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The Nine Gates of Middle-earth

This booklet is an introduction to my personal interpretation of the chakra system. It has to do with my [shamanic counseling](#) practice, and during the text you can find links to other articles and books, which explains further what this booklet only briefly mentions.

Shamanic counseling with me is about help to find a spiritual path, a journey which I describe as mythos-logos-mythos. You start out in the mythic life, or magical thinking, are using philosophy as a navigator (logos, discrimination), and return to the mythic life, transformed by an otherworldly enchantment. This three-phased journey can be described as sleep-dream-awake; that is: a process of awakening. In this booklet I will describe the nine chakras in a mythical way, and give them names according to their storytelling qualities. In my blog archive I have categorized articles which deal with this under the category, [Nordic Shamanism and Forest Therapy](#).

The chakras are, in my interpretation:

- 1) Mother Earth (the Earth Chakra, beneath the body)
- 2) The Dark Forest (the root chakra and the first chakra in the body. Indian name: Muladhara)
- 3) The Golden Stove (the second chakra. Indian name: Svadhistana)
- 4) The Alchemist's Gift (the third chakra. Indian name: Manipura)
- 5) A Christmas Carol (the fourth chakra or heart chakra. Indian name: Anahata)
- 6) The Magical Chimney (the fifth chakra or throat chakra. Indian name: Vishudda)
- 7) The Masked Ball (the sixth chakra or third eye chakra. Indian name: Agna)
- 8) The Guardian of the Threshold (the seventh chakra or crown chakra, and the last chakra associated with the body. Indian name: Sahasrara)
- 9) Father Heaven (the Heaven chakra, over the body)

As you open these chakras via your spiritual practice, you'll experience that you are beginning to wake up to something otherworldly, a secondary world, as Tolkien describes his concept of Middle-earth. Therefore I have called them *The Nine Gates of Middle-earth*. In my view the best way to describe the experience is through storytelling.

The shamanic elements in my counseling have to do with a particular, concrete frame of reference. It trains the lower chakras. The philosophical elements to do with the universal and abstract (you could use other words such as metaphysics, transcendentalism or platonism). It trains the upper chakras. My free Ebook [Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien](#) explains both the shamanic aspect (the storytelling aspect) and the philosophical aspect.

On my page [My teaching in Nutshell](#) I claim that the spiritual practice has three aspects:

1) Critical thinking (spotting thought distortions created by dualistic unbalance, both in oneself and in others). I also call this aspect *The Navigator*, or the philosopher - see my book [A Dictionary of Thought Distortions](#)

2) Investigating the shadow (ignorance, the unconscious, the painbody, the cause of suffering, your own dark side, the ego). This aspect I call *Learning to see with the Heart*, or Heartmeditation (Tonglen) – see my articles [The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can't heal it](#), and [Suffering as an entrance to the source](#).

3) The spiritual practice (going beyond all ideas and images). This aspect I call *The Compass*, or Hara Awareness – see my page [The Compass](#).

What it, very shortly, is about, is that you examine, restructure and change the Navigator. In most people the navigator is a Sophist, a person who is characterized by self-circling, or personal, thinking. The Sophist must be exchanged with a philosopher, a person who is characterized by self-forgetful, or universal thinking. What we are talking about is a metaphysician, or philosopher in the Platonic sense of the term.

The work with your chakras has two phases: Art of Life (the concrete) and The Spiritual Dimension (the universal/abstract/transcendent). The article is in this way divided into the following parts:

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These two phases are intertwined. Art of Life will by itself develop into the spiritual dimension.

1. Art of Life

Introduction

Storytelling have been a great part of how my life has formed. I have always reflected myself in storytelling. I early became fascinated with literature focusing on the journey motif, and which happened to stand on my father's bookshelf, for example the Danish Nobel prize winner in literature, Johannes V. Jensen, and his novel *The Long Journey*.

What is special about Johannes V. Jensen is that he grew up and lived on the peninsula Himmerland, where also Rold Forest is situated, and he wrote about the area and its people in the collection of short stories called *Himmerlandshistorier* (Stories of Himmerland). These people are my ancestors. Jensen wrote in the same style as Tolkien and Blixen, a style which could be called mythic fiction; a tradition which follows the ancient tradition of storytelling.

There is especially one story from *The Long Journey*, which has imprinted itself in my mind. It is called *Mother and Child*. It is about a hunter who in ancient times lived in the great Northern forests with his woman and their child. One day while hunting, the hunter finds the track of a deer, and forgets himself in the hunt. It is as if the deer is teasing him to follow. During the hunt he loses his track of time. Finally, late in the night, at the top of a cliff, the deer stops and looks back at the hunter, who now raises his bow to shoot. But then the deer transforms into fire, and runs up to the sky. The hunter realizes that what he had hunted, was a star constellation.

This story reminds me about the synchronicities that led me to Rold Forest. After my worst crises of kundalini, I moved to Rold Forest. My grandmother had lived most of her life in the village called Rold, in the outskirts of the forest. My mother is raised there, and I have visited my grandmother there all through my childhood. My mother often told us bedtime stories about Rold Forest.

I wrote my first six books when I lived in Aalborg. This was during my second kundalini cycle. Already there I wrote about Bach who signed all his works "Soli Deo Gloria". I have myself written this as a dedication in all my books. One day, after I had moved to Rold forest, I visited Gravlev church, a small middle age church build upon an ancient temple for the Nordic Gods. The church lies on the hill of Gravlev valley, surrounded by the forest, and with a view over the misty valley. I walked into the church and looked up at the pulpit. And there it was written: *Soli Deo Gloria*. I felt a contraction in my heart. A sign from eternity.

Signs have therefore become important for me. Important for me is the notion of a universal language, which lies behind the concept of Rune magic. After this I began to integrate certain shamanic elements in my philosophy (I will return to the story of Mother and Child and Gravlev Church in the end of this booklet).

In meditation-circles it's a widely-spread misunderstanding, that meditation is about being completely without thoughts. Because you can't stop the thoughts. This is due to that the thoughts originate in a very deep structure of personal and collective images, eventually universal images. And all this is revolving around your painbody, which is one and the same as your instinctive survival strategy (the ego). I have the concept of the painbody from Eckhart Tolle, but has modified it a bit.

The instinctive survival strategy, the ego, is the whole of your thought-pattern. The whole of your negativity, or suffering - which your own resistance against life has condemned you to, consists very simply in that you are making the Now into a problem by comparing with earlier, and hoping, desiring or fearing something else.

This thought-pattern is one and the same as your mind. So, thought training is the same as mind training.

Your thought-pattern has normally created an enlarged and energy-charged reflection of itself in your body. And if your past is filled with pain, then it can show itself as a negative energy-field in the body. This is 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.

And the painbody is, through the inner evaluating ego, which the painbody is constructed around, connected with the more dangerous depths of the astral plane's collective history, which also are a kind of dark, ancient inertia, which opposes any change of the ego. That is also the reason why you, through psychotherapy (or coaching), can't heal Man from the ground. Psychotherapy and coaching are in my view corrupt life practices. They are claiming to be neutral (science-based) but are exclusively building on the psychotherapist's and or/coach's idiosyncratic beliefs. There is therefore no philosophical argumentation.

In a broad perspective such beliefs are today rooted in what I call the mythology of authenticity. This mythology is the main mythology of popular culture.

The mythology of authenticity is characterized by two specific methods: psychotherapy and coaching. Psychotherapy and coaching are by no means methods, which only exist within a defined theory. The mythology is characterized by that people constantly are inventing new forms of therapeutic interventions, claiming them to be science, but the basic mythology is the same.

The two world-images can in other words be seen as two versions of the same superior psychologizing understanding of life, which I call the mythology of authenticity. This mythology is so to speak a compilation of the two world-images into one.

So, psychotherapy (with root in humanistic psychology) and coaching (with root in constructivism) can be seen as new, large, meaning-carrying world-images in a psychologized and therapized age. Even though they, in their sources of inspiration, at first specify two quite different views of Man and his possibilities and purposes in the world, they are common in explaining humans from a conception about, that humans have lost (or all the time are in risk of losing) himself and therefore constantly have to work with personal development in order to find himself

(psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past) or to become himself (coaching and the hope of a richer future). You can say that the two world-images both are based on the claim, that a human being not is himself, before he becomes himself, and that both world-images see lifelong therapeutic self-improvement as a presumption for, that a human being can become and live authentic.

So the mythology of authenticity defines Man as a being, who continuously need to cultivate himself therapeutic. The mythology does so by making Man into a problem to himself. It is indoctrinating people to see the Now as a problem by comparing with earlier, and hoping, desiring or fearing something else. This is precisely what traditional spiritual practice seeks to avoid.

A central part of the problem is that the mythology of authenticity only is dealing with the content of mind, the personal content. Religion and philosophy have been reduced to psychotherapy (or coaching). The Wholeness (and the metaphysical and ontological realms) has been reduced to psychological realms. Humanity, in its relation with nature, has been reduced to person and ego.

I hear protest, because the mythology is also working with the now. They also use mindfulness, which has become a buzzword in the mythology of authenticity. But when meditation, as in the mindfulness movement, are combined with the mythology of authenticity, mindfulness works as a hypnotic means of inducing the mythology into the mind. There will be created a conflict between the now (mindfulness) and the mythology of a lost past and/or a richer future.

The difference between mindfulness and traditional spiritual practice is that where authenticity in the mindfulness movement is the same as becoming another (authenticity is a dream, a mythology), then authenticity in spirituality is the same as being what you are (authenticity is reality); or said shortly: the difference between becoming and being, or between taking masks on, and taking masks off (see my blog post [Mindfulness and the Loss of Philosophy](#). Read more about *The Mythology of Authenticity* in my article [Self-help and The Mythology of Authenticity](#)).

In order to heal Man from the ground you need to go into a traditional spiritual practice. It is only within the religions and their spiritual traditions they have knowledge and names for the more dark sides of the astral plane's collective history.

The West has very precisely called this factor the original sin. The East has called it negative karma. The concepts indicate, that the inertia projects beyond the personal history (growing up conditions, traumatic bindings, painful experiences etc.) and far down into the collective inherit-backgrounds of history (genes, environment, society-

ideals, the archetypes and the primordial images of the dreams, fantasies, fairy-tales, myths, and finally: instincts inherited from the animals). It is a factor, which lies in the evolution itself, in the genes, in the collective subconscious, in the collective history.

When therefore psychotherapy and coaching require a change, then the instinctive survival-preparedness in us reacts and protests. Man has survived on willfulness and a consciousness-structure, which mental and psychic sign is Egocentredness. The bigger Ego, the bigger survival chance.

Seen from a spiritual perspective, this instinctive survival strategi (the ego) appears as a resistance, an invincible inertia: original sin, negative karma. You can't, by psychotherapeutic strategies, free the consciousness for its attachment to this inertia. You can therefore not dissolve or dilute or convert the original sin through therapy. In fact, you can't do anything. Therefore the religions talk about self-abnegation and humility.

Only the intervention of the Source (God, Christ, Buddha, the enlightened consciousness) can basically help Man with a transcendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order to, that a human being should be able to receive this help from the Source (gift of grace), then this requires an eminently precise and profound preparation. And as part of this preparation serve the true spiritual practice within the religions (read more about the painbody in my article [The Emotional Painbody and Why Psychotherapy Can't Heal It](#)).

In my book *A Portrait of a Lifeartist* I set up six steps in the spiritual practice: that is: some existential conditions, and some, common to all mankind, growing conditions, and growth levels, in the Life Artist's voyage of discovery into himself, and thereby into life itself. The steps are:

- 1) The separation of the observer and the observed
- 2) Religion and supporting exercises
- 3) Passive listening presence
- 4) Discrimination
- 5) Creative emptiness
- 6) The wholeness of the observer and the observed

Step 1 has to do with the ordinary mind, the negative thought-pattern which has created the painbody, and the instinctive survival strategy, the ego.

