am I': I want that job, I am angry, I am tired, etc.

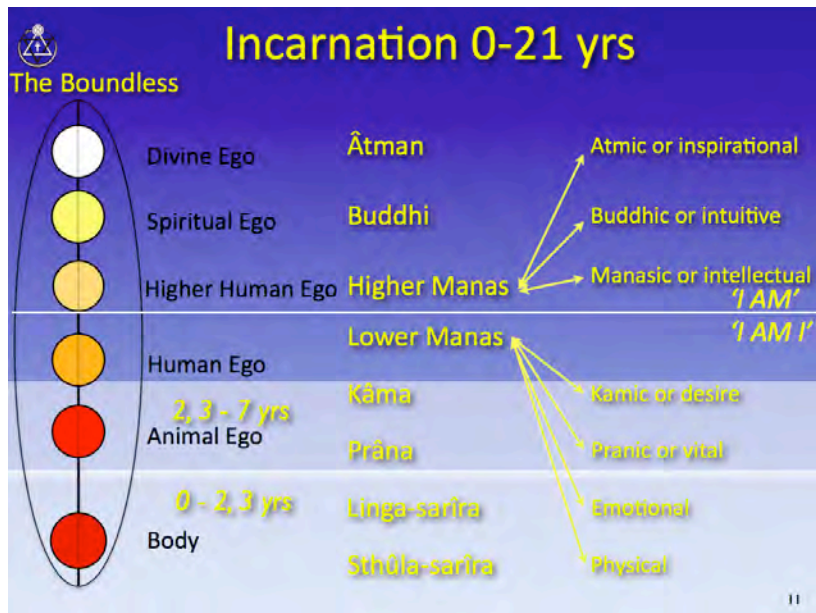
As said before, reincarnation is not completed at birth. Using the seven principles we can show how the process of incarnation continues the first average of 21 years after birth.<sup>1</sup>



The first 2 to 3 years (these are all averages and this can change per person) the body is built up again and the emotional consciousness becomes active.

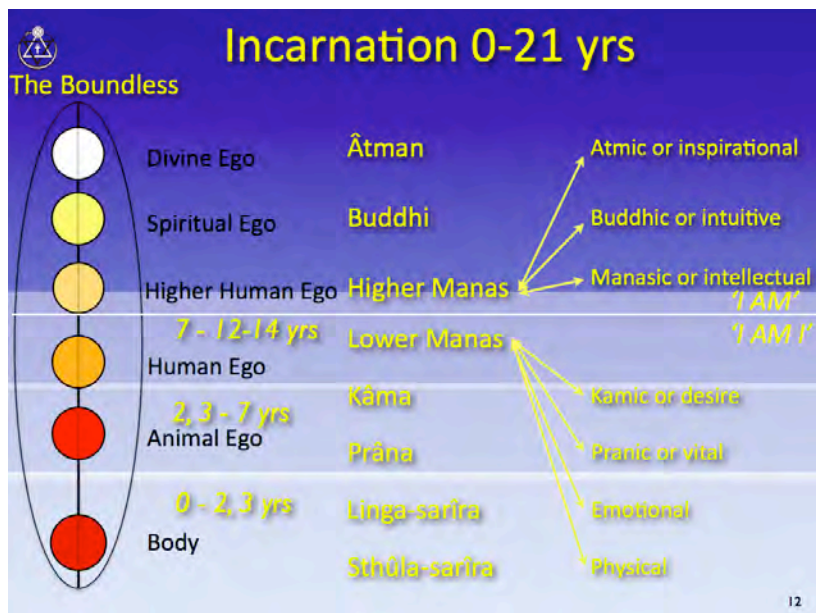
We know a small baby mostly eats and sleeps. Slowly, as it gets older, all the senses awaken. Also young children are already very sensitive for emotions.

<sup>1</sup> Maria Peeters – Endang Sutjiati, 'Opvoeden in de levensfasen tot 21 jaar' in *Lucifer* nr.4-5, september 2003, Symposiumreeks nr. 5, p. 12-17

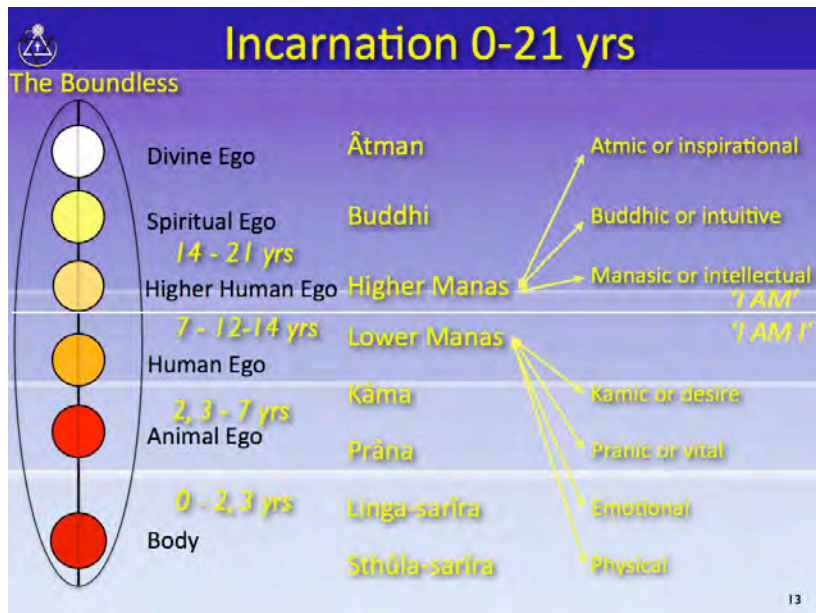


We can see that the prāna is developed when children become 2, 3, 4 years old. Suddenly, they have to touch everything, are moving around everywhere and trying to move everything. This is the phase when vitality is developed, the urge to act.

