

## AN IMAGINATIVE THINKING IS BASED ON THE FOUR ETHERS

by Horst Hellmann 2010

Our 21<sup>st</sup> century is demanding a new quality of thinking! Nearly every week you can read about climate change and the question how to solve the problems to get rid of poverty and nuclear weapons. Top scientists are searching for answers. The ruthless exploitation is progressing so fast that mankind will need two earths in order to satisfy the needs of the economy from 2030 on. We are on a way which is not forward-looking and it needs a rethinking away from unlimited growth to a sustainable use.

This is the message every day. One scientist who is known by everyone is Albert Einstein.

- *Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.*
- *You have to learn the rules of the game. And then you have to play better than anyone else.*
- *Most people say that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong: it is character.*
- *We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.*
- *Imagination is more important than knowledge.*
- *When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking.*
- *To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science.*
- *Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.*
- *There is no logical way to the discovery of these elemental laws. There is only the way of intuition, which is helped by a feeling for the order lying behind the appearance.*

Our planet is not dead slag, our planet lives and the universe is in one with the earth.

The heliocentric world view serves the astronautics.

The geocentric world view respects the rhythm in all life. It has to do with planets and zodiac and is creating an invisible field which was/is known under different names all around the world: Qui, life forces, morphic field, etheric field. This field is causing all processes within the body and this happens very fast:

- See my hard **tooth**, it contains calcium carbonate and calcium phosphate; in 240 days all these substances are exchanged. This is metabolism.
- See the **fat** that I feel here, 41% is not there next day at the same time and substituted by new fat. It goes to the liver and is transformed into other products.
- When I eat a little bit of **salt**, within one minute one can find it everywhere in my body.
  - And the metabolism in the bones is so enormous that within every minute the total calcium of the **bones** goes into the blood and from the blood the same amount is pouring into the bones.

The life forces are behind everything in the world and therefor our thinking is based on them as well.

At first we have to get an understanding of the etheric forces before we are able to see the relation to the thinking.

We are unable to perceive the etheric field with our 12 senses.

**With the senses** we experience the Nature, they are part of the nature forces and we call this **world of nature.**

But we have no senses for magnetism, electricity or uv-light and if we want to see them we have to use instruments in order to support the senses. Rudolf Steiner calls this realm the

**under sensible world.**

And there is another world that we can learn to perceive through inner soul development, it is called

### **super sensible world.**

The forming forces within nature are using matter, but they are more than matter. The German scientist and poet Goethe found these forces when he did research on plants 200 years ago.

Rudolf Steiner was the publisher of Goethe's essays on natural science around 1885. Steiner extended the knowledge on the etheric forces and could show us the inner way of the soul how to get such insights about the life forces, which he called **etheric body**.

In 1921 he spoke to the physicians about the etheric forces that we should look at them as we look at knives, where we have different knives for different purposes. So we have **four ethers: warmth ether – light ether – tone ether – life ether**.

Those 4 ethers belong to the super sensible world. The physical aspect of the ethers are the elements **fire, air, water, earth**.

These elements are to find in the world of senses. We will not discuss this aspect today.

Let me introduce the world of the four forming forces

#### **1. FIRE** as an element:

When something is burning at first the flames are growing, then shrinking, dying and disappearing, vanishing from sight. TIME is created and is progressing.

#### **WARMTH ETHER**

- has no dimension, no space
- is a very intensive movement,
- warmth is always a kind of glowing,
- TIME is approaching and works in the process of **RIPENING**

#### **2. AIR**

- is not visible but fills the space between the objects- air has no boundaries- is connecting everything- has no structure or direction
- is like chaos- has elasticity- is causing tension and pressure towards a centre > centripetal

#### **LIGHT ETHER**

- light is not visible
- imagine a sunrise from darkness to daylight:  
slowly we can distinguish things around us, the objects are seen separated now,
- space and distances become clear, space is created through limitation
- light and SPACE belong together
- structure is to see;
- light is dividing the inside from the outside,
- light is radiating towards the periphery, light is expanding > is "spacing", raying out
- the periphery is the constructive principle of light
- the periphery/ the horizon is sucking
- our view, our consciousness is sucked out towards the horizon (ocean)
- so light sucks out the sprouts of plants too
- in a living organism it shows as **GROWTH**
- under the aspect of the consciousness light gives interest – and within the soul: feelings which are creating the relationship to the world around us

#### **3. WATER**

- always wants to become a totality > drop – river – ocean- diversity will be extinguished- it is creating mass > and so is integrating
- it is in the fusion of 2 cells during fertilization > gesture of *sympathy*- water is thick, heavy, has mass, gravity, weight
- waves: a cork goes up and down = passiv  
the waves move towards the shore = active

#### **SOUND ETHER, tone e., chemical e., number ether**

- Music is only music because of the interval between one tone and the other  
but what is separated as tone from another tone, in an interval stays on to be related.