Step 2 has to do with thought training. The two main reasons why religion and supporting exercises is a necessity is partly, that the ongoing self-confirmation of the ego and its negative automatic thoughts, is replaced by a spiritual remembrance, partly that the collective inertia is purified and prepared, so that the Ego is made transparent along with that original sin and negative karma are transformed and transfigured in the contact with the Source (God, Christ, Buddha, the enlightened consciousness, the saints etc.) And these two processes mutually fertilize each other.

The supporting exercises are the beginning of the spiritual practice, where you begin to activate the higher functions of the mind. In my first book *Meditation as an Art of Life* I describe five supporting exercises. The most important is the re-discovery and development of your Hara center. Hara is fundamental to all wisdom traditions and natural healing professions. So where everything before were revolving around your ego, everything is now revolving around Hara. Hara is primarily known from Zen Buddhism and Taoism, but is also central in [Hesychastic mysticism](#). The Hesychasts ([Omphalopsychites](#)) is an order at Athos, who with the chin supported at the breast look at their navel (Omphalos), until they see the uncreated light.

Hara is in other words called Omphalos in Hesychastic mysticism. In symbolism the omphalos was an object of Hellenic religious symbolism and world centrality. So, in symbolism Hara is a symbol of world centrality believed to allow direct communication with the gods. Another symbol is the [Philosopher's Stone](#), which is a legendary alchemical substance capable of turning base metals such as mercury into gold. That's a good analogy since the work with Hara slowly and securely will transform your whole energy system.

I have often compared the balance of the human energy system with a cone. An unbalanced energy-system could be like that of a reverse cone, and a balanced energy-system is that of a normal cone. To be able to handle the increased energy you receive in meditation, you must have a ground connection like that of pyramid. The chakra system is a very good way of describing the human energy system.

In my book, *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien*, I claim that Sauron's One Ring has two demonical movements which are seen in our culture of today: the movement into the ego (the will to power), and the movement out towards the others in ideology. Hereby the Truth, Beauty and Goodness of the Wholeness is reduced to power and ideology. The danger is the reductionism of modernity.

Tolkien's philosophy is a pre-modern world-view, where the Wholeness is more alive, more dreaming, more awake. In modernity (and even worse: postmodernity) the Wholeness is reduced to its parts. Truth, Beauty and Goodness is

sleeping, suffering and dying. In Middle-earth, Truth, Beauty and Goodness is dreaming and eventually awake. More than that: there is so much life in things that we would call it “magic”.

There are two very different kinds of magics in Tolkien’s work. The two magics are not just different but opposed. In fact they are at war, and our civilization is in crisis because of the war between these two kinds of magic. One kind of magic, Enchantment, is our healing, and the other – the kind exemplified by the Ring – is our destruction.

The aim with the book is to inspire to a re-enchantment of our dying world.

Tolkien claims that Middle-earth is a Secondary world [the Inner Side] existing parallel with our own Primary world [the Outer Side]. He claims that he hasn’t invented it, but discovered it. The more we are awakening to this Secondary world, the more we are drawn into enchantment. The same is happening when we are opening the chakras in a balanced way. Therefore I have called the nine chakras, *The Nine Gates of Middle-earth*, and therefore I will refer to their qualities in the light of storytelling.

You must begin with the lower chakras before you can move to the upper chakras in a balanced way. But this is only figuratively speaking. The chakras are namely connected. This means that a part of the training of the lower chakras implies that you train your thinking, which is located in the upper chakras. As we saw: it is the thinking which reflects itself in the body in form of an emotional painbody, and it is the thinking which reflects itself in the chakras.

In my first book [Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader](#) I have sketched out the fundamental aspects of the spiritual practice. Here I claim that the essence of meditation, or spiritual practice, is to ask philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way, and that all other spiritual exercises only were used as a support for this. In the book I have developed five supporting exercises. In this way you can say that the supporting exercises are exercises for the lower chakras, and the art of asking philosophical questions is exercises for the upper chakras.

The supporting exercises are:

- 1) The Relaxation meditation
- 2) The Hara meditation
- 3) The Heart meditation

4) The change of Suffering into Enlightenment

5) The Philosophical Diary

My book *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien* is a course in philosophy as such, but *Meditation as an Art of Life* is a course in how you start philosophizing yourself. In the latter book I have put up a line of fundamental philosophical questions. I claim that these function as a kind of Koans. A Koan is a story, dialogue, question, or statement which is used in Zen practice to provoke the "great doubt" and test a student's progress in Zen practice. In the book I have worked out some answers to the questions myself. It is your task to come with answers yourself. A help is to start with the philosophical diary, which I will return to.

In connection with the supporting exercises I suggest you begin practicing some basic Hatha yoga exercises. On my page [My books](#), you can, under the description of *Meditation as an Art of Life*, download a guide to the Hatha yoga exercises I myself perform daily. In this way you have the basic supporting exercises to begin to train your chakra-system from the lower to the upper.

Now, let's look at what chakras are.

The Hatha Yoga texts describe, how the thoughts reflect themselves in the human body in form of energy-spots, or reflection-spots, which distribute over the body's 6 head zones: 1: the eyebrow-area, 2: the mouth-throat-neck zone, 3: the breast-heart-shoulder zone, where to often the arms belong 4: the diaphragm and solar plexus, 5: the abdominal middle, 6: the pelvic floor, the sexual organs, thighs, as well as the legs as a wholeness.

The chakra concept is part of a very worked out and profound system of description, which is developed on the background of thousand of years of work with, and experiences of inner and higher states in Man.

The chakras function firstly with the purpose of bodily and energetical balancing and regulation of the energetical swings of the thoughts. This aspect corresponds to the balancing and regulative function of the dreams, which also reflect themselves in the body's reflection-spots and their equal distribution across the body's six head zones (compensatory karma).

Secondly the chakras have a development function, which also reflects itself in the symbol function of the dreams (progressive karma) – see my articles [What is karma?](#), [What is Dream Yoga?](#), and [On the Nature of Dreams](#).

As the dreams, the chakras therefore also both have a balancing and a development-specific function. It is in other words the same basic phenomenon, which reflects itself in the dreams and in the chakras.

In so far as the chakras are related to specific body-areas as an expression of the life energy which functions in and regulates these areas, in so far the chakras are defined as centres in the energyfield of Man, as the focus-spots of the aura, or as energy-whirls in the so-called energy-body of Man. Experimentally they appear in the form of feelings.

When the chakras are related to the development-level of Man (the level of realization work and ethical practice), they are described as reflection-spots of the Source – the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Symbolically this is in India illustrated in the form of Mandalas.

Since the thoughts reflects themselves in the body in form of energy, the chakras are also connected to the painbody. Chakras are the storehouses of all our material, and all the conditioned layers of reality. All of the trauma of Ego, family, ancestors, and even all the grids to our outer edges of conditioned reality are contained within the physical form and the chakra system.

Below I will follow the description of the chakras which the spiritual teacher, Mary Shutan, has outlined in her book *The Spiritual Awakening Guide – Kundalini, Psychic Abilities and the Conditioned Layers of Reality*. But as mentioned, I will develop the description with my own interpretations, where I relate them to their storytelling qualities.

Each chakra is on or near the midline and informs the entire section of the body near which it is located. When a chakra begins to open from a closed state it will release the emotions and traumas that were stored in it. After a certain amount of releasing it will become less active in its release cycle. There is more to release from that chakra but it recedes into the background so that other chakras can open. To fully open a chakra will require other chakras to do some releasing as well. It is not unusual for a chakra to go through cycles of opening ten to twenty times before it has released enough to open and close appropriate and for energy to flow through smoothly.

Chakras differ in terms of number and placement according to the society they were created in. In North America they are used to the seven chakra format, but some cultures have three (Chinese Taoism), some have five, some have ten, some have forty-two, and some people include many of the microchakras, which basically

coincide with acupuncture points and number in the hundreds. In this context I will use a chakra system that includes nine major chakras (in other contexts I use the Taoist system of three).

Essentially, a chakra is like a whirlpool – it is a cone of vibrating, circulating energy that extends from the spine or midline, moving outward.

Two of the chakras, The Earth chakra and the Heaven chakra, are outside our body. In the case of the seven major chakras in our body, these cones extend in the front of the body as well as in the back, except for the first and seventh chakras that only have one side.

Chakras reflect the thought, and it is the thoughts that cause that chakras can be blocked, frozen, sluggish, open, or operating normally. A blocked chakra is no longer able to process material. Everything in the local area will be sluggish and dysfunctional and will create physical symptoms. A frozen chakra is a step beyond a blocked chakra. In a blocked chakra there is very little movement and have disassociated from the area. A frozen chakra means that nothing can pass through – total disassociation from that area as well as severe symptoms occur. A sluggish chakra means that the chakra is operating. It is opening and closing but there is a molasses-like quality to it. Sluggish chakras move slowly as if a great weight were attached to it – there is almost a groaning-type quality to a sluggish chakra. Open chakras are actually stuck open.

There is a culture of Energy Workers who want to open all of our chakras. This is because most of them are sluggish, blocked, or even frozen. However, chakras are not intended to be always open. If chakras were always open we would have no filter to the massive amounts of information coming through our bodies. This is an imbalanced state. Hypersensitivity and a lot of physical and emotional symptoms result from permanently open chakras. Normal chakras should be able to open and close on a regular basis to let in information that they should process without letting too much information affect the physical body and nervous system.

The more awake we are the more that we notice that chakras hook into and penetrate the painbody, as well as the grids that surround us. They hook into the deepest layers of the painbody, Ego, and the energetical blueprint that composes our physical body as well as the very outer layers of conditioned reality that compose our universe. There are chakras beyond what we discuss, such as chakras that extend beyond the Heaven chakra and hook into cosmic consciousness and divine flow. These chakras are activated when a person achieves a truly awakened state and goes beyond the grids that make up consensual reality. They create direct connections to the Universal

images in time (God's thought, progressive karma, the Great Vision, Dreamtime, the Divine). This is the spiritual dimension, which we will return to. All this is knowledge that comes later. What is necessary to begin with is a discussion of the first three chakras connected to the body. But in order to achieve a foundation for these we will discuss the Earth chakra.

1) Mother Earth (first gate)

Mother Earth is a concept which witches and shamans are working with. They feel at home on Mother Earth. To get into the philosophy of Mother Earth it would be a good idea to read literature on witches and shamans. A good beginning for studying witches is Erica Jong's wonderful book *Witches*. In this book you will find a lot of references to further reading on the subject, as for example Margot Adler's book *Drawing Down the Moon*, and Margaret Murray's *The Witch-cult in Western Europe* and *The God of the Witches*.

In my philosophical counseling practice I tell my guests about Rold Forest, and I suggest places and hiking routes for them to visit on their own. I present the guest to the concept of Mother Earth, and the importance of the Earth Chakra. Mother Earth is intimately connected to poetry, mythology, fantasy and folklore. Spending time alone in the forest is about getting in tune with Mother Earth ([Frigg](#)) and her power. One has the opportunity to *walk in beauty*, and to *think in beauty*. Mother Earth is central for shamanism and witchcraft, and therefore also for storytelling. Storytelling is about returning to the mythic life. Storytelling is healing because it comes from Mother Earth, and is therefore widely used by shamans and witches.

The White Goddess: a Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth is a book-length essay on the nature of poetic myth-making by author and poet Robert Graves. The White Goddess represents an approach to the study of mythology from a decidedly creative and idiosyncratic perspective. Graves proposes the existence of a European deity, the "White Goddess of Birth, Love and Death", much similar to the Mother Goddess, inspired and represented by the phases of the moon, who lies behind the faces of the diverse goddesses of various European and pagan mythologies. Graves argues that "true" or "pure" poetry is inextricably linked with the ancient cult-ritual of his proposed White Goddess and of her son.

Note that I suggest the above-mentioned literature for precisely this poetic aspect of Mother Earth, and not as scholarly works.