Later the child gets its own will, it discovers the 'me, myself and I', in the sense of 'I want cookies', 'I want this', 'I want that'. The child develops Kāma and gets desires.



From an average of 7 yrs old, the Manas, the ability to think slowly becomes active. The thinking is first combined with the ability to desire. The child becomes able to think independently, see itself and also to constrain itself.



In the last period of incarnation the Human Ego will get to function and think completely independent. Also its idealism and spiritual willpower will further incarnate. The buddhic and atmic consciousness becomes active, it learns to think thoughts directed at the higher principles, about compassion, harmony and peace.

Next, the lower, personal and self-directed urges also become stronger. At the one side the longing to create a better world, at the other side feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and isolation. We will probably recognize this as the period of puberty.

Now we see that the complete incarnation takes an average 21 years from birth. In this period the incarnating soul can slowly activate the consciousness as far as it has been developed in the previous lives. This explains the origin of the word 'education'. This comes from the Latin ex-ducere that means escorting, leading out.

True education is the guiding out of all aspects of the human consciousness that are already present within the reincarnating ego, from the most outer to the most inner principles, as harmoniously as possible.

This is why Socrates says, in the dialogue Meno of Plato: to learn is to recollect.<sup>2</sup>

So we see that 'young', meaning younger than around 21 years old, is different from 'young' adults. Let us focus further on the current generation of 'young' adults.

Since the 1960s, psychological studies have been carried out among young adults, which studies are still continued until present day. This means it can show changes and trends in youth culture of the past 50 years. The studies characterizes current youth culture, a generation born in the 70s, 80s and 90s of the last century and which is also named: 'Generation Me'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Plato *Menon*, 81 D

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.generationme.org/>



## 'Generation Me'

- Born in the 70s, 80s and 90s of the last century
- Narcissistic 'wise guys'
- Low score on empathy
- 'Restless, reasonless, shapeless, unattached'

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Me is standing for Millennium Edition and not coincidentally also standing for 'me', as in 'I, myself'.

I read an interview with a young girl, aged 19, as an example of a Millennium Edition child:

She describes herself as 'good-looking, self-assured and funny' and adds: "Boys are watching me pass the street and I am among the best at school. If I could choose, I would like myself as a friend."<sup>4</sup>

Psychologists call this generation narcissistic and see them as 'wise guys': self-centered, thinking they are the best, but also 'as vulnerable as a school of tropical fish in the North Sea'. They cannot stand criticism.<sup>5,6</sup>

The University of Michigan has analyzed the measure of empathy amongst students over the past thirty years. Their study, presented in May 2010, showed that the current generation of students scores 40% lower on empathy than students of the same age did 20 or 30 years ago.<sup>7,8</sup>

According to Rita Kohnstamm, a known Dutch pedagogue and Adviser on Education, the current generation is characterized as being "restless, reasonless, shapeless and unattached".<sup>9</sup>

The enormous freedom of choice they have in this age of abundance makes them restless. There is an overestimation of the importance of emotions over reason, which makes them reasonless. They did not learn to constrain themselves and hardly have had any resistance in their youth and upbringing making them shapeless. And they suffer

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.klasse.be/leraren/archief.php?id=13275>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.intermediar.nl/artikel/archief/59063/jan-derksen-nederland-is-koploper-in-narcisme.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://classact.prblogs.org/2007/06/01/10-characteristics-of-generation-me/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://trendport.nl/index.php?itemId=734&maintagId=1&zoekMaintagId=&TITEL=Narcistische%20dan%20oort>

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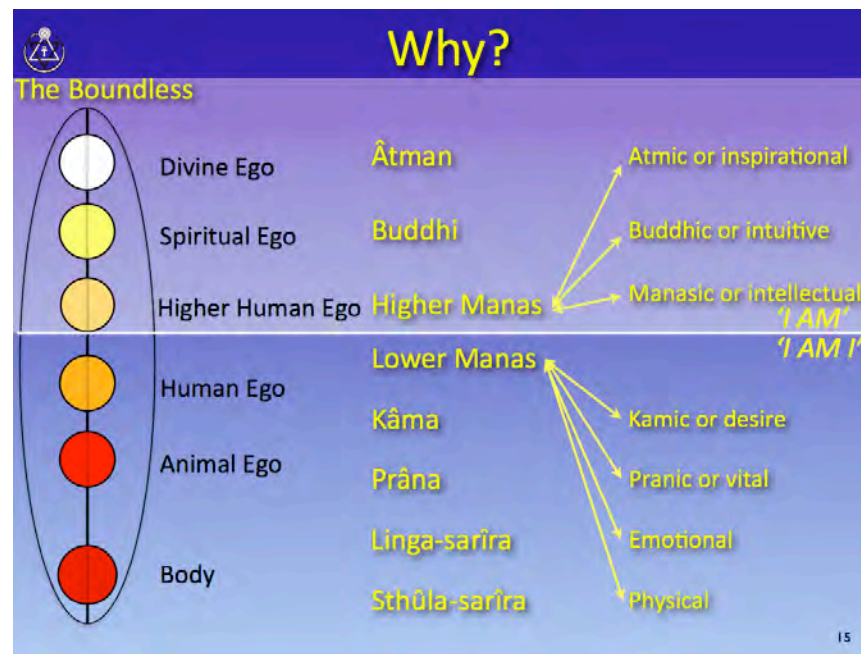
[http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/program\\_2010/search/viewProgram.cfm?Abstract\\_ID=17975&AbType=&AbAuthor=&Subject\\_ID=&Day\\_ID=all&keyword=konrath](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/program_2010/search/viewProgram.cfm?Abstract_ID=17975&AbType=&AbAuthor=&Subject_ID=&Day_ID=all&keyword=konrath)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.kohnstamm.info/ritakohnstamm/meer/meer\\_lezingen\\_maalstroom.htm](http://www.kohnstamm.info/ritakohnstamm/meer/meer_lezingen_maalstroom.htm)

from fear of commitment. They have many relations, many contacts but all of a transitory character. They are very unattached.

