

MORTEN TOLBOLL



MEDITATION
AS AN
ART OF LIFE

A BASIC READER

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Dedication:

Soli Deo Gloria

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Introduction

My philosophical journey

I would like to tell you the story of my life.

It is first by now I, as Karen Blixen could have put it, can begin to see the dream-tracks and songlines in the artwork of my life. By now I, seen with collective and universal eyes, consider it as a philosophical journey, that began in the dawn of time, before this universe.

Anyhow, seen with the personal eyes, the memory of my philosophical journey goes back to when I was 5 years old. Here I started to reflect over, whether life is a dream. This philosophical question has always followed me: whether we sleep, whether we dream this long dream, which is life? Therefore my adolescence has always been accented by a strong wonder over life, and a strong longing after something inexpressible, after something that can't be satisfied by explanations and interpretations - perhaps a longing after awakening. However I was never lead to connect this with philosophy, and therefore I first started an actual education in philosophy quite late.

After school I had my apprenticeship and worked hereafter as a clothier all-round, among other places in Harrods in London. Here I also started to study several books about philosophical issues, for example Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy*, and Pierre Hadot's *Philosophy as a*

Way of Life - Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault. A crucial turning point was the meeting with the philosopher Krishnamurti.

In London I also started to practise yoga and meditation. This led me more and more away from Krishnamurti, and into more Guru-centric and psychotherapeutic directions. After about five years of yoga and meditation practice I had a so-called "Awakening of Kundalini", and was thrown into a spiritual crisis. This spiritual crisis should last nearly ten years. I returned to Krishnamurti's teaching, but in order to find an explanation on the crisis, I also began to study the various wisdomtraditions of the World. Furthermore I experimented with different exercises in order to find out what provokes the crisis, and what works as stabilization. Gradually I realized, that the crisis was due to a lack of philosophical integration (read more about Kundalini and spiritual crises in this book under the philosophical question: *What do paranormal experiences consist in, and how ought my attitude to the paranormal be?*).

It was first by now I connected my life with an actual philosophical wonder, but at the same time I was aware, that there is a difference between philosophy as an art of life, and the academical philosophy. Nonetheless I decided to take an academical education in philosophy in order somehow to get in progress with it. Under this education I also discovered the special Danish tradition in philosophy of life. Here I particularly have been inspired by the Danish philosopher Mogens Pahuus, as well as my own teacher Niels Thomassen. Other sources of inspiration have been the Danish spiritual teacher Jes Bertelsen, and Eckhart Tolle. A great fictional mentor has been the argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. Also Karen Blixen and Bruce Chatwin have a great place in my heart.

Today I travel around in the world as a philosophical globetrotter, where I write and take photographs. I earn my living as a care worker. Besides this I offer free philosophical counseling, often to people, who accidently stumble over me, but mostly via postal mail. So during the whole of my philosophical journey I gradually developed (with inspiration from all wisdomtraditions) the concept of Meditation as an Art of Life. These things together has given my spiritual crisis a completely different healing and transformational value.

When that is said, it also has to be said, that even though Meditation as an Art of Life prevents a spiritual crisis, then my experiences tell me, that I should not try to argue for, or persuade people, to begin an intensive meditative art of life. This is because, that when you practise intensively,

then you in a short time have to run through a lot of existential stuff, which is the cause to suffering.

Meditation is a process of awakening. And though you wake up to greater presence and intensity of life, you also wake up to your own, and others, realized or unrealized, suffering. Actually it is necessary to pass through this process of realization in order not to develop a spiritual crisis. This also means, that it isn't the contents of the suffering you have to run through. The wisdomtraditions consider this stuff as rooted in time, and therefore not only in your personal history, but also in the collective and universal history. To open up for this is the same as opening up for an endless deep of suffering, and this is precisely what happens in a spiritual crisis. No, what you have to confront is the essence of suffering. And the essence of suffering is in short the ignorance about the Source of Life.

Therefore it is the sense of being on a wonderful journey towards the Source of Life - and the glimpses of this source - that makes it worth paying the price. And if you can follow me in this, then you are ready for Meditation as an Art of Life.

All in all it is the experiences from my philosophical journey that I wish to present in this book.

Introductory summary of Meditation as an Art of Life

In the meditative development there exist some existential conditions, and some growth conditions and growth levels common to all mankind. This indicates a common core which in a remarkable equal way occur in all wisdomtraditions. From the East can be mentioned Indian and Buddhist philosophy, Taoism and Zen Buddhism. From the West can be mentioned Greek and Roman philosophy, as well as the entire tradition of mysticism within Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

This core constitutes a teaching, which not only looks at meditation as a form of visualizing training, but as something philosophical, an art of life which affects the human being as a wholeness; which means: the entire cognitional, ethical and existential reality of Man.

The great masters within the wisdomtraditions have always communicated this teaching via philosophical counseling. Because the great masters asked philosophical questions - that is: not in an intellectual way as in the academical philosophy, and not in the sense of repeating a mantra - no,

they asked philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way, as the wordless silence within a strong existential wonder. As Aristotle said, then philosophy starts with wonder. You probably know the wonder you can feel when you look at the stars, or when you are confronted with all the suffering in the world. This wonder fills you with a silence in which all thoughts, explanations and interpretations in a moment wither away. It is in this silence you ask the great philosophical questions, open inwards and outwards, listening and observing, without words, without evaluations.

The wordless silence within the existential wonder is the same as asking philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way. And it is this philosophical questioning which can be the beginning of a deep inquiry into Man and reality - a lifelong philosophical voyage of discovery towards the Source of Life: the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

However most people lose this silence, and get satisfied with explanations and interpretations. And that's the difference between the great masters and ordinary people. The great masters had a strong longing after something inexpressible, after something which can't be satisfied by explanations and interpretations - perhaps a longing after awakening - or after realization. With the whole body, with life and blood, with soul and spirit, with brain and heart, they asked and inquired into themselves and into life. They were putting questions into everything, and were investigating it in a meditative way, as if it was something completely new. Simply because this philosophical questioning and inquiry constitutes a central meditation technique, which opens the consciousness in towards the Source. In other words they used philosophical questions as universal coans. All other spiritual exercises were only used to support this.

The central core in using such supporting exercises in the right way is therefore the philosophical questioning and inquiry. It is the philosophical questioning and inquiry that in the end will open the consciousness in towards the Source. In all wisdom traditions you can find descriptions that show that the moment of enlightenment happens in this way, either alone, or in a dialogue with a master.

The clearest modern example on how this happens in practice, is in my opinion Krishnamurti, and I can only recommend, that you use his works as a supplement to this book.

The essence of Krishnamurti's teaching is contained in the declaration he was putting forward in 1929, where he said: "Truth is a pathless land!" By

doing so he comes to be a spiritual alternative to the false spirituality of our time, which central declaration says: "Truth is a land with many paths!"

Because we live in a so-called postmodernistic time, where eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty more and more falls away – or where these values have become split into a labyrinth of paths. This is being used by an army of management-oriented coaches, spiritual counselors and gurus, who have an economical interest in putting forward the consumer-capitalistic ideology, that all paths are equal true, but they are not equal good, because some paths are more fascinating than others, some paths affect us more than others. Therefore the way these paths express themselves has come in focus. The expression of the path – it's aesthetics – decides, whether it fascinates us or bores us. What applies for today, is the intensity and seduction of the expressions. The new truth-criterion is, whether something is interesting or boring. An ideology, which - contrary to the real wisdomtraditions - comes to support the Ego's desire after becoming a success, after conquering a place on the top, after becoming a winner. For that reason the real wisdomtraditions are being distorted.

The economic interest in this "*the land with the many paths*-ideology" lies in, that real spiritual seeking people are being manipulated to become a kind of spiritual tourists, or postmodern pilgrims, who go shopping in the supermarket-like labyrinth of spiritual paths (theories, myths, ideals, conceptions, images), take a little this and here of what happens to sound interesting, and throw it out again when it gets boring. The spiritual self-deceit in this is, that such a "shopping mentality" is without any continuity or ongoing *practice*. Because the paradox (the ingenious manipulative) is, that the relativistic theory of the ideology in itself contains a making impossible, that any spiritual practice can open in towards the absolute truth (which in the context of spirituality is without paths; that is: theories, images, ideals, conceptions). What before characterized the spiritual practice, was, that it was a calling to you. Today "spiritual practice" has become a project (or as the management-theorists say: a good story, a good branding, a good spin), which quickly is being carried out and dropped for the benefit of a new project, which can maintain the constant demand of intensity and seduction. From management-theorists you hear slogans as: "It is not facts, but the best story, which wins!"

That it is an ideology shows itself in, that it does not allow any imaginable circumstance to speak against the ideology, and that it refuses all critique by analysing the motives in the critique in concepts, which are found in the

theory itself. The alarming perspective is, that this ideology has succeeded in spoiling philosophy (with the Thought-police in George Orwell's novel 1984 in mind). It has succeeded in creating an illusion about, that it is a type of sacrilege (intolerance) to want to utter yourself about, what is good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, at the same time as the ideology itself is doing this in all kind of quibbling ways.

In this way the Ego has created an ingenious trick, in order to preserve itself; that is: it's own path, which is constituted by images, assumptions, theories, ideals. Because in a postmodern context you consider concepts such as good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, as something we have created ourselves, and which therefore don't exist objectively. Therefore claims of objective truth are being rejected as premodern superstition, as expressions of old thinking. And because postmodernism also means individualism, yes, then such a rejection ends up in a global seen unique narcissism, which defends itself with phrases such as: *"I have my truth. You have your truth. I want to be allowed to do what I want. You should be allowed to do what you want. Tolerance! New thinking!"*

However the ideology fails, because truth escapes it, and returns to it as a kind of hubris-nemesis (which indicates, that truth *does* exist objectively). Two crucial arguments can namely be put forward against it:

1) The argument about self-refutation. The theory can in accordance with its own built-in relativism not itself be regarded as true. For that reason it is followed by a long line of self-contradictions.

2) The Reductio ad Absurdum-argument: If you preach relativism and believe, that everything is relative, and for that reason equal true, you have thereby accepted, that nazism, fascism, dictatorship, popular murder, terror and violence is as equally great blessings for mankind as democracy, negotiation and dialogue (it's a fact that many totalitarian ideologies, paradoxically enough, today have begun to use relativism as justification of their business). Then you have no basis in order to criticize, because you don't even have a rational frame to begin from. You can't criticize anyone for argumentation-bungling, or to replace arguments with machineguns, because this assumes, that there is a rational ground in your arguments.

The unusual and radical about Krishnamurti is precisely, that he uses philosophical questions as his central meditation technique, and that all other spiritual exercises only shall be used to support this. By doing so

Krishnamurti also has become the central source of inspiration to my development of the concept of Meditation as an Art of Life.

Krishnamurti uses philosophical questions as a type of universal coans with the intent of opening the consciousness in towards the Source: The Good, the True and The Beautiful – what Krishnamurti himself uses many various names for: the Otherness, Being, the Blessing, Love.

Krishnamurti was putting many various types of philosophical questions. The way he was investigating them in was by letting each and every question become followed by the question *Who am I?* - which means that each and every time someone was putting forward a question/problem, he went into an investigation of the one who was asking the question – like *Who asks? Who is it who is trying to find out the truth?*, etc.

Krishnamurti is himself a so-called enlightened master, which means that his consciousness is at one with the Source. In his book *Krishnamurti's Notebook* he describes experiences connected to the condition of enlightenment.

Time after time Krishnamurti makes people aware, that supporting exercises cannot lead to the Source. The purpose with the supporting exercises is only to give the practitioner the calmness, which is a necessity in order to acquire the philosophical question's ideas and concepts in an every-day, self-inquiring practice. For example he recommended yoga to keep the body flexible, and to sit quiet in passive awareness (like Zazen in Zen Buddhism), and finally meditative writing.

In this book I try to develop these things further by using my own experiences. Because Krishnamurti many times said, that he didn't want any followers. His teaching is about spiritual practice as becoming a light for oneself - as developing spiritual by developing your own teaching.

He said, that you should use his talks and writings as a mirror; which means: for meditative listening or reading.

This means, that you shall not listen to him, or read his words, in order to get new information, but in order to go into another state of consciousness when you listen – that is, that you, as a listener to his talks, or reader of his words, rather than evaluating, are trying to relate neutral to his teaching. You take, so to speak, a mentally step backwards, and observe yourself and

what is happening. You use Krishnamurti's teaching as a mirror, in which you discover yourself. In this way Krishnamurti transforms his own oneness-consciousness to the individual. You move from the outside teacher to the inner teacher. The Source in yourself is becoming activated. You become your own teacher.

By doing so Krishnamurti's teaching fits into our postmodernistic time, but rather than becoming a postmodernistic pilgrim, who jump from one path (theory) to another – and therefore remains on the pure *theoretical plane* - you become a real pilgrim who, through Krishnamurti's teaching, develop your own teaching, and hereby follow a continuous and ongoing *practice* in the postmodernistic labyrinth of paths.

To ask philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way has nothing to do with those enquire techniques used in psychotherapy and coaching. It's quite central that philosophical counseling is using philosophical questions, because such questions ask for what is common to all mankind, the universal - what you could call the essence of Man and reality. This is because that the Source, the essential in Man and in reality, precisely is something common to all mankind, or universal. In other words: philosophy directs itself towards the essence, and not towards the content. Psychotherapy and coaching are only able to ask for the personal (or the content), and therefore they can never open the consciousness in towards the Source (the essence).

Even though philosophical counseling gives answers to questions, then these answers aren't conclusions to anything, as you for example see it in politics and religion. The answers are only tools for the questioner's own self-inquiry.

I work with four philosophical openings in towards the Source:

1. A rational, where you examine the validity of your assumptions, conceptions and values, and search for coherency between your thoughts and your lived life.
2. A life-philosophical where you are present in the Now, and hereby achieve that self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom.
3. An existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation are yourself, live in accordance with your own essence, and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action.

4. A spiritual, where you aren't identified with your lifesituation, and where you, independent of religious or political ideologies, live from something deeper: the Source itself: the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

Today we see a tendency to, that many meditationteachers (and other spiritual counselors) have forgotten the philosophical aspects of the meditationprocess, and have made the merely supporting exercises (for example concentration, visualizing and so on) to the central aspect. For example this is to be seen in the so popular confusion of spirituality and psychology/psychotherapy, where they believe, that realization and ethics are coming automatically through psychotherapy, and by sitting and concentrating on some kind of object, or by visualizing something. But when the philosophical aspects are left out you create breeding ground for a lot of different kinds of spiritual self-deceit. This is because an important part of the opening in towards the Source is the realization of what *hinders* this opening. Unless you know, for example the Ego's, fundamental essence, you can't recognise it, and it will deceive you to identify with it again and again. But when you realize the hindrances in you (for example through the question *Who am I?* as Ramana Maharshi did it) then it is the Source itself - the Good, the True and the Beautiful - that makes the realization possible.

Again I work with four philosophical hindrances for the opening in towards the Source:

1. A rational where you take your assumptions, conceptions and values for absolute truths, and hereby end up in a contradiction between your thoughts and your lived life.
2. A life-philosophical, where you are circling around your own past and future, and hereby create a closed attitude, inattention, absent-mindedness and ennui.
3. An existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive towards being something else than what you are, where you imitate others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt.
4. A spiritual where you are identified with your lifesituation, are dependent on religious or political ideologies, and where you hereby exist on a future salvation.

You may say that these four hindrances constitute an actual malfunction in the human mind. And it is this malfunction, which is the cause of the ignorance about the Source of Life. Ignorance is again the cause of suffering. In this way meditation becomes a practice, which seeks to correct this malfunction. And therefore the two main concepts in meditation are suffering and ignorance.

The wisdomtraditions have always claimed, that the act of realization is one of the two most important ways in which the opening in towards the Source can happen. The other way is the ethical practice, the training of compassion and love. This aspect, which also is something philosophical, also seems to be lacking today.

All this together constitutes the background for the book. The book is not a scientific treatise, not a treatise in history of philosophy or history of religion. You can find several suchlike, but they don't clarify the above-mentioned problems. On the contrary I will try to clarify them by letting the book be a guidance in, how it quite concrete can be put into practice; that is: so you in that way can use it as a guidance in Meditation as an Art of Life.

The purpose is, that you use the book as a help in developing yourself spiritual by developing your own teaching – which means, that you become a light for yourself, that you become your own teacher where you happen to stand, but at the same time have the philosophical aspects of the spiritual practice with you, as it's the core in all the wisdomtraditions.

The way to use the book

First of all: if you don't immediately understand the book, then I will suggest, that you look at it as a work of art, a kind of poetry. I myself often look at my writings in this way. Just try to open the book in a casual place and read something. Then the words gradually will become clear by themselves.

Otherwise: the book consists of two sections: philosophical questions and supporting exercises.

The philosophical questions are formed as meditationtexts. The supporting exercises are intended to give you the calmness, which is a necessity in order to acquire the philosophical question's ideas and concepts in a daily,

self-inquiring practice. The exercises are therefore exclusively meant as support for the central meditation technique: asking philosophical questions.

Section 1: Philosophical questions

The texts to the philosophical questions are worked out as an answer to a You, so that you can use them for meditative reading. The oldest form of spiritual scriptures, as for example the old Indian Sutras, are intended for meditative reading. Sutras are effective hints to the truth in form of aphorisms or short expressions with a limited conceptual elaboration.

Just like the words of Buddha, the Vedas and the Upanishads belong to the early holy teachings written down in form of Sutras. The words and parables of Jesus can, when taken out of the stories, also be regarded as Sutras, as well as the deep teaching contained in Tao Te King, the old Chinese Book of Wisdom, written by the philosopher Lao Tzu.

In meditative reading it is important to understand, that the answers in the texts aren't conclusions to anything, but exclusively tools for your own self-inquiry. This means, that they are a help finding your questions/problems' implicit *philosophical* questions, and investigating them in a meditative-existential way. As the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein says in his Tractatus, then the words only are a ladder, which you can use to rise above them. Afterwards you throw it away. In the same way they say in Zen, that the words only are a finger pointing at the moon. You shall never confuse the finger with the moon.

That, whereof you can't speak, about that you must be silent. But then you precisely have entered into the wordless silence.

The texts are worked out in a way, so that they can be read independently of each other. This means, that there are coming some repetitions. But when you practise meditative reading, you don't read primarily to get new information, but in order to enter into another state of consciousness when you read - which means, that you as a reader, rather than evaluating, are trying to relate neutral to what you read. You take a mental step backwards, and observe yourself and what is happening. You so to speak use the text as a mirror, in which you discover yourself. This is the reason why you can read the same many times, and still feel that it is fresh and new every time.

The meaning is, that you shall read the texts slowly. Many times you may want to take a break and give place to a moment of reflection or silence. At

other times you may open the book on a casual place and read some lines. You can also try to see the texts in relation to each other. If you for example are engaged by a problem that one of texts is about, it can be, that the problem is made even more clear by seeing it in relation to other texts. Take for example the first text *Who am I?* You will soon find out, that this philosophical question becomes more and more clarified in the following 17 texts. This question recurs in other words in all philosophical questions. A philosophical inquiry will always in the end be a self-inquiry, regardless of what the philosophical question is about. Because who is it who puts the question, and who is it who examines the question?

If you work with the texts in this way you will discover, that you are being taught from a deeper layer in you, from your being in the Now, from life itself, yes, from the Source itself. You will be trained in seeing your personal problems from questions common to all mankind, and to see these in relation to each other. You are in action with a real philosophical inquiry, which opens your consciousness in towards the Source. And through the supporting exercises you can acquire this investigation in practice.

Section 2: Supporting exercises

Concerning the supporting exercises, then it is of great importance that you get all 5 exercises integrated as quickly as possible, since this is central in order to, that your training is becoming an existential reality, and not just an intellectual or mental thing.

The three first exercises (*The Relaxationmeditation, the Hara meditation and the Heartmeditation*) forms the three basic aspects of the meditationprocess. The two last exercises (*the Change of suffering into Enlightenment and the Philosophical Diary*) are a kind of supplements to this process, which go deeper into the problems you unavoidably will meet: for example the function of meditation in relation to suffering/disease, and returning negative feelings. The philosophical diary can furthermore be used as a diary over your meditative art of life as a whole.

Finally it is important that you, beside the texts to the exercises, continue to use the texts to the philosophical questions for meditative reading. This is namely a specific way to pass the meditative art of life on to you, which gradually expands your deeper understanding, both by repeated study of the texts and the work with the exercises. This gives you greater and greater

insight into the possibilities of deepening your view of life and for the splendour in being in the flow of life.

Philosophical Questions

Who am I?

The great Indian master Ramana Maharshi used the question *Who am I?* as his most important meditation technique. When he taught meditation to others, he used this question as a universal coan: *Who am I?* This question opens the consciousness in towards the Source.

Have you ever tried to look inward, and ask yourself: "Who am I?"

What do you see? At first you probably see your thoughts, this stream of memories, inner monologues, sensations, moods, comments, associations, imaginations, arrangements, plans and projects.

It is the surface of Heraklit's River. It is the surface of the River of Time. Your thinking takes place in time. Your thoughts are words and images, which work in this stream. But as the Indian philosophy claims, then this stream not only contains your personal history, it also contains a collective and an universal history – together a history which consists of images. These images are form-formations of energy, creative tensions, a kind of matter, although on a highly abstract level. In other words: the images exist in the movement of the matter itself, and therefore not only in your mental activity, but also outside yourself, in nature. Your thinking therefore rises from an endless deep of images, which flow in the movement of nature itself.

In the question about who you are, you must therefore also go in to an examination of the essence of time itself.

The Indian philosophy claims, that the movement of time in itself is a negationpower. Time is one great negation of the Now's unmoved being,

which is the unmanifested, the Source itself: the Good, the True and the beautiful. The negationpower is in this way the power behind the world's manifestation. This manifestation, as the Indian philosophy claims, has arisen in the light of a mighty universal vision of the world. And in this way the future arises and an outgoing creative movement; a movement comparable with what they within science call the Big Bang. In the outgoing movement the great vision becomes, due to the negationpower, shattered in many images, which now become a kind of memories about the great vision. This way the past arises and a longing back towards the origin, the unmanifested. And then a destructive backmovement is created.

The movement of time consists in this way of two universal movements, which we could call the outgoing movement and the backmovement. Creation and destruction. These two movements are reflected throughout the Universe in a multitude of different lifecycles. And this is not a theory, but something you can experience directly.

The images in the movement of time are therefore shattered reflections of the great vision of the Universe. They are shadows, dreams, masks, fables, fairy-tales, fictions. Because of the negationpower the images only come to exist in relation to their negation. For example images of the powerful, the perfect and the good, are only existing in relation to the powerlessness, to fiasco and evil. All images therefore contain a structure of opposites. The most universal images include their polar partners, they are a kind of visionary mandala-structures or yantrafields. The more collective and personal images expel their polar partners. This is however, according the logic of the images, not possible, and the result is contradiction and division. As Heraklit said: "Conflict is everythings father and king."

If you now try to observe your stream of thoughts with more awareness, you discover, that your thinking is circling around a central instance, namely the inner thinker – the Ego. The Ego is a common term for your consciousness' identification with the thoughts, and therefore with the movement of time. The stream of thoughts is a kind of vortex, a monotonous circling around yourself, a continual circling around your own past and future, and your own images of power and powerlessness, perfection and fiasco, good and evil.