- sound ether is dividing and this *creates* the *numbers*. Steiner calls it **Number ether**
- See a tree: trunk – branches – twigs ...
- we come to numerical proportions
- the **number ether** makes loose, light, porous, makes crystal lattice, gaps, holes, is bringing order (Chladny), harmony (leaves and plants), harmony of the spheres.
- the number ether is the basis for all chemical activity: all substances are built by number proportions
- H<sup>2</sup>O or H<sup>2</sup>SO<sub>4</sub> Steiner calls it also: **chemical ether**
- the true nature of this ether is **HARMONY and CREATING ORDER**
- (as the *thinking does which* we need it for the intellectual understanding of the world.

#### 4. EARTH

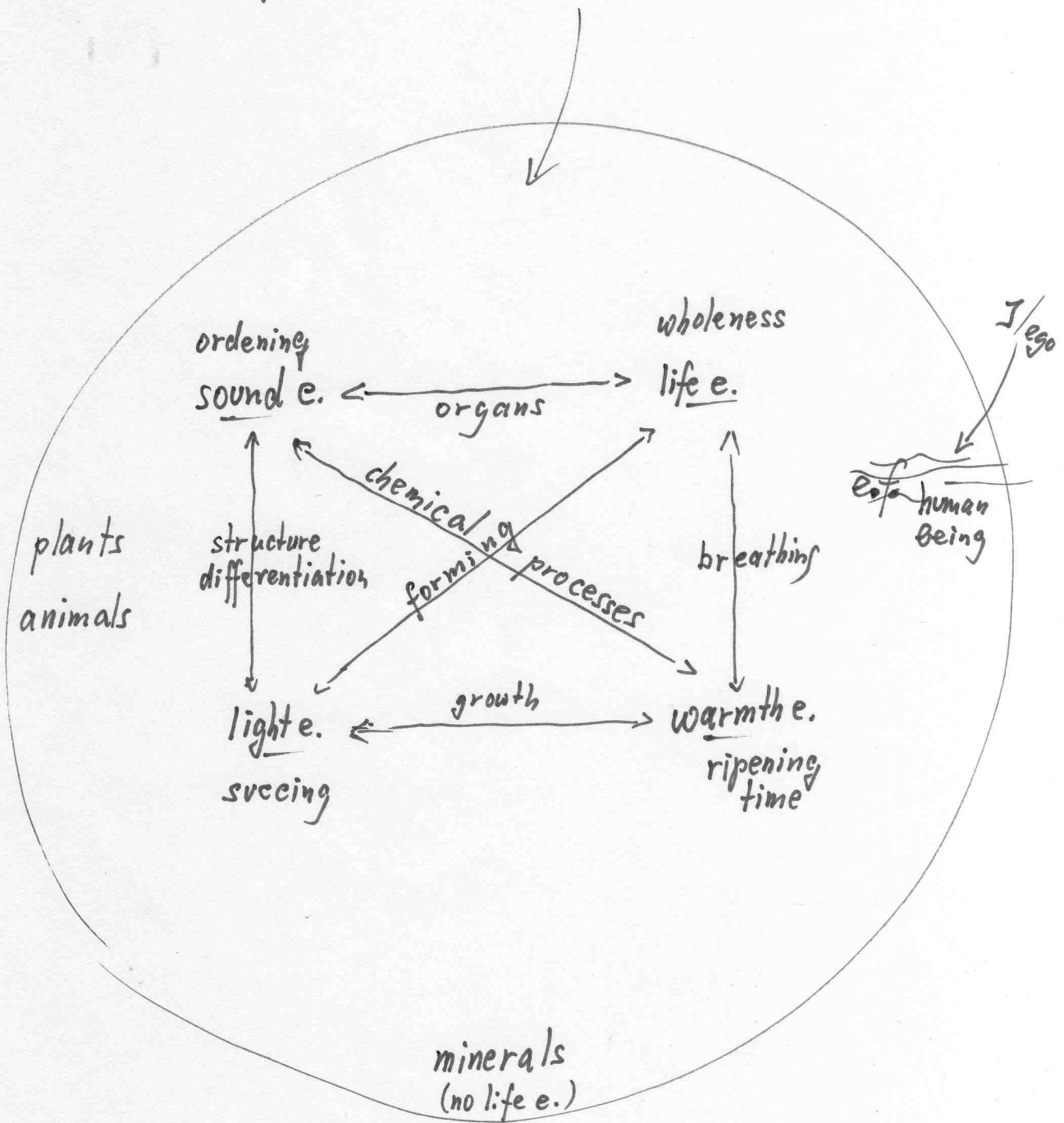
- firm, solid, rigid, dens, cold, rejecting: no other object can be found in the same place,
- solid objects with a surface, one can divide the object and gets single parts
- the earth is creating **objects** and **bodies**