A scholarly introduction to shamanism is Mircea Eliade's *Shamanism – Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. My own "witchcraft teacher" is Karen Blixen (see my free

Ebook [Karen Blixen – The Devil’s Mistress](#), as well as my book [Lucifer Morningstar – A Philosophical Love Story](#), where Blixen also plays a central role). I will return to two other books on shamanism later.

The Earth chakra is approximately one to three feet below the physical feet into the Earth. Like the Heaven chakra, which we will discuss later, it is a gateway between the concept of the individual Self and Earth energies. Earth energy is not just simply about grounding but is very spiritual, sensual, and embodied, leading to feelings of deep rootedness, caring for the physical earth, and love for nature. A deep opening of the lower chakras occurs in conjunction with the Earth chakra opening, leading to a release of sexual inhibitions and patterns, a reclaiming of sexuality, an understanding and integration of the “dark” or shadow aspects of Self, and an ability to just be who we are, a fully sensate, sexual, physical being with complete awareness of the darkness and light we carry. A value which the movement of positive thinking is in progress of destroying. It is not surprising that the New Thought movement, from where positive thinking has its origin, originally was an American Christian movement, extremely puritanical and afraid of the dark. It is also a way of thinking which in its most extreme forms claims that reality is a mental construct, and therefore an illusion, hereunder the body. The result is a masculine top-heavy fixation in the head, something which today seems to characterize most Westerners.

A connection to the animal or primal instincts beyond sexual also appears with this chakra – a realization of primal, deep emotions such as rage. A loss of separation between the “higher” nature of the human and the “lower” nature of the animal or Earth is achieved. We become earthly, we become wild, we understand our shadows and are comfortable working with and even playing with it. It is our lost feminine aspect. Read, for example, about this in Clarissa Pinkola Estés’s *Women Who Run with Wolves – Contacting the Power of the Wild woman*.

Mother Earth, or the Earth-Moon Kingdom, is also a quite central aspect of Karen Blixen’s philosophy, where she sees human nature in the image of an artist, who breaks with the mediocre Christianity, and surrenders to a Luciferian fall down into the dark, ancient secrets of nature.

We fully understand the impermanence of our bodies. A sense of humor, a certain darkness, and a deep settling into our physical body happens through opening the Earth chakra. The ability to process larger energies and connection to larger spiritual energies of the Earth, such as the elements and elementals, can occur. It is from this depth the runes appeared, runes which are signs given to humans so that they can communicate with Mother Earth. It was therefore Odin hanged upside down on the tree of life when he received the runes. Best introductions (if following my teachings)

to runic shamanism are *Rune Power – The Secret Knowledge of the Wise Ones*, by Kenneth Meadows and *Rune Magic and Shamanism – Original Nordic Knowledge from Mother Earth*, by Jörgen I. Eriksson.

When this chakra opens we no longer understand ourselves as separate, rather puritanical creatures. We are in touch with the rhythms of our bodies and the Earth. We no longer feel shame or fear around our darker instincts, and understand that dark and light are simply a continuum. There are other chakras below this that connect us to every single plant, animal, and layer of Earth. Connecting deeply to these chakras allows for us to integrate our shadows and our primal emotions. Emotions are no longer something to fear or avoid. There is an understanding that comes through that we are meant to have emotions – all of them. Rage, anger, fear, joy, happiness, sadness – they all have their own rhythm, their own flow, and are all equally beautiful. When we are fully grounded through the Earth chakra and below we can fully experience these flows of emotion, and discover that a flow of sadness may be exquisite, the flow of rage may be orgasmic, and the flow of everything that we experience as humans, both pain and pleasure, we can take responsibility for. There is no more shying away from full embodiment, our shadow, our emotions, or any part of us.

The first three chakras related to the body is about the Ego, and personal, ancestral, and family histories are stored in these chakras. Ideally we will have these chakras open first so we can deal with our own stuff before moving toward opening the upper chakras that deal with the deeper layers of conditioned reality, psychic abilities, and connection to spirit. This doesn't happen for various reasons, mainly because working through our own stuff is difficult. As mentioned in connection with the painbody: there is a dark ancient inertia, which resists any change of our Ego. And this is precisely what New Age seems to embody in a collective form. New Age has an aversion towards preparatory work, combined with positive thinking's avoidance of negativity, and then you see this dark ancient inertia put in system. It is also connected to the ideology of evolutionism, and the top-heavy Indo-European symbolism of spiritual growth seen as an evolutionary ladder. New Age feminism is therefore a complete contradiction. Westerners believe they are on the top of this ladder, and often believe that they can go directly to the upper chakras. It is one of the most striking illusions of the Western, masculine, mind (see my free Ebook: [Evolutionism – The Red Thread in the Matrix Conspiracy](#)).

This has resulted in a culture of top-down awakened individuals, where the top chakras (crown and third eye) are open, but the rest of the body is not, resulting in imbalances. This culture is especially steered by the ideology of positive thinking. (see my article [The Conspiracy of the Third Eye](#) about the top-down awakening. In

my free Ebook [The Tragic New Age Confusion of Eastern Enlightenment and Western Idealism](#), I give a philosophical analysis of what has led to the extreme versions, as well as some concrete examples of New Age teachers, who seem to have lost any sense of reality, but who at the same time are some of the world's leading voices within spirituality).

James Cameron's movie Avatar is a movie about Mother Earth. The inhabitants on the planet Pandora, the Na'vi, live a shamanic life in harmony with nature, and their divinity is a Mother Goddess called Eywa. But in the same way as Tolkien's universe, the movie hides an ontological pluralism, that also allows a Christian interpretation. In *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien* I have investigated this movie and both interpretations (chapter 5, Epistemology, part 3, *The Peter Pan Project*, and Chapter 9, Political Philosophy, part 3, *The Just War Theory*).

2) The Dark Forest (second gate)

The first chakra associated with the body. [Into the Woods](#) is an exceptional on-going series of blog posts on myth, folklore, and the wild world, by [Terri Windling](#), who is one of several artists centered around the [Mythic Arts of Dartmoor](#), which are rooted in Nordic mythology, folklore, and fairy tales. Windling shares a treasure of good literature related to the Dark Forest, another area of fear.

Our first chakra has to do with grounding, our ancestral history, and hierarchy-of-needs-type issues. Hierarchy of needs has everything to do with fear and survival instincts. Issues with money, fears of having enough food to eat, a place to stay, and day-to-day-type issues are here. This is also a place our ancestral and family issues are stored.

All of our chakras are storehouses of information. They get stuck or blocked because of unconscious desire not to process the information or energy contained, a lack of understanding of how to process the energy, or simply a huge amount of information that is difficult to process. This information can come from a wide variety of sources. The first three chakras are difficult to clear because they contain most of the trauma we, our ancestors, and families have experienced. It is understandable that we live in a culture of learning how to be psychic in six easy steps and countless books, schools, and workshops on how to work with the top two chakras because that work does not create the discomfort of dealing with our trauma and inner pain. When the upper chakras can awaken with cleared and balanced lower chakras we are able to see clearly without filtering the information through our wounds, emotions, belief systems, and the layers of conditioned reality in the first, second and third chakras.

Along with being the storehouse for grounding, fear, family, and ancestral issues, the first chakra also contains the dormant Kundalini, which for some will awaken and clear the chakra system quickly. The first chakra has also to do with passion and sexuality. It contains our life force, our fire, our dormant awakening potential. The first chakra also contains all of the information on our physical body, our nervous system, acts as an anchor to earth energies, and is responsible for reproductive energies, and is responsible for reproductive energies as well as the physical act of sexual intercourse.

Most people have issues with their first chakra. Our views on sexuality, our fears, and our ancestral patterns rule our lives until we are able to process them appropriately. I do not know of many who have a healthy nervous system, passionate sexual life, a zest for life, grounding, and have processed their fears and their ancestral patterns. Most people who have a spiritual awakening of one or the other kind, need to continue to work with their lower chakras. But due to the painbody, and the dark ancient inertia, most of them won't do this. They prefer to stay in their own mental and psychological constructs, and will find all kinds of excuses for this.

If our first chakra is out of balance we will feel ungrounded, feel fear (oftentimes irrational to the present moment), and have financial issues or a feeling of constant lack. We will feel constantly in fight or flight – meaning that our nervous system is constantly engaged and in an alarm state. We will feel blocked from moving forward in our lives and feel separated and isolated.

Those of us who have significant difficulties with unprocessed materials in our first chakra will typically either be totally dissociated from our physical bodies, especially our lower bodies (lower abdomen to feet). This is evident by physical imbalances – very small legs and pain in the hips, legs, and feet. Pelvic floor pain, itching, heat, difficulties after childbirth, inability to derive pleasure from the genitals, chronic constipation, hemorrhoids, and knee, foot, and leg issues are all signs of an imbalanced first chakra.

Emotionally, feelings of fear, shame, deep anger, and grief are stored here. Traditionally grief and anger are housed in higher chakras, but when we experience a huge amount of grief or anger that is not culturally appropriate for us to express, or we experience it at a very early age, it will be pushed down into this chakra. In-utero experiences and early childhood emotions are stored in the first chakra. It is understandable difficult for us to process trauma and emotions at a young age, and many of us have a deeply emotional healing process when this chakra begins to open.

When this first chakra opens we will feel being grounded and physically in our body, increased interest in life, a desire to be physically active and healthy. Proper eliminations will occur, both physically and energetically. Addictions and other disassociations will begin to be naturally worked through. When the first chakra is in the process of opening, the material it brings up can be difficult to process. Our darkest fears about being alive, birth, death, traumas, sexual history, and ancestral issues will come up to clear. Thankfully this is often not all at the same time except in the most sudden awakenings.

Our first chakra really responds to the physical realm and physical releases. Developing an exercise routine, spending time in nature, developing healthy sexual habits, and find passion in life or in a hobby are all excellent releases. The fundamental grounding exercise for this first chakra is the Hara meditation, but also the yoga cycle and relaxation meditation.

3) The Golden Stove (third gate)

While the first chakra is about basic, primal sexual instincts, the second chakra is about the acting out of that sexual instinct in a balanced way. Our feelings about our physical body and our relationship to ourselves as sexual beings capable of reproduction are housed in this chakra. Since our society, for the above-mentioned reasons, is rather puritanical and closed down in terms of sexuality and it is common for all of us have a fair amount of self-hatred toward our physical bodies, this chakra is often clogged or frozen. This results in lower abdominal bloating, reproductive issues, sexual issues, intimacy difficulties, dislike of the physical body, lack of passion, and retracting and separating from the physical world. Emotionally this leads to an inability to let go of emotions and traumas that we have experienced – this is the area of our body that many of these emotions are stored due to an inability to release them from our second and then first chakra.

The second chakra is our sensate, physical experience of this world. Art, beauty, sounds, music, movies, and physical exercise are all processed through this chakra.

To work through this chakra it is important to have a relationship with the physical world and our senses. Exercising, doing yoga, going for walks, going out for tea with friends, seeing plays, listening to music, playing a musical instrument, exploring our connection with nature, going to a museum, painting, drawing, and dancing are all ways to do so.

This chakra is often associated with Hara, or in Chinese: the lower Tan Tien.

Tan Tien is loosely translated as "elixir field", "sea of Chi ", or simply "energy center". Tan Tien are the Chi Focus Flow Centers, important focal points for meditative and exercise techniques such as Chi Kung, martial arts such as t'ai chi ch'uan, and in traditional Chinese medicine.

Different schools of thought categorize Tan Tien in various manners. Three main Tan Tien are typically emphasized:

1) Lower Tan Tien: below the navel (about three finger widths below and two finger widths behind the navel), which is also called "the golden stove" or the namesake "cinnabar field" proper, where the process of developing the golden elixir by refining and purifying essence (jing) into vitality (Chi) begins.

2) Middle Tan Tien: at the level of the heart, which is also called "the crimson palace", associated with storing Spirit (Shen) and with respiration and health of the internal organs, in particular the thymus gland. This cauldron is where vitality or Chi is refined into Shen or spirit.

3) Upper Tan Tien: at the forehead between the eyebrows or third eye, which is also called "the muddy pellet", associated with the pineal gland. This cauldron is where Shen or spirit is refined into Wu Wei or emptiness.

