

The ITC Naarden as a spiritual centre

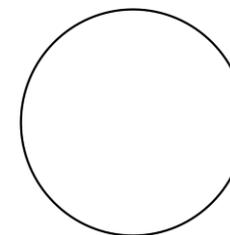
This article is a shorter version of an introduction given on Friends Day 2009 by Ingmar de Boer

From point to surface, from ideal to real

A centre is ideally a mathematical point, a symbol of spiritual power, a symbol of the potential of development. In reality however, a centre in the sense of a "spiritual centre" does not look like a mathematical point at all. It is more like a surface, or a distinct area on the surface of the earth, with buildings, people, trees, animals etc. This paradox, the contradiction between the ideal and real aspects of a spiritual centre, can be seen as a model for a spiritual centre in general, and for the ITC Naarden in particular.



Ideal



Real

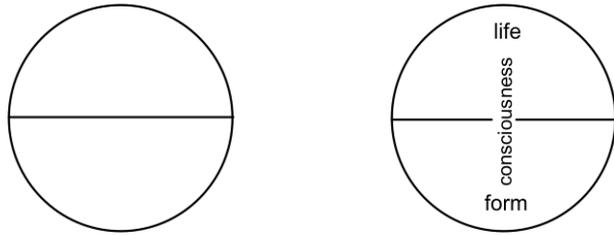
The aims of the ITC, or St. Michael's foundation, are largely equal to those of the Theosophical Society, and a correspondence can be seen between the "nucleus" in the first aim of the TS and the model of a spiritual centre. In the phrase "to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity", the nucleus is in reality not a mathematical point, but a collection of people who are embodying this nucleus of the brotherhood of humanity amongst each other. This is not just an abstraction. It is not only the common realization of the unity behind the manifested universe. According to the first aim of the TS, this nucleus is "formed". The Naarden Centre is a realization of the fundamental unity of consciousness in the "three worlds" of thought, feeling and action. Thus, a spiritual centre can be seen as a focus point for the energy that is connected to our ideals.

From paradox to transformation

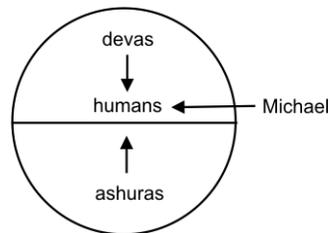
There is a certain contradiction or tension between the world outside the spiritual Centre, and the special world of the Centre itself. It is this contradiction that justifies the existence of the Centre. It has its own identity, which defines the meaning of the Centre in relation to the outside world, to its inhabitants and to other workers.

This contradiction between the world inside and outside the Centre invokes a certain inner division or tension, to which every person who comes into contact with the Centre is exposed, and can become a part of. Philosophically the inner division resulting from the interaction of an entity

with its surroundings, was formulated by Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater as "life" and "form" of an entity.



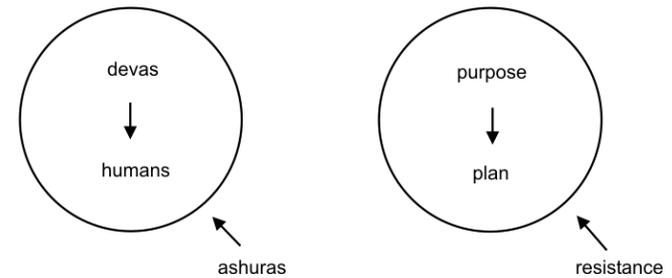
In the terminology of prof. Van der Stok, who played a significant role in the Naarden Centre especially between 1946 and 1959, the powers of life (light) are the angels or devas, and the powers of form are the fiery creatures, the ashuras. In his model of the universe, humans are situated between these two groups, being able to interact with both of them.



The symbol of the archangel Michael, which is closely connected with the Naarden Centre, can be seen as a symbol of the transformation that takes place in man, between the two sets of powers, the devas and ashuras.

From inhibition to motion

The connection between devas and ashuras could act in a stimulating way, like a spiritual "motor", or it could act more like a spiritual "inhibitor". When, for example, there is a feeling that the purity which the centre represents, is threatened by the outside world, this could act as an inhibitor. It could lead to a kind of introversion, the result of which is ultimately that the centre does not act as a radiating focus point anymore, but as a fortress protecting itself against the outside world. Its ring-pass-not becomes an obstruction for development, and cuts off the centre from its vital relationship, especially with the ashuras, who are kept on the outside, or if you will, projected into outside events.



Generally, problems occur when an entity, that is the Centre, its workers and visitors, is being too much subjected to the various forces, rather than consciously acting upon them. Whenever we feel tension rising, we may think of it as an opportunity for growth. The ashuras standing before our gate could then be cordially invited in, and be integrated, not alienated. We may think more in terms of inclusion, instead of exclusion. The ashuras assist us humans in our development, and in our prayers we may thank them for their work.

Ingmar de Boer