#### LIFE ETHER

- is not rejecting but integrating,
- the forces in a living organism are penetrating each other,
- are actively inwardly moving and everything moves under the higher aspect of the whole.
- There are organs : lungs, heart... they are separated by a “skin” but these organs are depending on each other and also inside the organs the processes are coordinated
- the parts are working together under one idea or a higher aspect.
- In a living organism the life ether is the healing force,
- is lets the grass grow again when it was cut
- or an earthworm was cut into peace or a lizard had lost the tail, they grow again.
- The liver gets back to its form when a parent has donated a part to the child
- Life ether creates a unity and parts at the same time, but they belong together.
- The life ether is **causing shape/ form, configuration**
- Life ether creates living bodies, but the bodies are super sensible and not matter, that the earth element creates.
- (When one has cancer the cells withdraw from the life ether concept)
- Life ether is causing form inwardly and outwardly
- life ether is the **deeper sense / the idea behind**, it is the holistic aspect behind the facts
- the “golden ribbon” as Goethe did call it.

### INTERACTION of the four ETHERS

planets: feelings/emotions



man and world are one

What can we see when the ethers are interacting?

1. When the **SOUND ETHER/ chemical e./ tone e./ number e.**

(which is: separating, harmonising, structuring, chemical activity, numbers)

goes together with

**WARMTH ETHER:** (time, coming towards us, causing ripening)

*then we get*

**chemical processes and ripening** as we see during puberty when the sexual hormones become active or when a green cherry turns into a sweet fruit. We call this kind of interaction:  
**a process**

2. *When the* **LIGHT ETHER** which is: (expanding, creating space, growth)

*meets the*

**LIFE ETHER** : (creating unities and is a life giving force within a skin)

*this is causing*

a shape which is changing the form and metamorphoses from a baby to an adult or from an egg it develops into a frog, or from a seed to a tree

- this **transformation gives the SHAPE**

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3. *When the* **SOUND ETHER** (structure, chemical processes, harmonising)

*is working together with*

**LIFE ETHER**: (creating a wholeness, surrounded by a skin, integrating, higher sense)

*then the this creates*

**ORGANS** like heart, lungs, kidneys- they have a skin and within there are specific chemical processes going on

4. *When the* **LIFE ETHER** (creating a totality)

*is going together with*

**WARMTH ETHER** (approaching time, ripening)

*then this leads to*

**AGING** (a unity is kept in progressing time through the warmth ether)

Soon I am 68 and my being is kept in the time by the warmth ether.

As we know: The warmth is always created anew and is vanishing again.

5. *When the* **WARMTH ETHER** (approaching time, ripening)

*is in combination with the*

**LIGHT ETHER** (expanding force, space creating)

*this leads to*

**GROWTH** (expanding in a certain time: a seed is germinating, sprouting, growing)

6. *When the* **LIGHT ETHER**

*is combined with the*

**SOUND ETHER**

*it leads to the structuring of the space*

*and we get the PARTS* of an organism, the *form*: roots, leaves, flowers, fruits, limbs, rhythmical organisation, nerve system, metabolism.

Through the combination of the different ethers we get

**parts, organs, growth, ageing, shape, transformation, chemical processes and ripening.**

This is life!

**How can we see it in a tree?**

LIGHT ETHER > growth and size

SOUND ETHER > structure and branches in the crown

LIFE ETHER > roots, branches and the leaves form a totality

WARMTH ETHER > in the ageing, flowering and fruitation

We see that the Ethers are the basis of life, they are always interacting together, not only 2.

Now we can see the **difference between the elements and ethers:**

The **elements** are central forces and they are mathematical conceivable, we use them in technology. They are representing the lifeless matter.

