LEOBRAND

Letters on Living Ethics

Introduction to Agni Yoga

9. Absolution or personal responsibility?

Table of contents

1. Temptations and trials – Causes of sin 3

2. The concept of sin 3

3. The division of sins into venial and grave 4

4. The consequences of sin 4

a) The psychological and the physical suffering 4

b) Heaven and hell 5

c) Last Judgement 5

5. Remission of sins 6

a) How did confession come into being? 6

b) From communal confession to auricular confession 6

c) Remission of sins through confession and baptism 7

d) Repentance and remission of sins 8

e) Absolution – a harmful aberration 8

6. Karma and self-responsibility 9

a) Freedom and self-responsibility 10

7. Did CHRIST teach the remission of sins? 11

a) False interpretation of the Bible 11

b) Bible forgeries 11

8. The right to indulge sins 12

a) Remission of sins only through amends 13

9. The duty to forgive 14

10. CHRIST - as Redeemer in us 14

Cover picture: "Sign of Christ", painting by Nikolas Roerich 1924.

Absolution or personal responsibility?

1. Temptations and trials – Causes of sin

Paul wrote to the Corinthians (I/10/12): *„Everyone, no matter how firmly he thinks he is standing, must be careful he does not fall.“* Temptations and trials approach man daily. They are a common occurrence based on the bipolarity of human nature and being, ranging between good and evil. Man is constantly confronted with the choice of deciding in favour of one or the other goal, and thus to pass character tests or trials, on the basis of which he is found suitable for the evolution of the spirit or is also eliminated or thrown back.

Even the founders of religion were not spared such temptations. See Matthew 4, the temptation of JESUS by Satan in the desert and on the parapets of the temple. We find a similar example with BUDDHA (his tempter was Mara = the Lord of the Underworld).

Only by proving himself in temptation can man ascend. Temptations and trials are therefore the obstacles on the path to self-perfection that no one is spared. If man succumbs to a temptation, that is, if he falls in one of the cosmic trials that are constantly sent to him, he commits a sin and in most cases harms himself. On the one hand, the temptations come from our lower nature, the animal soul of desire within us, whereas on the other hand, our higher nature - the spiritual soul - strives to keep us from falling in the temptation and to pull us upwards. This too is expressed in the words of JESUS in Matthew 26/41: "Watch and pray, that you fall not into temptation; the spirit is willing enough, but the flesh (soul of desire) is weak."

Another mighty seducer is the Hierarchy of Darkness, whose task is to be opponents of the Light, but this is by no means a reason for eternal damnation. The fallen must also have the opportunity to ascend, even if the conditions will be more difficult. In return, the representatives of the dark Hierarchy today enjoy solely the pleasures of matter, whereas those who strive towards the Light must free themselves from matter through suffering in order to advance to the heavenly pleasures.

Every human being also has opponents of equal strength who constantly force him to prove himself. This relationship is also expressed in the closest coexistence with fellow human beings, as the characters shaped themselves off through various frictions, which is nothing other than a test to improve the human qualities. In the case of the average man, these are the little seducers who try to lead the aspirant astray by all kinds of temptations, so in the case of the High Masters - like JESUS - it is the prince of darkness himself. Those who resist temptations will gain merits if they pass the test, those who fall harm themselves and their fellow human beings, and we commonly call this harm "sin".

2. The concept of sin

The concept of sin arose at the moment when mankind first knew how to distinguish between good and evil. At this stage, moral laws and ideas of taboo were developed, the transgression of which were regarded as an offence against the will of the divinity, and in later times also against the commands of the church. Of course, these transgressions also had to entail punishments, and here they coincide in most cases with the effects of the law of karma, which are triggered by negative thinking, speaking and acting.

Accordingly, a sin is - from a cosmic point of view - a transgression of the law of cause and effect, whereby the motive of the act, the mental sanity and the severity of the mistake are decisive in determining the penalty.

A sin is also resistance to the course of evolution and wittingly or unwittingly harm to fellow human beings and the community. After all, negative karma is also created through this. In civil life, offences against one's neighbour and the community are punished by human law. However, numerous crimes are not punished by the human law, regardless of whether they are committed through trickery, violence or other circumstances. However, justice forms

the basis of the world order. Therefore, an absolutely just reward and punishment can never be in the hands of subjectively thinking beings, but must be incumbent upon a natural law that proceeds according to very specific and regular reactions that can be observed. No fraud and criminal, however ingenious, escapes from this cosmic punishment. If the punishment does not reach him in this life, then in a later one. No human being and no community, no people or other human collective escapes the self-prepared fate. It follows from this that there can never and nowhere be an absolution of sins by outside persons, nor has there ever been. The absolving of sins is therefore completely ineffective.

By the way, the churches also suffer from moralism when it comes to determining what sin is. Often things are stamped as sins that are perfectly okay according to the law of nature; on the other hand, offences against nature are elevated to moral demands (celibacy). Incidentally, we also observe similar phenomena in human society. Due to the subjective attitude, man is generally incapable of determining in a just manner what is sin in each case or what is in harmony with cosmic laws or contrary to them. The boundary between good and evil can only be taken relatively, it can never be determined absolutely. What is good and useful for one person can be evil and harmful for another, and vice versa.

3. The division of sins into venial and grave

The division of sins into venial and grave, as handled by the Catholic Church, is impossible from the standpoint of natural law, because a limit cannot be determined. Thousands of gradations will not suffice, from the splinter of a sin to the beam. This statement is necessary because quite different punishments are attached to these two kinds of sins. The Church teaches that a grave or mortal sin deprives the human soul of "sanctifying grace" and thus consigns the person to hell or eternal damnation, whereas a venial sin only entails temporal punishment in the form of a temporary stay in purgatory, which can be shortened or cancelled by prayers of indulgence. One even goes so far as to claim that a mortal sin also makes a person incapable of acquiring new merits for heaven, so that after committing a mortal sin, a good deed would also no longer be a meritorious deed (see Catholic Catechism).

How illogical the division into venial and grave sins is can be seen from the scale, which is supposed to represent the major sins, namely the seven deadly sins:

Pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth.

Who would be in a position to determine, among all these weaknesses, some of which are very human, that limit which is to decide on purgatory or eternal damnation? Where, for example, is the boundary between laziness and sloth?