The two movements of time, the outgoing movement, the future, and the backmovement, the past, are in this way reflecting themselves in the Ego. The Ego is constantly busy evaluating the Now on the background of

images, which flow in the movement of time. The evaluations consist in saying yes and no, justifying and condemning, accepting and denying, choosing and excluding. This way the polar partners of the universal images are expelled.

Therefore the Ego evaluates the Now, partially from time, partially from opposites. The Ego simply consists of time and opposites, of past and future, of power and powerlessness, perfection and fiasco. But in its expelling evaluations the Ego also consists of contradiction and division. Constantly the Ego compares the Now with earlier, and hopes, desires or fears something else. For that reason the Ego turns the Now into a problem. And hereby the fundamental resistance, which is characteristic for the Ego, also is created. Resistance is the same as negativity in one or the other form. All negativity is resistance. Negativity goes from irritation or impatience to fierce anger, from depression or sullen reluctance or suicidal despair.

The Ego, the consciousness' identification with the thoughts, therefore forms a kind of pattern, or veil, which *hinders* you in seeing, that you contain a dimension which lies far deeper than your immediate lifesituation, that exists in time. Therewith the ignorance is created, and with the ignorance suffering.

The Ego is the instance in you, which makes you experience yourself as a spectator, a theorist or a doubter, in relation to your own life. The Ego is the instance in you, which is making an experience of, that everything which happens around you, and to you, do not concern you, that you are not in it, not involved, that you are not here, nor other places, but outside, in the meaning gone.

When you are centered in your ego you therefore have your identity in an absence. Very likely you believe, that your identity *is* the movement of your thought's moods and considerations – or, what is the same, that your identity *is* your past and your future. Your identity then comes from your past, and you are dependent on the future to give you fulfilment and satisfaction. Your identity is in other words one with your lifesituation, which exists in time.

And when your identity in this way only exists in the past and the future, you are not able to be yourself. You can only be yourself in the Now. When you are yourself in the Now you are one with the existential facts. When

you are absent in the past and the future, you are therefore not yourself. You strive to be something else than what you are, you imitate others, because time is not only your personal history, but also the collective history.

Such an identity is not only one identity. It consists of many various roles, which you play depending on what situation you are in. This is because, that you in the collective time become a slave of others ideas and ideals. Your actions therewith become characterized by irresoluteness and doubt.

But what happens when you in moments of wonder and silence stop evaluating the Now? What happens if you just are aware and present?

Have you tried just to observe the Now, just to register what happens in the moment, without making attempts to change anything or leave the situation?

Have you tried just to describe what you observe and sense, to put it down in words, without letting yourself being caught by the contents?

Have you tried to be open in relation to the moment, without judging yourself or others as good or bad?

Have you tried to decentralize yourself from your thoughts by training yourself in seeing the situation through the eyes of others? For example a journalist, a filmdirector, or a comedian?

It is in this wondering silence, you (wordless) ask yourself the question *Who am I?* And with this question you also ask other philosophical questions. You are in progress with an actual philosophical examination of yourself and the world. You are in progress with the training of your awareness, you are in progress with laying a distance to the stream of thoughts, to the movement of time, and thereby you are in progress with entering more and more into the Now. Gradually you dismantle the identification with the thoughts. Your lifesituation opens itself and steps aside for the deeper dimension.

Meditation is in all simplicity about seperating and dismantling this identification with the thoughts, in order to reach into the deeper dimension. You discover that you not *are* the thoughts, that there in your innermost exists a pure awareness, which is peace, light and love.

This awareness seems to be a quality of the Now, and therefore it is also a quality of life itself. This way you discover, that life itself is to be present in the Now with *the whole* of yourself, in the self-forgetful openness and devotion to the world. Life itself is therefore love. Your innermost, the awareness, is in this way one with life itself, love.

This oneness is the Source: the Good, the True and the Beautiful in itself, *not* as images. The Source is the unmoved being of the Now. In other words: in this oneness you have your identity in a presence, a presence which both is the essence in yourself, and the essence behind everything else.

When you live from this source you are in very deed yourself, you live in accordance with your own essence, and thereby you achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action. Furthermore you achieve the self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom.

Why do I exist?

Do you exist in order to become something (to be focused on the future), to gain success, to conquer a place on the top, to become a winner?

Or said in another way: do you exist in order to cultivate the Ego?

Any way, this is what the society of today will tell you. Egocultivation is a time-tendency within school, folk high school and continuing education, where you focus on so-called "personal development".

But the Ego always consists of a visionary pair of opposites, as for example images of power and powerlessness, perfection and fiasco, good and evil. And through evaluations the Ego expels it's images of what it thinks is negative: the powerlessness, the fiasco, the evil. This is in accordance with the built-in logic of the images not possible, and the Ego ends up in contradiction and division – or said in another way: in thinking in extremes. This is due to the negationpower of time.

The movement of time consists of two universal movements, the outgoing movement (the Big Bang), which in the light of a mighty vision creates the future - and the backmovement towards the shattered memories of the origin, the great vision, which now is the past. These two movements lie behind an ancient, universal energylaw known in all wisdomtraditions: Tao, the Dharmalaw, Destiny, Hybris-nemesis, Logos, the Will of God, and so on. It says as follows: *energy returns to it's starting point*. You may therefore say, that energy moves as a wheel. Thus it is this law, which controls all the different life-cycles.

The energylaw can therefore be described in many ways, according to the viewpoint you are using. You can say, that it in particular contains four universal sublaws:

- 1) The first sublaw says: energy works as wave-movements. A build-up in a wavecrest will always be followed by a trough of the waves.
- 2) The second sublaw says: energy works as pendulum-movements. A build-up in an extreme will always be followed by a swing over in the opposite extreme.
- 3) The third sublaw says: when energy is build up in a situation, this energy will work as a challenge, that causes reactions.
- 4) The fourth sublaw says: energy works as circulation-movements. A build-up of energy works as a pulse which moves outwards, circulates, for thereafter to return to its starting point.

The images of time will as *images* always, by reason of the negationpower in the movement of time, be defined by their negations. The more energy that is build up in the one pole of a pair of opposites, and the more the second pole is expelled, the more the abandoned pole will work stronger and stronger on it's polar partner. Eventually the energy will therefore switch over in it's opposite. This is because that energy works as streams and dividings within a wholeness, as the teaching of Yin and Yang describes it.

The energy you in other words have build up in the pole you consider as positive – (you have to remember, that the pair of opposites only are images, not reality) - will in this way finally switch over in its opposite negative pole. Simply in order to balance an inbalance within the Wholeness.

Once your thoughts therefore spread themselves too far out in an extreme (for example exaggerated perfectionistic) the energysystem will compensate by seeking to bring itself back to the balance of the middle. The system does this by seeking over towards the opposite extreme (for example an exaggerated feeling of fiasco). That is: through a contrabalancing, a compensation. Here we speak from the second energylaw, that energy works as pendulum-movements. The more energy, which is invested in the one extreme of a pair of opposites, the larger the swing in the opposite direction will be.

What apply for the individual, also apply for the collective and for nature. You can therefore also observe this energylaw in groups, societies, world-images, yes, in all Mankind, and in the Universe. You can observe it in everything, which is movement and not unmoved being.

For example right now Mankind is in an egoextreme. This is reflected in numerous fields. Too much energy is invested in armament. Too many atomic weapons. Too much pollution. Too much unequal distribution of the treasures of the Earth. Too much unequal distribution of the food and fruits of the Earth. And first of all: too many people are too focused in their ego; they accumulate energy to their ego, to themselves; or to the family ego; or to the national ego.

This is the energy in one extremity. With necessity the energy will swing over in the opposite extreme. And this will not happen in a quiet way, when you consider the enormous moment, that is in the actual extreme, and it will happen quite simple: through pollution of the environment, through illness (aids, cancer and other), through crises, warfare, terror, through inner mass-psychotic collapses, and through natural disasters.

However, Meditation as an Art of Life is to be aware, when your thoughts move too far out. In the situation you can therefore try to remember the opposite extreme and seek to bring it in. This makes the situation much more true.

The awareness itself is in the Now, in the oneness of the opposites, and therefore in the fulcrum, which is the unmoved being in the centre of the circular movement of time. Also when something else fluctuates and dances between the swings of the extremes. Therefore the training of the awareness in itself will gradually prevent, that there is given impulse to the

swings. It's the Golden Mean, which Aristotle and Buddha talked about, and which Lao Tse describes in his book *Tao Te King*.

The Golden Mean can generally be formulated as the art of balancing between the extremes *too much and too little*.

To strike the Golden Mean is an art of life, and to strike this path is a necessary suggestion for, why you exist.

What can I know?

Philosophy means love of wisdom, and wisdom is insight into *the essence* of Man and reality.

Wisdom goes even deeper than both belief and knowledge. What you believe, and what you know, lies in your lifesituation, and your lifesituation exists in time. Belief is what you hope for, that is the future. And knowledge is what you have experienced, that is the past. Both your belief and your knowledge are kind of images. But behind all the different circumstances which constitute your lifesituation, and which exist in time and images, there exists something deeper, more essential: life itself, the actual unmoved being in the timeless Now. This is the Source, in which wisdom lies.

However the Source is veiled, hidden by your mind's identification with your lifesituation, which exists in time. You therefore have to find it again. And this happens through Meditation as an Art of Life.

Meditation as an Art of Life is a holistic discipline in the sense, that it implies an examination, in which you have to put *the whole of* your selfunderstanding at stake – that is: your existence as a totality. Art of life is a kind of philosophical therapy. This therapy uncovers basic assumptions in order to, with the use of logic, re-evaluating them. One of the greatest masters in this art of life is the Indian philosopher and spiritual teacher Krishnamurti. He once said: "Truth is a pathless land."

But is it not so, that we all the time defend our assumptions as absolute truths? That we in the form of debate all the time work against each other and are seeking to show each other's flaws? That we often only listen to

each other in order to find flaws and defend our arguments? That we more and more harden our own perspectives, because we are so busy judging the positions of others? That we defend our own positions as the best solutions and eliminate others' solutions? That we fundamentally seem to have a closed attitude, which is due to a fixed decision to be right? That we wholeheartedly invest in our own conceptions, and that we therefore calculate others' positions, without being aware of feelings or relations, yes, that we even often happen to play down and resent the other person?

This debating attitude is unethical, and leads to violence and war, because assumptions are dividing interpretations, ideas, conceptions. They are preconceived views, which we tighten together with reality, that becomes distorted, because they as divisions only can perceive particular parts of reality, and therefore have to leave out others. Assumptions can in other words never be absolute. They are always relative. The danger lies in, as Kierkegaard said in *the Postscript*: "To relate absolute to the relative."

Art of life is therefore, with Kierkegaard's words, to "die from the immediate." We have to learn to relativize ourselves and our life situation, because our life situations exist in the movement of time, and therefore also in the images of time, which are relative. Only when we existentially concrete can relate relatively to the relative, we can begin the next great work: to relate absolute to the absolute. And this is not simple, because more often than not we confuse the image with reality, and therefore relate absolute to the relative.

Art of life is to balance between the relative and the absolute, between the image and reality. Art of life is to use dialogue and not debate. Dialogue is to be co-operating: two or more parts work together towards a mutual understanding; the goal is to find a mutual foundation. You listen to each other in order to understand, to find meaning and agreement.

Dialogue expands and changes your perspective. Dialogue uncovers your assumptions in order to re-evaluate them. Dialogue causes an examination of both your own and the other's position. Dialogue opens a possibility to reach a better solution than any of the original solutions. Dialogue creates an open attitude: an openness for own flaws and an openness for own change.

Dialogue is to present your best thinking, well aware that other people's reflections will help to improve it, rather than destroy it. Dialogue therefore asks for a temporary suspension of your conceptions.

Dialogue involves a real interest in the other person and will not seek to estrange or abuse. It's nature is love.

Dialogue is to be willing to challenge your own lifesituation, which means: both your belief and your knowledge. Dialogue is art of life.

Art of life is as Kierkegaard says: "To relate relatively to the relative, and absolute to the absolute." The relative is here the images in the movement of time. The absolute is the unmoved being of the Now.

Art of life therefore *doesn't* imply relativism. Within epistemology relativism is the teaching, which claims, that there doesn't exist any absolute valid realization at all, but that *all* realization is comparative to the realizing subject's state, standpoint or situation. Within ethics relativism is the teaching, which denies that there exist absolute valid, universal norms and values.

Relativism is a finished theory, a conclusion. This implies firstly that it hasn't got any practice which ask philosophical questions. Secondly that it, as a theory, defends an assumption, it views as absolute true. Therefore it tends to be ideological, rather than philosophical. And therefore it ends up in debate, and not dialogue.

The contradiction in relativism lies in, that it claims, that itself, relativism, is true, absolute true. Unless it was absolute true it would of cause not be valid. In both cases it refutes itself. Relativism often ends up making any form of critique impossible. It does this by asserting, that all viewpoints are relative, and therefore equally true and equally valid. The consequence is on one hand that it reduces people to some kind of chameleons who can be used by everything and everybody for anything. On the other hand relativism can be used to justify subjective argumentation and inappropriate views.

It's immensely important to be critical, but there are things you ought to be aware of concerning critical arguments. You ought to discriminate between subjective and objective argumentation. Subjective argumentation is an unethical way to convince others about your views, because it doesn't

show, what in reel sense is appropriate or inappropriate about a case, but manipulates with it. Precisely the culture of debate uses much subjective argumentation. Just try to follow political debates. It's after all tragic, that precisely our leaders are so good using subjective argumentation.

Subjective argumentation contains some of the following elements: innuendoes, distortions, generalizations, over-/understatements, sarcasm, satire, irony, postulates, emotional affections, coloured choice of words, choices and exclusions, subjective style.

Objective argumentation is a more ethical way to convince others about your views, because it in reel sense shows what is appropriate or inappropriate about a case. Objective argumentation contains some of the following elements: summary or abstract, informations, description, reason, concrete choice of words, nuanced objective statement.

The hallmark of philosophy is exactly to use objective argumentation, and to show the untenable aspect of subjective argumentation and inappropriate assumptions. This is the essence in using dialogue. So when dialogue involves that the participants must put their assumptions at stake, then this is not based on relativism, but on a fundamental critical attitude, that seeks a common understanding based on objective argumentation. Rationality and critical thinking are essential in philosophy.

The relationship between objective argumentation and subjective argumentation can be mirrored in the relationship between Socrates and the Sophists. The Sophists were a group of people, which for a fee, professed as teachers of rhetoric in Greece in the 5. Century b.c. In many ways they ran formal classes, as you see it today in form of lectures- and talks; that is: through one-way communication. Furthermore they were both cognitional and ethical relativists. That meant, that they couldn't see any cognitional and ethical reason for discriminating between objective and subjective argumentation. They were paid to teach people to convince others about one or another belief or knowledge. And because subjective argumentation has a greater effect on far the most people, they used subjective argumentation, what you also call sophism. Actual they in noticeably extent remind about those who you today call management-theorists and spin doctors.

As opposed to the Sophists Socrates did not ran formal classes. He had a conversation with people. His form was the dialogue, the living exchange

of words between two or more. Furthermore he never took a fee, as the Sophists did. Socrates had no finished conclusions. He was precisely philosopher, a lover of wisdom, one, who through wonder, was seeking wisdom. Socrates was a lifeartist. And art of life precisely implies a deep, critical attitude, which, by asking *philosophical* questions both to oneself and others, in an objective way gets oneself and life examined all the way down to *the essence*. Thereby art of life doesn't end up in that form of absolutism, which claims that certain assumptions or ideas can be *absolute* true. But it can very well show, what is appropriate or inappropriate about a case – and how you eventual can be able to re-evaluate your assumptions.

Art of life is connected with the direct experience of, or insight into *the meaning of life*, - that which is the innermost essence of life, *wisdom*, or the absolute. This is again connected together with *the ethical practice*, that you learn to train compassion and love, for hereby to be able to relate yourself open and relatively to the images in the movement of time, and to be in dialogue with other people.

In other words: wisdom lies in the Source of Life; art of life is the therapy, which opens your lifesituation, and prepares it for the meeting with wisdom.

What do I ought to do or not to do?

Life is the great dancer. You therefore ought to dance the dance of life. And this dance is the meditative art of life.

The three aspects of meditation are relaxfullness, awareness and heartfullness. Meditation starts with the practice of relaxation. A correct procedure consists in, that the relaxfullness more and more slides over in awareness, and that awareness more and more slides over in heartfullness. A genuine meditative practice therefore more and more moves itself out into the everyday life, out into the life of action and the ethical practice. Therefore meditation necessarily also must be an art of life.

Awareness in the life of action consists in, that you become aware of your energy in such a way, that you can finish situations by reacting with presence on their challenges. Situations both consist in challenges and reactions. The challenge is always something new, something fresh,

something filled with energy. But when you react from your past, you suck this energy out of the situation, and give it to your past.

What is it in the past, that sucks the energy of the challenge into itself? It's all those inappropriate basic assumptions, which have been created by bad experiences in the past, and those negative automatic thoughts, which follow from these basic assumptions, when you are in specific situations. And when this reaction-pattern takes the energy of the challenge, then the situation becomes a repetition of the same, and it is left unfinished. It's this reaction-pattern Eckhart Tolle calls the emotional painbody (see more about the painbody under the philosophical question *What are feelings?*).

Unfinished situations create existential guilt. The more unfinished situations, the more existential guilt. Existential guilt comes from regrets over unlived life and unrealized life possibilities. It's a guilt, people feel, or have, over themselves and their own life. Nearly all people carry a certain lot of existential guilt. A person, who has had a quite undeveloped or unlived life, will often carry a lot of existential guilt. It can show as bitterness, narrowness, introversion, dryness, psychical sterility and a thorough frustration of the soul. A person in this condition will often feel it difficult to look death in the eyes and to have to leave the earth life; he or she feels incomplete, feels not used.

Examples can be a person with a great desire to be an artist, or to get a literary education, but who has never got this realized. It can be a person, who too late discovers, that he or she would liked to have had children. Or a person, who all his life have had a wrong job, who have missed his vocation. Or a person, who in many years has lived in repressive or wrong family relations, without being able to straighten on it, or to break out of it.

And then death becomes terrible, as Tolstoj has described it in *the Death of Ivan Iljitsch*. Ivan Iljitsch lies on the deathbed and can't let go of life because of mortal dread. He screams three days and nights through. Not until he realizes, that the life he has lived has not been a real life, yes, that he actual never has lived, not until then he can let go of life and reconcile himself with death.

Existential guilt can also be about, that you have used other people in an unreasonable way, by living too much from your own ideas or needs – or said in another way: that you have reacted inappropriate on other people's

challenges. And the guilt can imply your relationship to nature: Have I showed reciprocity towards the nature, which has been my source?

Existential guilt can furthermore be about stagnation. When the past takes energy from the challenges, then the situations you are in fall off. The life desire or the vitality is reduced, crumbles, dissolves. Ennui and boredom make your world and yourself empty, waste and dark. Stagnation is in its actual form blocking, fixation, paralysation. Stagnation is a non-ability to, or a lack of possibility, for living to the full. Life stops, curbs up, for irrelevant reasons. Stagnation leads to obduracy, drying, lifelessness. There comes something grizzle, sad, colorless, monotonous over your life. The same applies for your world. The stagnation is connected with, that also your world, or parts of it, becomes grey, sad or monotonous. Lifelessness in yourself corresponds with a lifelessness in your world. Habits and tedious repetitions take over life. The life rhythm falls due to stereotypy. You are run fixed in specific patterns.

Another utterance of stagnation is officiousness, restlessness, busyness. These are therefore not positive alternatives to stagnation, but an outside movement, which covers over a lack of inner, of real movement.

Stagnation and boredom have been connected with a lot of problems in the modern society, as for example drug abuse, alcohol abuse, smoking, anorexia, promiscuity, vandalism, depression, aggression, hostility, violence, suicide, risk behaviour etc. etc.

Unfinished situations have to do with the third universal energylaw, which says: When energy is build up in a situation, this energy will work as a challenge, that causes reactions.

What it is about, is therefore that you become aware of this. Just try to register, what is happening in the situation, without making attempts to change anything or leave the situation. You take a mental step backwards and observe yourself and what is happening. You don't try to change anything or control anything. Don't judge yourself or others as good or bad. You don't judge. You wait forming an opinion and instead you direct your awareness towards the consequences of what is happening. For example: you have made a mistake, but instead of branding yourself because of what you have done, you investigate the consequences of the mistake, and what can be done to reduce the adverse effects. You should not think about, what you "ought" or "don't ought" to do, what is "right" or "wrong", "just" or

”unjust”. You rather ought to, as good as you can, to concentrate about doing what the situation actual requires, using the existent possibilities and act in a way that feels natural.

Try to see the challenges and the reactions as a mirror, in which you discover yourself. Put notice to your reactions. Put notice to, that they come from all those inappropriate basic assumptions, which have been created by bad experiences in the past (the painbody). Put notice to those automatic negative thoughts, which specific challenges bring about in you. Put notice to precisely what kind of actions you repeat again and again (learn more about this art of life under the philosophical question *What are feelings?*). And then put notice to the challenges. They are always completely new, completely fresh, filled with energy. Begin to discriminate between the challenges and your reactions, and thereafter begin to experience, how you yourself are contributive in creating your reality. Your thoughts have nothing to do with the challenges, nor your feelings. A sense of fear doesn't necessarily mean, that the situation is unsafe, and a sense of being rejected isn't a proof, that somebody do not like you.

In this way you remain neutral observing. You avoid the evaluations, which emanates from the reaction-pattern of the past. And by doing so, you don't give the challenge's energy to the past. You avoid becoming absent in the past. On the contrary you become present in the Now. Your reactions become characterized by authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action

In this way you finish the situation, and you can leave it without leaving behind existential guilt. Only in that way something new can occur.

A situation which is lived true and present, and which therefore can be left in an energyflow, hardly takes any energy. A finished situation gives a sense of peace, a readiness for the Now, which then is. Do this with each and every situation you are in.

In this way the past's grab in your mind is automatically reduced. The past is no longer maintained by that energy, which from the challenges of the situations, becomes canalized into the specific reaction-pattern, which bad experiences in the past have created. This gives a constant increasing sense of freedom, of an unconditional state. The past loses its attraction. The energy flows back to the Now. The Now becomes the important; your

awareness is being filled by the clarity of the presence. Everything appears in a new light, and you discover new life possibilities.

The situation movements, which both consist of challenges and reactions, can therefore be seen as a mentor in the art of life. The challenge and the reaction is the mirror, in which you can discover yourself. And when you are looking in this mirror with awareness, then your life becomes a dance! In each and every situation your reactions become a dance with the challenge. And the challenge is the greatest dancer of all: life itself. The challenge is the unmoved mover in the Now, the source of life itself.

All this is happening in a letting go, in a melting, in a devotion to the dancer, which is life itself. Your dance is in other words filled with heartfulness, self-forgetful openness and absorption in life itself. In your dance you therefore melt together with the dancer in love. Your dance is short told a deep ethical practice, and therefore something you ought to do, and don't ought to loose.

What can I hope for?

Are your hopes relevant for the Now or not?

Do your hopes make your thoughts swing out in extremes such as desire after power, perfectionism, success?

Then your thoughts are not relevant for the Now, you are imbalanced, and the laws of life will balance you through contrabalances. You will in other words always learn, that your hopes become closely followed by problems, discomfort, anxiety, stress, worries, speculations.

That's the way of the laws of life.

