

the *Light-bringer*

Lucifer[®]

For seekers of Truth

Current topics viewed in the light of the Ancient Wisdom or Theo-sophia — the common source of all great world religions, philosophies and sciences

Theosophia: core of
sustainable solutions

The ONE LIFE

What is a virus?

What is disease?

Diseased civilization

Acting *now* in the
light of Theosophia

A healthy global
society

Altruism

Learning from the pandemic

Inspiration for a healthy global society



Contents Lucifer — the Light-bringer

No. 2 | June 2020

Learning from the pandemic *Inspiration for a healthy global society*

Learning from the pandemic Theosophia: core of *sustainable* solutions

p. 38

This first article aims to be a basis for all subsequent articles, so that it is clear what the starting points are from which we are working. What do we want to offer you? The basic knowledge, but above all the Wisdom that is needed in this situation. It is of global importance to gain more insight into the causes that are driving the processes in this pandemic.

The ONE LIFE Basic ideas

p. 43

A number of basic ideas emerge from the three fundamental propositions. They will lead to a much greater understanding of the pandemic. All articles in this issue are based on these basic ideas.

What is a virus?

p. 46

What type of being is a virus? What is its character and its role in nature? What do we do when we manipulate viruses in laboratories?

What is disease?

p. 49

Now that we have gained some understanding of the basic theosophical ideas and we know what a virus is, we will discuss two very interesting and important questions: what is a disease and why do epidemic outbreaks often occur periodically?

Diseased civilization

p. 54

What is the mentality in our society that led to this crisis? This may lead us to the lessons we can learn to achieve a sustainably healthy society.

Acting now in the light of Theosophia

p. 61

What should we do now? Theosophia is timeless, and for this very reason offers a practical philosophy of life for the present, for our actions now, in the midst of this mental, social and physical crisis.

A healthy global society Immune to all germs

p. 65

A different view of humanity leads to a different mentality. A different mentality leads to a different society.

In this article an outline is given of the changes that will occur if we live in our spiritual aspects and act accordingly.

Altruism

p. 72

Gottfried de Purucker shows here how normal, universal and essential Altruism is.

Gottfried de Purucker

Theosophy: principles and practice

p. 74

More info ...

p. 76

All articles in this issue, with the exception of G. de Purucker's, have been written by the editors. They are the fruit of close collaboration. For that reason we do not mention any individual author's names.



Sunrise in Vietnam.

Learning from the pandemic

Theosophia: core of *sustainable* solutions

Key thoughts

- » Theosophia is the original source of all religions, philosophies and sciences. It has been used and tested throughout the ages.
- » The three fundamental propositions of Theosophia, as expressed by H.P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*, can be tested by investigating whether you can find all its consequences in the world and in your own life. It requires the willingness for continuous inner growth.
- » The three fundamental propositions can be worked out into seven basic ideas, the seven “Jewels of Wisdom”.
- » There is no problem that cannot be understood and solved according to this view.

This first article aims to be a basis for all subsequent articles, so that it is clear what the starting points are from which we are working. What do we want to offer you? The basic knowledge, but above all the Wisdom that is needed in this situation. It is of global importance to gain more insight into the causes that are driving the processes in this pandemic.

Why this theme issue?

There is a great need to understand the pandemic that is going on right now. What is such an epidemic, where does it come from, how does such a viral disease work and what can we do to stop it and prevent new outbreaks in the future?

The Theosophical Society (TSPL) would like to be helpful with this edition of our magazine, to find answers to questions. By showing that there is a universal vision by which we can understand Life: how Life works, with all its processes and laws. This pandemic affects us all. It is moving like a wave all over the world, and nothing can stop it. The word “pandemic” means “concerning the whole population”. But it is not just a physical wave going around; at the same time, or even preceding, there is also a mental wave of fear, of uncertainty about what awaits us.

This first article would like to be a basis for all subsequent articles, so that it is clear what the starting points are with which we are working. What

do we want to offer you? The basic knowledge, but above all the Wisdom that is needed in this situation. It is of global importance to gain more insight into the causes that drive these processes.

The following articles highlight the various aspects of the problem. What these articles all have in common is that they analyze the important questions from the same Universal Wisdom and knowledge. We want to show how helpful this Universal Wisdom is. We do this by presenting it to you in such a way that you can follow the logic, the coherence and the conclusions of the analyses.

The nature of Universal Wisdom

What is Universal Wisdom, Theosophia? The word is a combination of the words “Theos” and “Sophia” and can be translated as “the Wisdom of the Gods” or also as “Divine Wisdom”. But it has also been known throughout history – and still is – by many other names. This Universal

Wisdom of the Gods has been the foundation for the many religions and religious systems, although one cannot always find it back in a pure form. This Wisdom is very difficult to keep pure, because it requires a great deal of discipline not to fall into personal interpretation and to spread this personal interpretation as “true Theosophy”. Again and again such a decline leads to some form of degeneration, such as belief or faith.

Theosophia is a Wisdom that has been used and tested throughout the ages, and has proven its correctness. Try to make this Wisdom your own, so that you can follow the analyses presented to you in the articles in this magazine and can apply them yourself. Use it as a manual for your own research.

This Wisdom was presented again in the West at the start of the Theosophical Society in 1875. A larger part of it was published in 1888, with the publication of the book *The Secret Doctrine*, written by H.P. Blavatsky. The Proem of *The Secret Doctrine* presents three propositions, three universal principles, which are the foundation of Theosophia as we know it today. These very valuable propositions come from very universal thinkers, from advanced beings, the most noble beings that we know of. These three fundamental, religious-philosophical principles, propositions or axioms, which H.P. Blavatsky puts forward in *The Secret Doctrine*, are the foundation upon which Theosophy builds its modern doctrine, a synthesis of religion, philosophy and science. Every proposition, and therefore also the propositions in *The Secret Doctrine*, we could accept without question. But then it is just belief. We can also accept a proposition in confidence, when we know the source and we have positive experiences with this source. Then it is more than belief, but still it is not self-acquired wisdom. The latter can only be achieved through independent research.

What is a proposition?

A proposition is an assertion, a starting point, a statement that serves as a basis for further reasoning. In the proposition itself, no evidence is presented or given. It may or may not be true: the evidence must be built up by investigation of the consequences. Whether a proposition is true or not, can only be ascertained individually, by investigating it by yourself. This requires discipline. You build up your own evidence on the basis of your own life experience. If you do not do this and simply accept the proposition, then you will fall into belief.

You can and must, of course, allow yourself time to gather

evidence. After Einstein published his theory of relativity (a proposition) in 1916, it took another four years before the first pieces of evidence were found. But proof for a scientist in the same field is not yet proof for the layman, who does not have his knowledge or means. Even when the theory is proven by scientists, the layman who did not do that, can only believe or trust it. By trusting we do not mean blind trust, but a *reasoned* trust because the scientist who established the theory had drawn correct conclusions from previous research. Believing or trusting is not a problem as such, if we realize well that we ourselves have no proof yet.