What does eternal and thus eternal damnation mean at all? Not millions of years, not billions, indeed there is no end of time. Why should a human being, whose life does not even last a second in comparison to the imagined eternity, be eternally damned for a relatively small mistake, because he may have fallen once according to this scale or as a result of some other weakness and died in this state? There is no such cosmic institution. This would be a fist blow against every sense of justice, love and mercy.

4. The consequences of sin

a) The psychological and the physical suffering

The law of karma teaches the same as true Christianity: "whatever someone sows, that is what he will reap[1]", and "you will not get out till you have paid the (very) last penny[2]". According to this iron law, every human being has to atone for his sins or make up for his

[1] Galatians 6:7
[2] Matthew 5:26, Luke 12:59

mistakes himself, no matter how bitter, painful and sometimes very harsh the penance or punishment imposed. Experience proves that a sin, although this is not to be understood in the ecclesiastical sense, but as a transgression of natural law, is followed inevitably by suffering, either psychological or physical, sometimes both at the same time.

The meaning of suffering has already been discussed in detail in the previous lesson. Without suffering, no perfection would be possible at the present stage of human development. However, no human being will suffer innocently, but only after he has transgressed a cosmic law, either knowingly or unknowingly - even ignorance does not protect against punishment. Consequently, man should strive in his own interest to overcome his ignorance, for no one escapes karma nemesis. This is at the same time a proof of the self-responsibility imposed on us. Therefore, from the point of view of cosmic laws, there can be no remission of sins by outside or third persons, otherwise suffering would also have to be cancelled by confession. But the fact is that even the head of a church is not able to redeem from the least suffering. These are already quite chosen people who can take upon themselves the suffering of others, especially karmic debts. But what is the point of confession if it does not free one from the consequences of sin anyway?

b) Heaven and hell

The fact that earthly punishments cannot be cancelled by confession could not remain hidden even from the Church. It therefore shifted the field of its activity to the hereafter, which is invisible to man, and arrogated to itself the right to cancel or even impose punishments that must be served after death by absolving sins. For venial sins, a temporary purgatory is decreed, for deadly sins, on the other hand, hell and eternal damnation. Since, as we shall see, she has also acquired the keys to the kingdom of heaven on the basis of a falsified biblical passage, she assures her flock they will go to heaven and enjoy eternal bliss. Whoever dares to contradict her ideas, on the other hand, must reckon with eternal damnation. Truly a unique proof of intolerance and lovelessness! Thank God, in truth things are completely different. The gates to the kingdom of heaven are open to all people, without distinction of faith, with or without membership of the church. The decisive factor for entry is the personal striving for perfection. Seeking people have at all times found the connecting paths and also the spiritual teachers that lead to the Hierarchy of Light.

Certainly, someone who constantly violates the cosmic laws, who declares war on God and his co-workers of Light, the Archangels and Masters of Wisdom, i.e. the representatives of the Hierarchy of Light, cannot expect to be admitted into the Kingdom of God after death. Heaven therefore means closeness to God, hell, on the other hand, means distance from God or the kingdom of Satan or darkness (Mara-Kara in India, Mara = ruler of darkness).

c) Last Judgement

The Catholic Church teaches: After death, the soul comes before a special judgement of God. After this special judgement, according to the divine judgement, either heaven, purgatory or hell awaits them. On the Judgment Day, which is to bring the end of the earthly world, all people will rise from their graves, the good to life and the bad to damnation. The bodies of the good will be glorious, but the bodies of the wicked will be ugly. This Judgment Day resurrection is followed by the general or Last Judgement, whereby the good enter the Kingdom of God and eternal bliss, while eternal damnation awaits the wicked[3].

There is some truth in this idea, but it is expressed very primitively and adapted to the spiritual capacity of people, 2000 years ago. It is therefore necessary to explain the term "Last Judgement" from the point of view of an expanded consciousness.

As was already written in Lesson 7 on „Reincarnation", the evolution of human beings and also of the lower kingdoms of nature takes place over seven cosmic rounds or manvantaras,

[3] Matthew 25:31-46

which are to be called periods of creation or revelation of the cosmos, or also the cosmic day. They are succeeded by a cosmic night period or pralaya (the so-called " period of rest"). Like day and night, these cosmic periods of creation and rest alternate. It is a question of time and one´s efforts whether the human soul develops rapidly, normally or slowly. There are souls that cannot keep up with the pace of evolution and will therefore be eliminated by the cosmic judgement (Last Judgement) towards the end of a round. However, this does not mean eternal damnation but a separation of the mature from the immature souls, the righteous from the unrighteous or, as it is written in the Bible, the good from the bad or the wheat from the chaff.

Those who do not pass the cosmic test are put back a class, i.e. they can follow with the next round or the one after that. The loss of time, however, is gigantic. After all, one day of Brahma (a small Manvantara) is given in the Secret Doctrine as 4 billion and 320 million solar years. So it is no pleasure for the dawdler who are stuck in matter but think they have to smile at those who strive for perfection. Final examinations must be on the path of evolution into infinity. There is no standstill in nothing or nowhere.

5. Remission of sins

a) How did confession come into being?

At all times, people have felt the need to confide in an experienced soul advisor in order to confess their worries, their misdemeanours as well as sorrow and suffering, in a word, to unload or shake off everything that inhibited their development or their ascent. Where else could one seek this release other than with a spiritual leader who not only felt sympathy and understanding, but was also able to share some of these burdens.

This soul confession has existed at all times, among all peoples and religious systems. The modern equivalent of this is today psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

Unfortunately, the priestly caste could never quite resist the temptation to abuse this generally human desire to have a heart to heart talk for the interests of their own power. For this reason, all religious systems have different methods of freeing or washing oneself clean of sins. For instance, the Hindus recommend bathing in the Ganges on the occasion of the "Kumbh Mela Festival" in order to wash away the filth of the soul in the floods of the holy waters and thereby attain complete liberation from sins and eternal bliss.

What does it really matter if hundreds drown or are trampled to death on the occasion in the throng of millions, like it was the case at that festival in 1954. On the other hand, the Mohammedan has to undertake a strenuous "Hajj" to Mecca in order to become an aspirant to eternal bliss. However, it was left to the Catholic Church to channel the souls longing for bliss through its confessionals before entering the gates of the kingdom of heaven, and there to decide on heaven and hell.

b) From communal confession to auricular confession

In the founding period of the world religions, when the impulse of pure striving was greatest and strongest, there was almost everywhere the form of communal confession. It was an evidence of voluntary mortification before the public and a visible sign that someone who made an open confession of his faults was also truly striving towards perfection. But for a long time this confession was not associated with an absolution of sins or remission of sins, but merely a public penance that served as a pledge of a progressive improvement in character.