Your future sucks out the life of the present, so that your hopes become your reality, while the Now becomes unreal.

Meditation is to make your hopes relevant for the Now. And this is not only mental training, it's an art of life. It implies, that you must begin to examine your worries, and transform them.

When your worries make you vulnerable for pressure, then get in contact with your inner Socrates, have an inner conversation started about the validity of your thoughts. Ask yourself the questions: what do you base your assumption on? What speaks for and against the assumption? Could there be other ways to perceive the situation? What would another person think in the same situation? Is the assumption based on selffocus and feelings rather than on outer facts and logic?

When your worries make you vulnerable for pressure, then recognize the origin of the worries in the future, and then bring your full awareness back to the Now, again and again, as Shankara said, because you can be sure, that the Now gives you degrees of freedom under pressure.

When your worries make you vulnerable for pressure, then let your heart bloom, think of everything you love, of all persons or animals which have shown you love, let everything in your heart bloom, your gratitude, your compassion, your trust, your devotion.

Then you will not only experience inner fulfilment, you'll also experience, that you receive help from outside, that things in a strange way succeed for you, that your problems are solved one after one – but of course not in the way, your ego wants.

That's the way of the laws of life.

How ought my attitude to war be?

A bit simplified said, then you can have two kinds of attitudes: an ideological and a philosophical.

Much the greater part has an ideological attitude. An ideology is a manifestation of the future. It can be political or religious, and it functions with the implied assumption, that the supreme good lies out in the future, and that the intention for this reason justifies the means. The goal is an idea, an point out in a future, projected by the mind, where the salvation comes in some form – happiness, satisfaction, equality, liberation etc. And the way to get there is to make people into means for this goal. Usually with start in a debate, where you work against each other, seeking to

demonstrate each other's flaws, and advocate assumptions as absolute truths.

It is this attitude, which often leads to war.

The philosophical attitude is much more unusual. It works with an ethical attitude where you precisely do not treat people as means, but as goals. For this reason it is in the Now. It uses dialogue, where two or more parts work together towards a common understanding, as well as they uncover assumptions in order to re-evaluate them. This means, that it works with a neutral form of observation, rather than the evaluating attitude, where you all the time justify and condemn.

And hereby it is able to find the thought-distortions which lead to war, for example the dichotomous thinking, where you arrange the world in a pair of opposites, as for example good and evil. This is namely a degraded and one-sided division, and is background for the black and white thinking which classifies all situations, events or things as an example of one of two extremes, when the actual fact is, that between the two extremes occurs a whole spectrum of other possible viewpoints.

But can war not sometimes be necessary? What about when my family becomes attacked? Yes, of course war in such cases can be necessary. But it is still necessary to discriminate between the ideological and the philosophical attitude – otherwise you can use the assumption about necessity as a finished conclusion, and for this reason as an assumption you can use to justify war, also in situations where it is inappropriate. And by doing so war can evolve into the catastrophies we so often have seen.

What about war and democracy then? Do we have to bring about democracy through war? Democracy is the best government we have right now, but if you put notice to it, then a lot of wars on the surface have been fought in the name of democracy, whilst the fact actual has been an attempt to force through an ideology. The most important work within a democracy is for this reason again this discrimination between ideology and philosophy.

The problem with democracy today is the egoextreme we are in (family-ego, company-ego, religious ego, national ego, armament, pollution, unequal distribution of the food of the earth). In accordance with the laws of energy this imbalance will be contrabalanced by crises, diseases, inner

mass-psychotic collapses, natural disasters, war. So the greatest work against war you perhaps can carry out, is the work with your own ego. This is much more important than you maybe think at first. *Gnothi Seauton* – know thyself. Those words stood written over the entrance to the Apollon temple in Delphi, where the holy Oracle accomodated. To know thyself is the entrance to all secrets.

The Ego is identified with time, and for this reason it problematizes life itself by comparing with earlier and hoping, desiring or fearing something else. And the more the Ego is identified with the opposites in the images of time, it polarizes life itself by thinking black and white. In this way it throws thought-distortions into the collective, common human dimension of time, which we all are a part of.

The antidote is the philosophical attitude, the neutral form of observation. And here you don't have to do anything else than to begin to observe yourself in this neutral way. And that is precisely the meditative art of life. And obversely that will throw clarity into the collective dimension of time. In other words it will affect all.

How ought we live in community?

Meditation as an Art of Life is to be in the middle of the Now, in the middle of the life and the world. Art of life is therefore not an escape from the world. Art of life implies both an understanding of your own thoughts, your relationship to your fellow human beings, and to the society.

Society has namely always been a reflection of time, which manifests itself in the thoughts of human beings, specially the thoughts' direction towards the future. The collective manifestations of the future have, as Eckhart Tolle says, either appeared in form of rigid religious believe systems, or ideologies such as nationalism, national socialism, communism and liberalism. They all function with the implied assumption, that the supreme good lies in the future, and that the intention therefore justifies the means. It has not been unusual that the means to get there have been to make people into slaves, or by torturing them and murdering them here and now.

The ideology today is consumerism, or consumer-capitalism, and the supreme good in the future is constant increasing production, constant

increasing consumption. And the means to get there is, through advertises and other propaganda, to make people into empty consumer-machines. Freedom is only consumer-freedom: the freedom to choose between as many articles as possible. Identity and meaning you only find in articles you can buy or sell. Defect consumers (as for example the elderly, unemployed immigrants) have become problematized or directly demonized. The production rush makes people sick of stress. Anxiety and depression are intensively increasing.

The absolute ruling political tool is economy, and the only ethics economy allows is the "happiness" you find in consumption. According to the economists (who are the wise men in a consumer-culture) we therefore are "happy" in the western world.

If you are an insider concerning this society-ideal, you will inevitable be an outsider in relation to the Now, life itself. Therefore art of life is to step completely out of this time-structure, and hereby into the Now. In order to be an insider in relation to *life itself* you paradoxically enough have to be an outsider in relation to *the society!* You have to be a Socrates, a Henry David Thoreau, a Gandhi or a Krishnamurti.

Total existential presence in the Now is to be self-forgetful engaged in life itself. Art of life therefore is love. In relation to your fellow human beings you therefore have to use dialogue, not debate (*débat*, from *débattre*, struggle, quarrel). Dialogue is co-operating: two or more parts are working together towards a mutual understanding. Debate is opposing: two parts are working against each other and are seeking to demonstrate each other's flaws. Dialogue involves a real interest in the other human being and won't seek to estrange or abuse. Debate involves a calculation of the other position without being aware of feelings or relations and often plays down and disapproves of the other human being.

In art of life you focus on, what cooperation and conversation require of you in order to that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don't lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don't manipulate), don't make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for example that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the individual person's autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other *not only as a mean, but also as a goal.*

The society-ideology of today doesn't live up to this, because it increasingly makes people into means for the constant production of consumption in the future. And this despite, that it believes, that it is an advocate for freedom, peace and human rights, yes, that it even can use war under those slogans. The question is namely, whether people in the non-western countries (the poor) now also are being made into defect consumers, whom you therefore have to use force against.

Therefore: become a social outsider in order to become an insider in life itself!

What makes it possible for us to understand each other without language, and with language both to agree and disagree?

In your innermost there exists a pure awareness, which also seems to be a quality of the Now, and therefore a quality of life itself. And life itself is to be present in the Now with *the whole of* yourself, in the self-forgetful openness and devotion to the world. Life itself therefore is love. Your innermost, the awareness, is in this way one with life itself, love.

This oneness is the Source, and in this source there is a non-linguistic, universal understanding, which all people are parts of: the wisdom – the Good, the True and the Beautiful. The Source is the unmoved mover of life.

But the Ego is the inner instance, which places itself outside life itself. The Ego does this by evaluating life itself, either from time, or from opposites. Under the Ego lie namely time and its images. The images are both personal, collective and universal, and therefore they are found both *in* us and *around* us in the movement of nature. They are energy-formations, and therefore also a kind of matter. Nethermost lie the universal images.

Each of the universal images is made up by opposites as for example light and darkness, sound and silence, time and space, subject and object, identity and difference, heavy and light, long and short, high and low, masculine and feminine, good and evil, life and death. Each image includes in other words both a pole and the antipole of this pole.

These images are language which no longer is verbal, but superior, visionary syntheses and wholes. From these images the most universal models originate: philosophical, scientific, religious-spiritual and cosmic world-images. These images are close to what Plato called the world of forms, which means, that they are images in a great vision of creation. They are the models behind creation, that which makes possible, that we altogether can make concepts of life itself.

Often this universal vision is compared with the Holy Script. Johannes Scotus Eriúgena for example said, that the Holy Script is a text, which contains an endless number of meanings and which can be compared with the shimmering feathering of the Peacock.

For example the Koran is considered to be such a holy script. It's a book which is said to be older than the Arabic language; you can neither study it historical or philological, because it is older than language, older than the Universe.

The Pentateuch, or the Torah, is also such a holy book. An inexhaustible intelligence is claimed to have condescended itself to compose a book. The Holy Spirit has condescended itself to literature, what is as equally amazing, as to suppose, that God has condescended himself to a human being. In such a book there can not be anything accidentally, contrary to, that there in all human scripts are something accidentally.

This has affected the Kabbalah, the Jewish mysticism. Biblical seen, then it is the common opinion, that the words of God were the tools, he executed his work with. God created the world by using words; God said, that there should be light and there became light. In the Kabbalah they presume, that it were the letters, which came first; that the letters were God's tools, not the words which the letters were standing for. In other words they believe, that the holy script came before the spoken words. Therefore nothing in the Holy Script is accidentally. Jewish mysticists therefore treat the holy script, as if it had been a cryptogram: cryptographical.

For example the thesis is, that if you can find God's name in four letters – and can pronounce it correct, then you will be able to create a world and will also be able to create a Golem, a human being. Within the Kabbalah there is, in that way, found legends of Rabbis, who have discovered this name, and who have created Golem's to serve them. Thus also described in Gustav Meyrink's novel *The Golem*. This novel starts in the known myth

from Prague about the artificial human being, a Golem, created by a Rabbi. The novel has something of Prag's oddity about it, and is about dreams, which forfeits themselves in other dreams.

In the same way the persons in Herman Hesse's utopian future novel *The Glass Bead Game*, have created a Glass Bead Game, which language of symbols and grammar together forms a kind of high developed code, in which several sciences, but notably the mathematics and the music (or the science of music) have part, and which is able to express nearly all sciences and bring them in relation to each other. The Glass Bead Game is accordingly a game with all the content and values of human cultures, and one can play with them in the same way, as a painter play with his palette colours.

Herman Hesse says in the novel: "What mankind in its creative epoches have produced of realization, the high thinking and works of art, what the scholar's contemplation of the following periods have put on conceptual form and made into intellectual property – the whole of this enormous material of spiritual values the Glass Bead Player play on as the organist on the organ, and this organ is of a perfection, which hardly can be grasped, its manuals and pedals reconnoitre the whole of the spiritual cosmos, its registers are nearly countless, and theoretical seen it would in the game, with this instrument, be possible to reproduce the entire intellectual world content."

Our language, all our fictional productions, is, as the above examples show, reflections of the universal images in the great vision of the creation. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, then a library therefore is a magical room with a lot of bewitched spirits. They wake up when we call them. When we open a book an esthetic occurrence is happening. Because we are parts of the movement of time - which with its images both flows through us, and around us in nature - then the same book changes, as we changes. The text itself is after all also the River of Time, or Heraklit's River. Language is in that way an esthetical creation.

The philosopher Francis Herbert Bradley said, that one of the effects of poetry is to give us the impression, not to discover something new, but to remember something forgotten. When they for example wanted to make a portrait of the philosopher Plotin, he said no with the following reason: "I myself is a shadow, a shadow of the archetype which is in heaven. How

can you make a shadow of that shadow?" According to Plotin art was nothing but a shine of a second class, a reflection of the eternal images.

The argentine writer Enrique Banchs said: "If human beings are fragile, how can an image of a human being then be delightful?" Banchs felt in this - in accordance with Jorge Luis Borges – the ghostly nature of the mirror – the reflection of one of the universal images of time. In the same way it is said in an Iranian poem, that the moon is the Mirror of Time. The fragility of the moon is also it's eternity. Time is, as Plato said, the movable image of eternity. Anything fragile is movable images of eternity. Eternity is found in the universal images. But with the negationpower, and the outgoing movement of time, the universal images become split, and become progressively perishable, material. The world is manifested.

As Borges says, then we in that way, in the mirror, see the doppelgänger, or the negation, the reflection of an image from another world. It's the strange and magical about the mirror: "as a moonlight in the dark."

In The Gospel of Thomas Jesus says: "When you see your reflected image, you are pleased; but when you see your images which existed before yourselves, that they neither die or reveal themselves, how much can't you bear then?"

The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with the wholeness. They seek to put together, to synthesize, to join. In that way they constitute a common human consensus. We can all agree about them.

But in the consciousness' identification with thinking and time, the Ego is, as mentioned, created. And the Ego uses the negationpower of time to make resistance. The resistance consists in problematizing life itself by comparing with earlier and hoping, desiring or fearing something else. And in this evaluation-process the Ego splits up the universal images. It identifies itself with one pole in a pair of opposites, for which reason the polar partner is expelled. In this dividing process the collective and personal images arise, and herewith all the disagreements.

Consequently the universal language, and the movement of time, reflect themselves in your thinking, but because of the Ego's evaluations the images are divided in words and analysis; what you could call thinking in opposites (subject as divided from object, good as divided from evil, love

as divided from hate, perfect as divided from fiasco) - words and sentences which work in sequences in past and future, extremes, or analyses.

In other words the Ego, in its identification with opposites, tends to debate, to work against other people, and seeks to demonstrate their flaws.

However art of life is to move yourself backwards through the whole of this structure, which is created by the outgoing movement of time. Art of life is therefore, as Plato made it clear, to remember the outgoing movement's negation, namely the backmovement of time, the memory of the universal vision and the universal images.

In accordance with Plotin then *The One* (the Source), in its eternal and continual radiation, first of all manifests itself as thought, which in its individualized form shows itself in the soul, which again find its way to the body, the lowest and the most random expression of being. The purpose of life for the individual therefore is to move the opposite way: from the low to the high, from the random body and all its lust to *The One* and all its light. In art of life this consists in practising neutral observation rather than evaluating; it is to be in the Now rather than in the past or the future; it is to think between the opposites, rather than to think in extremes; it is to use dialogue rather than debate; it is to, together with other people, to work one's way towards a mutual understanding; it is to use language from the universal images of time, rather than the personal or collective images of time.

And finally it is also to let go of the backmovement of time. In physical sense this means death. But within mysticism they also describe enlightenment (Unio Mystica) as a kind of death. This death consists in dying from time and its images, for hereby to step into the Now and be made transparent by the Now's non-linguistic oneness, the Source from where awareness and love flow, and in which we all have a mutual understanding of the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

What is a human being?

Meditation as an Art of Life is to understand Man, and in order to understand Man, you must begin to examine why you have lost this understanding, and have become ignorant.

Man is for example an desirous being who primarily seeks happiness, truth, release or liberation. It was this Aristotle claimed in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. This search is a reflection of the outgoing movement of time, a vision of the future. But in this search Man invests the Now's energy in the future. The mind is getting absent-minded and creates a negative and self-circling absence. It is a state of becoming without any being. In other words: it is a state of non-being, nothingness. It's unhappy, characterized by anxiety and ennui. It's an existential fall.

This state of becoming implies, that Man also is a historical being. The past and the future have an unbroken continuum, which both contain an universal history, a collective history, and your own personal history, and this history consists of images which have a linguistic character. Unreality is to confuse the images with reality.

Thus Man also is a linguistic being. Under the ordinary spoken language lie time and it's images. The deepest and most universal of these images are, like mandalas, made up by opposites. They are in other words kinds of syntheses, and their language has a visionary character. This language reflects itself in your thinking, but the images become, by the Ego's evaluations, divided up in words and analyses; what we could call thinking in opposites (subject as divided from object, good as divided from evil, love as divided from hate, perfect as divided from fiasco). In this way there happens a degraded and one-sided division of the world, yes, a direct distortion of it.

The images of time (both universal, collective and personal) are formations of energy, a kind of matter, and they occur both in your body and around you in the movement of nature. Man is therefore also a natural being. Matter is energy and energy is the movement in nature, an outgoing movement and a backmovement. This double movement implies some universal laws of energy, which primary purpose fundamentally are to create balance in the Wholeness. When you have lost the Now's unmoveable being, and are absent in time and opposites, your energy will build itself up in wavecrests, which therefore must break in troughs of the waves. It will swing out in extremes, which will be balanced through contrabalances. It will invest the life-challenges in past reactionpatterns, and leave behind situations unfinished. It will build itself up in inappropriate pulse beats, move outwards, circulate and return to its starting point.

Meanwhile art of life is Man's possibility to get out of his existential fall.

The laws of the energy mean that everything is connected within a wholeness. And to float with the energy-stream is to devote yourself, and remember the laws of the energy-stream. Not to forget the one pole, when the energy flows to the other. Not to forget the backflow, when the energy flows outwards.

To remember the energy-laws is to be aware not to become absent in the past and the future, whether it is the universal, collective or personal history; and it is to be aware of the opposites in your language and thinking. To remember the energy-laws is to remember the Wholeness. To rest in the Wholeness is in genuine sense art of life.

The Wholeness is one with the Now's unmoved being, which is the Source of Life. This source can also be described through the concept of Spirit. When Man rests in the Wholeness he is transparent in Spirit. Thus Man also is a spiritual being.

What is the relationship between falling in love and Love itself?

Falling in love is not Love itself. Falling in love lies within the area of thinking, and therefore within the area of time. Love itself lies within the area of meditation, namely the Now.

Falling in love depends on images, partially collected from the more collective depths of time, partially from your personal images, and therefore from your growing up conditions. However the original images of falling in love are coming from the deepest and most universal images of time. These images are, like mandalas, composite by opposites, therefore a kind of syntheses. As Aristophanes claims in Plato's Symposium (which is about Love itself), then Man in his original mythological state was a double being. However when the Ego is coming in contact with such an image, then the Ego divides it in pieces in order to analyze it, understand it. And by doing so you get all the comparisons with earlier and the hopes/fears of something else, and the separated opposites such as subject and object, love and hate, male and female.

In this way a female gets an inner male image. A man gets an inner female image. Concerning homosexuality, then the circumstances, which constitute the lifesituation of the individual, have created another situation, but the inner image will under any circumstances reflect a longing after unification with an opposite pole, therefore a longing after wholeness. Falling in love arises when these images become projected on another human being.

That way falling in love implies a fount of contradictions. Falling in love is for example dependency. The other side of dependency is anger and fear and powerlessness over being so dependent. Furthermore the inner images can themselves be split. This can imply, that you cannot turn on sexually upon types you fall in love with, and vice versa. The man's inner female image can for example be divided up in the madonna/whore type. The woman's inner male image in the hard/soft type.

Furthermore falling in love, and sexually turn on, has something to do with the painbody (see the philosophical question *What are feelings?*). A person's painbody can be attracted by another person's painbody. This explains the peculiar ways in which people can be attracted by each other. For example why certain women again and again are falling in love with men that beats them up.

And since falling in love depends on images, reality will gradually uncover these illusions, and then the alienation and apartness appear, and therefore the mistrust.

To be able to manage this precisely requires Love itself, and therefore meditative art of life. The three aspects of meditation are relaxfullness, awareness and heartfullness. You must allow to loosen up the tensions, which the images of falling in love create. This requires a neutrality in your attitude to the various expressions of such tensions, therefore awareness. And the awareness again implies a melting, a letting go, a devotion.

The absorption, which takes place in and with such a relaxfull melting and letting go, leads in other words automatically in towards your heart. The Source opens itself, and feelings like gratitude, compassion, trust, care, gentleness - starts to trickle from your heart, like rays of sunshine through clouds.

Only this enables the genuine lovemeeting between human beings.

What are feelings?

As Eckhart Tolle says, then feelings are the body's reaction on the mind (the thoughts). Feelings arise where the mind and the body meet. They are reflections of the mind *in* the body. The mind creates a build-up of energy in the body. It's this energy, which is the feeling. It may be a lustfull feeling, or a feeling of unlust.

If you really want to learn your mind - or otherwise said, your thinking - to know, then the body always gives a true reflection of it. If there is conflict between the thought and the feeling, then the thought is lie and the feeling truth. A negative feeling is a true reflection of a false thought. It might be difficult to observe your thoughts, but they will always be reflected in the body in form of feelings. To observe a feeling is the same as observing a thought. The only difference is, that while a thought is up in the head, a feeling has a strong bodily component.

Feelings can also be a reflection of a whole thoughtpattern. A thoughtpattern can create an enlarged and energycharged reflection of itself in the form of a feeling. This means, that the whole of the thought's past also can create a reflection of itself in the body. And if this past is filled with pain, then it can show itself as a negative energyfield in the body. Tolle calls this the emotional painbody. It contains all the pain you have accumulated in the past. It is the sum of the negative feelings which you have "saved together" through life and which you carry. And it can nearly be seen as an invisible, independent creature. Therefore we also could, as H.C. Andersen does in his fairy tale, call it the Shadow.

The painbody is what we speak about, when we say, that somebody can have a dark side, or a wild side, as in Robert Louis Stevensons novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, or Ursula le Guin's Earthsea cycle about the wizard Ged, and in Herman Hesse's peculiar novel *Steppenwolf*.

The painbody is the inner demon, or the devil in the heart. Some painbody's are relatively harmless, some are anxietyfilled or angry, others are directly malicious and demonical. They can be passive or active. Some are passive 90% of the time, others are active 100% of the time.

The painbody is activated in the same moment as specific challenges activate the inappropriate basic assumptions, which have been created by bad experiences in the past. And they are being maintained by the vortex of negative automatic thinking, which follows from these basic assumptions. In other words it constitutes a rather particular reaction-pattern, a manuscript, which gets you to play the same role (or the same roles) again and again. That will say, that specific situations will continue to activate it, so that your actions become an eternal repetition of the same. It takes control over you, so to speak.

The painbody is, together with your identification with the thoughts (the Ego), the two major obstacles in order to open your consciousness in towards the Source. The painbody lives of, that you are identified with it. When you are identified with the painbody, you are absent in the past. In this way the painbody gets your energy. And for that reason you also gives energy to your negative feelings.

The task is therefore to off-identify yourself with it. This happens by being it present in neutral observation. But how can you recognize it? The painbody shows itself as negative feelings. What is a negative feeling? It is a result of a contradiction created by the Ego. By saying yes and no, accepting and denying, choosing and leaving out, justifying and condemning - the Ego splits up the images of time. The split and contradictionfilled images of the Ego, show themselves in the body as form-formations of energy, creative tensions. It's these tensions, which provoke the negative feeling.

A negative feeling is in other words a feeling, which is poisonous for the body, and which hinders it in functioning balanced and harmonical. Fear, anxiety, anger, grudge, sadness, hate or strong disfavour, jealousy, envy – all are they up-tensed images, which disturb the energy-stream through the body, and thereby affect the heart, the immune defence, the digestion, the hormone production etc.

A common name for all negative feelings is dissatisfaction.

Whenever you have negative feelings, then be aware, that it is the painbody which now is active. Then it is about just being neutral observing. The negative feelings come from the contradictions and divisions, which are a result of the Ego's evaluations. In this way neutral observation neutralizes

this contradiction and division. Then you don't give energy to the painbody (see more about this art of life under the philosophical question *What do I ought to do or not to do?*). Moreover you can change its negative energy through Heartmeditation, which means compassion, devotion etc.