How do you work with a proposition?

This self-examination of the correctness of a proposition is an extremely important process. It is at the same time a growth process, and that makes it a challenge to take on. We have all the possibilities latent in us, according to Theosophia. What we have to learn is to develop these dormant abilities.

There are two methods to build up hypotheses:

1. *From the details to the general hypothesis*

You build up hypotheses on the basis of your observations. So, you derive laws from your data.

2. *Explain the details from the proposition*

You build up hypotheses on the basis of the proposition. Then you look if you can explain your observations and data by these hypotheses.

If you want to test whether a proposition is true or not, you need to investigate smaller, testable perspectives or minor assertions, that will provide pieces of proof for or against the general proposition.

A hypothesis presupposes an active attitude. You test each hypothesis against your own experiences, the facts in nature, the logic, your insights, yes, actually against your entire consciousness.

We can explain this with an example. It is stated that the earth is a globe. The proposition then is: the earth is spherical. For the vast majority of us today this is a certain truth, but five centuries ago it would have been a proposition. If you are dogmatic, you immediately say “yes” or “no” to this proposition. However, you can also investigate it. Then you make hypotheses for yourself, find possible explanations for the questions you ask yourself. How is it possible that the earth is round, but I cannot

see it? You *reason* that this is because the earth is so big, that you do not notice its rounding. Are there any *other indications* for or against that statement? Yes, when you see a ship on the horizon, you do not see the bow first but the mast. During a lunar eclipse, a circular shadow falls on the moon. There is *additional evidence*: all other celestial bodies are also round. Finally, you will notice that if you're constantly sailing or flying in a westerly or easterly direction, you will end up at the same point. Probably you have never made such a journey, but there are probably people who have experienced it that way. You can therefore include the *experiences of others* in your research as well. If you *think further*, you will find more clues.

In this way you have worked out a proposition by means of hypotheses and discovered a truth for yourself.

Real proof explains the exceptions as well

But it doesn't stop there. Thus far, we still haven't proven the proposition. We have to keep investigating whether our evidence can be corroborated. If our observations do not match the proposition, we have to re-examine it to see why not.

A good proposition and its resulting hypotheses are only valid, as the philosopher of science Karl Popper said, if every exception can be explained by the same proposition. His well-known example is: if we can explain the existence of white swans, we should also be able to explain the existence of black swans, with the same proposition. Only then is it valid (for the time being). Take for instance the theory that the universe is expanding: this theory does not take all the facts into account; those facts which contradict the theory, are left out.

In this way you can find truth and lay a basis for the proposition for yourself. Keep in mind that these are your observations, your proofs, and that the proposition has become a truth only for you: a truth that is subject to growth. Therefore, we cannot impose it on others. However, we can help others in their search, with the attitude of "so it seems to me". By comparing your acquired insights with those of other fellow investigators who have done the same research, you can strengthen the basis of the truth you built up. If two people are 50% sure of the same observation, then the final certainty is much greater than 50%.

If we bring these joint insights back into relation with the proposition, then it has gone from an abstraction to a greater concretion. It has become a wisdom that we have

built up by sharing our insights with others. It is, however, a limited wisdom. It is, as said, subject to growth. We must continue to investigate and compare.

Independent truth-seeking, stimulated by teachers

This teaches us that wisdom can never be obtained by means of oral transmission or any other means of communication. This can only be achieved by our own research. But does that mean that we should not listen to others? No, of course it makes sense to use the insights of those who are wiser. But we must always test those insights, in the manner described earlier. Then they become a part of us. Of course you could discover everything without a teacher, even the details, as long as you have enough time and perseverance. And we do have that time. In essence we are eternal and we carry all faculties latently within us, according to Theosophia. But it would take many more lives before you are able to formulate the same universal propositions.

What does that mean? Think of the following example. If you stay alone on an island, you can discover and learn all the rules of arithmetic — assuming they haven't been taught to you before. But it goes a lot faster if you have a good and reliable teacher who stimulates your understanding of arithmetic from within by letting you experience and discover it for yourself, so that it becomes your own wisdom. Good teachers are useful: they save us a lot of trouble during the period we have not yet developed this wisdom and knowledge, as long as we are willing to *actively* follow their instructions.

With this attitude, let us look at the propositions from *The Secret Doctrine*. There are three, which should be applied in a very close interrelationship. These three propositions, also called the three basic premises, are as follows:

The first fundamental proposition

An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. (...) One absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being.

To put it in a nutshell, the first principle implies:

- infinity or boundlessness;
- the fundamental unity of all existence;
- all that exists is a reflection of that absolute Reality.

This doesn't mean that it stands outside that Reality, but that it reflects that Reality in itself and tries to express it.

This means that everything is based on the same unchanging principle. Everything is in principle, in essence, the same, and therefore there is a fundamental equality, a single principle from which everything originates and to which everything returns. Everything has the same possibilities, nothing is more or less than another.

The second fundamental proposition

The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically “the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing,” called “the manifesting stars,” and the “sparks of Eternity.”

The second proposition in shortened form:

- cyclical motion: the periodic appearance and disappearance of Universes;
- everything, so every “spark of Eternity”, goes through a never ending, upward, spiraling development.

The third fundamental proposition

The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul – a spark of the former – through the Cycle of Incarnation (or “Necessity”) in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term.

The third proposition in shortened form:

- the fundamental equality of every being with the boundlessness;
- there is a Cyclic and Karmic law;
- as above, so below.

“As above, so below; as below, so above” is the great Hermetic axiom. The processes are basically the same on all planes. But although the underlying process always follows the same principles, at the different levels it is always carried out individually, in accordance with the degree of free will and the development of all those individuals. The sparks of Eternity mentioned in the second principle, with their infinite qualities, are also called *monads*. These monads together, in mutual cooperation, go through a literally infinite, cyclical upward “journey” in order to learn to express their latent abilities. It is an infinite pro-

cess of learning and being, on the various cosmic planes, according to Universal Laws.

The basic insights of Theosophia

We would like to elaborate on these ideas a bit further, so that you have a basis to understand the following articles in this *Lucifer*, so that you can explore them in your own life as well. This further elaboration is necessary in order to answer the many questions surrounding the causes and consequences of the pandemic. It is necessary in order to see what life wisdom we can derive from the three fundamental propositions.

This knowledge is universal. It applies to every situation, every stage of development, within the whole of which we are all a part.

But it is not possible to summarize in a few pages an entire study of *The Secret Doctrine*, of the Theosophia as it was revived since 1875 thanks to H.P. Blavatsky. What we can do, however, is to look at some key words from the three fundamentals and draw conclusions from them. A more complete elaboration can be found in our many theosophical books and articles, among which those on our website.