The term used by itself usually refers to the lower Tan Tien, which is considered to be the foundation of rooted standing, breathing, and body awareness in Chi Kung, Chinese martial arts, and other martial arts. The lower Tan Tien has been described to be "like the root of the tree of life."

In speaking of the lower of the three energy centers, the term Tan Tien is often used interchangeably with the Japanese word Hara which means simply "belly." In Chinese, Korean, and Japanese traditions, it is considered the physical center of gravity of the human body and is the seat of one's internal energy (Chi). A master of calligraphy, swordsmanship, tea ceremony, martial arts, among other arts, is held in the Japanese tradition to be "acting from the Hara."

The lower Tan Tien corresponds to the yoga concept of the second chakra swadhisthana chakra. In yoga philosophy, it is thought to be the seat of prana that radiates outwards to the entire body. [

Traditional Taoist and Buddhist teachers always instruct their students to center the mind in the navel or lower Tan Tien. The centrality in this is shown in the Buddha sculptures, where Buddha either sits with both hands, or the left hand, in Hara. It is

therefore a peculiar phenomenon to see how modern meditation teachers often have forgotten this, thought they well can sit in the correct meditation position.

Hara is believed to aid control of thoughts and emotions. Acting from the Tan Tien is considered to be related to higher states of awareness or samadhi. The lower Tan Tien is considered to be the seat of awareness.

The Taoist concept of Tan Tien as energy centers is similar to the Indian yoga concept of chakras as key points where prana is stored. The major difference, however, is that Taoist Tan Tiens are the major energetic storage mechanisms whereas the yogic chakras are not so much storage centers for energy (though knowledge, traumas, etc., are stored here), but energetic vortices which act as intake and output ports. Many traditions consider the Tan Tiens and the chakras to be separate, albeit cooperative energetic mechanisms.

The lower Tan Tien covers all three lower chakras.

4) The Alchemist's Gift (fourth gate)

The third chakra connected to our body is the last of our "Ego" chakras. This chakra is especially about us – who we are and what we are intended to do here. While the first chakra is about how we were formed (our ancestry) and our second chakra is about our connections, the third chakra is about us and our individual power and gifts.

This is also the chakra that provides us the drive to do something in life. Our ability to make decisions, to move forward, to build a life, and to build our self-esteem are located in this chakra.

The third chakra stores trauma and issues related to lack of self-worth, difficulty with our own power, and imbalances of personal care vs. caring for others. Empaths and other individuals who extend themselves past their own boundaries to care for others frequently have imbalanced third chakras. This chakra also is in charge of our intake of an assimilation of food and other outside energies. When this center begins opening we may find ourselves having difficulties with our food intake.

Once this chakra is processing appropriately there is an ability to make decisions and to be in the driver's seat of our own lives. When we have the first, second, and third chakra functioning well we will have power flowing through and informing us. This energy or strength can then come from the confidence of the Soul, from our ancestors, and from the Earth. Once this chakra is balanced, the energy flowing

through will provide understanding and access to our unique, individual gifts and powers in this world.

Once the lower chakras no longer have significant boulders, emotions, or issues blocking them you can now access the power and gifts of these chakras. The first chakra's gift is of grounding, feeling a part of the Earth, and connecting to your ancestry. The gift of the second chakra is connecting to your senses, to your sexual drives, to your physical body, and one-on-one relationships with others. The third chakra's gift is about deeply understanding yourself and what power and individual gifts you bring into this lifetime.

You will know when your lower chakras are reasonable clear and processed when you no longer sense any heavy energy from the area of the ribcage down to the feet and do not have any significant physical problems in those areas. If you do have significant health issues either internally or in the outlying musculature of those areas – such as hip pain, back pain, leg pain, or foot pain – it is a sign that more processing work needs to be done. That being said, it is still possible to claim your gifts and individual power while having issues with the first three chakras...it becomes a stronger process the clearer you are in these areas though. It is also possible to have physical limitations and still have your first three chakras functioning at a high level; for example if your are wheelchair-bound.

The Simple Life

In order to discover and break the identification with the samsarical producer of the mind, the subject must discover the hidden source in the awareness or in the innermost of consciousness (the soul). It happens by neutralizing the Ego's, or the thinking's, functions. And the basic supporting tool is Hara meditation.

The magnet of attraction, which the ego is controlled by – (the ego's identity with the material world: instincts, sexuality, emotions, desires, collective ideals, ownership, personal power) – will in a true spiritual practice lose its attraction. Investments in the material world's ups and downs, its demands, temptations and dramas, become undramatized, uninteresting, even meaningless, when seen in relation to the consciousness' opening direction in towards its spiritual essence: the soul, the now, the wholeness, life itself, and finally: the eternal Otherness, from where the good, the true and the beautiful are streaming as grace and forgiveness.

The source of awareness, the naked consciousness, the soul, is hidden because it has melted together with the negative thought-pattern. It has become a kind of veils, or layers, which are maintained by what you could call the ego-religion and the ego-

exercises. The ego-religion and the ego-exercises are the ego's incessant confirmation or denial of the ego: "it is no use with me!"; or: "wonderful me!". Both, either the denial or confirmation of the ego, maintain the ego-process, the ego-identity and the ego-centralization. The ego's religion and exercises are the ego's needs and longings and will: I want to, I think, I believe, I feel, I wish, I hope, I think, I believe, I feel, I wish, or, in its most common core: I, I, I....(notice how expressions of confirmation and denial are quite central in the positive thinking movement; you are taught how constantly to think in confirmations, and therefore implicitly also in denials).

Religion has to do with the pious attitude and way of thinking, which stands for the observance of religious virtues, duties and rituals. In this way you can bring a unity and direction into the mind, an order and tranquillity in the thinking, a consistency between thought and conduct of life, an awareness of your relationship with persons, things and ideas, which no therapy is able to. In a spiritual practice it serves as a frame of reference.

Spiritual practice has always emphasized the simple life. If you simplify your life in a conscious, self-chosen and planned way, you will also simplify your thoughts. You will free them from a lot of burden based on complex lifestyle speculations (which in most cases also characterize people with a very low income). Complex lifestyle speculations are much more deeply rooted than we think: it is connected with anxiety, fear, mortgages, money, guilt, debt, government, boredom, supermarkets, bills, melancholy, pain, depression, work, waste, and especially: existential guilt over not having found your true calling in life: the inauthentic lifestyle of a constant becoming something else than what you are.

In my [Links to Idlers](#) you can find a large number of websites which can give inspiration to how to simplify your life, everything from the more extreme moneyless lifestyles, to useful unemployed lifestyles and simple low cost life styles (also see my blog post [What is a Life Artist?](#)).

Therefore: find your passion, your true calling in life, no matter how devalued it might be in the eyes of others. That being invisible to the mythology of authenticity – that being unregarded, ignored, devalued, is namely in such a culture of self-assertion a curse. But to understand and be free from self-assertion, and to do something, which you really love to do – regardless what it is, how small or how little remarkable it is – awakens a spirit of greatness, which never is seeking others' approval or reward, and which do a thing for its own sake, and therefore possesses strength and ability not to lie under for mediocre influences.

Here is that being invisible to the culture directly a blessing – that being unregarded, ignored, and devalued, can be an impetus to take another route: the quiet way, the gentle, steady, behind-the-scenes path. This is the invisible way of the life artist, the slow path of alchemy. Soul work takes time. This means that you intentionally have to make time, especially in our increasingly hyperactive, extroverted secular culture.

I have called this phase Art of Life.

Two thought training techniques can be used in order to find your true calling in life: The Philosophical Diary and Tonglen.

The Philosophical Diary

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."

I have two versions of the philosophical diary. The first is described in the supporting exercises to my first book *Meditation as an Art of Life - a basic reader*. Here I combine the supporting exercise Hara meditation with meditative writing and a Socratic enquiry technique used in cognitive therapy.

When you sit and practice 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 at the same time as 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.

The intention 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 differently said, that you explore the problem, which causes, that your negative thoughts/feelings can't become silent, and change and restructure it (in the exercise is mentioned a few thought distortions, but in my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions* you can find many more. Furthermore.

The other version is described in my book [A Portrait of a Lifestylist](#). This version is more existential experimenting than logical analyzing, it is more observing than thinking, more listening than arguing. This version is just an extended description of how to write your thoughts down as they bloom without evaluating them.

The surprising thing about these writing exercises, 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. Unfinished situations are the cause of many toxic cords. When you then practice meditative writing, 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). Here you must remember the heart and the ethical aspect of spiritual practice. The art of finishing thoughts can be associated with the Archangel Michael, who will serve as a helper in this work. But just having the knowledge that you are in a spiritual awakening process where your chakras are being processed, is a help in letting toxic relationships go.

The philosophical diary is also good exercise in finding your own creative calling in life. You can for example expand the diary and develop a philosophical library; that is: you write down all the inspiring books, movies, and thoughts you stumble upon.

5) A Christmas Carol (fifth gate)

Let's look at the fourth chakra associated with our body. In a fully awakened state, we see through our hearts, associated with the fourth chakra. The heart is where we branch away from our lower chakras that are about our own issues and needs. It is a pivot point, an intermediary between the higher chakras of the throat, third eye, and crown that connect us to energies of spirit and divinity, and the lower chakras that connect us to energies of the Earth and allow us to become embodied.

The heart is only associated with a chakra, since it is here the spirit, or the Soul resides within the body. It is here enlightenment is happening. It is also the place in the body where we store some of our deepest wounds. When the heart begins to awaken, these wounds appear to be processed. Physical pain in the chest, breathing issues, heart palpitations, and feelings of joy, bliss, and love for humanity flicker in the early stages of heart chakra awakening. If there is a more significant awakening, this process can be more physical, such as heart pain, feelings of the heart cracking open, and even heart attacks. It is extremely important with this chakra to get the physical elements taken care of. Simply because we are having heart pain and are

experiencing an awakening does not mean that our experience is only spiritual and we do not need physical intervention. If anything, at this point, there should be a realization that mind-body-spirit are the same thing, and physical issues should be taken care of on a physical level, and then the consideration of emotional and spiritual causes can be realized, especially when symptoms are emerging from a vital organ such as the heart.

At first when this chakra awakens it is a glimmer of what is to come. Love and bliss wash over us and we begin to see from a place of the heart rather than from the eyes. The lower chakras as well as the upper chakras are awakened before the heart can be fully balanced. This is due to the pivot functioning of the heart. The heart is the central command of the chakra system and any large boulder, wound, or energy not flowing properly through the body through the chakras and the midline creates a space of fear and anxiety that results in the heart not being balanced.

It is common for the first awakening of this chakra to be brief and minimal, our awareness and processing quickly moving to another chakra, such as the throat or back down to the solar plexus. All of our chakras, but especially the heart, may need to awaken several times before it has cleared out layers and layers of trauma and blockages. Since this is such a core place, such a wounded place for most of us, we tread carefully in the processing of this place. It is rare, even in a sudden awakening, for all of the stored material in this chakra to come up at once. Since it is a pivot point, the more that we are able to process in this chakra the more we are able to relate to both the first three chakras as well as the upper chakras. This allows for us to be balanced and connected to both Earth, ourselves, and the Divine.

When this chakra is fully open we are able to see through this space. Seeing from our heart means that we are able to actually sense seeing from the heart space and a sort of glow falls around people and places that becomes increasingly permanent. This is a wonderful feeling, and can be compared with the Christmas feeling. It is no coincidence that Christmas is connected to the heart and with giving gifts. Furthermore, this glow can be compared to the coloring of Icons. Icon mysticism points to the heart. One should therefore not underestimate what humans during hundreds of years have created of concepts, symbols and traditions. If these are sustainable it is because they point to something real (see my article [The Spiritual Practice of Icons](#)).

This center is therefore also connected to Christmas tales awakening heart feelings, such as *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl* ([read it](#) and feel how your heart reacts. Just let it react).