Beside the individual person's painbody you can also speak about collective painbody's. A family can have a painbody, as well as groups and countries can have a painbody. You can also say, that places and areas can have a painbody, which means a shadow, a negative energyfield, which affects all within its reach.

Finally it has to be mentioned, that the state in the Source itself hardly can be called a feeling. It's rather a state of being, a being in the timeless Now – a being one with life itself, with the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

Learn more about feelings under the supporting exercise *The Heartmeditation*.

What are suffering and happiness?

The Danish philosopher Niels Thomassen examines suffering under the following five categories: unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety and meaninglessness.

Unreality consists in, that the Ego constantly compares the Now with earlier and hopes, desires or fears something else. This way the Ego makes the Now (the existential facts), into a problem. Hereby there is created resistance. The Ego places itself outside life itself. Unreality is in this way the experience of, that what happens around you, and with you, do not concern you, that you are not in it, not involved. You are not here, nor other places, but outside, in the meaning absent. A condition filled with negativity.

Division consists in, that the Ego, through evaluations of the images of time, split the world up in opposites (good and evil, power and powerlessness, perfect and fiasco, love and hate). Thereby is created a line of one-sided and extreme basic assumptions (for example "I always have to be perfect!") and rules of living (for example "unless I always am perfect, then I am a fiasco"). But the energylaws of life will seek to balance these

imbalances, for example through contrabalances (perfect becomes fiasco). Hereby there arises negative automatic thoughts, and then you have the anxiety, the depression, the destructivity.

Stagnation has to do with being identified with the past. This identification forms an image of itself in the body, a negative energyfield; that which Tolle calls the emotional painbody. The painbody contains all the pain you have accumulated in the past, and when it is activated there arise negative feelings, and your actions will be a never-ending repetition of the same.

Anxiety has to do with that you are too much in the future, in your plans and projects. You constantly form shape energy, whereby the energy runs up in your head. It forms a creative, spiral-like up-tension of the whole of your being, so that you lose contact with reality. You become paralysed, the world becomes a threat to you, the space narrows, and there arises dizziness. You become constrained, captured and characterized by lack of life courage.

Meaninglessness is created by, that your mind (your thoughts) removes itself from the Now and invests the Now's energy in the past and the future. The mind is getting absent-minded and forms a negative and self-circling absence, characterized by ennui. Regardless how much meaning you in this way seek to find in the past or the future, then it will not be real meaning, because the loss of the Now always will lie behind in the form of emptiness.

These five categories constitute together the suffering, which in this way is a part of your life situation. Like this suffering has a past and a future. The past and the future form an unbroken continuum, unless the Now's releasing power is activated through your aware presence: Meditation as an Art of Life. Behind all the different circumstances which constitute your life situation, and which exist in time, there in other words exists something deeper, more essential: life itself, your being in the timeless Now itself.

If you activate this deeper dimension you will get the opposite categories: reality, cooperation, movement, safety and meaning.

Reality is middle, is fullness, lies in light. The middle is the quality, which lies in, that you are not decentralized, not apart from yourself, not absent from the actual. On the contrary you are in the middle of the actual.

Cooperation means that you think flexible, that you are capable always to look at the challenges from different viewpoints, for hereby to find a balance.

Movement has to do with, that you don't make resistance, that you transform the painbody's negative energyfield, so that the energy can flow unhindered through you. At the same time you open yourself to the life-source, which is the unmoved mover behind everything. And then you find yourself in the middle of the stream of life.

Safety means that you have found ground connection. The creative up-tension has become relaxed down into the earth through a melting, a letting go, a devotion. The world has become a place where you feel at home. You are free and filled with lifecourage.

Meaning arises when the energy flows backwards from the past and the future, and fills the Now with presence, and therefore with joy of life. You are present in the Now with *the whole of* yourself, in the self-forgetful openness and devotion to the world. The Now is awareness. Life itself is openness and therefore love. The Now and life itself is the same. In this way you discover, that the meaning of life is to express the awareness and the love which both are the essence in yourself and the essence behind everything else – the Source.

Why is there altogether anything?

In ancient Indian scriptures it is claimed, that the Universe is in meditation. The Universe *is* meditation.

The great wise men have always sensed this. Often they went out into the desert to be alone with themselves and nature. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry talked about his wonder over the desert; over the wind, the sand and the stars. His books are filled with wonderful meditations over this, yes, that the night could be so beautiful, that he, as a pilot over the desert, often felled into thoughts, and was in danger falling down.

It all seems to be there for a *reason*.

But the fewest of us give nature these thoughts. Most of us are *outside* nature, as inner thinkers who judge the facts from the past and the future. We are constantly busy circling around our own past and future. Therefore we are not able to see what actually is going on.

For could it be, that the Universe is there in order to teach us something?

If you sit down in nature, you will inevitable be absorbed by the movement in everything. It's Heraklit's River. It's the River of Time, which flows through everything. And maybe you discover, that this movement actual consists of two movements, an outgoing movement and a backmovement. Both the manifestation of the World and it's return to the unmanifested, it's expansion and contraction, consist of these two universal movements. These two movements are reflected throughout the Universe in many ways.

Matter is energy, and energy is the movement in nature, the movement of time. The outgoing movement of time is created by a great vision of the future. In this outgoing movement the great vision is shattered into many images, which now become memories. As then the backmovement is created, the longing after the great vision, which now is the past.

Thus the movement of time contains images, both personal, collective and universal images. These images are in other words form-formations of energy, a kind of matter, and they exist both in your body and around you in nature.

All these images only exist in relation to their negation. You may say, that time itself is a negationpower, a negation of the Now, or maybe rather: a negation of the unmoved essence in the movement of time. Time is, as Plato said it, the moveable image of eternity.

Because of the negationpower of time, all images contain a structure of opposites. The most universal images include their polar partners, and it is these images, which lie in the great vision of the creation. It's them, which are the models behind the creation of light and darkness, sound and silence, time and space, subject and object, identity and difference, heavy and light, long and short, high and low, masculine and feminine, good and evil, life and death.

You could call these universal images a kind of energetical mandala-structures or Yantra-fields. They have a linguistic nature, but it is of a

visionary kind. The images are composite of sound and colour, symbol and structure. You could also say, that they are what the philosophers call unmoved matter, an worldaspect of sound-colours and symbol-structures, an ocean of vibrant, soundfilled energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colours. Altogether filled with information about life. Together this great vision is an information-ocean of holographic nature, but not more mystical than many within science have begun to develop theories about, that there necessarily must exist such an information-ocean, for example the Russian professor D. Zielinski and the Hungarian researcher Ervin Laszlo.

In your spiritual history there is a map. This map shows the dream-tracks and the songlines in the artwork of your spiritual life. This map is an universal image. Is is also what could be called progressive karma, or what Karen Blixen called God's plan with you.

There is no doubt about, that Karen Blixen, though not fully conscious, had a sense of this map. All her books are about destiny seen in this way; they are about people who either live in accordance with this map (God's plan with them), or in discordance with it. This map, this universal image was, what she referred to as the "ancient", the "original", and which she always was seeking as authenticity, autonomy, possibility, freedom and adventure. And a universal image is of a holographic nature, therefore it contains all other images, personal, collective and universal, and therefore it contains the dream-tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life.

The more the universal images of the information-ocean however become thrown out in the outgoing movement of time (the negationpower), the more their polar partners are expelled. But because energy works as streams and dividings within a wholeness, as the Yin and yang teaching describes it, the expulsion is not possible, and the result is contradiction and division. The more energy which hereby is build up in the one pole of a pair of opposites, and the more the second pole is expelled, the more will the abandoned pole influence stronger and stronger on its polar partner. Finally the energy will therefore switch over in its opposite. This is because, that energy seeks to return to its starting point.

This law has many sublaws. These laws for example cause, that energy moves in wave-movements, pendulum-movements, situation-movements, and circulation-movements. When energy is build up in a wavecrest, this wavecrest will always be followed by a trough of the waves. When energy

is build up in an extreme, this energy-swing will always be followed by a swing over in the opposite extreme. When energy is build up in a situation, this energy will function as a challenge, which causes reactions. When energy is build up in a pulse beat, this pulse beat will move outwards, circulate, and then return to its starting point.

This is what you could call compensatory karma (hybris-nemesis, the will of God etc.)

In your dreams you can in particular observe the energy-laws through two dream-functions: 1) that dreams seek to balance the energetical thought-swings you have made in your awake life, and 2) that dreams seek to finish your unfinished situations (see also the philosophical question *What are dreams?*)

The energy-laws work in all cycles of life. On the plane of the outer forms there are birth and death, creation and destruction, growth and dissolution of apparently separated outer forms. This is reflected everywhere: the life-cycle of a star, a planet, a physical body, a tree or a flower; in the rise and fall of nations, political systems and civilizations; and in the inevitable cycles of gain and loss in the individual person's life.

A cycle can last from some hours to some years. There are big cycles and small cycles within the big ones. The cyclic nature of the Universe is closely connected with the impermanence of all things and all situations. Buddha made this into a central part of his teaching.

There are cycles with success, where things come to you, and you flourish, and cycles with defeat, where they wither away or wear down, and you become obliged to let go of them, in order to make space so that new things can arise, or so that there can happen a transformation. If you cling to them and make resistance at that time, this means, that you deny accompanying the stream of life, and then you will suffer.

As long as your awareness is identified with thinking, you will have lost the contact with your deeper being, and only exist in the movement of time. You'll have your identity in your lifestituation and be ignorant about the Source of Life. Therefore you will also suffer by being subject to the energy-laws and life-cycles in the movement of time. But suffering is closely connected with the fact, that you make resistance against impermanence.

If you however know the energy-laws, you will know, that it is not true, that the up-cycle is good, and the down-cycle is bad, except in the mind's judgement.

The energy-laws in the movement of time apparently function with the intention to teach you to play *Lila*, God's Game. And the intention with this game is basically to create balance in the Wholeness. Rather than resisting impermanence, then try to deepen yourself in the energy-laws of the life-cycles; try to follow their play through your perceptions and experiences. If you are on a wavecrest, then remember the trough of the wave. If you are in the one extreme of a thought-swing, then remember the opposite extreme. Try to finish situations by reacting with presence on challenges. Remember that your energy-radiation recirculates, and returns to yourself.

All this is art of life, all this is meditation.

In this way you can find more and more rest in a deeper form of being, which not itself is in motion – a being, which is middle and lies in light. What Aristotle called *The Unmoved Mover*.

You will be able to open up in self-forgetful openness. You'll discover that you *are* life itself, that you *are* the unmoved mover - that there in your innermost exists a pure awareness, which the meaning of life is to express, and that it is also this awareness which waves through the Universe in a meditation of immense depths.

You are an ocean that waves, with a deep filled by peace.

Is there a meaning of life?

The meaning of life can only be found in the Now. If the meaning of life were in the future, then there would not *be* any meaning. If it were in the past, yes, then life also would be meaningless. A life in time is in other words meaningless, agonized.

So regardless how much meaning you seek to find in the past or the future, then it will not be real meaning, because the loss of the Now always will lie behind in the form of emptiness.

Meaninglessness is created because your mind (your thoughts) removes itself from the Now and invests the Now's energy in the past or the future. The mind is getting absent-minded and creates a negative and self-circling absence. Meaninglessness is characterized by absence, emptiness and loss. Meaninglessness is unreality.

In unreality you are standing outside the Now as an inner thinker, who judges the facts from the past or the future. You are beside yourself, away from the actual.

Conversely meaning is that experience of life-feeling, spontaneity and self-forgetfulness you are in, when you are completely existentially present in the Now. This is obtained through training of awareness – Meditation as an Art of Life.

In awareness-training energy flows back from the past and the future, to the Now. The energy, which was invested in sorrows and bindings, plans and problems, flows into the Now, and fills it, increases the intensity and the consciousness in the Now, collects the mind from its absent-mindedness and creates a self-forgetful and positive presence.

The meaning of life is due to your innermost. Your innermost is the awareness. The feeling, that life has a purpose, is due to a feeling, that there in your innermost exists a pure awareness which the meaning of life is to express; an awareness which seems to be a quality of the Now, and therefore of life itself.

An awareness, which is an entering into reality.

A reality, which is presence in the Now, fullness and fulfilment. A reality, which is meditation.

In meditation you exist in such a way, that you yourself, your being, happens fully. Reality is middle. Real being is the being, which is in the middle of itself. A being, which is middle, fullness, and lies in light.

The meaning of life therefore is to unfold the awareness in your innermost, which is one with life itself. This happens when you are in the middle of the Now, in the middle of the actual, in the middle of the stream of life, and therefore are open to the Source of Life, which is the Good, the True and

the Beautiful. In meditation this dimension is opened like the petals in a flower. It shines, fragrances and flows from your heart, and from everything else.

What are dreams?

Dreams are a continuation in the sleep of the thinking in the awoken state. The awoken state thinking is primarily characterized by words, while the thinking in the dream state primarily is characterized by images. When you fall asleep the thinking in other words dissolves in images. In the Danish poet Ole Sarvig's poem *Daystreams* it is described in this way:

The day's murmurous slim river
widens out by evening
and becomes night's deep,
for miles, obscure lake,
reflecting the stars.

And deep by the bottom of the lake
the day's wild stream has
it's way in dreams.

The structure of thinking lies in time and its images. The thinking, and therefore the dreams, reflects in that way the double movement of time. On some deep level the dreams reflect the outgoing movement of time, which in the dawn of time took its beginning on the background of a great vision of the Universe, the future. The dreams reflect this outgoing movement's negation of the starting point, the Now's unmanifested being, the Source itself: the Good, the True and the Beautiful. And they reflect the negationpower, which shattered the great vision in a multitude of images, which in this way came to work as kind of memories of the vision, now the past. Finally they reflect the backmovement, the longing after the great vision.

So the images in the movement of time are shattered reflections of the great vision of the Universe. They are shadows, dreams, masks, fables, fairy tales, fictions, and they flow in the movement of nature itself – they are, as the Tibetan Buddhism says, relatively valid dreams.

In the scriptless peoples' religions, or in the world of the child, the dreams are episodes under the awoken state. To the poets and to the mystics it is not impossible, that the whole of the awoken state is a dream. As Shakespeare says it in his play *the Tempest*: "We are of the same substance as our dreams; our short life is encircled by a sleep." This is not totally wrong, when you consider, that the images of time flow in the actual movement of the matter.

The awoken state (which perhaps also just is a dream) is characterized by reality-experience, clarity, precision and stability. The Ego is active, knows its biographical, historical and cultural identity. Abilities and education are stable and cumulative. The world is reasonable stable: things, nature and human beings are recognizable and only change themselves after reasonably predictable patterns. The awoken state, and the responding larger sense of reality, is therefore so much more intense, the space around is so much larger, the clarity so much deeper - than the dream state.

In relation to the awoken state there are therefore, in dreams, great lacks and limitations. Dreams are thinking in images, but the sense of reality lacks. In dreams you often don't know where you are, whom and what you are. You can be all roles, carry all masks, have all ages and be both gender in every imaginable occupation. This creative richness and multiplicity of the dream state meanwhile costs identical clarity and stability.

Borges quotes the argentine author Paul Groussac - who in the section *Among Dreams* (in *the Intellectual Journey*) - says, that it is astounding, that we each morning wake up sensible and reasonable, after having passed through this territory of shadows, through these dreamlabyrints.

Borges furthermore claims, that dreams are fictions, fictional productions, which means: productions of the thought. He quotes Addison, who notice, that we in the dream both are the theatre, the spectators, the actors, the topic and the words we hear.

And after all this is correct, when you consider, that dreams are a continuation of the thinking, which structure lies in time and it's images, which are of a linguistic character.

In the awoken state the Ego is active, and therefore the Ego's evaluations also are active. But the double movement of time is reflected in the Ego, because the Ego is created in the consciousness' identification with the

thinking, and therefore with the images of time. Therefore you can say, that the awoken state also is a kind of dream. The actual sense of reality, or the awoken state itself, comes from the Now.

Because of the negationpower of time the images of time only exist in relation to their negations. The most universal images in the movement of time include their polar partners, they are a kind of visionary mandala-structures or yantrafields. The more collective and personal images expel their polar partners. Yet this is in accordance with the images' logic not possible, and the result is contradiction and split.

This split is also reflected in the Ego, which makes resistant against the Now, and therefore in fact against reality, or the awokenness. The resistance consists of problematizing the Now by comparing with earlier and hoping, desiring or fearing something else. And in this evaluation-process the Ego identifies itself with the one pole in a pair of opposites, wherefore the polar partner is expelled. The Ego says yes and no, justifies and condemns, accepts and denies, chooses and expells, either by using the past or the future, or by using opposites: by using time the Ego problematizes the Now by comparing with earlier, and hoping, desiring or fearing something else; by using opposites the Ego polarizes the Now by thinking black and white. Altogether caused by the various split images/assumptions of time, which constitute the Ego's selfunderstanding and outlook on life. Furthermore the Ego develops strategies with the purpose to maintain this selfunderstanding, or to avoid being confronted with it – the so-called thought-distortions. And all these assumptions and strategies are together constituted by words and sentences, which work in sequences in past and future, and in extremes, or analyses.

In the dream state there meanwhile happens a reduction of the Ego, which therefore no longer can maintain its selfunderstanding. This means that the universal images of time can come more into expression. And it is through these images, which the Source can express itself – they are reflections of the Source so to speak. These images are of a more visionary character, but they are still linguistic interpretations. Unlike the words meanwhile, then each universal image always includes, like a mandala, its opposition. The universal images are in other words a kind of syntheses, which work more in synchronism with the Now than in sequences in past and future.

In the concrete dreamcontent, which can be personally or collectively, the universal images work in form of symbols. The symbol is a telescoping, a

representing quintessence of the information quantities, which the wholeness in the universal image contains. In this way the symbol-function of the dreams has a development function, which works with the person's development level (the level of realization-work and ethical practice). This means, that dreams seek to put together, to synthesize and join, what the Ego in the awoken state has divided. This development function try to show you the map of your spiritual history, the dreamtracks and songlines in the artwork of your spiritual life – your progressive karma. But therefore it is also impossible for the Ego in the awoken state to understand the dreams. It can well be, that the Ego finds that the dreams cost identical clarity, but the Ego can logical seen not understand their function. Much dreaminterpretation is therefore completely deceptive.

Furthermore the dream state is connected with the body. When you fall asleep the energy flows away from the head and down into the body – you can feel it when you become sleepy, and the feet becomes warm. And therefore dreams are more characterized by feelings than by thoughts. Feelings are the body's reaction on the thoughts. Feelings arise where the thoughts and the body meet. They are a reflection of the thoughts in the body. The thoughts create a build-up of energy in the body. It is this energy, which is the feeling, and it is in this energy the images of the dreams show themselves. In order to understand a dream you therefore have to try to feel it rather than to think it. And if there is conflict between the thought and the feeling, then the thought is lie and the feeling truth.

The Ego-weakening, and the dreams' connection with the body, furthermore do that the energylaws of life work much better in the dream state. In other words: dreams balance the energetical swings of the thoughts. And dreams seek to finish unfinished situations. If you follow your dreams you will see, that wherever and whenever the Ego's awoken life - on the background of evaluations using opposites - has slipped out in one extreme, then the dreamprocess seeks to balance this imbalance by insisting on the opposite extreme. If you awake were too gentle, the dreams depict the more stubborn and unfriendly sides in your personality. If you were too negative, the dreams seek to bring the positive aspect into light. And each and every time the Ego in the awoken life reacts on the challenges of the various situations, by using the past, an unfinished situation is left behind. The dreams seek to finish this as good as possible. As you know you can have the same type of dreams again and again – until you begin to examine yourself, and change and restructure your

thoughtpatterns, so that you can let go of the situations. This is your compensatory karma.

So firstly the dreams has a development function through their symbolfunction (progressive karma). Secondly the dreams function with reference to bodily and energetical balancing and regulation of the swings of the thoughts (compensatory karma). This, the self-regulating system of the dreamprocess, is a Sisyphean task though, as long as you in the awoken life don't help.

It can result in nightmare. As Borges says, then it is not impossible that we in the dreams are in Heaven, or that we are in Hell. What does the nightmare consist in? The nightmare has to do with the contradiction and split that lies in, that the expulsion of the images' polar partners logical seen not is possible. All images imply the negation. But the more extreme you are thinking, the more you expel the negation, and therefore your contradiction and split are so much larger. The dreams - or the energy-laws in the dreams - will seek to contra-balance this contradiction, or finish a complicated unfinished situation. This can result in a dream which can be nightmarish unpleasant.

The nightmare can be illustrated in the following way. In Dante's *Divine Comedy* it is said, that there somewhere in Hell lies a noble castle, *Nobile Castello*. Here the shadows live, the negations of human beings. Here rules God's absence, which is the negations themselves. The castle is eternal - eternal and dignified - but it's a horrible castle. Everything is horrible here, here rules a nightmarish atmosphere, episodes with physical discomfort, a feeling of persecution, a terror element, an element of the paranormal. And Dante is forced to talk with all these shadows. He is forced to confront the negations.

When you in a nightmare are forced to confront the negations, but at the same time don't practise realizationwork and ethical practice in your awoken life, the nightmare will be characterized by contradiction and split. It is this doubleness, which creates the terror in the nightmare.

The paths and the locations in a nightmare imply two types of terror. The one terror lies in the paths. Each point on a path is determined by the negation of the point, which itself is determined by a third negation etc. The path constitutes in other words a serie of points with no end. The points themselves are limited extents. This means, that there never will

come a time, where you will get out over the limited points. On the path you become forced from point to point without ever being able to reach the unlimited, this endless, which would bring the path to finish. And yet the path is endless.

The second terror lies in the locations. When each location is determined by the negation of it, this means, that it might well be, that the location is divided from its negation, but nonetheless identical with it. This means, that each location is an endless number of locations, an abyss of worlds, countless, swarming, branching off to all sides in labyrinths, yet without that the worlds ever become mixed together.

You can see this terror illustrated by Borges himself in all his stories. You can also see it in M.C Escher's works, or in the films by David Lynch.

In fact it is the same type of split you can experience, when you are looking up towards the stars and become captured by this wonder over the infinity. How can it just go on and go on? But it is due to, that something, which by nature is limitary, namely the thought, seeks to grasp the unlimited. Something, which by nature is expelling, seeks to grasp the all-inclusive. It results in a feeling of endless split, which again results in a lot of logical anomalies, paradoxes and problems. And it is these logical problems which lies underneath the thought-distortions, for example Dichotom Thinking and Catastrophe-thinking, and therefore underneath a lot of inappropriate assumptions and rules of living (learn more about thought-distortions in the supporting exercise *The Philosophical Diary*).

It also has to be said, that if you are ill, have eaten or drunken too much, then this, mixed with just a little Catastrophe-thinking, also can result in nightmare.

In order to make changes in your dreams, or nightmares, it is necessary, that you in your awoken life support the work of the energy-laws in the dreams. This is what is called Dream yoga.

If you therefore begin to practise being in the Now, and flexible (deep) thinking, you can exempt the dreams from having to contra-balance imbalances and finish unfinished situations, what will give an ever increasing feeling of freedom. You'll progressively experience dreamless sleep. Dreams are, as Borges says, a work of fiction we can improve. In

dreams we not only need to be in hell, we can also be in heaven. We can accompany Dante on his ascent through the Purgatory towards Paradise.