The shortest way to build up for yourself a concise picture of Theosophia as explained in *The Secret Doctrine*, is by following with your abstract thinking the inner journey that every being, every “spark of Eternity”, makes: a path of unfolding, in which the being learns to express what is latent within. During this “journey”, such a spark of Eternity, such a monad, unfolds its faculties from unself-consciousness to ever more complete Self-consciousness. That unfolding takes an infinite amount of time, there is no limit to it.

So the shortest way is: try to grasp that theosophical core, in which it is not necessary to delve into the many degenerations that Theosophia has undergone in the different cultures.

The Seven Jewels of Wisdom

If we combine the key words from the three propositions, we get seven key concepts, which we call the seven Jewels of Wisdom. These key concepts can be found throughout the entire theosophical literature. We get to know and use them most easily by using all seven in combination with each other.

As we see in the three fundamental propositions (see above and on p. 74), the cooperation of the monads, the “sparks of eternity”, is cyclic, karmic and universal. The

latter means that the same basic processes are going on in all spheres or regions. The development of the monad, the expression of its latent abilities, always and everywhere takes place on the basis of the following seven Jewels of Wisdom: (see also page 75)

1. Reimbodiment (reincarnation): cyclicity, the twin jewel of karma.
2. Karma (cause and effect), the twin jewel of reimbursement.
3. Hierarchies (of consciousness, life within life).
4. Self-becoming (you always become yourself: what you yourself have built up in previous cycles).
5. Progressive evolution (continuous progress): you cannot lose what you have learned (i.e. become).
6. The two Paths (what is our motive: for the whole or for ourselves?).
7. Knowledge of the Self (the essence of the ONE, all-embracing LIFE).

The interaction between the monads (the sparks of Eternity) is cyclic (jewel 1) and karmic (jewel 2) driven, each action producing in character a similar reaction of the Cosmos. The cooperation takes place hierarchically: the proportionally higher developed monads inspire and work together with the lower developed monads (jewel 3). In this dynamic collaboration each monad always expresses what he has learned to express, what he has become in previous cycles (jewel 4). He elaborates on this, he develops nobler qualities. Thereby he is stimulated by the influences of the higher monad in the hierarchy of which he is a part. The influences of that higher monad stimulate the higher qualities that he carries dormant within himself. They stimulate him to develop these and to learn to express them (jewel 5). The final result of this collaboration is determined by the motive with which this process takes place (jewel 6). Only from a compassionate motive it is possible to know the Heart of Universal Life (jewel 7). This process of universal unraveling takes place in the rhythm of the above mentioned cycles, in which these seven laws play a continuous role. It produces an extremely dynamic manifestation. The challenge is to train ourselves always to use these basic theosophical insights to analyze each problem. In this way we learn to understand its cause. Then we can remove it. There is no problem that cannot be understood and solved according to this view.



Sunrise in Georgia.

The ONE LIFE

Basic ideas

Key thoughts

- » Everything is alive. Life is essentially boundless. Life is acting and reacting. There are always differences in levels of development between beings.
- » All beings are One and thus inextricably related to each other. They are part of a hierarchy of life. Each hierarchy is part of a larger hierarchy. The same laws apply everywhere.
- » In a cyclical process and on the basis of cause and effect, beings gain experience together and grow in consciousness.

At this point in time when people mainly identify themselves with the outer world, they tend to look for the cause of the corona pandemic in material things, such as the virus. And of course, the corona virus plays a role in the whole process, but if you assume the three fundamental propositions mentioned in the previous article, you come to essentially different insights and draw different conclusions. A number of basic ideas emerge from those three principles. They will lead to a much greater understanding of the pandemic. All articles in this issue are based on these basic ideas.

Everything is alive

The most important basic idea is that everything that exists is alive. There is no dead matter. What we see and what we don't see are living things. The common opinion is that only humans, animals and plants are alive, but we say that minerals, cells, bacteria, viruses, molecules, atoms, atomic particles, planets, suns, and universes are living beings as well. Also phenomena we cannot perceive with our senses, such as thoughts, are living beings.

Life or consciousness – acting and reacting

What exactly do we mean when we say everything is alive? What is life? It is peculiar that in today's science there is no universally accepted definition of life. There are a number of criteria that must be met in order to be considered life, such as that it can

reproduce and has metabolism, but these are rather arbitrary requirements which not every living being meets. A mule, for example, is considered as alive but cannot reproduce.

The definition we use in Theosophy is that every being *can move itself, can act and react, and to which other beings can react*. So every being always exists in relation to other beings. It acts from itself, reacts to others and is the object of actions of others.

In our opinion all phenomena – all manifestations – comply with this: atoms, viruses, cells, bacteria, minerals, plants, animals, humans, planets, stars, thoughts. Everyone can check this. Name a manifestation, a natural phenomenon, and examine whether it can act and react and whether it can be an object of the actions of others. If indeed, everything complies with this, isn't it logical to assume that everything is alive?

That movement of beings, that acting and reacting, takes place through an inner force within the being itself. There is a certain inner impulse that causes a being to perform an action. That impulse comes from the consciousness of that being.

Don't think of the word "consciousness" as self-consciousness, like our human consciousness. Consciousness, as we use it, is synonymous with being. It is the inward force that incites a being, instinctively or self-consciously, to perform actions.

Life is essentially boundless

Another basic idea is that all those consciousnesses, from atom to galaxy, are *essentially* the same. In other words, the deepest background, the heart of the heart of every being is the same. The same LIFE resides in an animal, a virus, a human being and in a sun.

The logic of that thought lies in the assumption that the deepest core of every being is boundless. The heart of the heart of every being is boundlessness. That is why every being has everything within it. That is why there is an essential unity.

Differences in development

Of course, there are differences between beings. In fact, there are *always* differences between beings. But they are not essential. Those differences are there because there is a difference in development. Not everyone has developed the same abilities and characteristics.

So the only difference between beings is the extent to which they express the ONE LIFE. And each being does so in a unique way. So while in essence all beings are the same, they differ from one another in their outer form.

Because all beings are essentially the same boundless LIFE, they all belong together, yes, they are all parts of one another. Just as the branches and leaves of a tree are parts of the same tree, so all beings are inseparable from each other.

Life works together hierarchically

The connectedness of beings is not arbitrary but is expressed in a hierarchical framework.

What is a hierarchy?

A hierarchy is a unity in which the further developed consciousnesses and the less developed consciousnesses work closely together. The further developed consciousnesses lay down certain patterns or laws for the lesser developed beings. These laws could be called local laws of nature, derived from universal laws of nature.

These lesser developed beings form the vehicles or instruments for the further developed beings. Thus a human works closely together with billions of living building blocks that compose his body, such as cells and atoms.

The top of a hierarchy is not an absolute top, because there is boundlessness. So there is always more. Each hierarchy is a building block or part of an even greater hierarchy, and this to infinity.