**The ethers** are universal forces, usual unknown to science, this is the reason why science cannot understand life.

### ***THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ETHERS AND THE HUMAN SOUL***

#### **1. Warmth ether – human will**

- warmth is a constant inner glowing– so the **will** of a person is constantly renewing.
- Will is based on warmth- in the blood lives our I - love for the children.

#### **2. Light ether – feelings**

- light is in a strong contrast to matter- light is invisible but makes possible to see things,
- it is raying out to the objects and gives interest and conscious striving
- so our **feelings** are streaming towards everything around us;
- devotion to the environment, astonishment, admiration, thankfulness and emotion

#### **3. Sound ether – thinking**

a tone is sounding together with other tones in harmony,- many *facts are combined with each other* > **number ether**, and under the aspect of the **chemical ether** > forming and dissolving > it means not getting stuck in rules and old habits.

This is a description of our activity of the **ordinary thinking**: we collect the different facts and form the abstract intellectual concepts

#### **4. Life ether – deeper meaning / sense / idea**

each organ is sending specific forces to all the other organs

We see the threefold human being – nerves, rhythm, metabolism: There is a higher harmony, because **life** is a harmony in a mutual interaction of the organs within an organism.

Life needs always rhythms. –

With our ordinary intellectual thinking we form concepts about the world

**but** through the life ether in our thinking we begin to **understand the true meaning**

behind the matter, and we begin to understand life processes because

the thinking has become flexible > we begin to have imagination and creativity.

- **Imaginative thinking is needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century!**

### **What is the task of the teacher?**

She/He has to teach in a way that the thinking becomes penetrated by the forces of the life ether in order to oppose the rigid notions and abstract intellectual concepts.

The teacher must **integrate the life ether into the thinking**.

Learning processes and life processes are based on the etheric forces and therefore they are vital for the health later in life (Salutogenesis).

But for this broader aspect of science we need to develop the **holistic scientist** in us who has -practical and experimental skills

- intellectual and scientific abilities
- comprehensive artistic attainments
- social ability and understanding
- individual training and development
- spiritual vision and knowledge
- perception of spiritual forces in the phenomenal world (life ether in the thinking)
- spiritual perception of the human being
- the ability to integrate all capacities into an ordered and “scientific” approach.

The mankind badly needs this kind of holistic thinking because this is the most effective help to stop the progressing destruction of our environment around the globe.

**Sound ether and Life together brought into our thinking makes the thought life universal, flexible and open for spiritual dimensions.**

This demands from us inner transformation and spiritual development.

### **A way towards understanding the being of different animals**

Usually children are taught about animals, e.g. the *elephant*, that they learn about this animal that is has a trunk, tusks, forehead, huge ears, strong legs, and a short neck, what it eats, and so on. One gets to know many, many facts, but do you understand the being of the elephant, the link between the trunk and the legs? The mere facts do not show any inner link, instead it is like a mosaic where the parts show no common law and everything appears accidentally and arbitrarily as the whole evolution seems to be arbitrarily and accidentally. This is the stand point of the science today.

By the way: One has a stand point when the radius to the horizon goes towards zero!

But how can we solve the riddle of the elephant? How can we find a way to its being? To find answers we have to look at the animal as a whole organism, because in an organism all organs, all parts of the body are interrelated .

The French scientist **George Cuvier (1769-1832)** wrote:  
***“Each living thing is a closed organ system, where all organs are tuned to each other, so that not a single organ can change without causing change in all other organs”.***

Therefore the method will be to observe which organ of the animal is dominant and is modifying the entire form and life processes.

The teacher will proceed by describing the animal, its behaviour and the environment.

In a next step she will show how the dominant organ gives the form and it will reveal the inner being of the elephant.

In mammals the inner forces of the soul become also very meaningful. The fox thinks how can I get it and how can I get away with it. The wolf is greedy to get it.

The type of a mammal develops the different parts of its organisation into various directions.

Through a one-sided predominate effect of an organ the type gets the special form of the animal.

The human being is not developing into such one-sidedness. You see within the human being the same organs as in the mammals, but they do not become so one-sided. The human being is related to the animal kingdom, but he does not belong to it. Take for example the gravity:

In the human organism the gravity is overcome by the ego/I.

### **The Elephant**

In class four or five we might learn about **the elephant**.