Finally I will therefore mention the actual sleep state. Each time you fall asleep, you in fact move through the three aspects of meditation, namely relaxfullness, awareness and heartfullness – until you finally arrive in the Source, the Good, the True and the Beautiful. The great spiritual masters have been aware of this since the dawn of time. Already in the Upanishads you can find it decribed in the principle: the enlightened state is akin to deep, dreamless sleep.

Furthermore it is claimed, that you go through the same planes in the moment of death.

The first condition, in order to fall asleep, is that you can relax in the body and in the mind. The relaxationprocess creates a neutrality in your attitude to all the various expressions of tension (the awareness). This again brings about a melting, a letting go, a devotion (the heartfullness). In this letting go the fall into the Source happens. Unlike meditation meanwhile, then this fall implies that the awakenness is lost, and that the sleep happen. Some times people experience this opening inwards as a shivering fall, which you with a jump again wake up from.

But the actual fact that you in the deep dreamless sleep are in the Source, is the reason why the sleep is so healing. It is actually a satisfactory and happy state. It is the same state, an enlightened person is in, for example Jesus or Buddha. The sleeper doesn't know it under the sleep. That is the whole of the difference. And after all it is quite fascinating to think about, that you at least one time a day are in the Source to everything.

What do paranormal experiences consist in, and how ought my attitude to the paranormal be?

You ought to be very careful concerning paranormal experiences, because they can be due to a spiritual crisis. The Czech-american psychiatrist Stanislav Grof has made a pioneering work mapping different types of spiritual crises, which I below, on the background of my own experiences, present in a slightly reworded version:

- **The awakening of kundalini.** Described as a snake-like energy, which in spiral form moves itself from the foot of the spiral column up in the head, while it opens a line of psychological centers, called chakras. The phenomenon is especially known in connection with the Indian Tantrism.
- **Para-psychic opening.** Visual, auditory or emotive knowledge about a past and a future, which lies outside your own personality. Is especially known in connection with different types of clairvoyance.
- **Spiritual crises as a hero's journey.** The experience of yourself as a hero who travels through a mythological and fantastic empire, filled with good and evil forces, as well as a fount of other sharply marked opposites. It often culminates in the meeting with death and the following rebirth. Such death-rebirth themes are known from ancient schools of mystery, as well as in the transition rites of scriptless peoples' religions.
- **The shamanic crisis.** At the beginning of his career the shaman often goes through heavy ordeals, the so-called initiation crisis. The initiation often includes a journey to the underworld, where the shaman aspirant goes through terrible ordeals with diverse demons and other mythological creatures. As in the hero's journey the initiation often culminates in the experience of death, dismemberment and extinction. Typical the extinction then is followed by resurrection, rebirth and ascension into heavenly regions.
- **Channeling.** The ability to make contact with divine creatures and levels of consciousness, which is thought to possess informations of spiritual value for people, and through the body mediate communication from these levels.
- **Close encounters with UFO's.** Experiences of unusual light phenomena, communication with aliens, or experiences of being abducted by aliens, or of travelling with them to other worlds.
- **Breakthrough of memories from past life's.** Sequences of experiences, which take place in other historical periods and/or other countries/planets – or in connection with karmacial experiences.

- **Near-death experiences.** Experiences, which are connected with death or the death process. This can be experiences of anxiety or existential guilt, but also experiences of a peaceful, harmonic condition after death.
- **Possession states.** An experience of, that your mind and body (it can also be things or places) have become invaded and are controlled by a being, or an alien energy, which can be of divine or demonic kind. Often with inexplicable bodily manifestations.
- **Oneness-consciousness.** Experiences of oneness between inner and outer, strong positive feelings, transcendence of time and space, feeling of holiness and paradoxical nature.
- **Alcohol and drug abuse.** The strong longing after alcohol or drugs corresponds on a low level to our own being's spiritual longing after wholeness: the unification with God. The important role of the ego-death under the above mentioned types of spiritual crises is a direct parallel to the abuser's experience of "hitting the bottom." Can for example be seen reflected in the "Beat Generation", and the works of the Beat writers. Another aspect of alcohol and drug abuse as spiritual crisis, is that alcohol, and some kind of drugs, can relieve the intense stress from other kind of spiritual crises.

Spiritual crises are not due to mental disease, but are manifestations of time and it's more collective and universal images. These manifestations are often accompanied by some deep and powerful energies (or forms of energy), which penetrate the whole of your being. And this can, in the meeting with the painbody (the thought's negative energyfield in the body), be heavy filled with suffering. Therefore such crises often in the psychiatric system are misdiagnosed as mental disease, due to a lack of knowledge about, or rejection of, such forms of energy. This often makes the crisis even worse. Furthermore you also see the above-mentioned phenomena rejected, and ridiculed, from one or the other individual branch of science. But this ends in reductionism, the viewpoint that everything can be explained from one or the other individual branch of science. The erroneously in this lies in, that reductionism is a philosophical viewpoint and not a scientific viewpoint. Science can't answer the problem of lifeviews and views of values.

Symptoms of a spiritual crisis can be:

1. Burning hot or ice-cold streams, which move up through the back.
2. Excitation in the abdomen, along the spine, and up in the head.
3. Vibrations, restlessness or cramps in legs and other places in the body.
4. Pains, tensions or stiffness in the back of the neck, as well as headpains.
5. Fast pulse and increased metabolism.
6. Sensitivity to sounds, people's presence and other influences.
7. Sense of orgasms different places in the body, or total, cosmic orgasms.
8. Mystical/religious experiences, revelations and/or cosmic glimpses.
9. Para-psychic abilities, light phenomena.
10. Problematic balance between sexual impulses and spiritual urge.
11. Anxiety because of uncertainty about the process.
12. Weakened concentration power and lapses of memory.
13. Sleeplessness, manic exaltation alternate with depression and lack of energy.
14. Total isolation because the inner experiences can't be communicated out.

The presence of the mentioned symptoms is however not a reliable criterion for, that it is a matter of a spiritual crisis. The criterion is also, among other things, that the physical symptoms can't be explained through medical science, as well as that you, in psychological sense, are able to discriminate between your own inner experiences and the outer surroundings.

The crucial criterion is however, that the experiences are accompanied by one, or more, of the following existential conditions: unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety or meaninglessness.

Spiritual crises often appear as unintended consequences of yoga, upward meditation techniques, body-oriented- and experiential psychotherapy, healing, energy transmission (for example Deeksha/Shaktipat), different types of rituals. The problem is, that many experiential psychotherapists, meditation teachers, or other spiritual teachers, often don't know, that the techniques they work with, directly are developed in order to provoke the above-mentioned phenomena, in the belief that such crises always have a healing and transformational potential. Or else they are not aware of the depth of the dimension they are opening up for. They don't know the fire they are playing with.

Among other factors of release can be mentioned: births, unhappy love, celibacy, deep sorrow, high fever and intake of drugs. But a spiritual crisis can also come suddenly without traceable cause. You can suddenly have a paranormal experience.

The wisdomtraditions have always claimed, that the above-mentioned phenomena come from the more collective imageworld of time, which consists of highly abstract form-formations of energy. This imageworld has had many names: it is Plato's world of forms, the Bardoworlds of the Books of the Dead, the Anabasis of the mystery cults, the image galleries of the Alchemists, the Akasha Chronicles, the collective subconscious, the dreamtime of the aboriginals etc. etc.

This imageworld has a relative validity, because it lies outside the area of the personality, and seems to have a paranormal character. It is on a so-called astral plane. The deceitful (relative) about it is, that it lies in time, which means: in the past and the future. If you therefore identify yourself with it (the above-mentioned phenomena), then you relate absolute to the relative, and remove your consciousness from the Now, which is the actual reality and being. The Now is left empty and meaningless, the absolute is vanished. Furthermore you become a helpless victim of the swings of the energy-laws, and then you have the spiritual crisis. As mentioned this can result in deep suffering, but it can also result in ego-inflation.

I use the expression Kundalini Guru in connection with gurus (spiritual teachers of all kinds: spirituals teachers, clairvoyants, medias, therapists etc. etc.) who unknowing are in one, or more, of the above-mentioned spiritual crises - but who lack philosophical integration, which means: realizationwork and ethical practice. Firstly this means, that they not from the ground understand what there is happening. They so to speak confuse the image with reality, and relate themselves absolute to the relative. Secondly this means, that they haven't got their own ego restructured and changed. In other words they don't recognize the nature of the Ego, wherefore they again and again identify themselves with it. Therefore they are able to misuse and lead people on the wrong track. They have become caught in an ego-inflation.

The major spiritual self-deceit is, that they seem to be able to "demonstrate" their abilities, because they actually, either have contact with an extraordinary knowledge about a past or a future, which lies outside

their own personality – or else they have contact with extraordinary energies and forms of energy.

Furthermore shall be mentioned the many people who only imagine, that they have extraordinary abilities, and don't hold themselves back in involving other people in it. This is partly because of a lack of self-esteem, partly the egoextreme and the ideological consumer-capitalism the society is in. A big problem is in this connection all the "spiritual" educations you today practically can draw in an automat, if you have money enough. These educations are typical taken in a few weekends, after which you get yourself some homemade title as therapist, coach, clairvoyant or spiritual teacher of one or the other kind. There practically seems to be speculated in finding new peculiar titles. But such educations can of course not give the sufficient experience, and there is no doubt about, that there in the grey, alternative market rules a wild growing (and uncontrolled) market of quackery and spiritual misguiding.

For example then the thought-distortion *Research has shown that...* is extremely widely spread within this environment, where concepts as research and science too often become mixed with spiritual concepts. Again an example of the lack of ability to understand one's own ideas as philosophy, and not science.

The phrase *research has shown that..* is in the alternative environment often used to convince the listener about, that the one who speak can substantiate what he says with concrete empirical proof. But this is an example of subjective argumentation, a kind of unethical manipulation (often based on wishful thinking), because it is extremely vague to claim that "research has shown" anything, unless you can substantiate the assertion with specific details about the claimed research. Who has carried out this research? Which methods were there used? What exactly did they found out? Have their results been confirmed by others who are working within the region? Science works with empirically evidence, or empirical content. But within the spiritual area you don't work with content, but with essence, and this has nothing to do with science, but with philosophy.

Therefore be very careful with the fascination of "spiritual" authorities. Krishnamurti said again and again, that you in your spiritual practice never must make yourself dependent on gurus and other spiritual authorities.

A test of authenticity is the level of philosophical integration.

Much simplified you can say, that the spiritual crisis arises because the thoughts, in one way or the other, have built a big volume of energy up in a wave. Whenever the thoughts build energy up, this energy is taken from the Now and led into the past or the future. The past and the future are the time-dimension of the thinking, which physical reflection-spot lies in the head. When the thoughts therefore build energy up, this energy runs up in the head. Said in another way there is formed a spiral-like, creative up-tension of the whole of your being.

When this tension is rising to a certain critical point, it breaks like a wavecrest, and there occurs an experience of one or the other kind. The experience is the breaker of the wavecrest. The built-up energy breaks in the experience's contents and visions, feelings and symbols. And when the built-up volume of energy is big enough, you can create an opening, through which the contents of time and it's images can begin to flow in.

Time is not just the personal history, but also the collective and the universal history, and therefore the contents of time and it's images are unfathomable. An absolute fascinating perspective, and dangerous. With Borges you could try to illustrate this fascination by comparing it with the fascination the western nations got, when they discovered the Orient. As Borges says, then you, in this connection, can talk about the "the Consciousness of the Orient". And in this way you can compare the fascination of time and it's unfathomableness, with the fascination of a sapphire from the Orient. That is: an oriental sapphire filled up by Thousand and one Night. Something magical, something enchanting. And it is exactly such a kind of fascination many people get over the phenomena in the different types of spiritual crises.

In Italo Calvino's book *the Invisible Cities* Marco Polo sits and tells Kublai Khan about all the cities he has visited during his journeys in the Orient. However the whole thing is one big fantasy-game, one big play with time and it's images, which endless content can flow out everywhere, for example in the labyrinths of Venice – because all the invisible cities Marco Polo is telling about, is a description of one only, complete, city: Venice. A description, which, because of the limitation of language, ends in an endless description of the negations of Venice, the invisible cities within Venice.

When Borges uses the concept Thousand and one Night, then he often refers to the circumstance, that the word "thousand" almost is synonymous with "endless many". To say thousand nights is to say endless many nights, the many nights, the countless nights. To say "Thousand and one Night" is to indulge one more to the endless many. The conception about something endless is similar in nature with Thousand and one Night.

To create an opening where time and it's images can begin to flow in through, is like opening an endless book. But the thought's fascination of this can transform itself into something nightmarish, because the thought - which by nature is limited - is seeking to play with the unlimited. The thought, which by nature is expelling, is seeking to understand the all-inclusive.

It ends up in a feeling of endless split. Everything has a negation which itself has another negation, etc. You open up for an endless book - or you can try to think about these Chinese balls within which there are other balls - or of the Russian dolls.

In Thousand and one Night Sheherazade is putting the Sultan off with stories, which never have any ending. With stories, which are inside other stories, she produces a mighty effect, almost of something endless, which gives a kind of dizziness.

Thus also in Lewis Carroll's books about Alice in Wonderland, or his novel *Sylvia and Bruno*, where there are dreams inside other dreams, which branch and multiply themselves.

As Borges said one evening under a talk, then Thousand and one Night is such a mighty book, that it is not necessary to have read it, because it is a part of our memory, which already exists, and also were a part of that evening, where he said those words. Thousand and one Night's endless time is still going on – it continues to grow, or reproduce itself. It is created of both the personal, collective and universal time, which we all are parts of through our thinking, through our minds.

In its positive aspect the contents of time and it's images are sublime and divine, and therefore a source of fascination. Many so-called upward meditationtraditions work with building energy up in a wave, in order to have an experience of this sublime and divine content. Among other things you do this through concentration – it can be concentration on a chakra, a

mantra, an object, or something else. But you must always remember, that concentration alone is a pure mental thing, and therefore a thought-activity.

In the egoextreme of our time you always hear people talk about, that they want to have experiences: "I want to experience something!" "I need experiences!" "Unless my life is filled with experiences, it is not worth anything!"

But such thoughts are actually dangerous, because experiences haven't anything to do with realization, nor the calmness you can get through the supporting exercises. Experiences can work as support for realization, but they can also work opposite. The danger lies in the identification with your thoughts and your painbody – and therewith in the identification with the whole of time's imageworld, which is the structure under the thinking. The identification itself is the same as the Ego, and the energy, which is build up in the positive aspect of the imageworld of time, will be able to blow the Ego up in inflation.

If you ask the philosophical question: "Who is it, who wants experiences?" you soon discover, that it is the Ego. Realization on the other hand, the Ego doesn't want, and will at any price seek to avoid it, because it would be the end of the Ego (the Ego is the same as ignorance). Therefore it is also very few people who will go in to in a real spiritual practice. Most people want to remain on the plane of wishful thinking and daydream.

Many people within the alternative environment speak about their spiritual practice without actual accounting for, what this spiritual practice is about. If you ask into it, you often discover, that it is more or less made up by chance by different self-help books – of course those who tell the most seductive story. That is: which is filled by positive images.

The "positive" aspect of a spiritual crisis is the most self-deceptive, because it more often than not ends up in ego-inflation and total lack of self-realization. That it is a matter of a crisis is characterized by the fact, that the positive aspect, like the negative aspect, contains elements of unrealized unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety or meaninglessness.

The images of time will as *images* always be defined by their negations. And in its negative aspect the contents of time and it's images therefore are frightening and demonic. The opposites in this structure can in this way not be separated, but are defining each other. So the more you identify yourself

with one pole in such a pair of opposites, and expel the second pole (which it is the case in the Ego-inflation), the more the abandoned pole will work stronger and stronger on its polar partner. This is because, that energy works as streams within a wholeness. The energy you have build up in the divine pole (which you have to remember only is an image), will in this way finally switch over in its opposite demonic pole. Simply in order to balance an imbalance within the Wholeness.

It seems to lie in the nature of human beings, that they want to experience the forbidden, the impossible, without making deeper considerations over it, wherefore they again and again become exposed for suffering. Thus also captain Ahab in Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*, who doesn't realize the madness in wanting to revenge himself on the white whale, which after all is not a whale, but an image of the cold (demonic) emptiness of the Universe, which Ahab try to fill with meaning.

Many in a spiritual crisis have experienced such a contra-balancing development. This is the aspect of suffering, but on the other hand also a much better possibility for self-realization.

When you identify yourself with your thoughts and your painbody, you loose your being and become identical with the swings of the energy-laws, which within the Wholeness work as an universal balancing-system (as for example also seen in the teaching of Yin and Yang, where too much Yin brings about a swing over in Yang and vice versa). In this identification you will in other words be exposed for troughs of the waves, for contrabalances, as well as karmacially return-swings. And these will be very heavy taken in considering, what volumes of energy you in a spiritual crisis are dealing with.

A spiritual crisis in its negative aspect is known under the term *the Dark night of the Soul*.

All people in an intensive, spiritual training (regardless what tradition it belongs to) run in a short time through a considerable amount of existential stuff, which is the cause to suffering. This existential stuff lies in time and it's images. Certainly you wake up to a greater presence and a greater life-intensity. But this is also an awakening to your own and others, realized or unrealized, suffering.

Meanwhile there is a big difference between whether the spiritual training develops into a spiritual crisis or not. The spiritual crisis is closely connected with the Ego. That is: the identification with the thoughts and the painbody, and therefore with the images of time. In this identification, when it is a matter of a spiritual crisis, the mind so to speak becomes flooded with experiences of *the contents* of time and its images, and you don't understand what is going on. And therewith you either have the ego-inflation or the deep suffering.

However this doesn't happen, when the spiritual training goes off correctly. And it is my experience, that the so-called downward meditation-traditions is a much better securing for spiritual crises, than the upward meditation-traditions.

To practise Meditation as an Art of Life must necessarily come within a downward meditation-tradition, where all creative up-tension, through being in the Now, is relaxed away from the images of time. In this practice the energy flows back from the past and the future, back from sorrows and bindings, plans and worries, and down through the head, down into the body, which becomes surrounded by the new energy's presence and joy of life. The whole thing happens through a melting, a letting go, a devotion (the heartfulness, the ethical practice). And such has the progress for example also been described by enlightened masters such as Sri Aurobindo and Martinus.

When you practise Meditation as an Art of Life you don't transform your life with the wave-movements of the energy. And in this spiritual safety you are present as a calmness, a resting, unaffected being present, which knows about the energy-swings; which knows that the image doesn't correspond with reality, yes, which relates itself relatively to the relative and absolute to the absolute. This meditative being is seeing and accepting the energy-movements, but is not identical with them. It is a stable presence in the middle of the energy-wave's build-ups, breakings, peaks and valleys.

This meditative being lies in a deep understanding and acceptance of time and its images – as well as of the lawfulness the energy follows. And therewith it is in the middle of the stream of life, and is open for the Source of Life.

The confrontation with time and its images - and therewith the existential stuff which creates suffering – does in this condition therefore not consist in, that you open up for *the contents* of time and its images. The confrontation consists here in a realization of *the essence* of time and its images. The confrontation has in this way a completely different healing and transformational value. You begin to get experiences of glimpses of the Source of Life – the Good, the True and the Beautiful – because realization in itself is closely connected with this source. This also gives a gradually increasing feeling of, that you are spiritual safe on your journey towards this source.

Is there a God?

Who asks the question? And who is it, who wants to inquire into it?

There are a lot of various conceptions of the divine. Monotheism stands for the faith in one god, and is a fundamental doctrine in Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Also Sikhism and Zarathustrism are monotheistic religions, and different kinds of Hinduism as well as several scriptless peoples' religions, as for example African Maasai, have monotheistic conceptions of God. Characteristic for the monotheistic religions are, that they often regard the one God as a creator-god, who have created the world and all the things in it, and as the sovereign and perennial ruler over this work of creation.

Contrary to Monotheism you worship multiple gods in Polytheism. The gods in a polytheistic religion are often thought to be a gathering or group, a pantheon, or they are arranged in multiple groups or systems, as for example in the ancient Greece, in Nordic mythology, as well as in some parts of Hinduism.

In some religions the divine is furthermore thought to transcend the world, which means: to be beyond the world, that can be experienced by human beings, or to be superior to it. In other religions the divine is regarded as immanent, which means: inherent, present in the world. This doesn't necessarily mean, that one can seek it out and see it, but that it in various ways is thought to manifest itself in the world: in holy animals, in statues, temples and holy places and above all, in the cult.

Furthermore there is the question if you see the divine as a personality, or for example as a mountain or a river. You can also speak about heavenly gods opposite to earth gods etc., etc.

This difference in the religious conceptions of the divine is an example on, that these conceptions origins from time and it's collective images – yes, even the different paranormal experiences within the religions are manifestations of time and it's images (see the philosophical question *What do paranormal experiences consist in, and how ought my attitude to the paranormal be?*).

Both the conceptions, as well as the paranormal experiences and manifestations, therefore origin from something relatively, and not something absolute (therefore miracles are not any proof of, that a certain religion is the absolute true).

In addition to this there is the problem with ideology, and therewith with *the future's* collective manifestations. These manifestations precisely appear as religious believe systems, that functions with the implied assumption, that the supreme good lies out in the future, and that the purpose therefore justifies the means. Ideology is larded with thought-distortions, such as *dichotom thinking* (good versus evil, justification versus condemnation, us versus them etc.), *selective abstraction* (to perceive particular parts of reality and leave out others), *arbitrary conclusion* (to make causal linking of factors, which are accidental and misleading).

These thought-distortions create – when the images of time have become split by the Ego's evaluations - the dogmatics of the religions, their myths and conceptions.

This leads to, that you begin to oppose the religions of others and seek to demonstrate their errors, yes, that you altogether exclude the solutions of others' religions; calculate them without being aware of feelings or relations; cry them down and disapprove of them, often with alienation and abuse as a result. Therefore so much war and violence in the wake of the religions – and of course a product of pure human misinterpretations of reality.

So how are you to find out, whether there beyond all this is something divine – something absolute?

If you for example look at the great religions, then there within these religions arised what you could call philosophical oriented therapy-forms. Thus Gnosticism and Mysticism arised in the earliest and medieval Christianity, Sufism in Islam, Hasidism and Kabbalah in Judaism, Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism, and Zen and Dzogchen in Buddhism.

Unlike the established religions then these philosophical therapies presuppose no religious dogmatics, ideology, myth or conception. They put their emphasis on realization and inner transformation. Herein the philosophical element. It was precisely these philosophical therapies, which Aldous Huxley called *the Perennial Philosophy*. And they correspond to Meditation as an Art of Life.

The work with realization and inner transformation within these philosophical therapies led to a realization of, that there in our innermost is a pure awareness, which the meaning of life is to express. All these traditions have expressed this awareness as a quality of the Now. But since this awareness is a quality of the Now, yes, then it also had to be a quality of life itself. And since life itself was experienced as being present in the Now with *the whole of* ourselves, in the self-forgetful openness and devotion to the world, yes, then life itself had to be regarded as love. Furthermore our innermost, the awareness, in this way had to be one with life itself, love. And this oneness could precisely best be expressed by the concept *The Source of Everything*, because it both seemed to be the essence in ourselves, and the essence behind everything else.