An ability to understand and have compassion for people, a letting go of the Ego and the individual experiences and the entering into divine flow begins. This is often a large switch for us. We are so used to our own truth, our own understandings of the world that anything outside of that is wrong or scary. When the heart opens we are able to understand others with dissimilar opinions without finding them threatening. We are able to understand that each person has a truth. From this heart space we begin to understand how much we have struggled, how much others struggle, and how wounded other people are.

Through seeing from the heart space we begin to not only get glimpses of the grids, masks, and tapestries (this capacity is fully awakened through the third eye and crown) but are able to have understanding and compassion for how each individual person or group is formed. There is a loss of judgment and instead a sense of discernment forms. Seeing with the heart is therefore a part of the subdiscipline of philosophy called ethics, and therefore also critical thinking.

Once in this space it is easy to see how most of the spirituality, most of the people in this world are beginners or child-like, playing with spiritual concepts and ascribing meanings to things without the understandings we now have. But with this chakra opening this understanding is met with compassion for people who remain in spiritual immaturity or ego-inflation.

One of the more intense aspects of individual chakra awakenings is when chakras open in conjunction with one another. The first, second, and third chakra at some point will open with the heart to allow for healing of any self-hatred or Destroyer tendencies. The ability to not only not want to destroy or harbor hatred for ourselves but the journey to self-love and kindness for ourselves leads to a sense of beauty, peace, and stillness in what can be a chaotic world. The outer chaos that once was reflected by our internal self-hatred quits, and when the first four chakras are flowing (open enough to exchange energy up the spine and between one another) an indescribable background bliss and acceptance of life as it develops.

The heart has two “parts” to it energetically. There is the physical, energetic heart and also the covering or pericardium. The pericardium has the job of protecting the heart and often needs to soften before the heart can be opened.

The Tonglen practice has a quite physical element, namely that it softens the Pericardium. Tonglen, or the supporting exercise The Heartmeditation, originates from Tibetan Buddhism, but the same elements can be retrieved in different forms in all great wisdom traditions. In Tibetan Tonglen means ”give and receive.” It’s about using your personal suffering to increase your compassion – which means: where you

mentally receive and give. Tonglen can change one's whole attitude toward pain. Instead of fending it off and hiding from it, one can open one's heart and allow oneself to feel that pain, feel it as something that will soften and purify you and make you far more loving and kind. Tonglen is the ethical side of spiritual practice.

The exercise is about, that you receive other peoples' suffering in your heart. Here you let it dissolve in the light of compassion, whereon you give the compassion on to these others. This can be done as a formal meditation practice, lets say, for about half an hour a day. Normally this is done by using your breathing as a medium. You inhale suffering, and exhale compassion. The first aspect of Tonglen is that you learn to recognize heart feelings. We all know what that is: it is a sense of contraction in the heart, which sometimes can be painful, and develop into tears (read the above mentioned story about The Little Match Girl). When you have recognized this feeling you must cultivate it. Many people find this illogical, but it is not about developing into an over sensitive person. It is about cultivating and developing the feeling. Find persons (probably family members in the start), animals, music, movies, etc., etc., where you know you will have this feeling. Then you use it for Tonglen. You can find the exercise in the supporting exercise The Heartmeditation in my first book *Meditation as an Art of Life*.

It also makes the thought ethical. First of all: Tonglen immediately stops any stream of negative automatic thoughts, what also is called discursive thinking. Discursive thinking is the thinking's attempt to finish all the unfinished situations (or cords) which are pulling your mind back into the past: the insults, the disappointments, the traumas, the annoyances, the accusations, the pains. In short: the painbody. This discursive thinking is the constant inner noise, the constant saying yes and no, accepting and denying, defending, justifying and condemning, comparing with earlier and hoping or fearing something else. It is the inner debater, who like Josef K., in the novel *The Trial*, by Franz Kafka, seems to has been arrested and prosecuted by a remote, inaccessible authority, with the nature of his crime revealed neither to him nor to the reader. It has its roots in the past, in the society, family, ancestry, yes even past lives. Relating to society it can be seen as a trial put on you by an autonomous and inhuman bureaucracy and of a lack of civil rights. Especially the unemployed are experiencing this in our culture which is ruled by the protestant work ethic of capitalism.

The Trial has its cultural roots in the Hasidic tradition, where tales of plaintiff and defendant, heavenly judgement and punishment, unfathomable authorities and obscure charges are not uncommon. If we take the modern Mythology of Authenticity, it is clear we here have a new authority, which constantly are putting us on trial and examination, demanding us to be in constant personal development

towards the better (indicating that there is something wrong with what you are). We are surrounded by psychotherapists, coaches, supervisors, who all are putting us on trial. It is a lifelong examination. It is puzzling that these self-proclaimed “experts” on the human nature, in fact is the last persons with wisdom of the what the human nature is. Philosophy has disappeared. The psychotherapists have taken over.

There are many parallels between Kafka’s *The Trial* and his other major novel, *The Castle*. In both novels, the protagonist wanders through a labyrinth that seems to be designed to make him fail or even seems to have no relation to him at all.

Worth mentioning is also the dreamlike component of the events: Like in a dream, K.’s interior and exterior world intermingle. A transition from the fantastic-realistic to the allegorical-psychological level can be made out. Even K.’s working environment is increasingly undermined by the fantastic, dreamlike world. This is a typical dream theme for most of us.

The problem is that you act as a sophist, and not a philosopher. When you discover that you are involved in discursive thinking, you actually just need to be aware of this, stop it, and just be in the now. You just need to realize that you all the time are free to go.

You can of course not be without thoughts. Therefore you can start changing your thoughts from this sophistic, debating form, to the philosophical dialoguing form. The first step in this is the philosophical diary, and the knowledge of thought distortions. Use my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions* as a help.

Meditation as an Art of Life is a holistic discipline in the sense, that it implies an examination, in which you *yourself* have to put *the whole of* your self-understanding at stake – that is: your existence as a totality. It is not someone else that should do this for you. 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.”

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 seen have a closed attitude, which is due to a fixed decision to be right? That we wholehearted

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 dividings 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 life-situation, which means: both your belief and your knowledge. Dialogue is art of life.

What especially must be worked through is the thought distortion called Rhetoric (Sophistic) or subjective argumentation. This is 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. 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.

Philosophical, or objective argumentation is therefore 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.

These two ways of argumentation have an equivalent in thinking. Subjective argumentation could also be called discursive, or debating thinking. Objective argumentation could then be called communicative, or dialoguing thinking.

Finally, training of the heart could be called The Art of Seeing with the Heart. I have investigated this in my article [The Philosophy of Antoine de Saint Exupéry](#).

So, the three fundamental aspects of meditation are relaxfullness, awareness, and heartfullness. These are trained in my five supporting exercises, including the above-mentioned exercises.

The refinement of the consciousness and attention which is trained in the supporting exercise 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 Hara meditation.

The Hara meditation'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 Heart meditation.

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.

In this movement in towards the source you begin to ask philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way: Who am I? Where do the thoughts come from? What is consciousness and where does it come from? Is there a meaning of life? 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 of a larger plan? In this way the grab, which the material world has in your mind, is automatically reduced.

2. The Spiritual Dimension

Where the three lower chakras have to do with the concrete and particular (and the heart as an intermediary zone), and are trained in the supporting exercises, the three upper chakras have to do with the universal and abstract, and are trained in the art of asking philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way. In connection with this it is also about the study of texts, reading books, and gaining knowledge, as well training critical thinking (the crown jewel of discrimination), both in relation with yourself and with others.

The top three chakras allow for us to make spiritual connections, open our sensitivities and allow us to see the patterns and energies that comprise the universe. We process and understand larger and more spiritual energies such as archetypes, past lives, karma, global patterns, and grids through these chakras.

It is very common for the crown or third eye energies to open without embodiment or the processing of the first three chakras. The first three chakras have to do with us. The upper chakras, while dealing with us, have to deal with the lighter or more distant aspects of ego. For many of us they are opened through energy work, psychotherapy, psychedelics, genetics, trauma, previous lifetime experiences, or karma, without having knowledge of grounding or working on the first three chakras. This is common in New Age circles and our top-heavy Indo-European culture, and it was what throwed myself out in years of spiritual crises. The first three chakras are difficult to get to a place of balance and most of us prefer the excitement and romanticism of learning about the higher chakras than the work required to be centered in our lower chakras. Unfortunately, this top-heavy idea has become an integrated part of New Age, where the different techniques are formed as an aversion against preparatory work. You will constantly hear the easy solutions: “three easy steps to open your third eye, how to enable astral travel, how to become a psychic”, etc., etc. You will hear the differentiations in “what is easy, and what is difficult” and

statements such as “with this technique you can quit years of meditation.” In agreement with consumer culture it is a “user-friendly” spirituality. You can also call it Google spirituality.

The upper chakras are the chakras of spirit, and the connection of spirit to our own human consciousness. These are the subtler senses, the “clairs” and other extrasensory information. The information then is intended to filter through our physical bodies from the crown down into the abdomen, meeting the energy of the first three chakras and finally processing out the feet, through the aura, and back of the neck. Without having the lower chakras open this does not happen and we are left with physical, emotional, and spiritual repercussions. When we have balanced our first four chakras and the fifth, sixth, and seventh chakras open naturally, we can have energy flow through our entire midline and out into the Earth and Heavens in a balanced way.

6) The Magical Chimney (sixth gate)

The fifth chakra, the throat chakra, is notorious known for being a bottle-neck of blocked energy due to its location as well as what information it stores. It is responsible for the difficult patterns of expressing oneself truthfully, communication from that space of being in our truth, and living a life of integrity and honesty. It is also responsible for understanding truth, creativity, and seeking. This is therefore the first chakra that especially is related to my critique of New Age, and its promotion of the Sophist instead of the philosopher.

The throat chakra, or Vissudha, is also considered space of personal records. All past lives are stored here, although they also involve other areas of the physical body as well (the painbody). This is also the space where the grids that surround us are held – if we are able to open our throat chakras and third eye we are able to sense the geometry of the universe and the grids of conditioned reality.

It is also worth noting that many people have suffered a great deal of trauma to the neck area. In the birth process infants can have the cord wrapped around their necks, and in other lives it is not rare to have deaths by hanging, strangling, or being murdered with blunt force to the throat chakra. A difficult pattern within many of our lifetimes is being unable to express ourselves honestly and authentically due to societal and family restrictions. This inability to express ourselves creatively creates blockage in the throat.

The yoga cycle is a good help to release and balance, but again Hara is central. In movies by Akira Kurosawa, as for example *Seven Samurai*, you can hear the actors

speaking with a characteristic deep voice. This is because the Japanese martial arts are centered in Hara. When practicing Hara, you will experience how your voice is getting deeper, clearer, and more self-confident.

Creative pursuits and being honest in your dealings in life as well as not stifling feelings or thoughts will continue to open the throat. Here we have to do with the philosophical life. In order to maintain a balanced throat chakra it is important to remain honest and pursue your creative path. Note that I all the time are emphasizing the concept of being creative. This is inspired by Karen Blixen, who saw human nature in the image of an artist. Such an artist can be many things, it doesn't necessarily have to be what we normally see as an artist: namely a painter. It can also be a cook, an engineer, a scientist, or a healer. All people can become creative. It is therefore I use the concept of the life artist (see my blog post [What is a Life Artist?](#)).

At some point in our spiritual journey honesty is no longer a choice – it is something we are compelled to be and do. When we have energy flowing through the first four chakras we begin to experience self-love and the truth of who we are. When we open our fifth center, our throat, we begin to express to the world who we are. It is no longer an option to hide, to wear a mask, or to lie.

When this center opens we also experience a difference in terms of flow of emotions and tastes. The tongue is tied in with the throat center, and when it opens we get waves of bliss and orgasmic tasting – a peach never tasted so good! Subtlety and distinction in tastes, appreciation of food, and the opening of the digestive tract to accept foods that previously we may have been sensitive to or unable to eat comes with a balanced throat chakra. With balance there is also a free flow of emotions, an inability to hold back emotions, and an understanding that there is no need to be anyone other than who we are.