The original communal confession, which is still customary in monastic orders in Buddhism today, became the secret auricular confession in Catholicism with supposedly absolutely secure secrecy. But like communal confession, auricular confession was never instituted by a founder of a religion, but it is the work of the epigones (descendants) who, in their

pure overzealousness, first wanted to make voluntary self-confession of faults before the public in order to prove their penitential spirit and humility, and later also tried to carry away their surroundings by their example. We find this kind of self-incrimination peculiarly even in the 20th century in totalitarian political systems with a messianic character, that is, an interesting psychological problem. The aim is to prove loyalty to the party despite misconduct in order to be accepted into the old community. For the latter is only graciously prepared to accept the fallen back in the case of an open confession. In civil law, too, open confession is considered a mitigating circumstance in the sentencing.

In the Middle Ages, when morals among the Catholic clergy had loosened to such an extent, and before the Inquisition began, it was no longer possible to hold a public communal confession without causing public scandals. The church leadership felt compelled or found no other way out than to switch from communal confession to secret auricular confession. This was the work of Pope Innocent III. (1198 to 1216), the founder of the Inquisition. At the Lateran Council in 1215, he succeeded in persuading the clergy, i.e. shortly before his death, to declare auricular confession obligatory for all the faithful. Since then, it has to be made at least once a year before a Catholic priest.

The secret auricular confession achieved a threefold goal. Firstly, the clergy saved themselves from public self-accusation of sins and could thus cover up scandals more easily. Secondly, the Catholic Church got its hands on the best and most comprehensive system of informers in the world by forcing its faithful to confess at least once a year under threat of hellish punishment. Thirdly, the church achieved a tremendous amount of power to rule over a large mass of people, unrivalled since then by any institution in the world, and could decide on heaven and hell based on a falsified biblical passage in John 20:23. These suggestive beliefs, lying in the decision-making power over eternal bliss or damnation, still make all believers tremble to the present day and are anchored deeply in their consciousness.

c) Remission of sins through confession and baptism

In addition to auricular confession, the Catholic Church also knows the remission of sins through baptism. This is initially intended as the instrument of liberation from so-called »original sin«. Original sin is understood to mean the first fall into sin of the alleged first parents Adam and Eve, because they ate from the fruit of the tree of knowledge. As a result, they were expelled from paradise and with them the following generations.

Original sin, however, means the beginning of negative karma. This point in time is identical with the symbolic expulsion of humanity from paradise. At that time, people came to the knowledge of good and evil, i.e. they ate from the tree of knowledge and also had to take responsibility for their thoughts and actions. This was in the middle of the end of involution and at the same time in the middle of the third or Lemurian root race. All human beings, including the members of today's fourth and fifth root races, went through this millions of years ago. If we assume that a certain number of monads are bound to the planet, which in turn form seven ever more perfect root races.

A lot of mischief is done with baptism out of lack of understanding. It is symbolically an act of first initiation into the Adeptship, where the disciple who has stepped onto the spiritual path is officially accepted into the Hierarchy of Light. Certainly no one can enter the Kingdom of God without this baptism, but this already presupposes a very high degree of perfection, which is only attained after severe trials. The Church, however, has made a »fishery of souls« out of this sacred act of initiation into the high mysteries of the cosmos. he fact is that it already binds the infant to its organisation for all time through the baptismal certificate, regardless of whether he later wants to belong to it or not. If the adult later leaves, he is threatened with eternal damnation. The ecclesiastical ceremony of baptism also does not exempt from original sin, since there is no such sin derived from Adam and Eve. Correctly, original sin is to be understood as the personal burden of negative karma, which every citizen of the earth brings into life from his or her previous incarnations. Man has to free himself from it through his own

efforts, i.e. not through baptism or remission of sins. By the way, we ourselves were our forefathers and foremothers.

d) Repentance and remission of sins

The Church also teaches the believer to repent of his sins, but nothing is easier than that. Yes, there is also talk of a "perfect contrition", by which one is supposed to be able, if necessary, even to rescind the law of cause and effect, i.e. to free oneself from the karmic consequences. What vain delusion! So let us praise the Senzar (sacred temple sayings of India), in whose dictionary the term repentance is missing at all.

It is a human weakness that we are quick to repent of evil when we have to suffer particularly from it. Then promises are made and sacred oaths sworn never to do again, what one has done wrong. The results of bad actions, however, remain despite "perfect contrition" and the sufferings are not extinguished. This proves conclusively that the sin is not forgiven by repentance. If repentance is sincere, it can only prevent a person from repeating his errors, but it will never save him from the effects of the law of karma.

e) Absolution – a harmful aberration

No religious concept and ecclesiastical institution has ever done so much harm to humanity as the false theory of absolution. It has become a major evil in contemporary spiritual education. For it created a feeling of irresponsibility in thoughts, words and works in man, and finally called forth a general irresponsibility such as is to be observed throughout the world. From childhood, people are taught that they can commit the greatest crimes with impunity if they only confess them to a priest and ask for absolution. Under certain circumstances, the awakening of a "perfect contrition" should also suffice.

But what would a merchant say if a debtor declared to him: "I completely regret that I owe you money, and that settles the case for me." Every man will realise that under such circumstances all order in the world ceases, but the churches nevertheless dare to preach such disorder as God's law. Thus freed from his burden of debt, man can sin anew until the next confession, sin again after successful new absolution, and so on. This went so far that for centuries papal indulgences could even be bought against monetary donations, which is still possible today. A good example of this is when masses are said for a poor soul in exchange for a certain tax in order to shorten the torment of purgatory. ("In half an hour at the most the soul is with the Holy Ghost"), according to the preachers of indulgences, in Germany it was Tetzel, a Dominican friar and a preacher of indulgences, who brought Martin Luther on the scene with his activities.

The book AGNI YOGA says in this regard: *„…To absolve a repentant sinner for a fee—is it not the most heinous crime? Is not this attempted bribery of Divinity worse than the most primitive kind of fetishism? Light must be shed from all sides upon this terrifying problem, otherwise the human undergarments will never lose their grime."* (AY, § 52.)