But there is still hope. According to Kohnstamm the solution must be found in the fact that young people naturally search for 'authenticity', a moral compass.

Using the scheme with the aspects of thinking, it is easy to recognize the path of thinking which in general seems to be leading for this so-called 'Generation Me'.



It tends to the path of 'I am I', with the thinking directed to the lower aspects, self-centeredness, desires, emotions.

Now the question is, why is this generation not attracted to the path that leads to Unity, Compassion, the Self in us that thinks 'I am', that knows it is inextricably bound to others, that identifies with the whole, the Boundless, while it is in the nature of our inner being?

It can mean two things:

1. Either, young people do not focus on their innate higher aspects, because these aspects are hardly addressed in their upbringing, education or environment.
2. Or, secondly, the way they are brought in contact with their higher aspects is distorted, this we will cover when answering the question 'What is Wisdom?'

Regarding the first point, the focus on higher principles, or rather lack of, in the direct environment of young people, we can say our current timeframe in general does not show much emphasis on buddhic or atmic characteristics. I think if we look around us, we can recognize that people in general are driven mainly by kâma-manasic thinking, they are driven by desire, and use their intellectual power to get the specific results they desire, be it higher profits, more power or more possession.

We can also recognize this in our education system. We can see that in general, our current education emphasizes the intellect, the Manas. We mostly learn things as they are, plain knowledge and facts: the capital of The Netherlands is Amsterdam, Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492, 2 times 7 equals 14, etcetera. We do

not so much learn why things are as they are, although 'why' has been our most frequent question since we added this word to our vocabulary, at the age of 4 or so.

Also typical for the manasic focus of our current education system is the obsession with measuring. Now there is nothing wrong with measuring itself of course, but there are different ways to use what is measured. For instance the use of standardized tests, as IQ tests, the CITO test or the SAT. These still play a major role in destining the futures of many pupils and students. However, in these kind of tests mainly intellectual capacity is measured and the ability to calculate, read and write. They leave out a lot of important human abilities, such as creativity, social skills or empathy. Also the resulting scores are often seen as fixed, destining the pupils or students.

The original founder of the IQ-test, the French psychologist Alfred Binet, had designed the Binet-Simon intelligence scale in order to identify students who needed special help in coping with the school curriculum. The test was not created to measure intelligence, but the lack of it. He did not believe himself that IQ test scales qualified to measure intelligence. Nor did he believe that intelligence was a measurable fixed entity. He strongly opposed against the thought that it could not be increased over time.<sup>10</sup>

The funny thing is that the Sanskrit word for 'that what can be measured' is 'Maya', also meaning 'illusion'. That means that fixed measures are illusory. There is always change taking place. To measure is a verb, and in a world of constant change it is necessary to measure repeatedly over time to see the change. The process of calibrating, which Herman C. Vermeulen used as an example in his lecture, is repeated measuring. By measuring the changes over time in our global climate we can discover forces influencing this, like the sunspot cycle. So measuring can help us find the forces driving the eternal change.

Next, our current education hardly has attention for virtue, brotherhood or compassion. Luckily, there is recent attention for so-called '21st Century Skills'. The Kennisnet Foundation, a Dutch organization advising the Dutch education system on the use of new technologies in education, just published research in this field and it appears buddhic characteristics appear in all the models for these 21st century skills. They name cooperation, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving ability.<sup>11</sup>

So on one side there is a preoccupation in current education and society with intellectual thinking as the basis for success. And on the other side, there is a lack of buddhic and atmic characteristics, universal ideals and insights, thoughts of unity and compassion. This is a factor influencing that young people are not stimulated to develop their higher principles.

But, when young people are brought in contact with their higher aspects, with the Age-old Wisdom, what is the way to do this? Therefore we first need to define 'Wisdom'.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligence\\_quotient](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligence_quotient)

<sup>11</sup> <http://onderzoek.kennisnet.nl/onderzoeken/overig/21stcenturyskills>



Now Wisdom can be defined as knowing of Truth.

But, according to the first fundamental proposition, the Absolute Truth is boundless and out of reach of human understanding: it 'transcends the power of human conception', 'can only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude' and 'is beyond the range and reach of thought'.

So what this first fundamental proposition does, and Johanna Vermeulen also explained this in her lecture about the fundamental propositions, is to create space. It creates for us an 'open mind' and frees us from all dogma, because no absolutes exist in this manifested world. All our truth is relative.