The obvious important organ is the **trunk**: One part of the head has grown unusual long and strong, the upper lip and the nose. With the trunk the animal reaches out into the surrounding in order to get the food. This muscular organ has a very sensitive feeling for movements. This reaching out is only possible because of **the legs** which carry the body a great deal highly lifted. So we see an inner connection between trunk and legs. The stretched legs and strong bones can carry the body. The elephant stands straight on its legs, therefore the muscles are relaxed although the body is heavy. Imagine the hind legs would be bent like other animals have it, the elephant would be occupied by the heaviness, instead the bones carry 5 to 6 tonnes of weight on the stretched legs and so the elephant is free to turn toward the surrounding. The sensitive movements of the trunk are only possible because of the calm balance. The **calmness in balance** is also caused by the short neck. Again we observe an inner connection between trunk, short neck and the calmness of the straight limbs.

The enhanced openness to the surrounding also shows in the **big ears**. They are highly sensible for infra sound, which serves the elephant for communicating over large distances.

**The tusks**, enlarged incisors, also have the tendency towards the surrounding space.

When the elephant **breathes**, the air goes into the large nasal cavity and the strong breathing leads to a widening of the sinuses which we see appear as forehead. The enhancement of breathing continues into the breathing organ of the trunk, the torso and the entire organism: chest and ribs grow much bigger as in other animals. Most mammals have 13 pairs of ribs, but the Indian elephant has got 19, the African elephant 21. **The blood** of the elephant contains more oxygen than all other mammals. Oxygen is activating the life processes of the whole organism. Normally young animals have more oxygen in the blood as long as they grow, so we learn to understand why the elephants have such a **long childhood**, they mature at age 10 to 12 and are growing as long as they live.

When we consider those facts we may get the image of the being of an elephant and we learn how the organism of an animal has been formed out of inner laws. The students inwardly follow in a process the forming of the organism and they experience how the entire **elephant is formed by the trunk**.

All facts are not any more an arbitrary accidental mosaic and so the pupils understand the inner being of the elephant. They get to know some building processes in the elephant. By following the body shape and inner processes the children see in which way the elephant is realising itself. This method involves the whole human being: thinking, and feeling and willing. The way leads from inner images through inner processes to a spiritual process.

### **The horse**

We notice the long slim legs, there is no foot or paw, right down to the hoof there are only legs, - and the forming of the leg is intensively enhanced. What does this mean?

The body is lifted high above the earth and the overcoming of the gravity makes the movements of the horse so elegant. We see it in the beautiful neck carrying the head with superior ease. As the body has limbs so the head as well: the big jaws. The enhanced form of the legs lets grow the jaws excessively as well. There is an inner relation between legs and the long head. The legs also influence the inner organs: blood circulation, breathing and metabolism. The nostrils are remarkable because the breathing is so important.

Usually a mammal has 13 pairs of ribs and 8 of them are immobile, but the horse has 18 pairs of ribs and 10 a movable, which causes that the horse in one breath gets 7,5 litres of air in (the cow, nearly as big as the horse, only 3,5 l). These facts, long legs, jaws, breathing, eyes, ears and so on, show that the horse belongs to an environment of a wide open plain. They live in a group which also widens the consciousness.

We learn to understand the horse as a being which gets the **impulse for its organism from the legs**.

### **Giraffe**

When we look at the **giraffe** then the special part of the body is the long neck.

The neck has developed far above the normal state, but still has only 7 vertebra. Through this neck



the animal penetrates far out into the space. The vertical dilation rules the whole organism. The legs grow into high stands. The horizontal form of the trunk stays remarkable short.

What does it mean to reach out so high through the neck? The head gets a distance from the dull making life processes of the metabolism and the senses are opening to the surrounding.

So the consciousness of the giraffe grows wide: the eyes are big and the ears clearly grow large and stand above the head. The giraffe stands calm and out of the calmness the perception penetrates wide into the space. In a distance of 1000m the giraffe is able to figure out if the giraffe over there belongs to the herd. Even the pasture where the animal feeds is high above the ground in the trees. The bright light of the African grass land is supporting the sense perceptions. At night the giraffe is sleeping only in periods of some minutes, and so the whole animal becomes an **image of the enhanced awareness**.

### The plant-kingdom from class 5 to 7

As we had a look on the animal kingdom we can learn about the minerals, climate zones, history, physics, chemistry and everything.

I want to have a short look on the plant-kingdom as it could be taught from class 5 on.

#### **First step:**

We look in general at the plant under the aspect of the four elements: earth, water, air and fire.

Earth – minerals, hardening, cold, moist, roots, germinating.

Water – in the soil, above the soil, forming round and large.

Air – light, breathing of leaves, delicate forms, together with warmth gives smaller leaves.

Warmth – flower, fruits, seeds, hardening, drying, oil.