Range of consciousness and sphere of influence

The further developed a being is, the greater his range of consciousness. This means that it has more awareness of the infinite possibilities and processes of Nature. Just as an adult has a greater awareness of the world in which he lives and of the processes that take place in that world than a child does, in this same way beings differ in the range of their consciousness. Humans have a greater range of consciousness than animals or plants, because of the ability to think, which is not yet developed by animals and plants. However, these different realms of nature are not separate from each other. The opposite is the case. Just as children live in the "sphere of influence" of their parents or teachers, so do lesser developed consciousnesses live in the sphere of further developed consciousnesses, and these again live in the sphere of still further developed consciousnesses. So there are constantly spheres within spheres. Those lesser developed consciousnesses can in fact only live thanks to the atmosphere of those further developed beings. The plants for example live within the sphere of the animal and the human kingdom, and the animal kingdom lives within the sphere of the human kingdom.

Therefore, think of a hierarchy as a unity with a top, in which beings of different levels of development live — the different realms of Nature. They all have the apex as their root, therefore in principle all have the same possibilities and abilities as that apex. In that hierarchy, life "flows" from the relatively most developed "down" to the less developed and from there back "up". Life is acting and reacting.

Thus, within our hierarchy there are spheres other than our physical world, which cannot be measured with material instruments. There is an emotional world — sometimes called an astral world. There is a world of thought, a higher realm of that astral world. There is a spiritual world, an even higher part of that astral world. In fact, humans belong to all those worlds and not just to the sensory world. For instance, we can perceive thoughts that belong to the mental sphere.

Because the lesser developed consciousnesses follow the patterns of the further developed ones, you will find the same laws throughout the cosmos. We express this idea with the phrase: *as above, so below*. The laws of cyclicity and cause and effect for example – more about that later – can be found everywhere.

Following these laws is not a mechanical process. A being is attracted to a sphere on the basis of a corresponding characteristic, which it has developed itself. Free will therefore always plays a role in these processes.

Cyclicity, cause and effect and growth

In fact, all the different beings “travel” through those different spheres of the hierarchy of which they are a part. Depending on our range of consciousness, we may or may not consciously perceive these spheres.

When a person is in the sensory sphere, we say he “lives”. He has manifested himself and is active. When he is asleep or dead he withdraws into the spiritual spheres and rests. And this is true for all beings.

So there is a constant alternation of activity and rest. In a cyclic movement we go from the period of activity – life – to the period of rest — death. When humans go from rest to activity, we call it reincarnation.

This cyclical movement, like everything else, takes place through consciousness. Consciousness is, as it were, the motor that controls and leads the process. It acts, gets a reaction, reacts to the reaction.

That rhythmic process of acting and reacting, of being born, living, dying, resting and being born again, takes place on the basis of the law of cause and effect. Every being acts and creates causes. Each cause leads to an effect that in character corresponds to the cause. The state in which we find ourselves can therefore always be traced back to the causes we sowed in the past. There are no exceptions to this.

Causes are often created collectively; therefore, people will often be confronted with certain consequences collectively. The cyclical process, and the law of cause and effect, causes that each being constantly gains new experiences and thus grows in consciousness. Continuous development is therefore one of the laws of Nature.

Ethics is the basic pattern of Nature

Finally, one last core thought. Because all beings are essentially boundless and they all originate from the top of the hierarchy from which they are an inseparable part, nothing is separate. Separateness does not exist.

As soon as we lose the sense of connectedness and assume separation, disharmony arises. Then wealth versus poverty, conflicts, crises, wars and diseases arise. Nature is the immeasurable aggregate of all beings that in mutual intermingling interact. There is dynamic harmony, where in communion every being is constantly changing and growing. By isolating oneself from the totality, disharmony arises. No matter how great this disharmony may be, harmony will always be restored. However, if we were to cooperate with Nature, harmony would never have to be restored because there would be no disharmony.

Ethics is based on the inseparable connectedness of all beings. Collaboration, sacrifice and compassion are therefore the habitual patterns of Nature (see also the article *Altruism* in this issue). This is a very inspiring thought: we do not have to “make” universal brotherhood, because it is already there. What is needed – very much needed – is that we recognize that wonderful insight and make it the leading ideal in our lives.



Sunrise in Ethiopia.

What is a virus?

Key thoughts

- » Viruses are primitive beings which cannot reproduce on their own, they need a host in order to do so.
- » Viruses live at the expense of their host, which makes them parasitic.
- » Viruses have always been around and can be found everywhere, but as long as we are in harmony, they can do little harm.
- » New viruses, artificially created in laboratories by genetic manipulation, can be even more contagious than their original form.

What type of being is a virus? What is its character and its role in nature? What do we do when we create viruses in laboratories, by genetic manipulation?

What is a virus?

The whole world is currently affected by the coronavirus. But what exactly is a virus? Compared to the global impact they have and the fact that they can kill huge animals like an elephant, viruses are extremely tiny. Just to illustrate: hundreds of viruses fit into one single bacterium. From a scientific point of view, viruses are nothing more than a package of genetic code, enwrapped in a shell of protein molecules. As for the coronavirus, this shell is supplemented by a lipid bilayer, a fat-like coating. That is why washing hands with soap is so effective. The soap breaks down this fatty layer, by which the virus is disarmed.

Viruses cannot reproduce on their own, they need a host for that. Viruses lack the mechanism that cells have in order to multiply. Their solution for this, is at the same time the problem they cause, because once they enter their host, they “hijack” the cell’s reproduction mechanism. The virus takes control of the cell and “orders” it to multiply its own viral genetic code. This continues

until such a large number of new viruses have been produced that the cell bursts and is destroyed. The viruses are released and spread further in the body.

Living entities?

Viruses are so primitive that there is no consensus among scientists whether they are living beings or not. The fact that viruses do not eat, do not grow and cannot reproduce outside a host, makes scientists consider them as non-living entities.

According to Theosophy however, viruses are very much living beings. As discussed in the previous article, the Ageless Wisdom teaches that *everything* is alive, so are viruses. Behind that “package” genetic code, the consciousness of a primitive being is present, working through it.

The characteristic properties of life we can observe in viruses as well: i.e. being able to act and react, to come into motion (self-motion) and to react on external influences. Once they have entered their host, viruses become very active. And in order to escape the host’s defense mechanism,

the virus constantly adapts through mutations. This shows a certain intelligence at that very primitive level, which makes some scientists speak with appreciation about the ingenuity and cleverness of viruses in their ability to constantly adapt. This adaptation means that viruses *evolve*, they continuously “dress” themselves in different jackets so that the host’s defense mechanism no longer recognizes them and immunity has to be built up over and over again.

Shapes and sizes

Viruses are mainly known as pathogens, but that is only one side of the story. Because besides that, viruses play an essential role in life and climate on earth. They are moreover the most common biological entities on the planet. To illustrate the extent in which they occur: in just a single drop of ocean water there are a few million viruses. And in that marine life in particular, they play a key role in the food chain and carbon cycle.