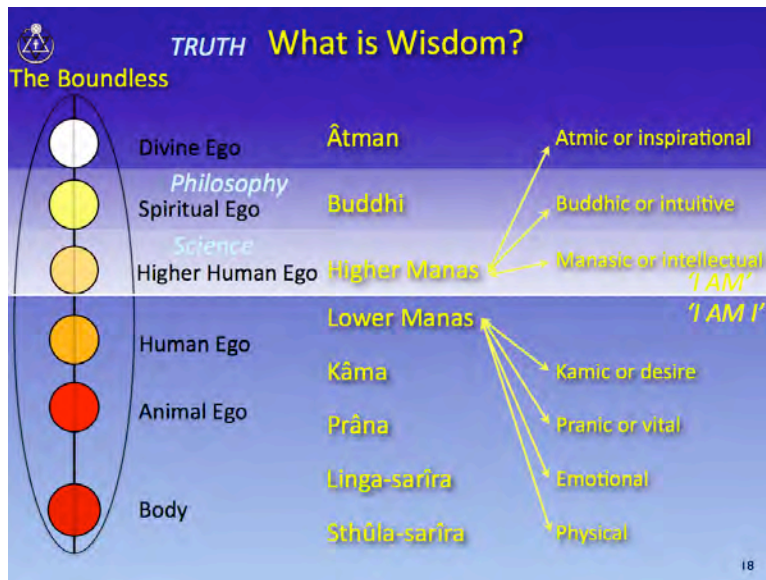
Like H.P. Blavatsky said 'I have come to break the molds of mind'.

H.P. Blavatsky recovered the Age-old Wisdom to the world in an age of dogma under the name of Theosophy with the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875.

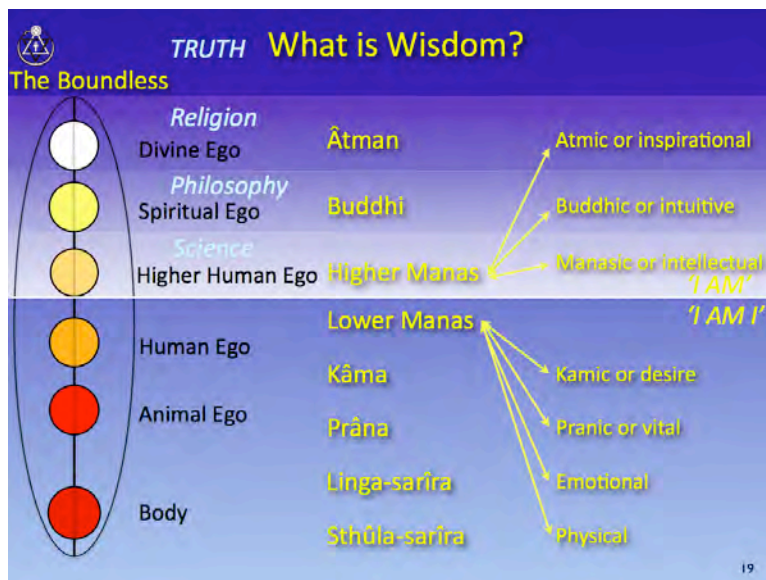
Theosophy, coming from the Greek Theos-Sophia, standing for Divine Wisdom, is a synthesis of Religion, Philosophy and Science, the three ways to investigate Truth:



Science - searching for the answer to 'how things are as they are', identifying and categorizing facts, taking place on the manasic level.

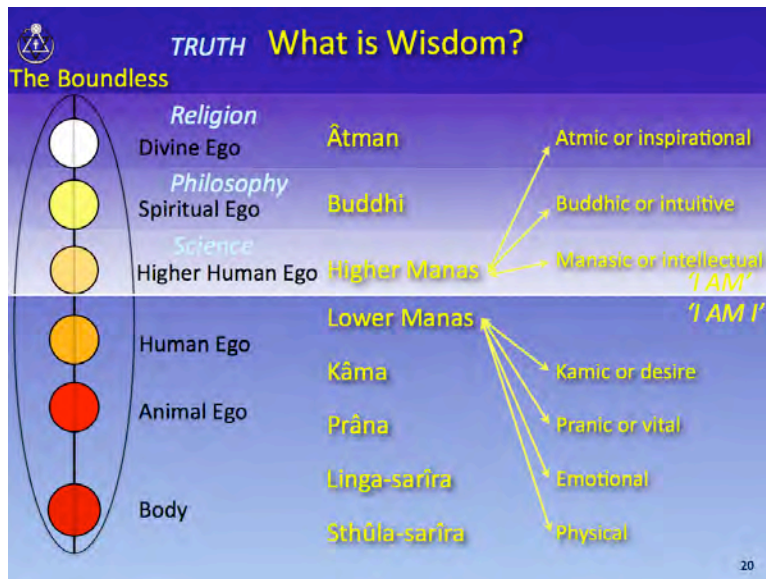


Philosophy - searching for the answer to 'why things are as they are', synthesizing facts of different disciplines into conceptual frameworks, theories and laws taking place on our buddhic level



And third, Religion - searching for the answer to 'what is the meaning behind being', unifying things in the highest sense, taking place on the atmic level of our being.

But these three ways all investigate Truth. And therefore the motto of the Theosophical Society is "There is no religion higher than Truth".



Now we named the way young people are brought in contact with Wisdom as another possible reason that this generation is not so much attracted to the path of Compassion.

We learned that young adults in their puberty could suffer from uncertainty. This makes them sensitive for false certainties. They are dupable, tend to quickly believe people telling them convincingly 'this is the way it is, has always been and always will be'. But at the same time their independent critical thinking is developing and they can discover the falseness of certainties they have lived with maybe for years. This can lead to distrust.

This is one of the reasons young adults sometimes want to do everything in a different way. It is the dogmas one rebels at. Many people never forget the moment they have released themselves from a false certainty or a dogma. Especially, degenerated religious dogmas as man's inborn sinfulness, leaving us only to the mercy of a personal god. It can be such relief for people to free themselves from such dogmas. But there is a chance people lose total interest in the degenerated religion, including the remnants of wisdom. Sometimes they even lose interest in everything religious.

Now popularized scientific theories also lead to new dogmas. Neodarwinistic thought telling us we are not more than a product of chance, a haphazard combination of atoms. This can also lead to egocentric and hedonistic thought: "we are just here for surviving this struggle of life, and we might get as much out of it as possible".