This essential powerfulness in the Now *is* life. This power is something carrying, something granted, something which is greater than yourself. Something which you can characterize as an absolute Otherness in relation to the created world. It is the instance, which leads you out to the things in an opening and involving way. This power exist in the Now's relations to everything.

So the self-forgetful life is spiritual because the lifefulfilment which life itself contains is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternally and endless.

So if you are present in the Now, actively and involved from the awareness, the innermost in yourself, and from the heartfullness; that is to say: totally, with the whole of yourself, and therefore in self-forgetful freedom and

world absorption, then you will experience eternity and infinity. You will experience the true essence of nature, which is the Otherness.

So the question is in actual fact not whether there is a God, but how you can find the answer yourself, by opening your awareness in towards this source.

Is there a life before or after death?

When you speak about a life *before* death, don't you speak about the past then? And when you speak about a life *after* death, don't you speak about the future then?

You think about the past in memories, historical events, experiences, knowledge, memories, sorrow, traumatic bindings, bad conscience etc. And you think about the future in images, plans, hopes, longings, wishes, conjectures, worries, fear and striving.

The whole of this stream of thoughts rises in other words from time, and therefore it also reflects the double movement of time. On one hand it reflects the outgoing movement of time, which in the dawn of time started due to a mighty universal vision of the Universe, that is: the future. The power of this outgoing movement originated from a negation of the Now's unmoved being. And therewith was created a longing back towards the origin, a backmovement towards the universal vision, which now, because of the negationpower, was divided into a myriad of images, that is: the past.

These images, which both are personal, collective and universal, consist of opposites: past and future, life and death, subject and object, good and evil, justification and condemnation, love and hate, power and powerlessness, perfect and fiasco. These opposites can't be separated, but form each other, and in the universal imageworld they swing between each other in vibrant, soundfilled mandala-structures and Yantrafields. Each and everyone of the universal images contain in other words such a polarized structure.

Plato was so fascinated of this imageworld, that he meant, that it was therefrom we came before birth, and that all realization is about recollecting this golden age and return to it. He therefore focused on the backmovement of time. The religions are so fascinated of this imageworld,

that they believe, that it is there we arrive to after death. That is: a paradise we ought to strive after. They therefore focus on the outgoing movement of time. But what fascinates them all so much is in short: time and it's images. And therefore they both relate absolute to the relative – they confuse the image with reality.

Can you for example talk about life as something which is before or after? Does life not only exist here and now? And when does death happen? It is not in the Now? But is the Now not life itself then?

Death therefore seems to be a quality of life itself. Life is neither before or after death. Life is in the middle of death. Death is the death of the past and the future, and therefore death also is a cessation of the images of time, both in their personal and collective and universal forms. Therefore we also always have been talking about meditation as the Art of Dying.

Meditation is awareness-training, and awareness-training is about turning the whole of the awareness towards what happens here and now. By concentrating yourself about the moment, you can lay a distance to time and it's images, and therefore to the stream of negative thinking, which always is characterized by guilt-feelings, repentance, anger, complaints, gloom, bitterness – or discomfort, anxiety, tension, stress, worries.

By laying a distance to the thoughts, and placid yourself outside your moods, sensations and considerations, you can enter into the Now and be in the middle of the Now.

Death is to die from the past and the future. Death is to step into the Now. And then you find yourself in the middle of the stream of life and open to the Source of Life.

Supporting exercises

The Relaxationmeditation

Meditation as an Art of Life is, like the term says, a constant process which takes place all day through, and actual also in the night in the dreams (dream yoga). To ask philosophical questions – the self-inquiring practice – can't be limited to some specific moments.

But the supporting exercises can be limited to some specific moments. You can concretely say, that a person who really wants to experience an existential transformation process, shall reckon in, during a number of years (besides the constant self-inquiring practice), to practise the supporting exercises about 2 hours a day.

I myself have good experiences with the following program for the supporting exercises:

Morning: 1½ hour practice. The first hour goes with the Hara meditation, and the last half hour with the Heart meditation (however the focusing in Hara is continuing during the day no matter what I do).

Evening: Before dinner I practise Hatha-yoga. However I only practise the stretching-exercises, and leave out the special yoga-breathing (Pranayama), because it can be dangerous (see the philosophical question *What do paranormal experiences consist in, and how ought my attitude to the paranormal be?*). But I consider the stretching-exercises in Hatha-yoga to be the very best mean to keep the body flexible and healthy. And that the body is flexible is an absolute necessity in a spiritual practice, where you begin to get an increased flow through of energy. So I can only recommend, that you learn some simple yoga stretching exercises.

After the stretching-exercises I practise the Relaxation meditation for about 20-30 minutes.

The two last supporting exercises *The Change of suffering into Enlightenment* and *The Philosophical Diary*, I practise in combination with the above-mentioned program. The philosophical diary I moreover use as a diary over the meditative art of life as a whole. In this way the book you are reading in, can be seen as a result of my own philosophical diary.

So if you want results it is necessary that you as quickly as possible get the timescale of supporting exercises up to about 2 hours daily. In connection with Meditation as an Art of Life there is nothing that says, that you as a beginner have to start with a lesser timescale. However it is clear, that there

will be a period of transition, where you learn to know the exercises, and where you of course can't practise so intensively.

The three fundamental aspects of meditation are relaxfullness, awareness, and heartfullness. Relaxfullness is both physical relaxfullness and a relaxed mind. The relaxation begins concrete bodily by allowing loosening of the un-neccessary muscular tensions. This happens in the progressive relaxation. But the relaxationprocess continues into the mind to the life of the will. This happens in the depth-relaxation.

If you are very stressed, anxious or tense, the exercise can be practised 3-4 times a day. Be sure that the feet are warm. Use for example a hot footbath or a carpet.

Place yourself on the back on a good supporting surface (hard mattress or the floor), with the legs slightly spread and relaxed (you can also sit in a chair and do the exercise). The relaxation begins with *progressive relaxation*. The body is divided into a series of muscle-groups. Each muscle-group is tauten and relaxed by turns.

- Clench the right hand, and feel the tension in the hand and in your forearm. Hold it tighten in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 seconds, and then relax. Wait 10-15 seconds.
- Clench the left hand, and feel the tension in the hand and your forearm. Hold it tighten in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 seconds, and then relax. Wait 10-15 seconds.
- Bend the right elbow, and tighten the muscles in the upper arm, while the hand keeps on being relaxed. Hold them tighten in 5 seconds, and hereafter relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Bend the left elbow, and tighten the muscles in the upper arm, while the hand keeps on being relaxed. Hold them tighten in 5 seconds, and hereafter relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Stretch the right leg, and bend the right foot and toes upwards. Hold the muscles in the muscle of the calf tighten in 5 seconds, and hereafter relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Stretch the left leg, and bend the left foot and toes upwards. Hold the muscles in the muscle of the calf tighten in 5 seconds, and hereafter relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Tighten the thigh muscles in the right leg by pressing the knees together, without that they touch each other. Hold the tension in 5 seconds, and relax in 10-15 seconds.

- Tighten the thigh muscles in the left leg by pressing the knees together, without that they touch each other. Hold the tension in 5 seconds, and relax in 10-15 sec.
- Take a deep inhalation, and pull the stomach completely in. Tight at the same time the muscles in the bottom of the back. Hold the tension in 5 seconds, and relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Hold the breathing, and tighten hereby the muscles in the chest. Hold the tension in 5 seconds, and relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Shake the shoulders, and pull hereafter the shoulders all the way up to the ears, so that the shoulder- and neckmuscles are tauten. Hold the tension in 5 seconds, and hereafter relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Press the back of the neck against the floor, and tighten hereby the neckmuscles. Hold the tension in 5 seconds, and hereafter relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Press the lips together, and bite the teeth together, so that the jawmusculature is tauten. Hold the tension, while you are breathing silent and calmly in 5 seconds. Let go, and relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Pinch the eyes together in 5 seconds. Relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Furrow the forehead by lifting the eyebrows. Hold the tension in 5 seconds, and hereafter relax in 10-15 seconds.
- Pull the eyebrows together down over the eyes. Hold the tension in 5 seconds, and hereafter relax in 10-15 seconds.

If there is a special part of the body, which gives you problems, you can repeat the tension and the relaxation there.

Hereafter you depth-relax the whole the body. Let the arms lie comfortably in a natural distance from the body and down along it with the palms upwards. But if you don't think it's comfortably, just place the arms in a different way, or move their position from time to time. If the awareness on your tensions leads to more tension, then try to lie and move the arms back-and-forth, shake them, hold them for example a few seconds over your head, stroke them with your hands, massage the face, change their position with regular interval. This helps you to lead focus away from tensions. Finally you will be able to relax completely.

Let the head rest comfortably, where it feels best, for example on a soft underlay. Let the breathing become silent by itself, and then begin to breathe from Hara (see the exercise *The Hara meditation*). Let the diaphragm steer the breathing-rythm.

Also let the mind become silent, and be neutral observing. Now let this awareness relax each and every part of the body, from feet to head. Be especially aware on the face, the eyes, the mouth, the tongue and the throat. Let the lower jaw droop a bit. Let a pleasant weight descend over the bodyparts, which the awareness is directed towards. Imagine that the bodyparts become so heavy that they sink down into the floor. Now let go of the exertion of your will.

Every exertion of the will (ambition, project, concentration) is in the meditative art of life inappropriate. It's therefore the wisdomtraditions always have recommended the simple life. And it is in connection with this, that you probably will meet the first big obstacle in your meditative quest. The simple life is namely a life, which our consumer-society will sneer of. In a consumer-society the ideal life is a constant growing consume-capacity, and therefore a life where you all the time have to be future-oriented and in progress with new projects. So if you seriously want to go in depth with the meditative art of life, but don't feel you have the time for it, that your life don't allow you to relax your will and your projects, yes, then it is necessary that you take your life up to consideration. Either you begin to simplify your life – which can imply big changes – or else you continue as always.

Back to the relaxation-exercise. When you register performance, when your mind wants to make an effort, then is it about, that you loosen off the tension of the will. This letting go, in relation to tension, refines your ability to perceive and feel more subtle patterns of tension. You discover, that also thoughts and images are due to tension. And you discover that thoughts and images lie in time, that they arise whenever you are absent in the past or the future.

Thoughts and images (both personal and collective) are form-formations of energy. And form-formations are creative up-tensions. They both exist around you in fascinating mandala-structures, and in your body. These form-uptensions you have to permit to loosen up during the training.

Now stay lying in the Relaxationmeditation for about 20-30 minutes.

The Harameditation

The Hara meditation consists of two parts:

1. The sitting Hara meditation
2. The walking Hara meditation

The sitting Hara meditation

To be practised each morning, preferable right from the very moment you open the eyes, because it's here your absent-minded thought-activity starts with new strength.

The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, that the wise rules by emptying the mind and filling the stomach. Here he refers to the concept Hara (in Chinese: Tan Tien). A help to carry the awareness with you out in the everyday life, out in the action, is Hara. In Taoism and Zen Buddhism, you therefore practise focusing in Hara as basis for maintaining the awareness in action and everyday life.

The training of awareness must necessarily begin with focusing or concentration. And at this point there are a lot of pitfalls in meditation, because what shall you focus your consciousness at (a point between the eyes, an inner image, a chakra, an outer object, a mantra or a prayer)? Through focus and concentration the energy level is rising, and how do you secure, that this increased energy flows into the Now, and not into the thoughts and up in the head, with the risk of ending up in a spiritual crisis? (see the philosophical question *What do paranormal experiences consist in, and how ought my attitude to the paranormal be?*). My own experiences with a spiritual crisis tell me, that Hara-focusing is the best guarantee, that the energy flows in the right direction. And if the energy already circulates wrong, then the training of Hara will correct this. Hara is in other words the absolute central entrance to the Now, and therefore an existential necessity for balance and life-unfolding. This is valid for all people, so therefore you might just as well from the start have Hara with you in your awareness-training.

Hara is your vital centre, an area in the body, a centre of gravity, which main center is situated about 4-5 cm under the navel, inside the front body. In Japanese Hara not only means stomach in anatomically sense, but has existential meaning. Hara is therefore not a chakra (psychic centre). Here I think about *Svadhithana* and/or *Manipura*. This has to be emphasized, because in a part of the modern time's New age-ideology there rules the

idea, that Hara is a bodily focus-spot at line with those Chakras, you find in the Tantric yogis' description of, how the thoughts reflect themselves in the human body in form of energy-spots – that is: the misunderstanding, that Hara just is a centre on the way towards higher lying chakras.

No, Hara neither means anything subjective or objective, but that experience of life-feeling, spontaneity and selfforgetfulness you are in, when you are entirely existentially present in the Now. In Hara you are in the middle of the Now, in the middle of the actual, in the middle of the stream of life, and therefore open for the Source of Life, which is the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Hara is the quintessence of grounding or ground connection, and your natural balancing energy-distributer.

The concept of Hara is also known in the Hesycastic mysticism. The Hesycasts (Omphalos Psychism) is an order at Athos, who with the chin supported at the breast look at their navel, until they see the uncreated light.

Place yourself in a chair where you for example can sit and look out of a window. Keep your eyes open. Be sure that the feet are warm. This is an extremely important point. Under meditation the feet must in no circumstances be cold, just as well as the head never must be warm. The feet *must* be warm, as well as the head *must* be cool. This are some extremely important signals to be aware of, because they signal whether your meditation (energy) goes off correct – and actual quite simple.

Use for example a warm footbath, or a blanket. Regardless whether you suffer from cold feet or not, it is a good idea always to practise the exercise with your feet in a warm footbath, since it improves the ground connection (unless your feet are very warm). A warm footbath is, by the way, also an excellent simple remedy against all kinds of stress, anxiety and depression.

It is important, that you are sitting comfortably. You can in other words easily sit well laid-back in an armchair while you are meditating. Yet be sure, as far as possible, that the spiral column is straight, in the sense that you are not sitting leaned out to one of the sides. You can also very well sit and drink your coffee or tea at the same time. An idea about, that you have to sit in one or the other uncomfortable meditation-position, can in other words directly spoil your meditative development. You can waste several years of meditation by forcing yourself to sit in an uncomfortable meditation-position.

As mentioned, then the eyes have to be open. You can very well shut them from time to time, in order to get into the mood, but generally they have to be open. This is a meditation tradition known from the Tibetan Buddhism (on the sculptures of Buddha you can see, that he is sitting with open eyes and with a hand placed at Hara). The reason is, that meditation must not be an escape from the world, but an *investigation* of the world. You have to carry meditation with you out into the everyday life, and if you are used to practise with closed eyes, then there is a tendency to create a contradiction between the meditation-state and the everyday life.

To meditate with open eyes moreover hinders, that the awareness-training ends up in a tense focused concentration, which basically closes your consciousness. A real meditative development moves itself from the focused consciousness of the neutral observation (the Hara meditation) towards a relaxed, de-focused awareness which opens your consciousness, both into yourself, but also out towards the world. And it is precisely in this wordless silence, you in wonder ask the philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way.

Let your awareness rest in Hara. Imagine, that you are breathing from Hara, the point 4-5 cm under the navel. Imagine, that you are inhaling through this point, and that you are expiring through this point. Place for example a hand over Hara in order to notice it. Breathe normally, *not* deeper, slower, or in any other way than normally – again very important to emphasize, because there exists a lot of deceptive literary about breathing-techniques. Just let the mind be neutral observing. Let the diaphragm steer the breathing-rythm. Feel the stomach lift and sink at inhalation and exhalation.

Let gradually the breathing become increasingly fine, increasingly silent, - yes, as silent as possible, - until it only is reflexive, and functions "by itself". Try for example to take a short pause in the breathing, for, in this way, to watch how it is getting going by itself. Now observe neutral how the breathing functions "by itself".

It is also a good idea from time to time to take a deep inhalation, where you fill the chest out. Take a deep inhalation on smells, sounds, sensations. Fill the lungs entirely out with these sensations. Feel the Now in the inhalation, and let in this way yourself out from the thoughts.

Let at the same time the mind become silent in neutral observation. Let sensations, thoughts and feelings come and go, but don't evaluate them or follow them into the past or the future. Just be a witness. Become absolutely silent. Put notice to how you can experience the world at the same time as being focused in Hara.

If you are in a difficult problem-situation you can try to vary the awareness-training using *The four Awareness-variants*:

1. *The observation-variant*, which implies to register, what is happening in the moment, without making attempts to change anything or leave the situation. You take a mentally step back and observe yourself and what is happening. You make use of your senses; you listen, watch, feel after, and register smells. You sense, how the feelings increase in strength for hereafter to decrease, whereafter other feelings arise. You notice, that different body-sensations follow these feelings. You register thoughts come and go as clouds, that are drifting past on the sky. You try not to change anything or control anything. Thereby you avoid getting caught by the past and the future in your reactions (because a difficult problem-situation only exists in time).
2. *The description-variant*, which implies putting words on what you observe and sense. When a feeling, idea or body-sensation arise, you give it a designation, for example by saying "I become unhappy", "I tense in the shoulders" or "the thought 'I can't' went through my head". You name a feeling or call a thought a thought. You try to avoid to get caught by the contents in what you feel and think. In this way you remain in the observing role. Thoughts are not facts, nor feelings. A feeling of fear doesn't necessarily mean, that the situation is dangerous, and a feeling of being rejected is not a proof, that someone doesn't like you.
3. *The openness-variant*, which implies, that you omit judging yourself or others as good or bad. You don't judge. You wait forming yourself a certain opinion and instead you direct the awareness towards the consequences of what is happening. You have for example made a mistake, but instead of branding yourself because of what you have made, you examine the consequences of the mistake, and what can be done to reduce the adverse effects. Don't think about, what you "ought" or "not ought" to do, what is "right" or

”wrong”, ”just” or ”unjust”. You rather ought, as well as you can, to concentrate about doing what the situation actual requires, use the existent possibilities and act in a way, which feels natural.

4. *The de-centring variant*, which is forwarded by training yourself in seeing the situation through the eyes of others. The intention is to strengthen the ability to discriminate between incident and reaction and to experience, how you contribute in creating your own reality: How could a friend or girlfriend have described this situation? How could a spiritual teacher (for example Dalai Lama) have described it? How could a film director or journalist have depicted what is happening right now? Or, as we all know, to see it through humoristic eyes – think about Peter Sellers or John Cleese!

In the start the awareness-training will be characterized by, that you again and again discover, that you already long ago have absented in your thoughts by evaluating, comparing, hoping and worrying, that you again and again are being distracted by the thoughts. Don't get impatient because of this tendency, for it is an important part of the realization-aspect of the training. What it is about, is that you become aware of this fact, and sober-minded again and again take yourself out of this already automatically confirmed stream of words and images. It was this practice Shankara called the Crown jewel of Discrimination. Day by day, year out and year in, it is necessary to keep the Crown jewel of Discrimination clear. This is done by discriminating between neutral observation and distraction, again and again.

Since the Hara meditation in the start still will be a focused, mental activity, and not a being-activity, you also have to be prepared, that the meditation process in the start still will be subject to the energy-laws. You'll for example experience wavecrests and troughs of the waves in your meditative experiences, good mood and bad mood, etc. Here it is just about remembering the energy-laws, and not letting yourself carry away by the energy-swings.

In this is also involved, that you begin to wake up to your own, and others, realized or unrealized suffering, which can be experienced as increased suffering (see the philosophical question *What do paranormal experiences consist in, and how ought my attitude to the paranormal be?*) – you might very well be close to a breakthrough, and at the same time seem as unstable

in the eyes of others (an example is the beginning of Francis of Assisi's life.)

If you under the meditation become dull and drowsy, then try to look straight out in the room in front of you. You can also very well stand up and walk around a bit, as long as you maintain the neutral observation. Be also aware, if you have had enough sleep. If you are troubled, then try to look down at the floor two meters in front of you, or look directly at Hara and the stomach. You can for example try to shut the eyes. Yet remember, that you most of the time should keep the eyes open.

If the thoughts can't be silent at all, then write them down. Have a block of paper and a pen lying beside you when you are meditating. This is an old technique to finish the stream of thoughts, which for example also Krishnamurti recommended. Just let the thoughts bloom as they will, but write them down in time with, that they arise in your mind. Don't evaluate what you write. Write all thoughts down, regardless how trivial, incoherent or foolish they occur to you. Continue until they fall to calmness (more about this writing exercise under the supporting exercise *The Philosophical Diary*).

Later in your meditation practice you will probably discover, that this writing exercise, because of returning negative feelings, necessarily must develop into an actual philosophical investigation! As your meditation practice proceeds forward your personally thoughts will begin to open themselves for the original images, yes, your thoughts will also become characterized by more common and universal questions: How does man preserve peace of mind and balance in all the relationships of life? How do we learn to appreciate the true goods and flout all transient and vain goals? Is the destiny of Man part in a larger plan?

The walking Hameditation

The English author Bruce Chatwin had an intuitive feeling of the spirituality of walking, which he again and again described in his books, for example in the book *The Songlines*. And of course the spirituality of walking also is known from the pilgrimage.

All kind of action, work and everyday life can namely be done meditative. It can be done with love and awareness in the Now. It can be supplied with a new quality, where it goes from something you have to get over, to a

possibility of finding inner calmness and energy. Children are natural centered in Hara, the body's reservoir of energy and life-joy. It is therefore they do things with an incredible lot of joy and vitality. To work with centring in Hara means that you become like a child again.

There are two fundamentally different ways of using the body. The one is performance-oriented, where you in a certain physical activity have to achieve something or acquire something. The second is about being physical active with a meditative mind. Here you also can achieve something, but rather than being focused on the goal, you are present in the moment of action. You *are* your activity.

By focusing the awareness in Hara, by letting the consciousness rest in this point when you are standing, moving, working and functioning in the everyday life, the body will by itself go into another balance, and existentially you will be more present and real in the Now.

The walking Hara meditation is as follows: When you for example is out going for a walk, then let your consciousness rest in Hara. Let the mind be neutral observing. Let sensations, thoughts and feelings come and go, but don't evaluate them or follow them into the past or the future. Just be a witness.

Whenever broodings over the past, or worries over the future, automates your awareness, gently bring the full awareness back to the Now. Again and again. Use smells, sounds and visual impressions as entrances to the Now. Take a deep inhalation from time to time, where you fill the whole of the breast out. Let all the negative thoughts out in the expiration.

The Heartmeditation

The following exercise trains the heartfulness. Awareness seems to be a quality of the Now, but since the complete existential presence in the Now is equivalent with self-forgetful openness and absorption in life itself, then love *also* is a quality of the Now. It is the heart's cooperation and spontaneous openness, which give practice the right direction. The emphatic feelings: gratitude, compassion, faith, and devotion - are the steering, which - combined with Hara's grounding - secure, that the awareness-training do not end up in the head and becomes an intellectual or

mental thing. And the heartfeelings are the instance, that leads the released energy away from the relaxation process, away from sleep and away from the Ego, towards compassionated openness in the Now.

Again it ought to be emphasized, that the heart in this connection has nothing to do with a chakra (psychical centre). Here I think of *Anahata*. This shall again be emphasized, because there also in a part of the temporal New age ideology rules the idea, that the heart is a bodily focus-spot in line with those Chakras, which you find in the Tantric yogis' description of, how the thoughts reflect themselves in the human body in form of energy-spots.

This would mean, that the heart should be a centre on the way towards something even higher? No, the heart has existential-ethical meaning, and functions, in cooperation with the relaxfullness and the awareness, as a tool, which opens your consciousness in towards the Source, and therefore also out towards life itself.