Helena Roerich writes: *„Indeed, by instilling into the minds of children the idea that the church, as a powerful intercessor, can for a tear of repentance and a fee give passage to the erring through the gates of Paradise, the church commits the greatest sin. By removing from man the sense of responsibility, the church shuts him off from his Divine Origin. The church has discredited the great concept of Divine Justice. By losing the understanding of responsibility and justice, man will inevitably begin his devolution, for those who fail to follow the cosmic laws are destined to deterioration."*

"The whole Cosmos is built upon the law of responsibility, or, as it is more often called, the law of cause and effect, the law of Karma. And it is quite impossible to ignore this law and to neglect it without bringing on, in the long run, self-destruction. All the ancient Teachings, without exception, taught this law of great responsibility, this pledge of the Divine in us. This is clearly indicated in the words of Moses, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth," misinterpreted and taken as an example of the revengefulness of the Jewish people." LHR I, 12 September 1934, p312

The theory of absolution of sins is despite its ethical reprehensibility still popular even in the age of alleged progress due to its convenience and suggestive underpinnings. It is sometimes even supported by those philosophers to whom the legal foundations of the universe have hitherto remained unknown. After all, it is much more comfortable to live in such a way that one can sin according to its desire as it suits one and does not have to bear any responsibility.

Especially "high intellectuals" are outraged against the development of man's divinity and deny the existence of his "higher ego". Many of them believe that the power of the Church lies precisely in the forgiveness of sins, which is why sin must be attributed great usefulness. Very cunning casuists even go so far as to esteem sin higher than virtue, since only sin and penance make possible the joy of complete liberation from all burdens through the absolution of sin.

Verily, such theorists will dwell in the spiritual darkness they prepare for themselves. How can one prefer sinfulness to virtue in the path of perfection?

6. Karma and self-responsibility

It was through the sacrament of penance or confession that the harmful consciousness of irresponsibility towards one's sins arose. The misconception was awakened that one could sin without listening to one's conscience, i.e. to the admonishing voice of one's spiritual soul. Nevertheless, one can make the comforting perception that even in the case of serious criminals, the conscience has remained more or less awake and in all people the feeling of responsibility towards the negative deeds remains, even after absolution and “perfect contrition” has taken place. Even Christians brought up in the consciousness of the absolute efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance shy away from further mistakes and sins in the feeling of lasting responsibility that is embedded in their consciousness. In any event, according to the teaching of their theologians, they can always hope for immediate absolution and grace. This is a valuable proof that the confessors have not been able to calm the consciences of their faithful. Rather, these act unconsciously against their own teaching and thus confirm the correctness of karma.

Even a superficial consideration of our destiny proves to us that every human being is responsible for himself / herself, i.e. for his thoughts and actions. Those who try to shift the responsibility for the resulting fate and for their character onto other people as well as onto heredity and upbringing flee in vain from the severity of their own responsibility. Even our choice of parents and of surroundings is largely karmically determined.

Even a GOD can never be held exclusively responsible for our fate. Divine beings are only involved in our fate insofar as THEY are creators (PITRIS) of human beings and THEY are responsible for our primordial creation, just as the parents are today for our present incarnation. Human beings are endowed with reason, intellect and free will, possess the freedom to develop and to shape their own destiny within the framework of the laws of nature. Humans have all the freedom to think and act, only then does the law of cause and effect come into action. There are rewards for good thoughts and deeds, punishments for bad ones. However, GOD does not take care of this, but by the law of karma, which runs automatically like a reaction, acting absolutely justly and it is constantly effective. Every human being therefore has it in his or her own hands to bring about reward or punishment, or to decide on it. They are even urgently reminded by the natural law of suffering and pain to strive for the good in order to reach spiritual perfection.

There is no God who shapes the destiny of the people through direct influences, but they shape it on their own responsibility in relatively greatest freedom, consciously or unconsciously, limited, however, by the consequences of the law of karma. The fate or destiny is prepared by our thoughts, words and actions and comes despite “perfect contrition” or absolution of sins in any case to the effect. Depending on the circumstances prevailing on earth, the effects take place only after centuries, or only then, when the conditions for fulfilling the

destiny are most favorable. Anyone who does not yet know anything about these things, because they were withheld from him, despite numerous indications in the Bible, will naturally become either an unbelieving fatalist or a weak-willed and slow-witted tool in the hands of a caste of priests. By this, man is decisively hindered in his spiritual development.

Therefore, in order to initiate anew the spiritual progress, which is necessary for a general improvement of morals and thereby also of the world situation, the cosmic foundations of self-responsibility must be taught. Furthermore, the unfolding of a higher and expanded consciousness is necessary, as well as the unfolding of self-awareness. However, anyone who deliberately and purposefully covers the sources of light and thus allows the spiritual darkness to enter, will become a victim of darkness himself with all its consequences, unless he frees himself from it again, which takes tremendous efforts. This is by no means a threat, nor a well-intended admonition, but a statement for the benefit of all who struggle for knowledge.

a) Freedom and self-responsibility

Another factor that underlines the self-responsibility imposed on earthlings for their actions is the freedom left to the human beings. There is no self-responsibility without human freedom, on the other hand no freedom without self-responsibility. We have the freedom to think and act in this way or in another way, but we also have to take responsibility for it. Otherwise, without responsibility, chaos would gradually emerge. Therefore, the degree of freedom requires a correspondingly large responsibility.

Freedom is the absolute requirement of every development, otherwise the man would be a sport of an unknown fate or a puppet in the hand of a powerful creator. But what pleasure could a GOD have in creating some people from the beginning for heaven and others for hell or eternal damnation? Humans must therefore have the freedom to choose between the two poles of good and evil in order to be self-responsible for determining their evolution in this way. This means, however, that he also has to take responsibility for the choice he has made, which, of course, cannot be taken away from him by an absolution of sins.

One often hears the question, why God does not intervene in the fate of humans or in the world affairs, why does HE not prevent crimes and wars? Why do numerous criminals run around unpunished etc.? All these questions are based on the ignorance of the law of karma, not least on the ignorance about the freedom given to the humans for shaping of their own fate and self-responsibility associated with it.

Man is completely free in his thinking and acting. So he has absolute freedom of choice, but in the suffering of his fate he is bound. In this way his responsibility is compellingly proven. Because of the fact that he must accept the consequences of the self-created causes in any case, his freedom of will is limited or only relatively perfect, but not the freedom of choice, this remains absolute. The man is forged by the hammer that he himself has wielded as a blacksmith before. Yesterday's freedom becomes today's destiny. Today's destiny and freedom become tomorrow's destiny. The responsibility for the fate always lies in one´s own past. Man is therefore free and unfree at the same time: free in new causes towards the future, unfree in the effect of the causes already initiated in the past, which inevitably come back to him in the form of effects. The same applies also to all omissions.