The reaction of young people to these dogmas can also lead to feelings of despair. "If everyone behaves like this, I cannot change the world, I might as well go along." Before they know, young people are just following the herd, behaving like everybody else and losing their ideals.

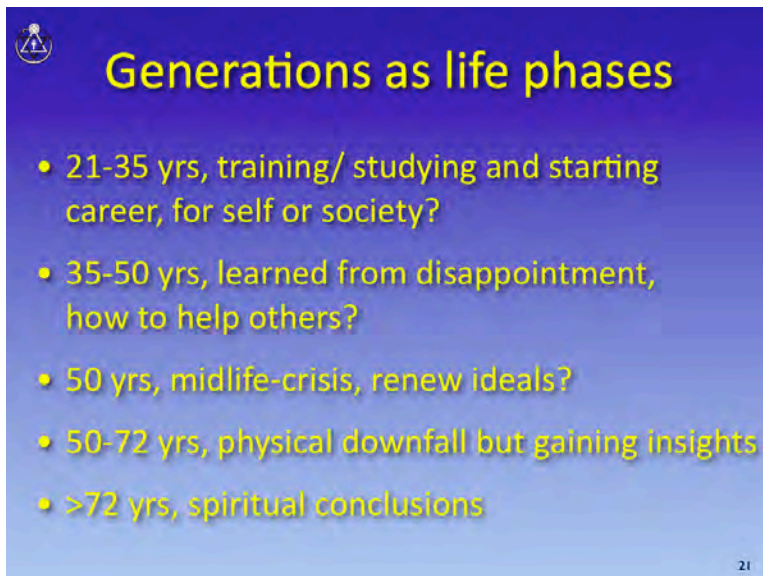
So the younger generation rather needs people that show how little we know, people that make them wonder, that inspire them, making them curious about how much there still is to discover. People that can also identify with their life, using present-day examples, examples they can use in the practice of their daily life. This is why young people in general are attracted by other young people, but this is not required as long as someone listens, tries to understand and can answer in a way that is recognizable for the questioner, of whatever age.

Young people like to be taken serious. They learn quickly when they get responsibility, so they can discover their talents in the practice of life. In Point Loma, children of 3 or 4 years old were already helping with small tasks, like watering plants. They know they are contributing from the start. Of course, it's an evolutionary process with small steps at a time. You do not say to your baby of one year old: 'stand up and walk!'. You need to be patient and make baby steps. Similarly, it is not advisable to have newcomers reading the stanzas as an introduction to Theosophy.

Now is this current so-called 'Generation Me' different from any other younger generation? Has there not always been criticism from an older generation towards a younger generation? There is a quote from ancient Greece, attributed by some to Socrates, saying: "Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; (...) they contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers." <sup>12</sup>

Also the younger generation always tries to differentiate itself from the older generation, and not only because of bad motives. It's also the starting idealism, the wanting of a better world, which makes adolescents are sometimes rebelling against their parents.

Seeing the younger generation in general compared to different life phases in an incarnation can tell us more.



**Generations as life phases**

- 21-35 yrs, training/ studying and starting career, for self or society?
- 35-50 yrs, learned from disappointment, how to help others?
- 50 yrs, midlife-crisis, renew ideals?
- 50-72 yrs, physical downfall but gaining insights
- >72 yrs, spiritual conclusions

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In general, we can identify several phases in life. Every phase has its own characteristics. Also every phase we can be focused on one of the two moral directions: towards our personal self interest and separateness or towards the interest of a larger whole and unity.

From 21 to 35 years old we spend most of our time training and studying before and during the start of our career. The question is do we choose our profession for our own sake, to make as much money as we can or do we look for a job to contribute to society?

From 35 to 50 years old we have already experienced some disappointments compared to the ideals and ambitions we have had when at a younger age. The lessons we learned

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<sup>12</sup> <http://cgi.stanford.edu/group/wais/cgi-bin/?p=39329>

from these experiences can help us in our own career, but they can also be of a major benefit for a younger generation. We can choose our focus again.

Around the age of 50 most people experience what is called the 'midlife-crisis'. We look back at the ideals we have had when we were young and we are finding new energy to focus on our ideals. For some this means buying the motorcycle they have always desired to possess, for others it means becoming aware of hidden talents and having the courage to exploit them for the sake of others.

Age 50 to 72 can be a period of physical downfall, but also, and often at the same time, a period of gaining insight from all past experience. Where do we direct our focus?

Above 72 years old we enter a phase when we will draw the spiritual conclusions looking back at our life.<sup>13</sup>

The attention for questions about life, the search for Truth and meaning starts often when people are confronted with experiences of life and death. This might imply that people of later generations, with more experience in life, are more open to philosophies of life. However, sometimes even young people who are only at the start of their career are already counting the days before retirement. It seems as if they are mentally asleep and will stay in the same mental state as in their thirties when they are 50, 65, 80 years old.

So, it totally depends on the mental attitude - do people stay young of mind?, do they keep their sense of wonder?, are they always willing to learn and educate themselves? - if experience of life will lead to wisdom. Only with this mental attitude wisdom will come with age.

Also the motive plays an important role. If we are first directed to others, instead of ourselves, if we are compassionate of nature and focus on our higher aspects, we will develop wisdom much faster than if we only care for our own sake.

So there can be differences between generations. And the younger generation can, because lack of experience in life or because of growing up in a protected environment, lack the need to search for Truth.

However, we also see the opposite. Young people that start to think about what they want to mean for society at a very early stage.

Maybe it is time to draw the conclusion that reasoning from reincarnation and eternity, age is something that belongs to the transitory manifested world, it is something that is measured, Maya, illusory.

