

Some excerpts from:
**LEARNING TO EXPERIENCE THE ETHERIC WORLD:
EMPATHY, THE AFTER-IMAGE & A NEW SOCIAL ETHIC**
by Baruch Luke Urieli & Hans Müller-Wiedemann

Through making oneself conscious of the after-image, one is able to add to every act of perceiving an object with the physical senses—whether it be a stone, a plant, an animal or a human being, or a situation—the etheric reality that belongs to it as an after-image. In this way one is no longer at the mercy of the etheric realm but learns to stand within it. Working with the after-image is not an esoteric path but is, rather, an endeavor to bring the beginnings of a **natural** consciousness of the etheric (which manifest themselves not infrequently in modern man) to full consciousness and, hence, under the rulership of the Self.

p. 2

During the 1950s the American psychologist Carl Rogers noticed the presence of a new faculty in the younger generation for which he used a word originally coined in 1912: **empathy**.* In fact, what he was describing is a process which has become part of the experience of an ever-increasing number of those born after the end of the Second World War. Empathy arises out of sympathy, love, interest in & compassion for our fellow human being; it enables us to extend our own inner being into that of the other person & directly experience something of his essential nature.

*The word empathy was first used in 1912 by Theodor Lipps (1851-1914), a German psychologist & philosopher, at a meeting of the Royal Academy of Arts as a translation of the German word *Einfühlung*. The best known part of his teaching is about the phenomenon of *Einfühlung* as defined as projecting oneself into what is seen. One appreciates the other's reaction by projecting oneself into the other. In his two-volume work *Ästhetik* (1903-1906), Lipps makes all artistic appreciation depend upon a similar self-projection into the object. The latter teaching was the subject of his lecture at the British Academy given about two years before his death. The year 1928 marked the time when this word fully entered English usage, for it was used by Rebecca West in her book *Strange Necessity*, where she writes, 'The active power of empathy which makes the artist, the passive power of empathy which makes the appreciator of art.'

p. 3

This quality of inner interest, which demands a kind of 'turning' towards another, is to be found in its most archetypal form in Parzival's words, 'Brother, what ails thee?' Whenever on human being is willing to take an active interest in the existence & destiny of another, to turn towards him, a glimmer of Parzival's question breaks through & enables the person asking the question to extend part of his own being beyond its usual boundaries.

p. 4

This new faculty which becomes available to mankind was called by Rudolf Steiner the phenomenon of the 'after-image'. It has its foundation in that man is beginning in our time to cross the threshold of the spiritual world in the natural course of his development. This means that our present-day consciousness, which is limited in its perception to the physical world alone, is gradually supplemented by a capacity to perceive the etheric world, the world of living processes.

p. 5

Where a person learns to take an interest in his fellows & the world in such a way that the 'after-image' can arise, he will be able to glimpse something of the inner nature & need not only of another human being but also of a plant in the garden, an animal in the stable or any difficult situation.

p. 7-8

Through the four phases of the after-image process, two different directions of movement can be discerned. First there is the interest, a turning towards, which leads to the perception of the inner state or need of the person/object. Then follows the 'return'; this enables us to resound and, out of the resonance, form mental images & concepts concerning the nature of the person/object. The quality of the mental images or concepts resulting from this process will depend on two factors: the purity of the perceptions initially attained & the purity of the activity of thinking that follows.

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