Christmas has pagan roots. The modern Santa Claus grew out of traditions surrounding the historical Saint Nicholas (a fourth-century Greek bishop and gift-giver of Myra), the British figure of Father Christmas and the Dutch figure of Sinterklaas (himself also based on Saint Nicholas). Some maintain Santa Claus also absorbed elements of the Germanic god Wodan (the above-mentioned Odin), who was associated with the pagan midwinter event of Yule and led the Wild Hunt, a ghostly procession through the sky.

Underneath the Christmas tree (the tree of life) we put our presents. On top of the tree is often placed a star, the Christmas Star, or the Star of Bethlehem. This star could also symbolize the Pole star, a vestige of Siberian shamanism. In Siberian ceremony the shaman would climb through a hole in the roof of the yurt and this could be the

origin idea of Santa coming down the chimney. Writing a letter to Santa telling him what you want relates to the shamanic practice of carving the runes on tree (or writing them on a paper), and hereafter burning them in the fire place, so that the smoke would lead the message up to the gods. Then there is the reindeer connection. These animals are of utmost importance for northern peoples like the Sami, and is a keystone in the so-called shamanic flight or journey. The Shaman's headdress often consists of a metal cap with reindeer antlers, and reindeer antlers also figured heavily in the designs of objects hung on the cloak. Attached to the cloak were strips of reindeer hair or reindeer skin, referring to the body of the reindeer and to the fact that shamans regain the ability to fly that, according to the belief of the Ket people, reindeer had once possessed. Note that this is connected to my storytelling element, and is only a poetical speculation. What is without question is that without the pagan element, there would be no Christmas as we know it.

The opening of the throat chakra is like cleaning a magical chimney, through which you can send your wishes, and through which you can receive gifts from above.

7) The Masked Ball (seventh gate)

I often associate this chakra with Venice, with its masks, mirrors and labyrinths. We know that at midnight the masks must come off. Venice is filled with Catholic religiousness, but also has a clear demonical aspect, a place where you can be deceived by the devil to take on new masks. Personally I love Venice, and see it, despite the tourism, as a place of pilgrimage (about Venice, see my blog post [The Cosmographer Who Stole Lucifer's Dreams](#)).

The sixth chakra, the third eye, or ajna, is the center of perception. It is rather well known for its ability of opening clairvoyant abilities (seeing beyond normal capacities of others). It is also the center of clear thought and guidance from both inner and outer sources. Discrimination, or ability to see clearly what thoughts, advice, literature, and teachers are providing wisdom relevant to us, is cultivated here. We move from mimicking the wisdom of others to seeing and knowing our own wisdom when this center opens. Philosophy means love of wisdom, and this is cultivated in this area.

This center is fairly easy to open but difficult to open in a balanced way. The upper chakras, particular the sixth and seventh, often open long before the lower chakras do. This leads to symptoms of being able to see beyond conditioned reality, dimensions, or simply seeing more than the average person but with a lack of grounding, discrimination, and mental balance. This center opened in a mentally imbalanced, ungrounded, or dissociated individual can lead to an inability to function

properly in society. We may lack the ability to discern the everyday reality that we need to function in with the amount of stimulus that is coming in. This can lead to a wide variety of physical and mental symptoms that are difficult to care for properly.

When this center is open we begin to see what is going on with ourselves as well as others surrounding us. In a balanced way this information would lead to a sort of sanity, embodiment, and rationality that is a true gift. In an imbalanced way this center can open and lead to a tendency to see everything but the Ego, mental imbalances, psychosis, ego-inflation, and the creation of further layers of illusion and delusions that take us further away from real understanding.

This center is the chakra which is especially related to my critique of New Age. This center requires deeply that you exchange your inner sophist with an inner philosopher, or else you risk becoming an advocate of the philosophical hindrances of the opening into towards the Source (read shortly about this in my article [The Four Philosophical Hindrances and Openings](#). Related is also my article [The Conspiracy of the Third Eye](#), where I explain the top-down awakening, and the bottle-neck of energy this is creating in the throat center).

When we open our third eye we begin to discover that we, as well as those surrounding us, have many layers of conditioned reality. These layers are further trauma and wounding patterns, issues around sexuality, race, gender, money, and many more. Most of these layers are thoughtforms – thoughts that we, our community, or our world have called into being.

To begin a spiritual practice is to begin a proces of awakening. In Zen it is for example said about the process of awakening: "In the beginning mountains are mountains, and woods are woods. Then mountains no longer are mountains and woods are no longer woods. Finally mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods."

This refers to the three states the Wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. When the Wholeness is sleeping, mountains are mountains and woods are woods. This is the reality of the ordinary consciousness (the Ego-consciousness). The ordinary consciousness can sleep in three ways: 1) the dark sleep, which is the Ego's deep nightly sleep; 2) the grey sleep, which is the Ego's nightly dreams and other dreams; 3) the light sleep, where the Ego is awake.

The three states the Wholeness can be in, can also be described as the personal time, the collective time and the universal time. Furthermore it can be described as the

personal history, the collective history and the universal history. Time and history constitute the structure under your thinking.

This structure is also called the astral plane, or the astral world. It is a plane of existence postulated both by classical (particular neo-Platonic), medieval, oriental and esoteric philosophies and mystery religions. It is the world of the planetary spheres, crossed by the soul in its astral body, either through the dream state, or on the way to being born and after death, and generally said to be populated by angels, demons, spirits or other immaterial beings.

The astral plane is connected with the so-called Akashic records. The Akashic records are a compendium of mystical knowledge encoded in a non-physical plane of existence: the astral plane. These records are described as containing all knowledge of human experience and the history of the cosmos. They are holding a record of all events, actions, thoughts and feelings that have ever occurred or will ever occur.

The Akasha is an “astral light” containing occult records, which spiritual beings can perceive by their “astral senses” and “astral bodies”. Clairvoyance, spiritual insight, prophecy and many other metaphysical and religious notions are made possible by tapping into the Akashic records. They are metaphorically described as a library. They can be accessed through astral projection, meditation, near-death experience, lucid dreaming, or other means.

The Akashic records lie in the Wholeness, and as mentioned: the Wholeness can be in three states of spiritual awakening - sleep, dream, awake – which again can be described as the personal, collective and universal time (or history).

The collective time is a very dangerous intermediate area, if you not are very trained in realization and compassion. I have called this area *The Spiritual Twilight Zone*. The Spiritual Twilight Zone is the area where different kinds of paranormal (philosophical/religious) phenomena are beginning to occur in your daily life. It is especially the lack of understanding this area, that is due to my critique of the many incompetent spiritual teachers you see today in the New Age movement. If you don't understand what to do, when these phenomena arise, it can end in a spiritual crisis. Though you might have paranormal abilities, then you, spiritual seen, not necessarily are sufficiently awake on these areas, and therefore competent enough to guide other people spiritual.

The universal images are not human made. They are what you might call the thoughts of God, or in a shamanic language: the dreamtime, or the great vision.

It is important to make clear that neither the collective images, nor the universal images, can be compared to Jungian archetypes. They have an external ontological status. The universal images are Platonic archetypes, and the collective images, are an intermediary zone between the personal and the universal images. They exist outside the individual psyche in the actual movement of nature. They can not entirely be controlled by the ordinary mind.

A part of the layers of collective images are grids created from schools and education, religion, television and movies. Books, gurus and teachers, and the many sources we interact with. We conform our identity and shape our reality around our experiences and teachers. At some point in the awakening process we free ourselves from all of our layers – and be around gurus, teachers, read books, go to school, participate in religious activities...all without changing who we are or adding on layers. This is what philosophical counseling is emphasizing from the very beginning. Think for yourself!

At midnight you must remove your masks...One of the larger aspects of awakening is the removal of masks – typically many of them. Again this is closely connected with philosophy and critical thinking. Each time we learn to conform, to change ourselves, to put a further layer of illusion up that is different than who we truly are it is a mask. Some of these masks are removed as soon as we leave a particular situation. Others remain permanent. Although these masks are separate in a way from the layers of conditioned reality, they do stop us from seeing who we truly are. If at our core we are still a hurt five-year-old who has put mask after mask on to hide that fact, at some point we will be tasked with unmasking her and processing her wounds (note that highly sensitives also often put on many masks because high sensitivity is considered negative in our society – this is something I have been a master in myself). If we have put on a mask of being “spiritual” or “enlightened” at some point we must remove that mask to actually become enlightened. If we are wearing a mask of being functional and happy and inside we are angry and depressed, taking off the mask and getting to know our inner emotional selves, who we truly are, may seem frightening. But removing the masks that we wear allows for us to process the wounds that we carry and to understand who we truly are.

By the time that we are experiencing the third eye awakening it can be easy to see the masks of others. We may also be able to look beyond them. At this point we have access to understand each person as divine. The person we are looking at may have no idea – they in fact may be the person who flicked you off in traffic or someone who is the first to judge and gossip about everyone. When we look at their masking we can see their wounds – what has caused them to put on masks in the first place. When we look past the masks to the inner light that fills each person we will lose our

sense of judgment and can come to the important realization that everyone is awake, some people just have many layers and masks that they have no chance of remembering.

To look inward and remove our masks is more difficult and remove our own masks is more difficult but is necessary to be who we authentically are.

The third eye will open in its own right timing. Chakra exercises, meditations to open the third eye, or whatever the trend is these days is not necessary. When we meditate on a regular basis and consciously work through the lower chakras (art of life), this chakra will open in a balanced way on its own. We then work with whatever material is coming up for us to process. The clearer we are – the fewer layers of conditioned reality and masks we have – the more the third eye awakens. We are then able to see further and with more clarity. With this ability comes the tendency to see outer and focus on what we see in others. Allow for this sight to focus inward and it will blossom.

It is quite dangerous to force this center open due to the mental imbalances it can create, and those of us who naturally have this center open are often not able to psychologically or physically deal with the amount of stimuli coming in. Even for the most balanced or awakened soul the information and truths that come from having this center truly open are quite difficult to process. By working through the other centers and our issues with personal awareness we can see from this center in a balanced way.

8) The Guardian of the Threshold (eighth gate)

The crown chakra, or *Sahasrara*, allows for us to receive divine input. Since the crown chakra is still part of our physical body (at the crown of the head) this divine input is filtered through our wounds and the conditioned layers of reality. The universal images in time, God's thoughts, or the great vision (Dreamtime), are an intermediary divine area between the crown chakra and the heaven chakra. Around ethical highly placed spiritual teachers, there seem to be formed existential mandala-structures, which, as great energy-whirls, canalize highly growth-advancing energy and consciousness-waves from the Source (the Divine). These mandala-structures necessarily have to arrange themselves after the collective images' polarization-patterns in past and future, whereby the lines are formed, which the energy and the transmissions can follow into the personal images, which after all also only work in past and future. In this process the energy and consciousness transformations are symbolized.

These energy-mandalas are in religious art archetypal portrayed in for example the classic configurations around Christ (the four evangelists and their symbolical power) and Buddha (the Dyani-Buddhas with their esoterical figures).

Such mandala-fields are constellated concretely among the students, who relate to such a teacher. And in these fields, constituted by human beings, the Divine manifests itself concretely-existential.

Such teachers function as energy-distributers and energy-spreaders to individual persons, who are students and disciples of this teacher, a kind of transformation-phenomenon, where the individual persons are lifted into the spiritual dimension with its universal images, insights and experiences of love.

To teach spiritual consists after all in, among other things, in passing on energy (love, information, healing, direct transmission of spiritual consciousness). Only an enlightened master can do this. The enormous amount of New Age teachers calling themselves spiritual teachers are therefore an extremely dangerous inflation of knowledge about spirituality.