From the average age of 21 we have taken up our consciousness again that we developed in all our innumerable previous lives. This is different for everybody. Of course, we do not incarnate by chance under certain circumstances. We are also karmically drawn to a certain generation and a certain cycle.

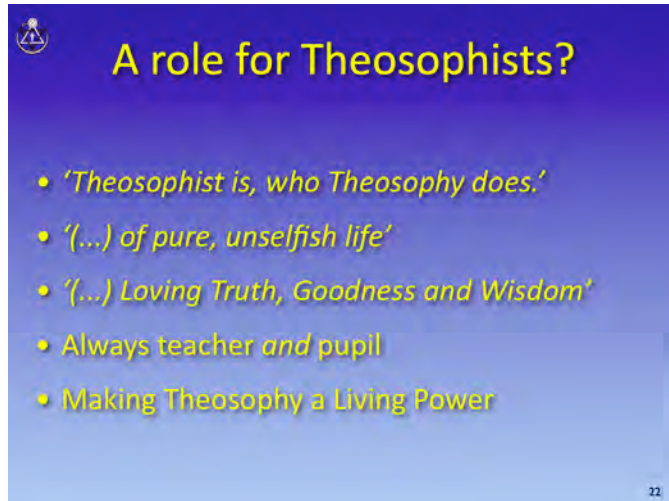
From a theosophical perspective, if there is Universal Wisdom, it applies to all ages. And no matter what age, which generation, in which part of the world, we can always focus on our higher aspects and develop our Inner Wisdom. Life-phases, generations, time frames are all of transitory nature. We can always learn, there is always growth and we can always stay young of spirit!

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<sup>13</sup> Herman C. Vermeulen, 'Zelf-opvoeding' in *Lucifer* nr.4-5, september 2003, Symposiumreeks nr. 5, p. 18-22

But the current time-frame and characteristics of the so-called 'Me-Generation' as recognized in the Western world does show us that there still is a lot of work to do for Theosophists to spread the Age-old Wisdom.

Before we will focus on what Theosophists can do, we first have to define what a Theosophist is.



H.P. Blavatsky writes in *The Key to Theosophy*: "Theosophist is, who Theosophy does."<sup>14</sup>

According to our definition of Theosophy, this means at least someone who is searching for Truth, who sees himself as part of Unity instead of separate from others and who is focused on the higher aspects of his Inner Nature.

Blavatsky also writes: "It is easy to become a Theosophist. Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning toward the meta-physical; of pure, unselfish life, who finds more joy in helping his neighbour than in receiving help himself; one who is ever ready to sacrifice his own pleasures for the sake of other people; and who loves Truth, Goodness and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer--is a Theosophist. (...)"<sup>15</sup>

These definitions explicitly leave out that Theosophists must be a member of a Theosophical organization. There are much more Theosophists than there are members of Theosophical organizations. However loving Truth and Wisdom does mean that we have the courage to express our vision on life, protest against injustice and stand up for our neighbours.

Being a Theosophist also means being teacher and pupil at the same time. As truth seekers we are always ready to learn and open for the knowledge of others that are ahead of us. And with our knowledge of Truth, of Theosophy and our level of Wisdom we can help others in need; HPB writes in *The Voice of the Silence* (p111): "(...) seek out him who knows still less than thou; (...), and -- let him hear the Law."<sup>16</sup>

And this means not to teach people just about Theosophy as a body of knowledge, but also about Theos-Sophia in a true sense of the word. Showing Divine Wisdom in the practice of life. Not trying to convince people by words, but by being an example without putting yourself in the spotlight.

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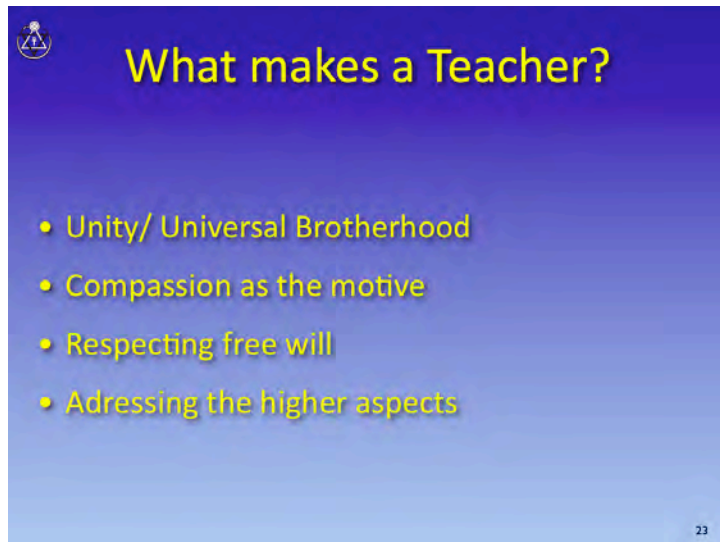
<sup>14</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p.14

<sup>15</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, *Practical Occultism*, p. 5-6

<sup>16</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 111

In other words, by making Theosophy a living power in our life, we can act as teachers for our fellow human beings, regardless of age, generation or cultural background. We do not need to be a teacher in class to show some of the age-old Wisdom to young people. Each one of us has people of different ages around us. A lot of people were in their youth inspired by a mentor, someone in their surrounding who inspired them for life.

What can make us such a Teacher?



A theosophical Teacher is someone who is living the ideal of Universal Brotherhood, always seeing Unity and the essential equality of all beings.

Compassion is the only motive to spread knowledge and wisdom.

Such a teacher respects free will. The pupil is only helped in a way that he can help himself to find Truth.