#### **Second step:**

We observe a plant outside and try to connect with the knowledge from step one. In Europe we like to take the *dandelion*. We see the rosette, the buds in the rosette, the lifting of buds, warmth of the air, reflecting warmth brings the flowers, enhanced warmth lets seeds grow. Roots, leaves, buds, flowers, seeds influenced by the elements.

#### **Third step:**

The influence of the forming forces of the planetary movements on the plant and especially on the flowers: 5 petals – Venus; 3, 6, 4, 8 petals – Mercury. Seeing Mars forces, Jupiter, Saturn, Sun and Moon in the growth of plants.

#### **Fourth step:**

Feelings and emotions are forming the plants. Example rose and thistle stand for love and anger.

What the plant is without an own will you should become willing.

Look into the world and you meet yourself,

look into yourself and you meet the world.

#### **Fifth step:**

Summary of our way through the plant-kingdom: elements and the ethers behind, planets, soul forces are all invisible influences. They are existing as the archetypal plant-kingdom, and when they connect with the etheric character of a landscape and materialise in matter then they are our plants.

#### **Sixth step:**

Relationship between a butterfly and your eternal being as a human.

Relationship between insects and plants.

#### **Seventh step:**

The threefold human being and the threefold plant as a healthy basis for nutrition.

### A kind of a summery

**Warmth ether** – fire – will – I/ego – human being

**Light ether** – air – feelings – astral body – animals

**Tone ether** – water – intellectual thinking – etheric body – plants

**Life ether** – earth – holistic, imaginative thinking – physical body – minerals

In a human being the life ether and tone ether (imaginative and intellectual thinking) are **universal**.  
The light ether and warmth ether (feelings and will activity) are **individual**.

When we bring together the universal part in us with the individual part,  
we develop the **sense of coherence**, and the SOC is the basis for our health.

In so far we can understand how education is contributing to the **health** later in life.

This is what **Salutogenese** is about.

**Imaginative thinking is causing health!**

*The spiritual science of Dr. Rudolf Steiner – Anthroposophy – is describing the way towards an imaginative thinking.*

In his book **How to get knowledge of Higher Worlds?** we can read about the inner path we have to go in order to perceive again the spiritual nature of all things and beings. This is a new and modern approach about how we can form within ourselves a spiritual organ. We have it in us sleeping, but everyone can awake it.

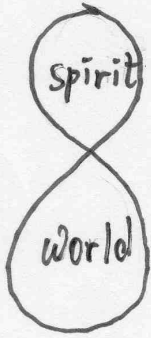
Let me use a picture: There is the inter-net which gives us information and knowledge.

But when we develop in us an inner-net we get imaginations. Both are vital today.

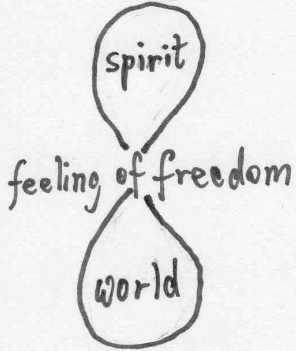
What did Einstein say?

- *We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.*
- *Imagination is more important than knowledge.*

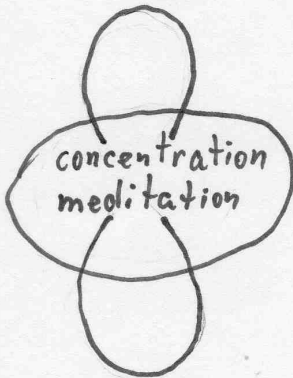
The development of consciousness into an imaginative consciousness which is suitable for the future of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is shown in a picture below.



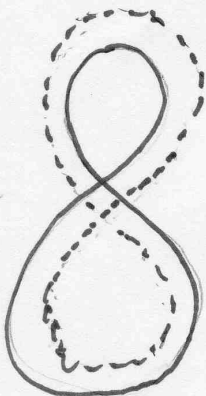
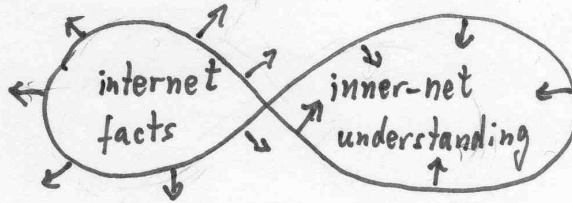
consciousness outside  
before Christ  
dreamy  
holistic  
shaman



today  
consciousness inside  
destruction  
helplessness



spiritual path



inspirative thinking of the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
world as spiritual cosmos

health