The passed energy from the spiritual dimension is, from the medium of an enlightened master, spreading itself like waves out towards those, who are open, and those, who can learn and receive. This wave-vibration-process goes through the mandala-structures of the universal images, which work in synchronism with the Now (the spiritual dimension) to the polar tension-tracks in the collective images, which work in past and future, in order to be able to reproduce itself in the personal images, which after all also only work in past and future. The waves have to be able to travel. The energy has to be able to spread itself from higher levels, via the teacher, and out to those, who can grow in this field.

Around such a teacher there in other words arises a universal image, a kind of mandala-structure, created by the teacher and the students around him.

Most known is as mentioned Jesus and his disciples, or Buddha and his disciples. But it can also happen in a monastery, for example around Francis of Assisi, Hildegard von Bingen, or around Socrates and his students.

The teaching can also happen in dreams. Below I will explain the importance of this (in my article [Paranormal Phenomena seen in Relation with Mystical Experiences](#), you can read about how signs from Eternity are coming to the individual in symbolic form).

The crown chakra allows for us to taste flickering oneness and be able to experience awareness outside of ourselves. It is the pivot point between the Ego in physical form and the Divine.

The crown chakra is a door, a gateway. It is the guardian of the threshold. This gateway allows for us to leave the confines of conditioned reality and experience larger spiritual realities, such as oneness and the Emptiness (Sûnyatâ). The crown chakra is an initiation for us, a junction where we can decide if we would like to experience freedom and let go of the chains that remain around us. In a balanced state in which all of the other chakras have flow and are balanced, this gateway leads to progression of the awakened self, other dimensions, realities, universes, and more. This is connected to progressive karma, divine providence, or spirit help, a magic book, where you can see the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life (see my article [What is Karma?](#), and my book *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien*, chapter 2, Philosophical Theology, part 2, *Divine Providence and Free Will*).

In an imbalanced state the crown chakra is a release hatch, a way for us to disassociate or be partially embodied. This leads to ungrounded spirituality, or an escapist tendency where we feel as if spirituality is always somewhere else, and a preoccupation with rigid rules, ego, going home, and other mental imbalances that make it difficult to function in daily life. This center can be worked with through grounding and consciously having physical, sensate experiencing, exercising, spending time in nature, appreciating our physical body, and working through whatever patterns of wounding are causing us to want to leave our body and the Earth. In other words: a return to the lower chakras.

That the crown chakra both can release us and capture us, is what I have tried to depict with my concept of Lucifer Morningstar, a guardian of the threshold who offers you a choice to play either the sophist's play, or the philosopher's play.

In a balanced state this chakra will open to large spiritual experiences, access to currents of energy, and seeing and experiencing things beyond the conditioned layers of reality (the personal and collective images). The crown chakra once opened leads to the eighth chakra, or Heaven chakra, which is the first chakra that is more about the divine than us. This crown chakra can be passed through by reaching for and going through the doorway when it is presented to us. When done at the right time in our path there will be an energy flow from the first chakra through and above the crown. When the seven chakras associated with our body are functional and balanced we can feel this flow of energy through the spine going up, as well as spiritual energy coming through our crown down. We then can begin to feel other energies from the Earth coming up into our root, and energy flowing out of our arms and hands. The

chakras in the hands and feet are important to properly cycle energy through our bodies. When we are awakening we have huge amounts of energy cycling through us. Without the proper ability to release, these energies reside within us, causing us energetic, emotional, and very real physical pain.

In a culture ruled by the Mythology of Authenticity, Art of Life offers central tools for increasing our capacity for mature personal processing. It promotes proper self-care, help people come to terms with the painbody, original sin and negative karma; to explore, change and restructure thought distortions, as well as finding their true calling in life and develop a creative expression. It is a prerequisite for a secure and sober process of spiritual training that these areas have been thoroughly developed and are consistently tended and balanced. Hereafter the spiritual dimension opens by itself.

In all simplicity spirituality is about being present in the now. This is almost a cliché today, where everybody is talking about being in the now, paradoxically enough also the Mythology of Authenticity, which in reality is about dreams of a lost past and a richer future. But precisely the paradox in this also show how easily we are letting ourselves be deceived by the past and the future. I have explained this paradox with my concept of Lucifer Morningstar. The Mythology of Authenticity has in that way developed into a globally seen exceptional narcissism.

An ordinary state of consciousness – an Ego – either is or is not in the present moment. Most often the Ego is not fully present. Most frequently the mind is caught up in the past or lost in the future. The busy to-and-for in consciousness is unceasing, and as a rule the mind is either filled with past memories or looking ahead with worries and plans, with hope and longing. When the mind finally becomes more focused on the here and now, it is usually busy thinking and commenting on whatever is happening at that moment; discursive thinking (it is here the secret of Tonglen is a good help).

Nonetheless, it is possible for the Ego to be fully present in the here and now. This means that the attention is focused in Hara, as well as the sensations of the body and the stream of emotions and feelings. The sense-portals to the outer world are open and receptive, and the Ego is ready to express, communicate, listen, or act. This could be a fair description of a state of ordinary Ego consciousness that is present at this moment, in this situation. It is a fairly sharp and intense state of being.

A person with a lot of life experience and personal processing from Art of Life will bring an even wider range of him- or herself to the here-and-now and will be even more fully present. This person will have a deeper, more integrated, and expanded

presence – the sense of connectedness with the world and people around him will be richer, the centeredness clearer. This kind of presence is more whole, more restful, and yet attentively transparent. It is a fairly satisfying and pervasive state of wakefulness and coherence. This is what happens in step 3, 4, and 5: Passive listening presence, discrimination, and creative emptiness.

Finally, there is the open now of transdual consciousness. This is step 6, the wholeness of the observer and the observed. This state of presence is qualitative different, since it is based on the entirely different perspective of unity consciousness. This is an almost ecstatic state of completion, a luminous, blissful wakefulness in which consciousness is also fully relaxed, not holding on to the bliss, not desiring the ecstasy, just an open transparency. It is a wondrous and heavenly state. The transdual presence is like the open sky, and this open sky is present here on earth at this moment.

Meister Eckhart describes this heavenly state in this way:

The now in which God created the first human, and the now in which the last human perishes, and this now in which I speak: they are equal in god and they are nothing other than one single now.

And Master Tilopa:

*Do not pursue the past
Do not invite the future
Do not think about the present
And do not meditate with the intellect.
Avoid all logical thought
And completely relax the mind.*

Especially Eastern texts like Tilopa's are the cause of New Agers confusing this with Western irrationalism, subjectivism and anti-intellectualism, forgetting that these themselves are intellectual views. You don't get enlightened by accepting a theory. You can't stop the thought. This confusion is tragic, since what Tilopa is talking about is complete objectivity and absolutism. The preparation for such a state is precisely the use of philosophy, rationality and logic: thought training and art of life (I have explained the confusion in my Ebook, [The Tragic New Age Confusion of Eastern Enlightenment and Western Idealism](#)).

The more advanced forms of consciousness training are traditionally thought only to take place in a face-to-face exchange with an enlightened master. It is indisputable

possible to use books as sources of inspiration, and in particular to review one's insights and refresh one's practice. This is something I advise people to do, but unfortunately it is not possible to obtain the subtle practical adjustments and individual corrections required to avoid getting stuck or losing one's way in the unimaginable abundance of states and pathways of consciousness. Traditionally, this kind of teaching can only take place in an existential, individually responsible, and deeply engaged mutual process with a competent teacher.

But precisely the Mythology of Authenticity, and its whole spiritual role-playing game with its self-designed gurus and masters without experience, has in my view put an end to this tradition. I have especially been disappointed over discovering that spiritual environments, which precisely claim to build on the necessity of a teacher who can adjust and correct unbalanced states and pathways of the individual's consciousness, have been characterized by a large number of people who have got their spiritual path distorted by these same teachers. Examples are [Swami Muktananda](#) and [Sogyal Rinpoche](#).

In the former time's spiritual pedagogics the teacher took the central place in so-called energy-mandalas, whereby the hierarchical structure was able to be unfold (Christ and Buddha in the centre). In the newer time's spiritual pedagogics a true spiritual development aims, in my view, towards holding free the center of the circles, whereby an ideal equal spirituality can begin to unfold.

This development is especially represented by Krishnamurti, who in this way seeks to make the Source common. In such a mandala-structure that, which before symbolical was gathered in the centre, is now unfolded and made common in the periphery. The aim is completely to avoid the guru-centric. Anybody, who has worked with Krishnamurti's teaching, can recognize this. But you can also recognize it in the American Transcendentalists, which I will return to.

In connection with philosophy this is also interesting since Krishnamurti's teaching in that way follows the central virtue of philosophy: Think for Yourself! Indeed, his teaching is characterized by the use of philosophy, instead of religious preaching or psychotherapy. Krishnamurti time after time emphasized that you must be completely alone in your spiritual development. You must be a spiritual anarchist. The help you need will so to speak come from above when you are completely alone. This help is also called progressive karma.

As mentioned, when speaking about philosophy, I work with Platonism as the standard for philosophy as truth-seeking, in contrast to sophism, which deliberately is using thought distortions as a way of getting on in the world. Platonism represents a

metaphysics that, although it corresponded to late antique paganism, is not necessarily tied to any particular religious tradition and can be imported into Christianity, Islam, or other traditions. Furthermore: several scholars have recognised parallels between the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato and that of the Upanishads, including their ideas on sources of knowledge, concept of justice and path to salvation, and Plato's allegory of the cave. Platonic psychology with its divisions of reason, spirit and appetite, also bears resemblance to the three gunas in the Indian philosophy of Samkhya. Various mechanisms for such a transmission of knowledge have been conjectured including Pythagoras traveling as far as India; Indian philosophers visiting Athens and meeting Socrates; Plato encountering the ideas when in exile in Syracuse; or, intermediated through Persia.

Alfred North Whitehead was a widely influential twentieth century philosopher and mathematician. He is responsible for coining the following celebrated quote about Plato's enduring influence.

The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato (Process and Reality, p. 39).

There is a fascinating thought in this, which also has to do with the yuga teachings in Indian philosophy, namely that Plato not was the beginning of philosophy, but the end. Plato works are simply one of the last accounts of a much older, and much richer, philosophical tradition. Also the Indian Vedas (whereof the Upanishads are a part) suggests this. The Vedas is said to have been written down at the beginning of the Kali Yuga. According to Puranic sources, Krishna's departure marks the end of Dvapara Yuga and the start of Kali Yuga, which is dated to 17/18 February 3102 BCE. The Shastras say that the Vedic civilization flowered in India much longer time ago than the 50.000 years which modern science claim to be earliest possible time where Homo Sapiens firstly appeared on Earth (characterized by behavioral modernity; that is: behavior which can be characterized by abstract thinking, planning depth, symbolic behavior - e.g., art, ornamentation, music - exploitation of large game, and blade technology, among others). The Shastras (or Sastras) claim that the philosophers, Yogis and Rishis (Seers) lived for millions of years ago, and the Vedic Acharyas (Indian scholars) believe that the stories in the Puranic literature are factual stories, not only from this planet, but also from many planets in this Universe. Data taken from these planets have nothing to do with the data from this planet (as for example incredible life spans and the ability to fly without mechanical help). The Puranic literature describes a universe where the supernatural is trivial and miraculous births are everyday phenomena.

I will not be tempted by pseudo-scientific speculation, but there are in fact many

holes in the evolutionary theory, which believes that we have developed from lower states to higher states. It is questions such as how the pyramids were build, how the builders could fit enormous blocks of stone on top of each other, so that not even a razer blade could enter in between them. And there are many other anomalies.

Platonism as an example of the late antique paganism is the reason for why I can associate philosophy with all kinds of spiritual traditions, even the oldest (known) form of religion, namely shamanism. Indian philosophy claims that the manifestation of the universe thus has arised on the background of a mighty universal vision (Mahat or Mahat Atman – a vision of beauty), which originates from past universes. It is compared with the experience of objectivity when you awake from a deep sleep an early summer morning with singing birds. All wisdom traditions have concepts of this great vision: it is the Dream-time of the Aboriginals (the world's oldest known religion), God's words in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the Pythagoreans' Music of the Spheres, 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 Akashic Records of the Occultists. In Indian philosophy it is also called the causal body (karanadeha), or, as in Christianity, the spirit in the symbolism of body, soul and spirit.