Where the Hara meditation is about creating an entrance into the Now by concentrating and focusing the consciousness in Hara, then the Heart meditation briefly is about training the self-forgetful openness in the Now itself. This self-forgetful openness is the same as a consciousness, which is completely de-focused – a pure awareness, which seems to be a quality of the Now, and therefore of life itself. And this is precisely love. Awareness and love flows in this way into each other in an essential *being*.

The actual spontaneous appearance and stream of heartfeelings is therefore the crucial indication, that your training-intention has become *existential* reality. Heartfeelings are in other words not an entrance into the Now, as Hara is. The heartfeelings are coming from the Now, or rather, from the actual Source, because the consciousness is open. When the consciousness is open it is de-focused, and this is again connected with, that it both is directed into yourself, and out towards the world. It has become *spacious*, all-inclusive. And this spaciousness is the same as silence. And it is in this wordless silence that the great wonder arises; the wonder in which you ask the philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way.

In connection with the Heart meditation you can in this way talk about wordless prayer. The wordless prayer is a philosophical questioning after the source of the heartfeelings. In the heartfeeling you open yourself in wonder and silence, not only out towards the heartfeeling and its object,

but also in towards the source of the heartfeeling. You are therefore not only wordless open in the direction the heartfeeling flows (towards the object, the suffering person, the love-partner, God), but also wordless open towards the Source from where the heartfeeling is coming. It can all briefly be described as silence. You can't understand it by analysing or thinking. Dont do that! You have to experience it.

It is a bit misleading to call heartfeelings feelings, because they rather have something to do with space, being and clarity (see the philosophical question *What are feelings?*). This is necessary to emphasize because you must never confuse heartfeelings with sentimentality, daydream, excitability etc. These things namely often rise direct from thought-distortions. In my philosophical practice I have met incredibly many people, whose spirituality has become distorted by such things. People, who contrary to their ideas about themselves, can be a direct nuisance to their surroundings.

One of the most common traits in our idea- and mentality-history, is a constant change between a priority of the rational, the harmonical well-arranged, the controlled, and, on the other hand, the emphasize on the value and right of the feelings: Rationalism and the Age of Enlightenment are followed by the sensitive time and by Sturm und Drang (1700-1800). Realism, positivism and faith in the rational improvement are followed by symbolism and irrationalism (1870-1900).

As the Danish philosopher Mogens Pahuus asks: "Should the right not be the Golden Mean – the successful synthesis of the rational and the emotional?" Pahuus mentions, that we earlier in our culture-history has met this idea. Already in ancient Greece was formulated the thought about a combination of the Apollonian and the Dionysian – a thought which came into expression in the organization of the Apollon temple in Delphi, which – under impression of the Dionysian fertility cult, that victorious forced itself forward from Asia Minor – was changed into a temple, which one half of the year was devoted to Apollo, the god of sun, light, order, control, and the other half of the year to Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility.

A such synthesis of reason and feeling is precisely to be found in Meditation as an Art of Life, where you, by combining the philosophical question's self-inquiring practice with supporting exercises, gradually achieve to see complete with the mind and the heart; which means: where awareness and passion constitute an oneness.

A such synthesis you can also find in Herman Hesse's novel *Guldmund and Narcissus*, where Hesse pictures two friends which are pure examples of respectively a man of reason, and a man of feelings: Narcissus and Guldmund, the theorist and the dreamer, the thinker and the artist. Two human beings, whose life's without each other are characterized by absence and unreality; the one of them conscious evaluating, the other of them unconscious dreaming. The one of them conscious by experiencing himself as a theorist in relation to his own life. The other of them unconscious by being beside himself in experiences and intoxication. Only in synthesis they can become real and present, by learning something of each other.

So heartfeelings are not feelings in ordinary sense. They are rather, as the Danish philosopher Løgstrup says, sovereign and spontaneous life-expressions. The sovereign life-expressions are, among other things: love, mercifulness, faith and the openness of the speech. Being together breaks without faith, speech is being distorted without openness and becomes superficial or insincere.

The sovereign life-expressions are, according to Løgstrup, spontaneous in the sense, that they are unforced and without ulterior motives. There can't be given reasons for them and they can't be made into means for something else. They are sovereign in the sense, that the actions of the life-expression are not determined reactions, but precisely actions where you intervene actively in, and change the situation. They are also sovereign in the sense, that in them you are spontaneous in accordance with yourself. In love you fill yourself in full.

Moreover Løgstrup characterizes the sovereign life-expressions as definitive, which means: they have an explicit character. Furthermore should be added, that they are good in the sense, that they always are aimed at taking care of the other's life. Moreover he says, that they are anonymous. They are nobodys, which means: no one can make them into theirs, and use them towards others in power struggles. No one has privileges in relation to them. We are all equal for the expression of life.

The sovereign life-expressions are, according to Løgstrup, given with the human life. If we want to understand ourselves, then we must start with them. The expressions of life are given with *life itself*. You may say, that they belong to our nature, if you thereby mean the metaphysical nature.

The sovereign life-expressions are a direct goodness in our life. In them we both are spontaneous and ethical. The ethics are standing firm by force of these given life-possibilities, not by force of our choices, as for example Sartre believed.

In the sovereign life-expressions you clearly meet something, which arises as richness, gift or mercy in your life, something you have not created yourself, but which at the same time are the actual and carrying in all kinds of being together. Løgstrup says, that the sovereign life-expressions are coming from the Universe, and that Man therefore not is the Universe irrelevant, not is self-dependant, but is connected with the Universe. Løgstrup claims in this way, that we must interpret the Universe and the sovereign life-expressions as created.

So the training of the heartfeelings is actual not about training the heartfeelings in themselves (because you don't have them in your control), but about training the openness for them, and this is what the Heartmeditation is about. In this openness they then come by themselves.

It is a good idea letting the exercise coincide with the Hara meditation. If you practise for example 1½ hour each morning, then use the first hour to the Hara meditation, and the last half hour to the Heartmeditation. But let it come natural, don't force anything. Use for example a fewer number of minutes in the start.

You have to be completely relaxed. In the start most people will have trouble with the exercise, because in most people the heart is closed by tensions, blockages, sorrow, traumas etc. If the heartfeelings are not coming spontaneous (or if the thoughts start to wander), then return to the Hara meditation, and practise it until the heartfeelings start to arise by themselves. Some need years before the heart begins to open itself. But use this text for meditative reading. This often makes the exercise easier.

The main practice of the Heartmeditation is the so-called Tonglen-practice, which origin from the Tibetan Buddhism. The same elements can however be retrieved in different forms in all great wisdom-traditions. However it is my experience, that Tonglen, which in Tibetan means "give and receive", is one of the most useful and strong heartmeditations that exists. When you feel closed inside yourself, Tonglen opens you for others' sufferings. When the heart is blocked, Tonglen spoils the powers, which causes this. And when you feel alienated towards the person, who suffers in front of your

eyes, or are bitter or agonized, Tonglen helps you to find, and lay bare, your true nature's loving, expansive emanation. No other exercise is equally effective in destroying the Ego's self-assertion, which is the root to all our suffering and hard-heartedness. Therefore there also are a lot of stories about Tonglen's miraculous ability to heal.

Before you can practise Tonglen, you must be able to evoke compassion in yourself. This is more difficult than we often think, because the source of love and compassion mostly is hidden for us, and we might perhaps not at first have access to it.

Heartfeelings is in my context a spectrum, which includes gratitude, compassion, faith, love, care, gentleness, openness, devotion and affection. You have to be able to feel them as a concrete influence in the heartregion; in the beginning often as a pang in the heart, or as a contract in the breast. If there come tears, just let them come.

Below are shown some simple techniques, that can help you:

- When you have negative feelings for other people (or life itself), then try to think about people, who really have shown *you* love, your mother and father, your grandmother or grandfather. Then let the heartfeeling arise in your heart, so that you are being filled with gratitude. Open your heart and let the love flow out and expand towards people whom you have negative feelings for, or towards life itself.
- When you have negative feelings for other people, then try to think about, that they are as yourself, have the same feelings as yourself, the same wish about happiness, the same fear of suffering. Then let your heart open itself towards them.
- When you experience, that you are indifferent towards others' suffering, or direct experience malicious pleasure when someone is suffering, then unhesitatingly put yourself in the place of the person concerned, try to imagine, how *you* would feel. Then let your care unfold and set free the heart's compassion.
- When you see someone suffer, and you are indifferent, then try to imagine, that it is someone you really love, a brother, a daughter, a

mother, a best friend. Let the compassion, which your heart now has set free, flow out towards the person.

Also use the everyday life to evoke the heartfeelings: a person in the street, something you see on TV etc.

When you are in contact with the heartfeelings, you can begin the actual Tonglen practice, where you train yourself in using your personal suffering to increase the compassion – which means: where you mentally receive and give.

The exercise is usually about, that you receive *others'* suffering in your heart. Here you let it dissolve in the light of compassion, whereon you give the compassion on to these others.

Call up for your inner eye, as living and intensively as possible, someone you are worried for, and who is suffering. Think of the person, and imagine the suffering of the person concerned. See the situations in which the suffering person is. Then imagine the suffering of the person concerned, as a black flowing tar, which you receive and let absorb in your heart. In the heart you imagine the black mass as a fuel for the healing light of compassion. Then you let the compassion flame up, and spread out from your heart. Now you give the compassion to the person, or those, who are suffering, by letting it radiate out to them, embrace them, fill them and clean them.

It is a good idea to use the breathing as medium for the exercise. You receive the suffering in an inhalation, and in the pause between in- and exhalation you let the compassion swell up. In an exhalation you now give the compassion to those who are suffering. If you can't evoke the heartfeeling (this is namely necessary for the exercise to work) you return to the Hara meditation. Sit for a while in passive awareness with focus in Hara. Use for example the above-mentioned help-techniques. Then repeat the exercise. Continue until you feel that peace comes over you. You don't have to imagine, that you use every single of your breathings to keep the process going on; it is enough for example to use each fourth or fifth breathing – as long as you make the exercise with regular interval. In the pauses you return to the Hara meditation, so that you alternate between Hara and Heart.

In the start the exercise probably will feel artificial, sluggish, unpleasant; you'll also maybe experience soreness in the muscles around the heart. This is because, that you in Tonglen directly are confronting and transforming the Ego, and the pain-body's negative feelings. Therefore keep on doing the exercise, it is a natural purification process. Don't be afraid, that the exercise hurts you. The only thing you can be sure of, is, that there only is *one* thing Tonglen can damage, namely the thing which also has hurt *you* the most: your own ego, your own self-assertive and self-centred mind, which is the root to all suffering.

Once Tonglen has become natural to you, it will fill you with amazement. Then you only need to receive the suffering in your heart with a simple breathing, and the heartfeeling will spontaneous fill you with release and joy.

In the beginning it is perhaps a good idea to use the exercise on yourself. To create a compassionated mind in relation to yourself has not anything to do with self-pity, as long as the exercise evokes heartfeelings. However your own suffering will much easier could be transformed, if you use the exercise on others. Then your own suffering becomes a kind of substitute for others' suffering.

The complete unique about the exercise's healing effect on yourself is namely, that it gains strength, the more self-forgetful open you are towards, and engaged in, other people than yourself. The openness namely opens the whole of your being, and therewith also all tensions, knots, and wounds. Moreover it also works healing on these *other* people. You will not only experience inner fulfilment, you'll also experience, that you receive help from outside, that things in strange ways begin to succeed for you, that your problems are solved one after one. However, not in a way that your ego perhaps wants it.

How is that? As the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, then the Now's regularity concerning the function of the energy, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the Wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part *not* is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair or a pair of opposites – as in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly it implies, that each part only can

be understood in relation to *everything* else; which means: in relation to the Wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego's evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the left parts will act stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes finally will switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this regularity, or another way to describe this regularity is: energy returns to its starting point. And since everything in this way only works correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that you actually can't say anything about the Wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the Wholeness for *the Emptiness* (*'sūnyatā*) – a teaching, which had one rather explicit purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints which ignorance has created.

Nagarjuna's emptiness is one and the same as what I call the Source.

Said shortly, then the Wholeness works balancing, and the more self-forgetful open for, and engaged in the Wholeness, you are, the more the balance of the Wholeness works cooperative through you. And it is exactly this, which Tonglen promotes. But the more self-circling closed against the Wholeness you are, the more the balance of the Wholeness works divided, and therefore compensatory (suffering-creating), through you.

But try to imagine your own problem (or problem-situation) as an object of suffering (you can also imagine the suffering of life as such). Now receive this suffering in your heart as a black flowing mass. Let the compassion burst into flame, and then give the light of compassion back to the problem, or the problem-situation, regardless if it only is something you purely mentally imagine, for example in the past or the future. It could also be a physical problem.

This holy secret from Tonglen is known by all the masters and saints of the wisdomtraditions. And by living it and incarnating it with the renunciation and glow of true wisdom and compassion, it fills your life with joy.

Briefly: begin the meditation with yourself and your own problems. Then expand it to your nearest. Finalize with people, or situations, which at first seems irrelevant to you, yes, which you perhaps direct feel dislike towards.

Though you primarily practise the Heartmeditation in the morning, it is important that you bring it out into your everyday life as such. Practise it at any time.

The change of suffering into enlightenment

We have now looked at the three fundamental aspects of the meditationprocess, the relaxfullness, the awareness and the heartfullness.

The refinement of the consciousness and attention you train in the Relaxationmeditation, slides imperceptible over in neutral observation. You discover the uniformity concerning tension in so different phenomena as muscle-tension, will, thoughts and form-formations in more collective patterns. The Relaxationmeditation creates a neutrality in your attitude to all the different expressions of tension. This neutrality is refined in the Hameditation.

The Hameditation's neutrality in relation to the different expressions of tension, will more and more lead into a melting, a letting go, a devotion. And the absorption, which takes place in such a relaxfull melting and letting go, leads by itself in towards your heart. This is refined through the Heartmeditation.

Finally the Now opens itself and the three fundamental aspects (relaxfullness, awareness and heartfullness) are melting together in an open, all-embracing silence. This silence is what you in reel sense can call Meditation as an Art of Life, because it's in this silence you in wonder ask the philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way, open both inwards and outwards, listening and observing, without words, without evaluations.

The purpose with the following exercise is that you learn to use meditation in connection with eventual illness-symptoms (or all "bad" that happens in your life), without trying to change anything, without going into panic and without changing behaviour. The method shall hinder catastrophe-thoughts (or other thought-distortions) in arising, and hereby have a neutralizing effect on the suffering-filled about the symptoms.

The exercise can be used in connection with stress, anxiety, depression, physical illness – yes, in connection with all forms of illness, or whatever occur "bad" to you in your life.

As Eckhart Tolle says, then illness always has a past and a future. An illness, or rather, the suffering-filled about an illness, is constituted, not so much by the symptoms, as by the thoughts you tighten together with these symptoms.

The thinking's past (memories, knowledge, traumatic bindings) and future (plans, projects, ambitions) is a never-ending self-circling activity. Løgstrup called this activity for the circling life-expressions; that is: as contrast to the sovereign life-expressions. The circling life-expressions are expressions such as wrong, envy, hate, jealousy, insincerity, mercilessness etc.etc. Løgstrup called them circling, because you in them are closed inside yourself, circling around yourself and your negative or destructive feeling. The circling life-expressions are, as the sovereign life-expressions, spontaneous in the sense that they take you by surprise. But they are full of ulterior motives. They are not sovereign, they are on the contrary reactive, and they don't bring you in accordance with yourself. But they are definitive in the sense, that they are evil.

Consequently the sovereign life-expressions are coming from the Now, while the circling life-expressions are coming from time.

Guilt-feelings, regret, anger, complaints, gloom, bitterness and all forms of lack of forgiveness, are created by too much past and too little presence in the Now.

Discomfort, anxiety, tension, stress, worry – all forms of fear – are created by too much future and too little presence in the Now.

It's this self-circling activity, which constitutes the suffering-filled about the illness. It's this activity that gives identity to you, as the one who has an illness. The past and the future of the illness have in this way an unbroken continuum, unless the Now's releasing power is activated through your conscious presence. Behind all the different circumstances, which constitute your lifesituation ("I, who have an illness"), and which exists in time, there exists something deeper, more essential: life itself, your actual being in the timeless Now.

But because you compare the Now's facts with earlier, and hope/desire/fear something else, you make the Now into a problem, and therewith you have the suffering-filled about the illness. But in making the Now into a problem, you in addition to this also make resistance against the Now's lifeunfolding power, and therewith you also are reducing *the life* in yourself.

There are in other words no problems in the Now. And since there are no problems in the Now, there neither is any problem in connection with illness. Furthermore there in the Now exists the life-power, which directly is able to heal the illness.

The exercise is therefore about, that you direct the awareness towards this moment and omit to label it mentally. Hereby the suffering-filled about the illness is reduced to one or more of the following factors: physical pain, weakness, discomfort or handicap. Furthermore you let go of your resistance, and hereby the Now's lifeunfolding power, which works healing, is activated. You can in other words heal the illness through meditation.

The procedure is as follows: settle in a good position, or lie down, and, if convenient, close your eyes. Relax completely - use eventual the Relaxationmeditation. Now turn the awareness towards symptoms of anxiety, depression, or any illness, which actual is present. Don't evaluate the symptoms, and don't seek to change them, only register them. Inside yourself you may give them a name.

The more difficult it occur to you being completely neutral, the more intensively and long you have to focus your awareness in Hara.

Try to understand, that it is not the symptoms in themselves, which constitute the suffering-filled about the illness. They are as such completely neutral. No, it's the *thought-distortions* which you tighten together with the symptoms, that together come to constitute the suffering-filled about the illness – simply because they are distortions of reality (see the supporting exercise *The Philosophical Diary*). Furthermore the Ego, with its comparisons with earlier and fear of something else, makes resistance against the healing power of reality.

Therefore the *neutral* observation. The neutral observation is a surrender to the Now, to the existential facts: the illness. Surrender is an inner

acceptance of that, which *is*, without any reservation. This happens through a letting go, a melting, a devotion. And as you surrender to that, which *is*, you surrender to the Now, and therewith to the Now's healing power. And this is the aspect of heartfulness. Therefore use the Heartmeditation as a help.

Continue the exercise until the suffering eases off, or until you achieve relief. However you have to be prepared, that the exercise can take time. It's a slowly-existential transformation work. In return it opens up into the Source: the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

You can, as Tolle says, use your illness in a spiritual practice, and change it into enlightenment. Illness can, in other words, work advancing on a spiritual transformation-practice. This is because that suffering can be so unbearable, that you finally do not feel up to make resistance against it anymore. But this surrender exactly leads you into the Now. Paradoxically enough it is your resistance against the suffering, which upholds the suffering, while the surrendering of resistance neutralizes the suffering.

As Tolle says, then all inner resistance is experienced as negativity in some kind. All negativity is resistance. Negativity goes from irritation or impatience to violent anger, from bad mood or sulky reluctance to suicidal despair. Sometimes the resistance activates the painbody, and in such cases even a small situation can create negativity, for example anger, depression or deep sorrow.

The resistance is created by the Ego, which through evaluations compares the Now with earlier and hopes, desires or fears something else, whereby the Now (the illness) is being made into a problem. And through negativity the Ego then tries to manipulate reality and get what it wants.

Returning negative feelings sometimes contain a message, in the same way as an illness does. A message about, that there is something you have to change. But every outside change is superficial and temporary, unless it is coming from a change in your consciousness. And what that concerns, it can only mean one thing, namely to be more present.

When you have achieved a certain degree of presence, you no longer need the negativity to tell you what you need in your lifesituation. But as long as there is negativity, or illness, then use it as a signal, which reminds you to be more present.

If you have a serious illness, then use it to be enlightened. All "bad" which happens in your life – use it to be enlightened. Surrender to the existential facts, surrender to the Now.

The following five points can be used as a kind of memory-rules of pain-management; a "suffering-mantra":

1. To be able to do one thing at a time
2. To be able to focus the full awareness on what you do
3. To be able to bring the full awareness back to the Now, when broodings over the past, or worries for the future, automate your awareness, and make you vulnerable for pressure.
4. To be able to focus the awareness more intensively and long in Hara, the more difficult it occur you to bring the awareness back to the Now.
5. To be able to recognize the origin of the suffering in the past and the future, and know, that full awareness in the Now gives you degrees of freedom under pressure.

The philosophical diary

At a time in your meditative development you will very probably discover, that specific negative feelings keep on coming back, that the painbody again and again is activated. Therefore you have to examine the painbody deeper, or rather, the specific thoughtpattern, which lies behind the painbody, as the triggering cause. Though meditation is about being in the Now, then this also implies observation of the thoughts. You may say that you need to change between being in the Now, and observation of the thoughts.

So when specific negative feelings keep on coming back, regardless what you do, then it is necessary, that you begin to observe these feelings in order to change and restructure the thoughtpattern in them, which causes, that you can't progress.

How do you observe the thoughts? Many meditation-masters say: "Observe your thoughts, and follow them all the way to their end!" But this seems very difficult and confusing. It's here the philosophical diary comes in.

The philosophical diary is a way to stop up in the everyday life in order to find your bearings, and look for existential "pathfinders and trailmarkers". It is a kind of notebook or lifebook, where you:

- 1) Lay up a store of useful, wise, interesting, wonderful, critical, alarming and funny quotes, experiences and thoughts.
- 2) And it is place, where you make your own thoughts and experiences about living a philosophical life.

Number 1 you will find by yourself during your philosophical journey (it's a good idea to read a lot of literature about spirituality, philosophy, and life as such) - so the following is specially a help with focus in number 2.

The philosophical diary is, with focus in number 2, supposed to be, partially a notebook you can have beside you when you practise the Hara meditation – partially a kind of lifebook over everything that happens when you ask philosophical questions – that is: in cooperation with your meditative reading of the book's text-part.

The stoics, for example Marcus Aurelius, kept philosophical diary, or lifebook, in order to explore, change and restructure negative thought patterns. But so-called "meditative writing" also exists in other wisdom traditions as a priceless help to the meditative development; that is: to learn to know who you are. Krishnamurti for example also recommended it. Montaigne's *Essays* are also a kind of lifebook. Montaigne said about his *Essays* that: "They are attempts to paint myself."

When you sit and practise the sitting Hara meditation (you can of course also do it in other situations) and your negative thoughts/feelings can't become silent, then take a piece of paper out (or a side in your philosophical diary), and write the thoughts down. Just let them bloom as they will, but write them down in time with that they arise in your mind. Don't evaluate what you write. Write all thoughts down, regardless how trivial, incoherent or foolish they occur to you. Continue until they fall to rest.

A variant of this is to write a letter about what you are thinking about. If your thoughts are about a person, then write a letter to the person, but don't send it.

The surprising thing about this writing exercise, is that you in this way actual can finish unfinished situations. It's after all precisely the thoughts which all the time (without luck) try to finish situations. The existential guilt about an unfinished situation exists after all precisely only in your thoughts. When you then practise this exercise, yes, then you can help the thoughts in finishing the situation. To finish situations has in this way not necessarily anything to do with, that you have to confront the specific situations, and for example the implicated persons (it could very well be dead persons).

The meaning is now, that you try to find all the various inappropriate basic assumptions, rules of living, thought-distortions, negative automatic thoughts, values, ideals and conceptions, which are hidden in the writings. Or different said, that you explore the problem, which causes, that your negative thoughts/feelings can't become silent.