The human spirit is also not seized by death and annihilation, because its responsibility cannot end with death and death itself is not a compensatory end. Freedom is therefore only possible if there is responsibility. This is the most important proof that our soul does not die with physical death, but continues to live, indeed must continue to live in order to carry on its responsibility.

No account is settled with death. Therefore, human evolution leads towards infinity with increasing responsibility. (Especially important for those who believe that man does not possess an immortal soul and that life ends with death).

7. Did CHRIST teach the remission of sins?

In the first announcement of the Passion we read in agreement in Matthew 16/24 and in Mark 8/34: "*If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.*" These words of following CHRIST are of special significance in two respects. Firstly, they prove the possibility of an evolutionary development, which allows every striving human being to reach the state of the divine perfection of CHRIST one day, but only through much suffering and hardship. Secondly, we see from this that no man can be given anything on the path of evolution, not even sins, otherwise CHRIST would not have said: "Whoever wants to follow ME, let him take up his cross and follow ME." HE might have said otherwise, "let him come to ME, confess and repent of his sins, for I will take them upon MY shoulders, and then let him go on and sin without a care." Taking up your cross means to redeem the negative karma or one's burden of sins by one's own strength through the reparation of all faults, even under suffering and pain, and thereby purify oneself.

a) False interpretation of the Bible

The Church uses two biblical passages to confirm that CHRIST instituted the remission of sins or confession, one of which turns out to be a later insertion when examined critically, while the other is misinterpreted. Let us first examine more closely the second passage in the chapter on fraternal correction in Matthew 18/18: "*In truth I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*"

The words of binding and loosing do not refer to the absolving of sins, but to karma, and are not addressed to the apostles alone, but to all mankind. This means that the karma that man creates on earth in thoughts, words and deeds (whatever you bind on earth) will also be bound in heaven (Subtle World) - e.g. personal bonds such as marriages, friendships, enmities, etc. - whereas the karma that you erase (release) on earth will also be released in heaven (Subtle World).

That is why Living Ethics so urgently recommends that negative karma be redeemed as quickly as possible and that the relationships with the people with whom we are karmically connected be settled or resolved in love and friendship while we are still on earth, otherwise it will continue to bind us in a detrimental way. It is therefore completely wrong to refer the address "you" in verse 18 only to the apostles alone. This in no way emerges from the Gospel, either literally or in meaning. The words are addressed to all people without exception, whether Christians or Heathens. Surely it is not difficult to understand why the Church tries to interpret this passage as if it were a commission of CHRIST for a special right given only to the apostles and their successors.

b) Bible forgeries

The Gospels were written down by ordinary, mostly poorly educated people who did not yet fully understand the spiritual greatness of their MASTER and the significance of the expanded world religion taught by HIM. This is evident from numerous biblical passages. For it was not without reason that JESUS was often very discouraged because His own disciples did not understand HIS teaching correctly. (See Mark 4/13, 6/52, 7/18, Matthew 16/8, Luke 9/45, etc.).

One must therefore assume that the great and for that time revolutionary teaching was not always handed down correctly or completely. As we all know, the Gospels were not written down until many decades after the death of the DIVINE MASTER. So the Church had a hard time selecting the most reliable ones with the fewest contradictions from a large number of Gospels, some of which differed greatly from each other. Nevertheless, even in the selected texts presented to the world public in the form of the "Christian Bible" - the rest were bought up or destroyed by the Vatican as a precaution - there are still numerous deviating passages that

cannot be reconciled with the true teachings of CHRIST. Furthermore, one must consider that not only out of lack of understanding and as a result of oral tradition, but also out of zeal for faith, some Bible additions have come into being which truly cannot be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it is peculiarly the most important passages in the Bible from which the Church derives all its powers (such as Matthew 18/18) that turn out to be forgeries.

This includes the second biblical passage, which also refers to the sacrament of penance. The only passage that speaks directly of the forgiveness of sins, in John 20/22-23, reads: "*Receive the HOLY SPIRIT*". And now begins the later addition, "*If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained.*" That these words are a later insertion, made by an ecclesiastical zealot, is evident from the fact that these words not only contradict the true teaching of Christ, but also the cosmic laws, and therefore could not have been taught by CHRIST. Strangely enough, the DIVINE MASTER is said to have spoken these words only after his death at HIS appearance to the disciples. But even more conspicuous is the fact that in Matthew, Mark and Luke this extremely important statement about the institution of the sacrament of penance is missing altogether, and thus all the other evangelists had no idea about it, which, however, would be completely out of the question if it were true.

It is most remarkable that the foundations of the Christian churches are based on demonstrable Bible forgeries, which have so far escaped the attention of all Bible researchers, because they do not only accept everything uncritically, but interpret it all too literally. As the example shows, in which it was customary for an American Bible sect to gird themselves with poisonous snakes, because it says in the Bible at Mark 16/18 it says: "*they will pick up snakes in their hands and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.*" Nevertheless, some zealots were bitten to death; for they did not possess those higher yoga powers which are necessary to control the will of even the most dangerous animals. Incidentally, in the same chapter of Mark, which deals with the appearance of the LORD after His death, there is also a passage which sounds like a massive threat, and in this wording is proof of the misunderstood teaching; namely, in the preceding chapter16 it is written: *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers:"* and then follows the story of lifting up serpents, casting out evil spirits, speaking in several tongues, etc. (Note: Understanding all languages when the corresponding spiritual centre - [chakra] - is opened). Here, too, baptism refers to the act of first initiation, such as the apostles received on the feast of Pentecost - Fiery Baptism - and thereby also attained higher psychic abilities. This baptism, however, may not be administered to everyone or to any believer, for it is a great distinction for corresponding merits on the spiritual path, which can only be acquired in numerous incarnations through great achievements and severe trials. Moreover, this baptism may again only be administered by a higher initiate.

8. The right to indulge sins

It is obvious from the meaning of Christian teaching that the remission of sins is only in direct relation to the people who have been affected. In other words, the forgiveness of sins can only be accomplished by those people between whom mistakes and transgressions have occurred. Never can a third or outside person forgive or pardon without the consent of the one who has been harmed, least of all in the name of GOD. Therein lies the great presumption of the later Church Fathers, who claim a right for themselves that not even JESUS himself possessed, because as HIGH MASTER he could never institute such a sacrament, which is in contradiction to the natural law of cause and effect.