In this way, the future arises, and an outgoing creative movement; a movement, which can be compared with what they within science call The Big Bang (but it is not the same). In the outgoing movement, the great vision becomes, because of the negation-power, shattered in many images, which now become a kind of memories about the great vision; signs from Eternity. In this way, the past arises, and a longing back towards the origin, the unmanifested. And then a destructive backmovement is created. This longing and backmovement are the background for that all original wisdom traditions see life as a Quest, or a Pilgrimage. Tolkien's Rivendell and Lórien are places you long for. Every kind of longing contains a glimpse of a longing after the universal vision and song of the Universe.

In connection with Platonism, it ought to be mentioned that there is a distinctively American form of Platonism, fostered by the Concord School of Philosophy. The Concord School of Philosophy was a lyceum-like series of summer lectures and discussions of philosophy in Concord, Massachusetts from 1879 to 1888.

Starting the Concord School of Philosophy had long been a goal of founder Amos Bronson Alcott and others in the [Transcendental](#) movement. The school was based partly on Plato's Academy. Many of the school's lectures and readings focused on reminiscences of the Transcendentalists: Ralph Waldo Emerson attended some of the school's meetings before his death, and was commemorated after; readings

from Henry David Thoreau's then-unpublished journals were among the most popular events.

This school is fascinating in the way that it, precisely like Plato's academy, was spoiled by sophists (evolutionists), and eventually was closed as a result. In his brilliant book *American Gurus – From Transcendentalism to New Age Religion*, Arthur Versluis writes:

Broadly speaking, there were two primary streams of thought that emerged from American Transcendentalism and, in particular, from Emerson and Alcott. One was the development of distinctively American forms of Platonism, fostered by the Concord School and its consistent inclusion of Platonic subjects. The other was what became known as “New Thought,” later becoming New Age, which Catherine Albanese termed “American metaphysical religion.” The New Age will be part of the context for our final chapters in this book, whereas we must turn now to consider a very different creature, American Platonism as it engaged in battle with materialism and evolutionism (page 55).

I seriously think that evolutionism is a sign of the decline of wisdom and therefore philosophy (a sign of the [Kali Yuga](#)). It ought to be emphasized that I don't talk about evolutionary biology or science, but about evolutionism as an ideology; especially characterized by scientism and different kinds of reductionism, as for example historicism and psychologism. New Age has precisely adopted evolutionism, and has, with its [subjective idealism](#) and relativism, rejected Platonism ([objective idealism](#) and absolutism). New Age is (among many others) therefore a sign of the return of the sophists.

The conflict is obvious when we are speaking about spirituality, since the spiritual dimension is considered to be a timeless dimension, and that evolution *only* occurs in time. Platonism is about the timeless dimension. But New Age has won the battle.

Versluis writes on page 67:

By the 1880s, even the sanctum sanctorum of American Platonism, the meetings of American Akademe in Jacksonville, had been penetrated by evolutionists.

[...]

It is not surprising that the Akademe ceased to be in June 1892, as did the Journal of the American Akademe...

In order to remember this tradition, I suggest that you read about spiritual teachers in the tradition of Emerson and Alcott, combining Emerson's Platonic Orientalism with Alcott's love of dialogue or conversation. It could be teachers such as Franklin Merrell-Wolf, René Guenon, and Fritjof Schuon.

In order to avoid the sophists (the many false gurus of our time), I suggest that you read *The Guru Papers: Masks of Authoritarian Power*, by Joel Kramer and Diana Alstad. *The Guru Papers* demonstrates with uncompromising clarity that authoritarian control, which once held societies together, is now at the core of personal, social, and planetary problems, and thus a key factor in social disintegration. It illustrates how authoritarianism is embedded in the way people think, hiding in culture, values, daily life, and in the very morality people try to live by. The book unmasks authoritarianism in such areas as relationships, cults, 12-step groups, religion, and contemporary morality.

As I have suggested, I believe that we see a collective spiritual awakening of the upper chakras, and a closing towards the lower chakras. In my article [The Conspiracy of the Third Eye](#), I suggest that this is demonically steered; that is: we see a collective masked ball of spirituality, and a worship of "crazy wisdom", or moral anarchism, as, for example, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho) and Andrew Cohen practised it. The lower chakras has do with the heart (ethics), and personal shadow, family, ancestors, society, relationships. All pre-modern wisdom traditions emphasize that you can't be fully enlightened without ethics (compassion); in fact: wisdom and compassion are seen as aspects of one another. All chakras must be breathing and alive.

Ken Wilber's integralism is, in some respects, like an inverted version of traditionalism (American transcendentalism, and, on the whole, the original wisdom traditions), based on the works of religion scholar Huston Smith. Whereas Traditionalists in general and Fritjof Schuon in particular regard our era as one of decline, and remain critical of evolutionary theory and progressivism, integralists in general and Wilber in particular are committed evolutionists, and look forward to a superhuman future. And, with one of Wilber's collaborates, Andrew Cohen, we see a vision of "evolutionary enlightenment" - or New Age. That is, it points us toward a new era of "collective consciousness" and, entirely true to New Age works more generally, suggests that this transformed society will come about through a "new path," one that does not require preparatory work, long meditation practice under a teacher recognized by a traditional lineage. In other words: a spiritual system, that is as totalitarian as communism and Nazism, and which can have its breeding ground in America, where the educational system primarily doesn't teach any other history than America's own history.

As a former devotee of Andrew Cohen, Andre van der Braak, says in a conclusion to his book *Enlightenment Blues*, then he is not longer convinced that there is such a thing as "enlightenment" as "a state of consciousness to be attained." Cohen actually told that he had a completely different view of enlightenment. And so it appears that many other self-proclaimed "enlightened masters" of our time also have. To fit a traditional view of enlightenment with any kind of evolution in history or in time is a contradiction, since enlightenment belongs to a timeless dimension. It is a transcendent state. So, the time of enlightened masters is over, and the time of false prophets have begun.

I have therefore suggested that you let your main teacher be your dreams (see my article [On the Nature of Dreams](#)). About the evolutionistic turn in spirituality, see my own Ebook, [Evolutionism – The red Thread in the Matrix Conspiracy](#).

To summarize: seen from a spiritual perspective, our instinctive survival strategi (the ego) appears as a resistance, an invincible inertia: original sin, negative karma. You can't, by therapeutic strategies, free the consciousness for its attachment to this inertia. You can therefore not dissolve or dilute or convert the original sin through therapy. Only the intervention of the Source (God, Christ, The Saints, Buddha, the enlightened consciousness) can basically help Man with a transcendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order to, that a human being should be able to receive this help from the Source (gift of grace), then this requires an eminently precise and profound preparation. And as two phases of this preparation serve: firstly: Art of Life, and secondly: the spiritual dimension where you must be completely alone.

On this path I suggest that you find a religion that suits you, and use it as a frame of reference. Personally, and this is only personally, I work with the Earth chakra, Mother Earth, in form of Nordic Shamanism. I work with dreams in form of Tibetan dream Yoga. And I work with the Heaven chakra, Father Heaven, in form of Christian mysticism (see my article [The Spiritual Practice of Icons](#)). Especially the Christmas season I see as a season where Nordic shamanism and Christian mysticism can be combined. The complete philosophy about how this can be carried out, I have shown in my Ebook [Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien](#).

9) Father Heaven (ninth gate)

There are several chakras above our heads, but the Heaven chakra is the first from our physical body (after the crown) and the last that is about our physical body. The chakras beyond it are about our pure divine energy and are no longer concerned with

our individual experiences or our experience of this Earth. Once we are aware and opened to the chakras above the Heaven chakra the experience of spiritual energies and understandings far outside the realm of anything that can be logically written about or discussed increases exponentially. This was what Master Tilopa spoke about. It is obviously absurd to reduce it to a psychologizing metaphysical idea such as idealism, but this is what New Age does (again: see my free Ebook [The Tragic New Age Confusion of Eastern Enlightenment and Western Idealism](#)).

The Heaven chakra is approximately two feet above our crown chakra. It is the first truly “spiritual” chakra, meaning that it is not concerned with our day-to-day existence. This chakra contains the blueprint of our existence, our karma, and at death all of the energy from our other chakras pulls up into it. When we are able to access this chakra we are able to fully experience oneness and are able to understand much of our karma and other global patterns. The place, where you can find your own progressive karma and special providence, if such is available, is therefore in the life, you have lived, in the history of your present life. It lies as an invisible script underneath the history of your actual life. It is the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life.

In the inexplicable events in your life (synchronicities), in the rows of moments of spiritual longing, in the fateful incidents and actions - in them are contained the progressive karma and special providence. In the history of your Soul there is a map. This map shows the dreaming tracks and the songlines in your spiritual work of art. This map is a universal image. It lies in the Inner Side of the world. In *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien* I have examined karma in chapter 2, *Philosophical Theology, part 2: Divine Providence and Free Will*.

After accessing this chakra we begin to have understandings beyond the constructs of conditioned reality (the collective images in time), specifically space and time. We may encounter our future selves, patterns that are outside a linear timeline, and understandings of other dimensions, realities, and beings.

This chakra is about the ocean of divine flow. Once it reaches our crown, it is again about us, the drop. This chakra is the first interface with the massive ocean of oneness, the letting go of “I” in order to expand into something much greater than the Ego. In death, all of our energy rolls up into this eighth center to take our individual Self, our drop, back into the state of oneness. In spiritual awakenings the awareness and opening of this center allows for the states of ego death, oneness, and a release of our own fears surrounding death. In further states of spiritual awakening we are able to access further chakras that are no longer about the Self or the individual experience

– they are about pure spirit, the Void, divinity, and understandings that most of us would not be able to fathom until we have direct experience of them.

The further we are able to access above ourselves we are able to nurture beneath ourselves as well. Mother Earth, the Earth chakra, is not only about grounding and embodiment but also of a deep sense of awakening to the spiritual unfolding of the Earth. Primal instincts and realizations of ourselves as emotional, sexual beings with instinctual rhythms develops.

That Christianity can't be without the feminine Mother Earth aspect, a White Goddess, can be seen in the importance Virgin Mary has to people. And therefore in the importance of Christmas. Christmas is placed on the pagan festival of Yule, simply because the church could see that this wasn't something they could take away from people. In Mother Earth we saw that both light and dark powers are equally valuable powers. But in our day's subjectivism and relativism, this can be a dangerous idea (paganism has nothing to do with subjectivism and relativism, since there is an absolute discrimination between light and dark). It is therefore necessary to emphasize an absolute good, true and beautiful foundation for this, and it is here Christianity comes in (this is my personal choice, you could also choose the White Goddess, the Taoist *Tao*, or what suits you best). Christianity was also what Tolkien added to his pagan mythology. He said himself that *The Lord of the Rings* is a Catholic work. You can read about this in chapter 2, Philosophical Theology, part 1, *Christianity or Paganism?*

One day, during the Christmas season, while I was thinking about all this, I decided that on Christmas evening, I would go back to Gravlev church, in the valley in Rold Forest, and participate in the Christmas service. It was thrilling to sit in this small, ancient stone building and listen to the priest, and seeing the happiness in the faces of the children. And also feel that below it all were the temple of the ancient Nordic Gods. And it reminded me about the end of Johannes V. Jensen's story *Mother and Child*.

After the hunter had discovered that what he had hunted was a star collection, he remembers his woman and their child. He now tries to find his way back through the dark forest, but he has travelled far. When he finally comes back to the place where his little family had their camp, he realizes that he had been away for more than thousand years. He tries to find the signs of his family, and he enters into something which looks like a cathedral of trees. Along the sides are standing great wood sculptures of the Nordic gods. He enters further into the cathedral, and along the sides he now sees the great Christian saints. Finally he reaches the most holy place, and as

the central sculpture at the end of the cathedral, he finds the mother and child, now immortalized in wood for all eternity.

All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com

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