If we confine ourselves to the human kingdom, we see that in addition to the viruses that make us ill, there are also viruses that eliminate other pathogens, such as bacteria, and keep us healthy. We carry viruses with us all the time, but as long as we are healthy and in harmony, they do not become harmful and will not make us sick. In the next article we will discuss what we exactly mean with harmony and disease.

One of the differences between the current COVID-19 virus and the SARS-1 virus for example, which emerged in 2002, is that it is so highly contagious. SARS-1 did not become contagious until it settled deep in the lungs and the patient showed clear symptoms and started coughing. COVID-19 settles higher, in the throat and nose, where it is already abundantly present and therefore contagious, well before the infected person gets symptoms.

Where do viruses come from?

Ever since cellular life was around, viruses have existed. They are found in all kingdoms of nature, from bacteria to humans. Every kingdom has its own specific viruses that are generally harmless to species from other kingdoms. “Generally” I say, because in the rare occasion that a virus is transmitted from one kingdom to another, the problems start. If we examine the origin of viruses that make us ill, it can always be traced back to the animal kingdom. Every virus that has caused a pandemic is known to be *zoonotic*: an infectious disease transmitted from animals to humans. For example, HIV originated from monkeys, the MERS outbreak in the Middle East came from camels

and most other flu variants originate from (wild) birds. And the current coronavirus is now known to have its origin in bats (that do not get sick themselves).

So, viruses have always been around and can be found everywhere. As a crucial part of carbon- and lifecycles, and as cleaners, they have their function in the totality. When nature is in harmony, viruses do not cause any problems, but when this harmony is disturbed, things go wrong. When we humans disturb the environment too much, we create a situation that can lead to a crisis like the current one. In the next article we will elaborate more on these underlying causes. It should however be evident, that a disharmonious situation as occurred on the Wuhan market, where life-stock, poultry and wild animals were densely packed in cages on top of each other and slaughtered alive, has highly increased the opportunity for animal viruses to be transmitted to humans. The same can be said about the bio-industry where high concentrations of animals are made possible through the extensive use of antibiotics.

Manipulated viruses

However, there is a second cause for viruses to become transmittable to humans. Not all viruses originate naturally. In laboratories all over the world, scientists create viruses synthetically by means of genetic manipulation. The two motives for this are each other’s opposite: on the one side it is for the benefit of mankind; to gain insight into the behavior of viruses and how they can contribute to new vaccines one hopes to find. On the other side the motive is biological warfare.

Well-intentioned or not, in either case there is a great risk involved in these laboratory experiments. The chance exists that sooner or later such a manipulated virus will end up outside the laboratory, with all its consequences. Interestingly, it is in Wuhan, where for some years now, in the Wuhan Institute for Virology, coronaviruses from bats have been manipulated and were even made transmissible to humans!⁽¹⁾ These manipulated viruses are sometimes even more contagious than the natural ones. At the time of writing, researchers have still not been able to determine the exact source of the outbreak. Whereas in the case of the previous MERS and SARS-1 epidemic the exact source was known relatively soon. It would certainly not be the first time that viruses have escaped from the laboratory. In fact, several escapes have been reported in the last decades, of which the consequences have been limited to just a few deaths, due to resolute intervention.⁽²⁾

Common characteristic

As mentioned before, viruses are inextricably linked to life on earth, in which they fulfil their role. It is us humans who label a virus as “good” or “bad”, depending on whether they threaten our health or not. And yet the “bad” viruses – looking beyond our personal suffering – also serve a greater purpose we are not aware of most of the time. They offer the opportunity for mankind *as a whole* to raise its well-being to a higher level, provided that we learn our lessons. We will come back to this in the next articles.

But apart from the label “good” or “bad” we attach to a virus, we can say something about its general characteristic. What all viruses have in common, without exception, is that they all live at the expense of other life, at the cost of the host they use to reproduce themselves. Viruses therefore, are *parasitic*. Something to keep in mind for the next articles when we elaborate more on the underlying cause of the pandemic we are dealing with now.

Questions ...

So far we gave a general introduction of what viruses are, where they come from and what role they play. But despite all the scientific knowledge we have, fundamental questions remain unanswered. If we take a look around us, we see numerous exceptions and patterns to which we do not yet have an answer. Why do pandemics recur with a certain cyclical frequency, often in periods of mental stress due to war, famine or poverty?

Once there is an epidemic, why is one person susceptible and another one not? How is it possible that one person becomes terminally ill and another, also carrier of the virus, barely notices it? How come that during the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 in a village in Alaska, 76 out of 82 inhabitants died, while inhabitants of a nearby village only showed mild symptoms?⁽³⁾

In the following article, we will discuss these questions and see which answers we can find based on the universal wisdom of Theosophy. Answers that not only reveal the cause of the current crises, but also provide a sustainable solution and preventive measures for it. What lessons can we learn from this pandemic? What is our role in it? To give you just one hint: it is not the virus that spreads itself right now, it is us humans who do so!

References

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuhan_Institute_of_Virology
 2. <https://thebulletin.org/2014/03/threatened-pandemics-and-laboratory-escapes-self-fulfilling-prophecies/#>
 3. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20181023-the-places-that-escaped-the-spanish-flu>
-



Sunrise in Wisconsin, United States of America.

What is disease?

Key thoughts

- » Health and disease have their origin in our way of thinking. A disease is a disharmony in our thinking that projects itself into our lower nature.
- » Physical diseases are processes of recovery. The body tries to get rid of the acquired disharmony. Diseases can expose themselves once we are at the point of taking a new step in our inner development.
- » Inner growth is well possible without diseases.
- » The *risk* of an epidemic or pandemic occurs periodically, according to cosmic cycles. Whether they actually occur depends on the human mentality.
- » By living in the light of unity and universal brotherhood, you prevent future diseases.

Now that we have gained some understanding of the basic theosophical ideas and we know what a virus is, we will discuss two very interesting and important questions: what is a disease and why do epidemic outbreaks often occur periodically?

Human consciousness is a thinking consciousness

Everything is alive, everything is conscious. This may be self-conscious or instinctively conscious, but in all cases everything is acting and reacting, so therefore, *conscious*. And consciousness is the driving force behind all external events, as described in the contributions above. The primary cause of our periods of health and illness lies therefore *in our human consciousness*.

What type of consciousness do humans have? We are self-conscious. We are able to think, to perceive thoughts, to construct an image of reality and to make conscious choices. Choices that are in harmony or disharmony with the Totality we are part of. That is why the origin of our health and illness lies in our thinking: in the kind of thoughts we think now and have been thinking in previous years and lives.