We can only forgive and absolve the one who has a debt due to us, and we can only obtain forgiveness and absolution from the one to whom we owe something. These are fundamental insights that are also valid everywhere else in life. An outsider can only help in paying off debts to the extent that he pays for us. Certainly, we can hope for the help of a greater or

more powerful one and knock on his good and helpful heart. But then who will not show gratitude and try to make good his debt by giving something in return to others in need of help?

The law of cause and effect gives us the right to change the links of cause and effect by forgiving our debtors, but we have no right to interfere in the chain of cause and effect of third party with whom we are not karmically connected. If we do so without authorisation, like the confessors, we have to expect a bitter fate. Therefore, all theologians who fall into this error out of ignorance or greed for power are highly to be pitied, for they create negative karma for themselves through the unauthorised remission of sins.

No one in the cosmos has the power to forgive sins of third persons, because such an institution would disturb the balance of the universe. Only the MASTERS OF WISDOM can, for example, personally take upon themselves the karma of suffering people if THEY foresee, on the basis of higher knowledge or clairvoyance, that the person whom THEY are helping really deserves it and will prove worthy of the help without falling back. They sometimes make use of natural healers who act on their behalf. However, not every healer is a servant of the light, there are also fallen and dark ones among them.

Satan and his co-workers also know how to perform miraculous healings - but not by their own power, for they do not want to take over the karma of other people out of love and compassion, but they vampirise the psychic energy of other people. This is very often done through mass suggestion, which they are good at, which is why they like to use the mass scenery for this purpose, in order to concentrate the psychic energy taken from other people on one individual and thereby have themselves worshipped by the ignorant as god-blessed miracle workers. Therefore, caution is needed everywhere. Not everyone who speaks the name of the Lord is a servant of GOD, there are also black magic miracle workers. It is therefore best to pay off one´s karma on your own if possible. Not even the HIGHEST SPIRIT can forgive committed sins that do not concern HIM, because it contradicts the law of karma. HE can, to a certain extent, ease karma. Even the healing of a serious illness that is incurable according to medical opinion does not mean the total end of negative karma, but only the lifting of a serious partial karma, which the sick person himself could not cope with. Besides, it is the task of all those who want to enter the spiritual path to deal with the payment of their debts themselves as far as possible. However, this does not exclude the possibility of seeking help. Much more important than the liberation from physical illnesses, which are sometimes even very necessary as teachers, is the entering of the spiritual path, the spreading of religious truth and the elimination of nescience. Only through this does man come into the position of being able to help himself. We should get out of the stage of spiritual beggary, so that we do not always have to rely on the help of HIGHER POWERS.

Forgiving or redeeming sins means - erasing their consequences. In this process of erasing or redeeming from the consequences of an evil deed, above all, those currents of force are neutralised that have appeared in the aura of man, as a result of the energy he has released in doing the unlawful deed. Just as one chemical ingredient can change the whole character of a substance composed of several other chemical ingredients, so also the effect of a high impulse or quality can neutralise and overcome the consequences of the effects of lower qualities in the nature of man. It is as if in this way the whole character of a man were entirely changed. This is an example of self-help.

a) Remission of sins only through amends

If it has been proven so far that a release from sins through confession is not possible, it is by no means said that there is no possibility at all to get rid of one's sins. All sins are forgiven, but not through absolution in confession and through repentance, but exclusively through amends. Of course, this will not be feasible in a single life. Therefore, we also find here the necessity of the law of reincarnation, which makes redemption possible in the next

incarnations. However, sins against the HOLY SPIRIT (fight against GOD) can set man back several rounds (see also Satan) or lead to total self-destruction if the person concerned excludes himself from any further evolution. Like it is in the hands of man to choose to sin, it is also in his hands to free himself from his sins. Assuming a decent attitude, who would want to shirk his responsibility!

Not only cosmic law demands amends, but also civil law, or the criminal law of all countries and peoples. This applies to all transgression and crimes, be it fraud, theft, robbery or other damage. Even in the case of murder, appropriate atonement is demanded in the form of imprisonment or even the death penalty (note: absurd, because you cannot make up for one murder with another). Only through redemption can one ascend the path of evolution. No one is excluded from perfection, not even the most serious criminal. For this is not in harmony with DIVINE mercy and love. All men have the possibility of redemption and thus of ascending to infinity. However, the conditions for those left behind become increasingly difficult until one day they collapse under the burdens. Yet mercy and hope exist in principle for every fallen person, but ascent is only possible through improvement and one's own striving.

The belief in remission of sins without amends is absurd. This is proven by the very thought that Satan in human form could visit a confessional, obtain absolution there and ascend to heaven. No, there is no heavenly journey in this way. Entrance into the kingdom of GOD can only be achieved through the utmost effort in the struggle for good. This was also the last insight of the German prince of poets Goethe, which he expressed in Faust II: "Whoever strives, we will redeem." (However, it should be said: ... he will redeem himself).

The belief in the forgiveness of sins without amends is only peculiar to people of the lowest level of spiritual development. A higher consciousness knows that there is neither an entity nor a force in the cosmos that could destroy or undo what has once been brought into being. What is thought and done, is and remains done. In turn, it can only be neutralised and offset by corresponding counteractions.

9. The duty to forgive

When asked how often one must forgive one's brother when he has erred against us, JESUS answered Simon Peter: *"Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18/21-22)"*. That means: practically always. Only when we forgive another do we forgive ourselves and change the consequences of the law of karma. By forgiving, we create beneficial consequences to arise and turn the effects of karma in our favour rather than against us.

We must fully forgive every injustice that has been done to us, no matter how severe. Those who cannot forgive and go on hating or seeking revenge and retribution bring down upon themselves the worst consequences. But over those who completely detach themselves from all thoughts of hatred and retaliation, these feelings, even if they are sent to them by others, no longer have any power.

CHRIST'S words about forgiveness are a clear indication that disputes and hostilities must be resolved here on earth, for only what we resolve here will be resolved in "heaven".

If we cannot end the disagreements here, they will remain on our heels through the Subtle World until the next incarnation on earth, until a new meeting between the disputants leads to a reconciliation. Therefore, in order to obtain redemption or forgiveness through the law of cause and effect, it is necessary to forgive one's brothers and sisters everywhere and under all circumstances.