The teacher provides hints, encourages and inspires, but always on the background. Only marking the direction as a compass. Like Socrates said: "I am so far like the midwife, that I cannot myself give birth to wisdom;"<sup>17</sup>  
It is the Teacher as midwife for the Soul.

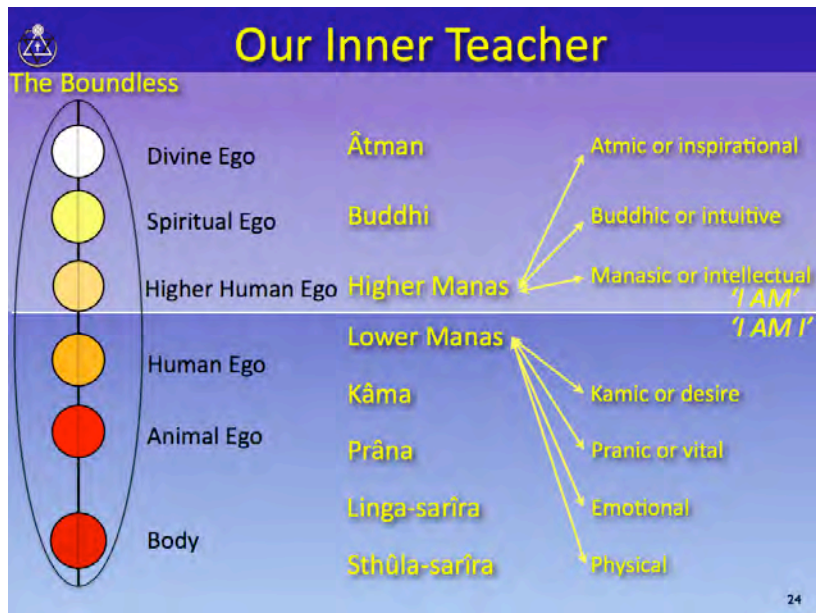
The Teacher can identify with as many perspectives, beyond the illusory, because he speaks to the enduring part of Man, young or old, rich or poor, enemy or friend. He addresses the higher principles corresponding with the own higher principles at work.

So when we develop the Inner Teacher in ourselves we are able to vibrate with the Inner Teacher of the other, so the other can discover the Inner Wisdom in himself.

But who is this Inner Teacher in ourselves? To use the scheme of the human composition once again:

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<sup>17</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, §150

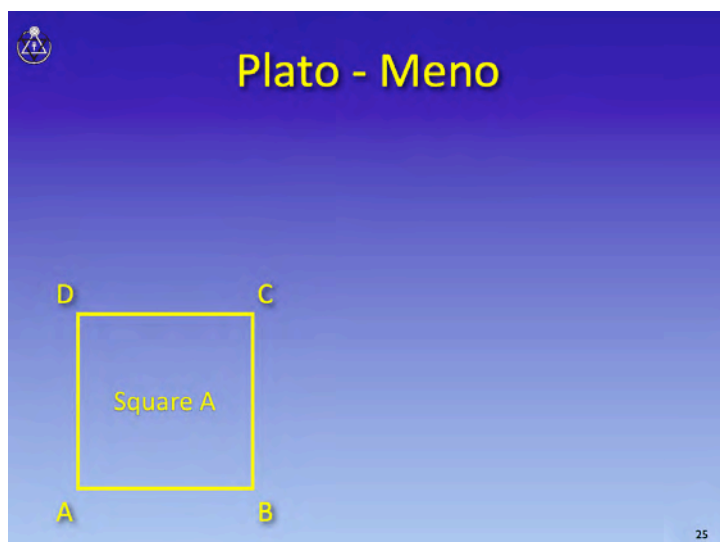


The Inner Teachers in ourselves are the Higher Human Ego, our Spiritual Ego and our Divine Ego.

In the next fragment from the dialogue *Meno*, Plato describes how Socrates gets a slave of Meno to understand a mathematical problem. Just by asking the man some questions, he makes clear how to uncover the Inner Teacher in the other.

It is a great example of how a teacher can educate, according to our definition: escorting the knowledge which is already within.

Socrates shows Meno through a dialogue with one of Meno's slaves that knowledge comes from inside and that learning is just recollecting what the immortal soul already knows.<sup>18</sup>



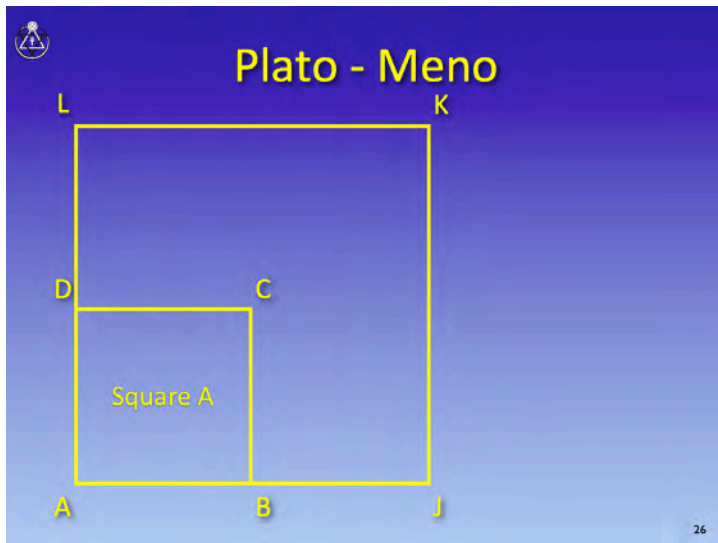
Socrates and the boy try to solve the following mathematical problem: Given a square A with a side of two foot, so a surface area of 4. If you want another square, let's call it