The cause of our health and illness

How can that be explained? We as

human consciousness are the leading entity for all beings in the hierarchy that we are. We can manifest ourselves by cooperating with all these beings. This hierarchy consists of a great diversity of beings: from thought beings to our desires, our feelings and the beings that form our body: the organ, cell and atom beings. All these beings are in constant interaction with each other. Each has a function to fulfil in the totality. All these beings are much less developed than we are. They cannot think, cannot choose a direction in their lives and therefore they follow our impulses. It is up to us to guide them. How does this work? Our mind creates a *sphere of influence* or *force field* of a certain characteristic within which all these lower beings live their lives. They are completely surrounded by our influence. If our thoughts are balanced and constructive, kind and helpful, that harmony reflects itself in our lower nature. We can sometimes experience this straight away, for example if we forget all our worries about ourselves for a few hours

because we are fully dedicated to a goal that is valuable to others. Perhaps we are tired when we start. Nevertheless, we often discover afterwards that our selflessness has made our body very fit. Our body cooperated obediently. But if, for example, we burst into anger or we are carried away by a fierce desire, this explosive disharmony in our thinking will act as a shock on our body. Unbridled emotions are always exhausting. Everyone will have noticed similar examples.

In short, each of our thoughts can be seen as a seed which we plant in our own constitution. And if the circumstances are right, such a seed grows into a “herb” or a “weed”, into a constructive or destructive force. Sometimes very quickly, as you have seen in the examples mentioned above, sometimes only after many years or lives. We are then talking about delayed effects, which we once caused ourselves. This is the underlying cause of our periods of health and illness.⁽¹⁾

What is disease?

Let us elaborate a step further: what is disease? A disease is a disharmony in our thinking that – after a ripening period – projects itself into our lower nature, which after all always follows our impulses. The imbalance first influences our psychical and emotional nature, and subsequently our physical nature. It manifests itself as a psychical or physical problem, or, in the case of psychosomatic illnesses, both. When such a disharmony has been built up in our physical body, we become physically ill. What is actually happening then? It is our body’s attempt to get rid of this disharmony in order to restore the balance and vitality. It is *a process of recovery*. So the theosophical view on physical illness is fundamentally different from what most people think. Usually a disease is seen as an uninvited guest, a dangerous intruder, that needs to be fought. This is due to ignorance of the cause.

An infectious disease is a process of recovery, as well. When a virus or bacterium infects us and starts to multiply in our body, our immune system comes into action. Sometimes we also get a fever. During our period of illness all kinds of substances are driven out of our body: substances that are in our sweat, dead cell remains, etcetera. Getting sick is not a punishment or bad luck, but our bodies’ attempt to restore harmony.⁽²⁾ That is why a wise doctor does not try to suppress a disease, allowing the inner tension of disharmony to increase even further, but facilitates the gradual outflow of the illness as harmoniously as possible.

Inner growth without diseases is very well possible

Of course, the ideal situation is to *prevent* diseases. This can be realized, indeed. In fact, it can be realized very well: by making our thinking balanced and spiritually inspired. Then we do not lay any causes for illness. We create a *state of dynamic harmony* in the living hierarchy that we are.

By expanding our human consciousness, we stimulate the beings who form our lower nature to grow accordingly. Some of them will develop with us, while another part will no longer be attracted to the altered characteristic. That part will disappear and continue its evolution elsewhere. In a harmoniously growing organism, there is a continuous in- and outflow of beings, comparable to a country that grows culturally and spiritually. This is as well always accompanied by immigration and emigration.

We can therefore go through all our human growth phases without becoming ill. Nevertheless, diseases will still occur frequently in our current phase of human development. We are still in the process of understanding the true nature of life. We are still learning to be in control of our consciousness, instead of undergoing the waves of thoughts and feelings. If we would not get diseases, the disharmony in our bodies would continue to build up. After a shorter or longer period of time, such an enormous tension would arise that our body would all of a sudden collapse completely.

Diseases as a teacher

Diseases are essentially our teacher, as are all events in our life. A disease does not appear randomly. It often forces us to take a step back in our daily life. We are limited in what we can do or we cannot do anything anymore. And while we are sick in bed, illnesses stimulate us to think deeper, to introspect. We may wonder what in life is lasting, and what only comes and goes. They stimulate our family and friends to help us. There may be more quiet moments for good conversations.

Every disease has such a characteristic to stimulate us to develop those abilities that we have not paid enough attention to, in the past. To give an example: anyone who “gets thrilled” by being continuously busy, often gets an illness that requires a large amount of patience. We then have to appeal to that neglected aspect in ourselves.

We can also learn a lot from a deadly disease: lessons we take with us to our next lives. This is also true when death occurs quickly. During some hours after our death

we will look back on our whole life from an insightful perspective and see all underlying causes. This so-called “panoramic vision” gives us the opportunity to draw very valuable conclusions.

That is why diseases are our *friends*, even if they involve temporary suffering. At the same time, we – we humans, including all doctors – do have the task of leading the disease along routes which are as painless as possible. We have the duty to reduce the suffering of our fellow human beings, wherever possible.

Why does one get sick and the other does not?

Everyone has observed that within one group some persons get a contagious disease and others not. Yet, the virus or bacterium undoubtedly visits them all. “One is susceptible, the other is not”, we say then. But what does that word “susceptibility” mean?

If consciousness is the underlying force behind all events, it must be about our *mental* susceptibility, a result of our earlier thoughts. In the words of G. de Purucker: “*It is impossible for any human being to contract any disease unless the seed of that disease be already latent in him*” ⁽³⁾ Pathogens are not attracted to people who have a different characteristic. They cannot thrive in such a human being, just as a polar bear cannot thrive in the tropics.

Which thoughts cause diseases?

Which mental tendencies are the main source of disease? These are prolonged *uncontrolled* desires, passions and feelings. ⁽⁴⁾ Fears for example, arise from misdirected imagination. The following quote from H.P. Blavatsky gives us a deeper insight: “Half, if not two thirds, of our weaknesses and illnesses are the fruit of our imagination and fears. Destroy the latter and give another direction to the former, and nature will do the rest.” ⁽⁵⁾

Thus, a wise guidance of your mind ensures a healthy body in the long run. It’s all about mental hygiene. Physical hygiene, the sensible care of your body, is a consequence of this. For example, you will make sure that you do not infect others. Those who live by strict standards for physical hygiene without practicing any mental discipline, will still evoke diseases. Because the character of their thoughts is the determining factor.

Does a disease may strike someone unduly?

We are frequently asked: why do people who live a balanced and social life sometimes become ill as well? We

can never blame it on “bad luck” or “fate”, because there is no bad luck or fate in the whole Cosmos. As we wrote before, consequences can always be traced back to their causes. What, then, are possible causes?

A first reason may be that we do not completely know ourselves, right down to the most subtle corners of our character. It is even more difficult to know our fellow human beings, in all their complexity.

A second possible reason may be that we planted the seeds of the present illness in our former lives. So, there was still some latent disharmony to elaborate. We might have, in the meantime, overcome the character trait that caused the disease. But that does not dismiss us from the obligation to compensate for what we have disturbed in the past. It is our task to stimulate the lower beings we once inhibited in their inner growth to a higher level.