10. CHRIST - as Redeemer in us

„...Christ the Redeemer certainly abides in every one of us. You know already that for the first Christians, as well as for the whole Ancient World, the word "Christos" or Christ, was

synonymous with our higher Ego. In this sense, one should understand that Christ is the Redeemer of sins. Thus, the redemption of personal sins is performed by the soul—the conductor and the messenger of Christ—perpetually, during the long chain of earthly lives of our individual Ego. "The crucified Christ is represented in every human being, who, after the achievement of a certain degree of evolution, must descend into hell and bring back to the higher or normal state the soul fallen there through the lawless deeds of its lower ego. In other words, the Divine Love must reach the heart of a man and must conquer and regenerate him before he is able to realize the monstrosity of his sins against Divine Law. This can be achieved only through a complete fusion and unification with the higher Ego or with the Divine Law of Love."

The same meaning is in the words of Christ to the sinner, Mary Magdalen, who poured myrrh on his feet. The power of faith, the power of love is that fire which transmutes all our feelings. The latter are energies which are transformed into qualities of thought and deed.

Thus, only the transmutation of energies, i.e., feelings or qualities of thought, can take us out of the magic circle of karma. Hence, let us uplift our vibrations through high emotions. It is most important to cultivate in children the aspiration and love toward everything beautiful. …" (HIR I, 9 July 1935)

„The karma of one's actions cannot be compensated for by inaction. He who built a pyre to incinerate Truth will have to bend and remove each cinder. The command of justice neither burns nor smolders. It flares up, unexpected, and consumes the strongholds of obstruction. …" (AY, § 114.)

„Energy and will are the true rulers of karma. He who renounces self, who strives for the Common Good, who is devoted in battle and joyous in labor, acquires, at least for a moment, an Arhat's enlightenment, which makes him lord of his own karma. The realization of enlightenment may be defined as straight-knowledge. True, this straight-knowledge may be lost, or may never be realized. These meteors of spirit race by in space, bearing away the happy opportunities of unconscious humanity.

The consciousness of an Arhat bestows advantages, but exacts full responsibility. But how many can sense the joy of responsibility? At the time when one must assume responsibility, one must also have the courage to see oneself as an Arhat who leads the battle unaided, able to withstand the assault of the elements with his wisdom and his will. …" (AY, § 127.)

„ The most base of all feelings is that of self-satisfaction. Any feeling has its consequences, but self-satisfaction brings only death. It is not easy to think of self-criticism as a blessing, but one can train oneself to persevere on this endless road to achievement.

If you imagine your highest attainment, even it will be ugly when compared with perfection. Our labors primarily have dissatisfaction at their base, it is the impetus for Our searching. But to the newcomer the most difficult question will be, "Brother, can you contain eternal dissatisfaction?" (AY, § 484.)

„A saturated solution forms crystals; various conditions pass before us similarly. So does the saturation of thought produce action. From thought is born a physical effect. So does the saturation of karma finally produce physical consequences. Many timid ones try to put off karmic consequences, but a fiery spirit wisely hastens it by all means. He understands that the ends of a torn fabric can but hinder the ascent. Ugly confusion should not disturb the hastening one. He recognizes within his heart that the inevitable must come to pass, and he only rejoices that everything can be passed through—the strength of Agni is in him." (FW I, § 625.)

„There can be no mercy when the law of karma has to be carried out to the very letter. Karma will catch up with you, but its quality can be changed by a voluntary sacrifice on behalf of people you do not know." (LGM, § 21.)

❖ ❖ ❖

Build a “Star”

Many responsible-minded and worried people today demand a practical action that promises maximum success without attracting much attention, without affiliation to a club or without political risk. In this way they live up to positive expression to their sense of responsibility towards the world situation. Working on the "Star" helps to alleviate not only spiritual but also material distress. It is therefore important to be concerned, at least a few times a day, sending out good thoughts, not for oneself, but above all for the world and for peace. Then the general mental work will also become accustomed to selfless aspirations, and there will be the hope that through such concentrated powers of thoughts the power of evil can be successfully reduced and averted. If millions of people voluntarily made themselves available to such a work, those men and women who would be fit for their purified thinking and noble character, could be able to protrude without great difficulty in religion, politics and social life in order to establish a fair and peaceful world order for the benefit of all people.

„Aum – Tat – Sat – Aum“

Source of light in the universe,
pour out light into human thinking,
it become brighter on Earth!

Source of love in the universe,
pour out love into all human hearts,
May love blossom on Earth!

Source of wisdom in the universe,
pour out knowledge and wisdom,
let cognition prevail on Earth!

Source of peace in the universe,
strength peace and justice,
may felicity and joy be on Earth!

Source of power in the universe,
seal the door to evil,
that the plan of the good will be fulfilled!

„Aum – Tat – Sat – Aum“

(For further information see Lesson no. 6).

Source:

Works of the blessed Mahatma Maitreya Morya:

Blossoms of Morya`s Garden:

Abbreviations:

Leaves of Morya's Garden I,	LMG I	§§ 387
Leaves of Morya's Garden II,	LMG II	§§ 358

New era:

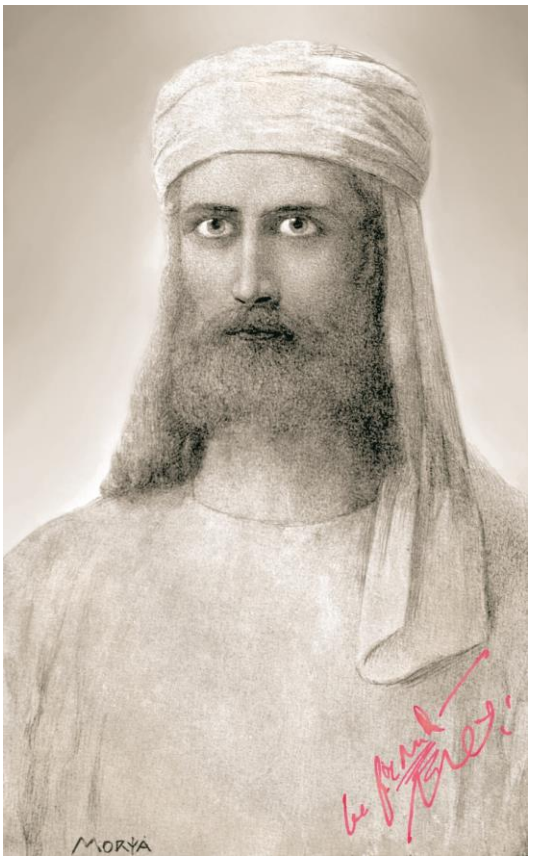
COMMUNITY	COM	§§ 275

Doctrine of Living Ethics in seven themes:

AGNI YOGA	AY	§§ 670
INFINITY I	INF I	§§ 400
INFINITY II	INF II	§§ 518
HIERARCHY	HIE	§§ 460
HEART	HEA	§§ 600
FIERY WORLD I	FW I	§§ 666
FIERY WORLD II	FW II	§§ 470
FIERY WORLD III	FW III	§§ 618
AUM	AUM	§§ 600
BROTHERHOOD	BH	§§ 610
SUPERMUNDANE	SMU	§§ 955

Letters of Helena Ivanova Roerich

2 Books: HIR I, HIR II



MORYA – Indian Rajput prince, whose spirit had been raptured to the great spirit of MAITREYA and was enlightened or overshadowed by him. This portrait drawing commissioned by the artist Hermann Schmiechen in 1884 was often repainted. However, the copies only achieved a resemblance to the "face of the teacher", which is why repainted copies can lead to failure in meditations!

LEOBRAND – Leopold Brandstätter (* 20th February 1915 Wallern, † 26th February 1968 Linz), was an Austrian nature philosopher and humanist.
His writings are concerned with ethics, humanities, psychology, philosophy, politics, ideology of the world and architecture.
In the 1950s he translated the Agni yoga doctrine from Russian together with a Baltic-German team, thus paving the way for this philosophy in German-speaking countries.
Leobrand founded a (non public) school for Living Ethics. Decades before the introduction of teaching ethics in public schools he had already written 36 lessons of Living Ethics, as the first interdenominational teaching aid for ethical training. He gave countless lectures and conducted seminars. Recordings of Leobrand‘s lectures are available. These historical audio documents offer the possibility to understand/think along the philosophical analysis of the great thinker Leobrand and open up new horizons for life´s spiritual dimension. Philosophical accuracy and clarity of expression are Leobrand‘s trademarks.
The new concept of God is particularly noteworthy. For this new and completely independent concept of God, a new term was created: "UNIVERALO“. Leobrand‘s concept is explained on a hierarchical basis, it detaches itself from the abstract and merges with the whole existence. It includes many philosophical and historical concepts as well as advanced knowledge of relatively immortal spiritual fields of force. Leobrand therewith expressed the first and only humanistic definition of God within a new worldview and pulls the rug from under atheism. The new concept of God is as dynamic as nature itself and thus indicative of the forthcoming independent humanities.
Other highlights are his work for a united Europe and for a forthcoming pannational world union. Many of those great-sounding ideas of Leobrand are already self-evident reality.

Works:

1955 - 1961: 36 lessions, **Briefe über Lebendige Ethik** (*letters on Living Ethics* **-** in translation)
1957: **Psychische Energie** (*Psychic energy* - humanities and psychologie)
1958: **Heilung durch psychische Energie** (*Healing by psychic energy* - humanities and health)
1966: **Freude** (*Joy* - philosophy)
1967: **Der Ausweg** (*The way out* - politics)
1968: **Neues Europa und Welt ABC** (*New europe and world ABC* - politics)
1968: **Das neue universelle Weltbild** (*The new universal world view* - world view)
1968: **Spiralik** (*Spiralik* - architecture of the future)
1953 - 1968: reprint, articles in magazines (partly unpublished manuscripts)
1976: **Der auferstandene Gott** (*The resurrected god* - humanities, compilation of articles)
1962 - 1967: **Lectures** and seminars on all his works (recordings MC in German language)

Activities:

1949: Establishment of a **peace league**
1953: Establishment of the (not public) „**School for Living Ethics**“ and magazine
1960: Publication of the magazine „ **Spirale und grüne Wacht**“ (nature protection and biotechnology)
1961: Publication of the magazine „ **Weltreichspirale**”
1962: Establishment of the association „ **Welt-Spirale**“ - ethical society of progress and renewal of the world, and magazine.

© 1956, Leopold Brandstätter, the first edition was published in German by „Schule für Lebendige Ethik“ Verlag für Lebendige Ethik, Linz, Austria. Translation from German: 2022 Welt-Spirale, Ethische Gesellschaft für Fortschritt und Welterneuerung, Linz Austria. weltspirale@aon.at, www.Welt-Spirale.com, Correction status 2026/02/24 Electronic Edition. Gratuitously distribution of data carriers and printouts of this electronic edition are permitted.

Joy – Peace – Freedom

Serve peace and welfare of the world!

Overview of the „letters on living ethics, Introduction to Agni yoga“ from LEOBRAND:

Basic information ethics

1. The truth about yoga
2. Problems of spiritual renewal
3. The meaning of life
4. Karma and forming of fate
5. Might and meaning of thoughts
6. Self-help through proper thinking
7. **Reincarnation – yes or no?**
8. The meaning of suffering
9. Absolution or personal responsibility?
10. Dharma and life-task
11. Death and Rebirth
12. Devotions and sacrifice
13. The relationship of the sexes
14. Marital problems
15. Living Ethics and education
16. Living Ethics and everyday life
17. Living Ethics and nutrition
18. Living Ethics and art

Spiritual training

19. Living Ethics – doctrine of life
20. Chakras or centers of higher consciousness
21. The spiritual meaning of the heart
22. The widening of consciousness
23. The subtle constitution of man
24. Monad or spiritual grain
25. The construction of the universe and Cosmoses
26. Subtle world
27. Fiery world
28. Brotherhood
29. The universal understanding of God
30. The Mother of the world
31. Occultism – yes or no?
32. Danger and meanders of occultism
33. Good and evil
34. The coming new world
35. Infinity
36. The path to become a master

No religious concept and ecclesiastical institution has ever done so much harm to humanity as the false theory of the absolution of sin. In civil life, offences against the neighbour and the community are punished by human law. However, numerous crimes escape the earthly judge, be it through cunning or violence or other circumstances. Righteousness, however, forms the basis of the world order. Therefore, an absolutely righteous reward and punishment can never be in the hands of subjectively thinking beings, but must be incumbent upon a natural law which proceeds according to quite definite and lawful reactions which can be observed. No cheat or criminal, however ingenious, escapes this cosmic punishment. If the punishment does not reach him in this life, it will reach him in a later one. The law of karma teaches the same as true Christianity: "What a man sows, that he will reap", and "no one goes from this life until he has paid the last penny".

„Welt-Spirale“
www.welt-spirale.com
Ethical society for progress and world renewal