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<sup>18</sup> Plato, *Meno*, 81A - 86B

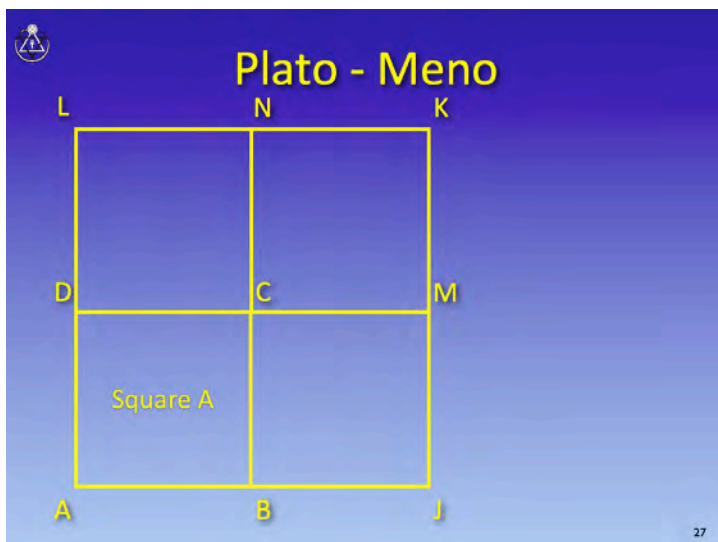
square B, with a surface area that is twice as large as the surface area of square A, what should be the length of the side of square B?

The boy answers that clearly it must be double.

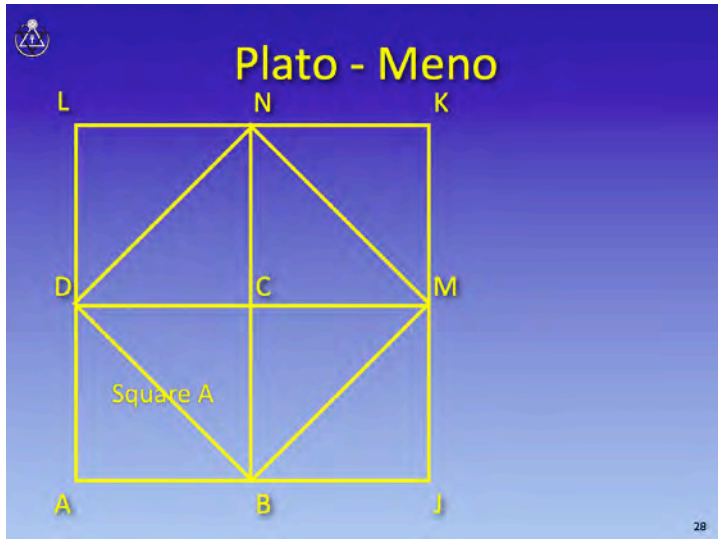


So Socrates and the boy visualize the resulting square with the double side of square A, so with a side of four foot. They calculate the surface area and find out it is 16, four times as large as square A. The boy realizes this is not the answer.

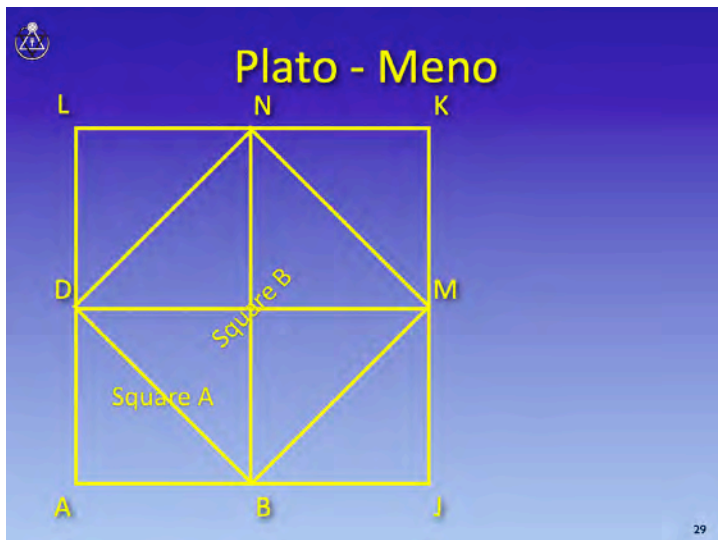
Socrates shows he does not know but also that it makes him curious.



Then Socrates visualizes how many squares of the size of square A fit in the large square. They then see that there are four of these squares, so they need only two of these squares to get the surface area they are looking for, twice as much as that of square A.



So Socrates says: if we cut every of the four small squares in half, we have half the surface area of the large square.



On a 45 degree angle the boy discovers square B, which is exactly twice the surface area of square A.

“Soc.: And that is the line which the learned call the diagonal. And if this is the proper name, then you, Meno's slave, are prepared to affirm that the double space is the square of the diagonal?”

Boy. Certainly, Socrates. “

With this dialogue Socrates shows Meno that learning is recollecting and also what the task of the real teacher should be. He lets his fellow brother find out about his own ignorance. At the same time he makes him curious and wonder about the problem at hand, the independent thinking of the man is stimulated. Using his own thinking, just by answering the teacher who only questions, he discovers the solution to the problem.

I think this is an excellent example of how to educate, by addressing the higher aspects and make people discover their own Inner Teacher.



## Summarizing

- The Boundless is our most Inner Self, we carry all knowledge and capability within us
- In each incarnation we learn to develop our consciousness further towards universality
- To be young is to be incarnated later than the other
- Each life has its phases which can characterize man and generations
- Current education and society in general lack focus on the higher aspects of man
- By discovering our own Inner Teacher, we can help others find theirs