There is also a third possible reason. We can identify ourselves with a certain group of people in such a way, that we undergo the ups and downs of this community — at least to some extent. ⁽⁶⁾ The combined karma of the entire group cannot but affect all its members. The motive for this identification may vary, but it can be very selfless. One example is Father Damien, who in the nineteenth century, out of compassion, went to live in a leper colony to support the people there spiritually and physically. After working there for many years, he himself became ill and eventually died of leprosy as well.

The cause can of course also be a combination of these three.

How do we deal with diseases wisely?

By learning from them. Those who do not learn from their illnesses, will not change their desires and feelings and will therefore continually evoke similar illnesses. You can do your best to get rid of a disease, but what use does it have if you do not combine that with tackling the cause? ⁽⁷⁾

It obviously makes sense to involve doctors. They have the medical knowledge we need in order to make conscious choices. And what are wise choices? That is not always easy to say. Even if we know that pushing away a disease is in fact postponing it, we can still choose to do so, for example when we have an important task to perform. Then, for example, we take a strong painkiller in order to be able to function optimally for some hours. Furthermore, we have to make many choices about our medical treatment, for example whether we choose for artificial respiration on an intensive care, and if we do so, for how long. And so on. This is a matter of everyone’s own insights and goals, in

the unique situation everyone is in. Someone else cannot determine that for us.

In the event of a major virus outbreak, many people see great merit in trying to produce a vaccine quickly. The idea is that if the vast majority of all people were injected with such a vaccine, the virus outbreak would be suppressed. In order to assess what happens then, we need to study the inner causes of disease.

Here are some important points to ponder over. Vaccinations suppress the problem *in us*. It is like postponing the repayment of a debt. You shift the problem to the future and miss the offered opportunity to settle the debt. Furthermore, it is not without consequences if you bring germs directly into someone's bloodstream: germs that this person might otherwise never receive. And that also applies if these germs are first weakened or killed, or if only fragments of them are injected, as is the case with vaccines. In spite of that, they still have their virus-characteristic, which, as mentioned in the contribution above, is parasitic. A final consideration would be that the production of a vaccine is in fact a manipulation of life. You "weaken" a bacterium or virus, you test the vaccine on laboratory animals, but the question is justified if we really know what we are doing with these entities.

What is an epidemic or pandemic?

An epidemic is based on the same principles as disease is for an individual human being, but then on a larger scale. It is the recovery of a certain disharmony by many people at the same time. In a pandemic this is worldwide, with the disease affecting all of humanity. Such large-scale disease outbreaks can of course only occur if the inner cause for it has been laid with many people. In other words, the pattern of thought that is the cause of it, was built up by a large number of people.

The influence of a pandemic is much broader than the people who become ill. Actually every community on earth is affected, because it also has an enormous impact on health care, trade, production, administration, education, and all other sectors of our society. All of humanity has a fever, you might say.

A pandemic is an ordeal for all. Every human being, every organization is faced with the choice: do we follow our animal nature, aimed at survival, or our human nature, aimed at living together? Just as a disease stimulates us to adopt a different way of life, a pandemic is a global stimulus to reform our way of living together. Viruses are essentially supporters in healing the earth's mental spheres.

The periodical nature of epidemics

Epidemics often occur cyclically. Everyone knows the seasonal influence on the flu: the highest peak always comes in winter. Some diseases return in a cycle of about 10-12 years. H.P. Blavatsky mentions the potato disease as an example. ⁽⁸⁾ This can be related to the sunspot cycle, which lasts 11-12 years. Undoubtedly other cycles are also of importance.

At such periodical moments the conditions are favorable for a specific epidemic; but this does not mean that an epidemic always occurs. In Universal Wisdom there is no fatalism. We are not dealing with fate coming over us from outside. The circumstances in which a contagious disease *could* break out are cyclical, but *whether* that disease actually does break out, and if so, how we deal with it, depends on the human mentality. In the next article we will discuss this in more detail.

Why do we see epidemics occur periodically?

Why are many epidemics cyclical? In fact we should turn this question around: which process in nature is not cyclical? We really see all things in the Cosmos coming and going, appearing and disappearing, according to certain patterns. We ourselves are the living example of it. Our sleeping and being awake, our spiritual resting period which we call "death" and our active physical life: our consciousness is alternately focused on the outer and inner life. And this applies to all beings, of whatever nature. And therefore, also for all mankind.

The cycles that humanity goes through during its long path of development are not separate from the cycles of the Cosmos. Of course, we belong to the Cosmos, yes, we are an inseparable part of it. Therefore it makes sense that we live our lives within and along the pattern of cosmic laws and cycles.

We humans are, so to speak, cells within the living Earth, which is itself a cell within the great organism of the Solar System, which is again a cell within an even greater cosmic organism. We live within the sphere of consciousness, within the aura, of those cosmic beings. That is why all human growth cycles are based upon the growth phases in our entire Solar System.

To make the picture more concrete: the Planets of our Solar System, our Moon, our Sun and certain groups of stars (especially the signs of the zodiac) have a large influence on our Planet. Those influences have different characteristics. They combine to a joint influence that

can be compared to a musical chord. And that musical chord changes cyclically. Sometimes one characteristic is dominant, sometimes another. ⁽⁹⁾

At what cyclical times do epidemics or pandemics occur? The true causal factors lie, as mentioned earlier, in our thinking consciousness. That is the seed. But the seed only germinates when the circumstances are right, like flower seeds rising in spring. Those circumstances are determined by cosmic factors. Only when they are favorable for the germination of the seeds of disharmony, epidemics will appear.

Of course, this fact also applies to all positive developments in society. We can sow the seeds for it at any moment. Sooner or later, at the cyclically appropriate moment, they will germinate as a powerful reform movement.

Why is there a pandemic right NOW?

Why is there a COVID-19 pandemic now and not a year ago? Is this related to the present influences from cosmical entities?

The nature of the cosmic influences can, at a certain moment, be read from the position of the Planets, Sun and zodiac, as seen from Earth. The positions of the Planets, Sun, and zodiac do not cause these influences, but they reflect the characteristics of those cosmic influences. Just as the reading on a thermometer does not cause the fever, but only indicates our condition.

Is there a remarkable state in 2020? Yes, there is. Without willing to have the last word – true astrology requires a deep understanding of the Theosophia – we can point out some aspects. Seen from Earth, Pluto stands behind Jupiter. According to the astrologers, this position stimulates large unexpected disturbances and processes of change. This influence continues to work for many months. At the same time, we are in a minimum of the sunspot cycle. And maxima and minima of the sunspot cycle are fertile periods for epidemics. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Furthermore, on the 21st of December 2020 Saturn will stand behind Jupiter. Conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn always go hand in hand with the destruction of old structures and the birth of new ones. ⁽¹¹⁾ Therefore, during the year 2020, many people will discover indications that our society needs some fundamental reformations.