What you discover, you also write down, so that the writing-process develops into an actual philosophical investigation.

In the following I will give you three tools, which can help you in this investigation. They are only guidelines and shall not be followed slavically. Nor are they complicated, though they at first might seem so.

With a bit of exercise you can learn to use the three tools very quickly. The writing of your thoughts, and the exploration and restructuring of them, do not have to fill more than an A-4 sheet. It can be done through small notes. And it doesn't have to take more than 5-10 minutes to make an investigation.

Tool 1: To clear up the problem

Go through the following three points:

1. Registration of the problem
2. Understanding the structure of the problem
3. Restructuring the problem

1) Registration of the problem

What is the problem about?

2) Understanding the structure of the problem

The problem's components are as follows:

Situation → Automatic thought → Painbody → Act

The triggering situation, or challenge, is always something completely new, but it activates the past's inappropriate assumptions and rules of living, which you tighten together with the challenge (as for example "I am something special" - "unless I always am perfect in every situation, then I am a fiasco").

The problem arises in other words when you react from your past and future; that is: through evaluations. You compare with earlier and hope, desire or fear something else. In this way the inappropriate assumptions and rules of living are activated. And then have you the problem, the negative automatic thought which for example says: "everything is my fault", "I can never do anything right", "nobody likes me", "I am alone", "I am stupid", "the world is evil", "everyone are idiots", etc., etc.

The automatic thought again activates the painbody, and then you have all the negative feelings and inappropriate actions. The painbody consists of a number of reactions in your body, your feelings, your motivation and behaviour, which altogether form a vicious circle; that is: something which make you repeat the same inappropriate actions again and again.

First of all try to become aware of the problem's components: Situation → Automatic thought → Painbody → Act. Under this point you don't need to do anymore.

3) Restructuring the problem

Now describe in very short form the following three points:

- A) The event/the challenge.
- B) What feelings were there involved (the pain-body's expression)?
- C) What thoughts were there involved?

Then think it all through and try to make notes about, which more realistic, appropriate and flexible ways of thinking, you could use on the problem (see tool 2 and 3).

Marcus Aurelius' book with *Meditations* is actual an example on, how *he* did it. His *Meditations* are in other words a philosophical diary, and an example on, that the philosophical diary can be a poetic practice, and an inspiration to creative unfolding.

Tool 2: To find the connection between growing up conditions and inappropriate basic assumptions

In order to reach some more realistic, appropriate and flexible ways of thinking, it is first of all important that you understand the connection between growing up conditions and inappropriate basic assumptions.

Below is shown some connections between growing up conditions and inappropriate basic assumptions:

A) Lack of stability – insufficient attachment leads to fundamental

1. Experiences of neglect/assumptions about neglect
2. Mistrust-assumptions/experiences of abuse
3. Experiences of emotional privation

B) Hindered independence leads to fundamental

1. Assumptions about functional dependence/incompetence
2. Vulnerability to pain and illness
3. Experiences of "captivity"/undeveloped attitude

C) Experiences of being unwanted leads to fundamental

1. Assumptions about defect/experiences of shame
2. Assumptions about social unwantedness/experiences of alienation
3. Assumptions about fiasco by performance
4. Assumptions about submission
5. Emotional inhibition

D) Insufficient needs-satisfaction leads to fundamental

1. Assumptions about self-sacrifice/experiences of sense of responsibility
2. Relentlessness/unbalanced norms
3. Negativity/pessimism

E) Insufficient limits lead to fundamental experiences of

1. Assumptions about special rights/self-centredness
2. Insufficient self-control/self-disciplin

You can for example be fundamentally convinced about, that you are others inferior/superior, that you are something special, or that you are nothing.

Find out, which of the above examples fits to your lifesituation (it is not sure that any of it fits to you).

Your basic assumptions are fundamental in deciding, how you judge yourself and other people. They mark out guidelines of, how you shall think, feel, and act. Some basic assumptions are stable and difficult to change, and are closely connected to time and it's more collective and universal images. The problems arise when the Ego, because of bad experiences in childhood and adolescence, evaluates on the background of these images, and uses them to model your individuality, your self-image and your outlook on life, and hereby creates the foundation of the painbody.

The more your basic assumptions are characterized by thought-created extremes, the more your self-image and outlook on life will be false and imbalanced. Since extremes only can arise on the background of a opposite extreme, your ego, or self-image, will in this way be characterized by a pair of opposites, as for example power/powerlessness, perfect/fiasco. Your basic assumptions (for example "I am something special" – "I am not worth anything") - and rules of living (for example "if I not always do well, I am not worth anything" – "if I am not always loved, I will be unhappy") - will therefore originate from these oppositions.

You will therefore develop strategies in order to maintain this self-understanding or avoid becoming confronted with it – strategies, which I also call thought-distortions. Thought-distortions lead to a vicious circle.

On one hand they are maintained by your basic assumptions, on the other hand they conversely also are coming to activate these assumptions (you can find examples on a series of thought-distortions under tool 3).

But as soon as your thoughts swing too much out in an extreme, your energy-system compensates by seeking to bring itself back to the balance of the middle. The system does this by seeking over towards the opposite extreme (for example power/powerlessness, perfect/fiasco). That is: through a contrabalancing, a compensation.

The energy works as a pendulum. And by the way, the laws of life also work in this way in more collective patterns.

So the energy will, when you don't meet the challenges as perfect as you want, provoke negative automatic thoughts (for example "everything is my fault", "I can never do anything right", "nobody likes me", "I am alone", "I am stupid", "the world is evil", "everyone are idiots", etc., etc.) When you think in extremes you can therefore never avoid the opposite pole. It always lies there as a shade, a possibility of hubris/nemesis. Other names of this law are Tao, the Dharmalaw, Destiny, Logos, The Will of God etc.

So negative automatic thoughts are, as we have seen, the instance, which provoke the painbody and it's negative feelings, for example anxiety (lack of lifecourage, obsessions, phobia), depression (ennui, guilt, shame, boredom), destructivity (hate, powerlessness, self-destructivity, anger, aggression).

So behind the painbody lies a determinate negative thoughtpattern, which reflects itself in the body in the form of a negative energyfield. Be in this connection aware, that this thought-pattern's various inappropriate basic assumptions, rules of living, thought-distortions, negative automatic thoughts, values, ideals and conceptions, mostly work unconscious in you. It's in other words not sure they exactly appear in words and sentences, as mentioned above. They can also appear as kind of images, ideas or conceptions, and they may flash through your head in a fraction of a second. Therefore psychotherapy often overlook, that a negative feeling arises on the background of a thought, whereby they also overlook the cause to the feeling (psychotherapy may therefore lead to a spiritual crisis – see the philosophical question *What do paranormal experiences consist in, and how ought my attitude to the paranormal be?*).

Tool 3: Helping questions

When you sit and study what you have written, then try to get in contact with your inner Socrates. Learn to put question marks by the validity of the negative thoughtpattern which characterizes your problem; that is: the pattern which are weaved together by inappropriate basic assumptions, rules of living, thought-distortions, negative automatic thoughts, values, ideals, conceptions – and which reflects itself in the body in the form of that negative energyfield, which is called the painbody. Be aware of the pattern's various aspects in your thoughts, and don't let yourself be controlled by it. You shall confront yourself with the fact, that the pattern is not an expression of valid facts, that it diminishes your quality of life and hinders you in using your abilities and potentials.

What it is about, is that you learn to think more flexible, and all the time look at the challenges from alternative viewpoints, for hereby to find a balanced way to react.

In meditation-circles it's a widely-spread misunderstanding, that meditation is about being completely without thoughts. On the contrary the meditationsprocess requires a great deal of deep thinking, but it is not thinking in ordinary sense.

It has to be emphasized, that flexible thinking has nothing to do with positive thinking. This shall be emphasized, because there within the alternative world, and within the whole of the management-theory's coaching-industry, is being worked a great deal with positive thinking. But positive thinking is actual the primary cause to ignorance and suffering. As we by now have examined several times (see for example tool 2), then the Ego always consists of a visionary pair of opposites, as for example images of power and powerlessness, perfect and fiasco, good and evil. But through evaluations the Ego expels it's images of what it thinks is negative: the powerlessness, the fiasco, the evil. Tragic enough this is precisely what you in positive thinking make an effort to intensify. But it is, in accordance with the images built-in logic, not possible, and the Ego ends up in contradiction and division – or different said: in thinking in extremes. This is because of the negationpower of time.

The images of time will as *images* always, because of the negationpower in the movement of time, be defined by their negations. The more energy there is build up in the one pole of a pair of opposites, and the more the

other pole is expelled, the more the abandoned pole will act stronger and stronger on its polar partner. At the end the energy will therefore switch over in its opposite. This is because, that energy works as streams and dividings within a wholeness, as the teaching of Yin and Yang also describes it.

The energy you in other words have build up in the pole you consider as positive – (you shall remember, that the pair of opposites only are images, not reality) - will in this way at the end switch over in its opposite negative pole. Simply in order to balance an imbalance within the Wholeness.

So flexible thinking is not positive thinking, but realistic thinking. Flexible thinking implies the use of rationality and critical thinking, which is essential in philosophy. In positive thinking the Ego makes the Now's existential facts into a problem by comparing with earlier and hoping and desiring something else. Contrary to this, the flexible, and realistic thinking, seeks to be aware of the Now's existential facts, and hereby of the Ego itself.

So the deep thinking consists in flexible thinking, yes, flexible thinking actual consists of asking philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way; that is: continually to examine yourself and life. Looking at positive thinking this could be to ask the questions: "Who is it, who thinks positive? What does this positive consist in?"

All other spiritual exercises actual only exist in order to support this central meditationtechnique.

Dalai Lama says time after time, that our various problems of life require deep thinking. When you allow yourself to let the philosophical questions absorb you deeply, when you reflect over them, you discover how there slowly happens a deep transforming in your way of looking at everything. By continued reflection and supporting exercises you uncover something in yourself, which you neither can give a name or describe or put on concept, "something" which you begin to realize lies behind all change, ignorance and suffering in the world. The whole of the negativity - which the resistance against life has jugded you to (making the Now into a problem by comparing with earlier, and hoping, desiring or fearing something else) - starts to dissolve and cease.

In the following you get a Socratic inquire technique, which furthermore can help you in this work.

You can have the questions in the back of your mind, or you can have the below list at your side.

If your thoughts are characterized by too much past, and you feel anger, guilt or gloom, then answer all the questions as far as to *Questions to activation of alternative thoughts by anxiety*. If your thoughts are characterized by too much future, and you have worries, economic speculations, stress, then answer the questions under *Questions to activation of alternative thoughts by anxiety*.

Questions, that inquire down to the values, ideals and conceptions, which form the structure under the negative thoughtpattern – can be found at the end of the exercise. The inquire technique is finalized with questions that can activate important alternative viewpoints, when you are in a difficult problem-situation.

You don't have to answer the questions in writing. You can read them meditative, and only write those discoveries down, which are of relevance for your problem – it doesn't have to be more than short notes. What it is about, is that you get an inner conversation started about the validity of the thoughts which characterize your problem. It's this "Socratic dialogue" you shall write down. (Write for example also your dreams down, and observe them in relation to your awoken life - see the philosophical question *What are dreams?*).

And last, but not least: ask philosophical questions to your thoughts! See them in a perspective common to all mankind, or even an universal perspective. Do this, as a help, by seeing them in relation to the texts in the text part with the philosophical questions. In this way you will discover, that you soon can keep a philosophical diary like Marcus Aurelius.

Investigative and transforming questions

Questions to investigation and analysis of the problem-situation

- What happened in the situation? (who said/did what, when?)
- What did you feel then? How were you? (how angry/sad etc. were you on a scale 0-10?)

- What did you say to yourself, immediately before you felt that? What were you thinking? If it is true, what does it tell about you? About the other?
- What did you then do in the situation?
- Which of these thoughts are specially affecting your feelings, burdening you the most? Central thought.

Questions to transforming and restructuring the central thought

- How convinced are you, that this thought is true?

Argumentation

- What do you base the thought on? What substance do you have for it? What is the evidence for it?
- Is there anything in the situation, which can point in another direction?
- Is there anything in your life, which can point in another direction?
- Do you have experiences, which could suggest, that this thought is not completely true?

Alternatives (concrete examples last in the exercise)

- Could you think different in this situation? (More self-supporting and constructive?)
- What would a more realistic/self-supporting way to think be in this situation?
- Does it feel different, when you imagine, that you were thinking in that way?
- What is most realistic to think?
- When it feels better, and also more realistic, to think alternately, what would you then choose to think?

Worst and best

- What would the worst be, if your thought is true?
- Would it be so bad?
- What could there come out of it, that would be beneficial/good for you, if it is true, what you think?

Problem-solution

- If your interpretation/thought is true, what could you then do in order to manage the situation better?

- Could you lay a plan, so the situation is getting better now/onwards?

Distancing

- What would you tell your best friend, if he, in the same situation, was thinking in that way?
- How would you perceive the situation in three months/six months?

Thought-distortions

Which distortions characterize this thinking? Examples on the most spread distortions:

Dichotom thinking: which means that you arrange the surrounding world in a pair of opposites (for example life and death, past and future, subject and object, good and evil, justification and condemnation, love and hate, power and powerlessness, perfect and fiasco). This is a degraded and one-sided division, which happens when the Ego, through evaluations, splits the more universal images of time in pieces. These images are in themselves a kind of syntheses, because they always include the opposite pole. But the dichotomous thinking expels the opposite pole, removes it, and by doing so you are coming to live on postulates, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives. Dichotom thinking – or thinking in opposites – is the central thought-distortion. All the below thought-distortions arise on the background of dichotom thinking.

Selective abstraction: selections and exclusions - which means that you, usually unconscious, choose to perceive special parts of reality and leave out other.

Generalization: which means that you expect, that something, which has taken place in one situation, also takes place in other situations, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives.

Personalizing: which means that you see independent incidents, which happen in the surrounding world, as related to yourself. To take something personally, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives.

Enlargement and reduction of elements in the surrounding world: To make a problem much larger than it in reality is, or to make the number of your life-possibilities much lesser than they in reality are. You overestimate or

understate - exaggerate or understate, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives.

Catastrophe-thinking: Unrealistic thoughts that are being connected with a harmless fact. For example when you under a dizziness-attack think: "I am going to die", "I am going mad". Or when you receive a bill a bit larger than expected and you think: "Everything is lost". Catastrophe-thinking is out of proportions with reality, and you don't ask, or seek for contra-conceptions and alternatives. Follows often from black and white thinking, and is closely connected with anxiety-development.

Attribution: Misleading way to explain incidents. One-sided ascribing the reason for, or the responsibility for, negative incidents, to yourself, or to other people or circumstances, without including other elements in the situation. Is closely connected with sense of guilt or anger.

Black and white thinking: To classify all situations, incidents or things, as an example of one of two extremes, when the facts actual are, that there between the two extremes exists a complete spectrum of other possible viewpoints. Black and white thinking is a variation of false dichotomy. Black and white thinking arises when you try to get the world to fit into very simple prejudiced categories. Words characterized by black and white thinking are words such as *must, shall, never, always*, as for example "all of it is hopeless", "it cannot possibly succeed", "I have to be better than the others", "nobody likes me". Often the most basic assumptions about yourself and the world, are based on black and white thinking. Black and white thinking is thinking in extremes, and leads to a false and imbalanced way of life. You come to live on postulates, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives.

False dichotomy: A misleading conception of possible alternatives. A dichotomy is a division in two alternatives. Often seen in the expressions Either/or – If/then, as for example: "Either you are with us, or you are against us" – "if I'm not always a success, then I'm a fiasco". A false dichotomy appears when somebody sets up a dichotomy in such a way, that it looks like, that there only are two possible conclusions, when the facts actual are, that there are many other alternatives which not are being mentioned. Many inappropriate rules of living and life-strategies are based on false dichotomy. False dichotomy is thinking in extremes, and leads to a false and imbalanced way of life.

Arbitrary inference: which means, that you make a causal linking of factors, which is accidental and misleading.

Thought reading: You are convinced, that you know, what others think about you. You don't investigate if you are right by asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives. Without deeper reflection you just conclude, that others for example are critical.

Rhetoric or subjective argumentation: an unethical way to convince others about your opinions, because it doesn't show, what in reel sense is appropriate or inappropriate about a case, but manipulates with it. Contains some of the following elements: innuendoes, distortions, generalizations, over-/understatements, sarcasm, satire, irony, postulates, emotional affections, coloured diction, choices and exclusions, subjective style. - **objective argumentation** therefore is a more ethical way to convince others about your opinions, because it actually shows, what in reel sense is appropriate or inappropriate about a case. Contains some of the following elements: summary or abstract, information, description, reasons, concrete diction, nuanced objective statement.

Wishful thinking : To think, that because it would be nice, if something was true, then it actual must be true. This thoughtpattern is very common, and very seductive because it allows us to avoid unpleasant truths. But it's a form of self-deceit. Wishful thinking for example often ignores the possibility of plausible alternative explanations on exactly the same observations.

Prejudice: a belief held without good reason or consideration of the evidence for or against its being true. Philosophy – that is: rationality and critical thinking – is opposed to prejudice. We are all riddled with prejudices on a wide range of issues, but it is possible to eliminate some of them by making an effort to examine evidence and arguments on both sides of any question. Human reason is fallible, and most of us are strongly motivated to cling on to *some* beliefs even in the teeth of evidence against them (see wishful thinking); however, even making small inroads into prejudice can transform the world for the better.

Ad hominem move: A Latin phrase meaning “to the person”. The devious move in debate, where you shift attention from the point in question to some non-relevant aspect of the person making it. Calling someone's statement *ad hominem* is always a reproach; it involves the claim that the

aspects of the arguer's personality or behaviour, which have become the focus of discussion are irrelevant to the point being discussed. Often ad hominem move is simply based on prejudice. It can also be a rhetorical move. Ad hominem move is a very widespread, and problematic, move among psychologists and psychotherapists, who can't limit their theories to clients, wherefore it can be very difficult to have a normal discussion with these people.

Could you catch yourself in the above distortions? Try to do it by observing the pain-body's negative feelings in your body. Remember that the thoughts are false, while the feelings are true. Be aware, that these thought-distortions try to lead you on the wrong track. If you can catch them in misleading you, what could you then do to change them? (See the alternative viewpoints last in the supporting exercise).

Dilemma-training

- What can the advantages and disadvantages by doing so and omit to do so, be? Use for example a sheet of paper which you with a vertical line divide in the middle. Arguments, both for and against to *to do* so, are written on the right side, and arguments, both for and against *omitting* to do so, are written on the left side.

Supplementary questions to inappropriate assumptions and rules of living

- How is that assumption/life-rule good for you?
- How is it hindering or obstructing for you?
- How should a better, more functional, and less obstructive, assumption/life-rule be?
- Setup of behavioural experiment to investigation of the new assumption/life-rule.

Questions to activation of alternative thoughts by anxiety

1. Is your evaluation-basis correct? Is there evidence?
 - What do you base your assumption on?
 - What speaks for and against the assumption?
 - Could there be other ways to perceive the situation?
 - What would another person think in the same situation?
 - Do the assumption build on selffocus and feelings rather than on outside facts and logic?

2. Do you overestimate the probability?

- How convinced are you, that your assumption is true?
- How probable is it, that the feared will happen?
- How often has it happened in earlier situations?

3. Do you overestimate the negative consequences?

- What is the worst, that could happen?
- If the worst imaginable happened, what would then happen?
- Could there happen something else?
- What will most realistic happen?

4. Do you understate your ability to manage the anxiety?

- What have you done in other similar situations?
- What could you do, if the worst imaginable happened?
- What would you propose, that another person did in a similar situation?

Questions to your values, ideals and conceptions

Rational questions

- Do you investigate the arguments for the answers you give? (be in this connection aware, that your actions and your way of life also are a way, in which you answer the questions of life).
- Do you think about what you mean with your various concepts/ideas? Do you ask philosophical questions? Are you enough inquiring and investigative?
- Do you seek after unity and coherence in your concepts/ideas, or do you end up in self-contradictions, paradoxes or myths?
- Is there coherence between your thoughts (logos) and your lived life (bios)?

Life-philosophical questions

- Do you notice, how much you are circling around your own past or future?
- Do you notice, how this is connected with a closed attitude, inattention, absent-mindedness and ennui?
- Are you enough aware and collected? Are you able to be existentially present in the Now?
- Do you notice, how this is connected with self-forgetful openness, and absorption in the world – as a condition of love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom?

Existence-philosophical questions

- Do you notice your effort on becoming something; that is: your opinion formation and identity formation?
- Are you yourself in this process, or do you strive on becoming something else than what you are (roles, masks, stories)?
- Do you imitate others?
- Are you a slave of others' ideas and ideals?
- Are your actions characterized by irresoluteness and doubt?
- Or are you able to be yourself, to live in compliance with your own essence?
- Have you achieved authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action?

Spiritual questions

- Are you dependent or independent of religious institutions, whether it is large religions, sects or gurus? (This question can also be asked in connection with political institutions/ideologies).

- Do you exist on gurus (politicians), religious (political) dogmatics, ideology, myths or conceptions?
- Are you inquiring and investigative in relation to such silent assumptions, premises, and things taken for granted?
- Is there coherence in it?
- Is it self-contradictory?
- Is there coherence between your thoughts and your lived life?
- How about your way of being; is it self-circling or self-forgetful?
- And how about the autonomy and the power of action? Are you yourself or dependent on others?
- Is there conflict between *that which is* and *that which should be*; that is: between the realities, the existential facts, and your ideals and values?

Questions which can activate important alternative viewpoints, when you are in a difficult problem-situation:

- The viewpoint of awareness. Is the problem due to assumptions that are based on selffocus and feelings rather than on outside facts and logic? Could you try to open your assumptions by using *the Four Awareness-variants* under the supporting exercise *The Harameditation*? See for example also the philosophical questions *Who am I?* and *Is there a meaning of life?*
- The viewpoint of heartfulness. Are there unethical thoughts involved? What could you in that case do? (see for example the philosophical questions *What can I know?*; *How ought my attitude to war be?*; *How ought we live in community?*; *Is there a God?* and the supporting exercise *The Heartmeditation*).
- The viewpoint of suffering. Is the problem due to resistance, negativity and inability to surrender yourself to the facts? (see for example the philosophical questions *Who am I?*; *What are feelings?*;

What are suffering and happiness? and the supporting exercise The change of suffering into Enlightenment).

- The viewpoint of time. Is there a problem here and now, or does it only exist in the thinking's past or future? (See for example the philosophical questions *Who am I?; Is there a life before or after death?* and the supporting exercise *The Change of suffering into Enlightenment*)
- The viewpoint of opposites. Is the problem due to selective abstraction, black and white thinking, catastrophe-thinking or other thought-distortions? Which form of flexible thinking could you in that case use? (see for example the philosophical questions *What makes it possible for us to understand each other without language, and with language both to agree and disagree?* and the supporting exercise *the Philosophical Diary*)
- The viewpoint of the energylaws. Does there occur a trough of the waves, a contrabalancing, an unfinished situation or the consequences of an inappropriate action? Which form of flexible thinking could you in that case use? (see for example the philosophical questions *Why do I exist?; What do I ought to do or not to do?; What is a human being?; Why is there altogether anything?; What are dreams?; What do paranormal experiences consist in, and how ought my attitude to the paranormal be?* and the supporting exercise *the Philosophical Diary*)

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