What role does the corona-epidemic play in this? In this epidemic, many organizations and societal structures are showing what they are really worth. Are they helping us in difficult times? Or are they a major obstacle, an undermining factor? Valuable lessons! As already mentioned, there

is no fatalistic fate. On the contrary, we can discover the positive possibilities of even the potentially most difficult circumstances. ⁽¹²⁾ A disease presents itself when we are ready to take an inner step in our thinking and life. It is up to us to seize the opportunity.

References

1. W.Q. Judge, 'Replanting diseases for future use'. Article in *Echoes of the Orient*, Volume 1. Theosophical University Press, Pasadena 2011, pp. 294-297 (originally published in *The Path*, Volume 7, October 1892, pp. 225-228); G. de Purucker, 'Life-atoms and the cause and cure of disease'. *Esoteric Teachings*, Volume 8. I.S.I.S. Foundation, The Hague 2015, pp. 69-97.
2. G. de Purucker, *Golden Precepts of Esotericism*. I.S.I.S. Foundation, p. 32, online: <https://isismail.wetransfer.com/downloads/66dbc98ea6da38ed77b1a4f8e496418c20190127163000/79944d>
3. See ref. 1, text of G. de Purucker, p. 95.
4. See ref. 1, text of G. de Purucker, pp. 73-74, 86.
5. H.P. Blavatsky, 'Hypnotism, and its relations to other modes of fascination'. Article in: *Collected Writings*, Volume 12. The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1987, p. 403.
6. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*. Section 11, On the Mysteries of Re-Incarnation, What is Karma? Question: "But, surely, all these evils which seem to fall upon the masses somewhat indiscriminately are not actual merited and INDIVIDUAL Karma?" Online: <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/key/key-11.htm>
7. H.P. Blavatsky, 'Conversations on occultism.' Article in: *Collected Writings*, Volume 9. The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1986, pp. 102-103.
8. H.P. Blavatsky, 'Stars and numbers'. Article in: *Collected Writings*, Volume 3. The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1982, pp. 193 and footnote.
9. G. de Purucker, *Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary*, lemma "Epidemics". Website: <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/etgloss/etg-hp.htm>
10. See ref. 7. See also: G. de Purucker, 'Esoteric hints on cycles'. In: *Studies in Occult Philosophy*. Theosophical University Press, Pasadena 1973, pp. 10-12; N.C. Wickramasinghe, et al. (2017), 'Sunspot Cycle Minima and Pandemics: The Case for Vigilance?' Article in: *Journal of Astrobiology and Outreach*, Volume 5, 2017, p. 159. Online: <https://doi.org/10.4172/2332-2519.1000159>
11. G. de Purucker, 'Esoteric hints on cycles'. In: *Studies in Occult Philosophy*. Theosophical University Press, Pasadena 1973, p. 14.
12. G. de Purucker, *The Esoteric Tradition*. Theosophical University Press, Pasadena 1973, chapter 34, pp. 1021-1022, footnote 439.



Sunrise in Brasil.

Diseased civilization

O dear Pan and all the other gods of this place, grant that I may be beautiful inside. Let all my external possessions be in friendly harmony with what is within. May I consider the wise man rich. As for gold, let me have as much as a moderate man could bear and carry with him.

(Plato, *Phaedrus*, 279b–c.)

In the previous article we focused on what disease is from a theosophical point of view. We explained that an epidemic or pandemic is a disease on a societal or global level. A recovery process that manifests itself, among other things, through physical health and which has its cause lying in a disharmonious mentality. We also explained what a sustainable cure means: learning from your illness.

In this article we will analyze what this means for our civilization. What is the mentality that led to this crisis? This may lead us to the lessons we can learn to achieve a sustainably healthy society.

Key thoughts

- » An epidemic is to restore a way of thinking that has been disharmonic at a societal level.
- » The dominant capitalist system has the same parasitic characteristic as the coronavirus.
- » We created this system ourselves, consciously and unconsciously, by misjudging appearance for reality.
- » Through compassion and joint spiritual growth, we can create a harmonious system.
- » The great trial is yet to come: an appeal to (international) solidarity.

What makes the world sick?

One of the – if not the – most important ethical conclusion(s) from the principles of Theosophia is that all life is essentially one. In a world that is in harmony, everyone would therefore act consistently from this sense of oneness. People would cooperate with each other, sacrifice themselves for one another and be compassionate towards all other beings: animals, plants and the earth as a totality. In our present civilization we see this only to a limited extent.

You could say it is just a matter of free will. We can choose to act in harmony with the totality or in our own interest. But people are usually not so conscious of their motive or of the consequences of their actions in a broader context. We often act out of habit, without thinking too much about it. And if we act against

our very nature – that is, not out of compassion – this is more likely to originate from ignorance than from bad will.

Ignorance

Ignorance does not consist of a lack of factual knowledge or intellectual ability. It is a lack of self-knowledge. An essential part of self-knowledge is the realization that our consciousness is composed. This means that we can discern different parts in ourselves. From the first article follows: every life or consciousness, including the human, is boundless and imperishable *in essence*. We can also call this the spiritual or divine part of the human being. It is what we *are* in essence.

On the other hand, we *have* a transient part. And by this we do not only mean our physical body. Our emo-

tional world is also very temporary, as we can experience on a daily basis.

Then there is an intermediate part that you may call the learning part. It is the part within us that learns to express the imperishable. As human beings we do that through thinking. We are thinkers. With our thinking we determine who we are and subsequently how we act.

We can identify ourselves with the transient part. This results in the idea that we are separated from others. An example of this is the instinctive urge to survive: fighting, fleeing or freezing. But also all forms of desire for material or personal things for nobody but yourself, such as possessions, money or power, are characteristic of this way of thinking.

We can also identify ourselves with the imperishable part. We then identify more or less with all the other life. This manifests itself in, for example, understanding, insight or compassion.

You can also recognize these two characteristics in the different reactions to the COVID-19 crisis. Hoarding behavior comes to the fore: the desire in the human being. But you also see people who are selflessly committed to the people around them.

We do not always think consciously, resulting in habituation. The more we are used to think and live according to a certain pattern, the less open we are to other possibilities. And if the pattern of thinking and living is disharmonious, it can eventually lead to illness. That goes for a society just as well.

Essential workers and the healthy state

The Greek philosopher Plato wrote about the distinction between the healthy state and the excessive or “feverish state” 2500 years ago. In his dialogue “The State” or *Politeia* he first sketches the healthy state. Through a division of labor in which everyone does what he is good at – one person is a farmer, somebody else makes clothes, another one builds houses – people can jointly provide the necessities of life. It is what we would now call the essential workers that make up the vital sectors for running the state. It is also interesting to see what Plato writes about the role of money in this society. Making money is not a goal in itself, he clarifies. After all, we always do work for something other than our own interests. The doctor takes care of the sick, the captain takes care of the people on his ship and the shepherd takes care of his animals. ⁽¹⁾ In order to achieve a good distribution of food, you do need money as a means of exchange. Only those who cannot do

the necessary labor because they are too weak are allowed to temporarily possess money. These are the traders. ⁽²⁾ And they are actually the only ones who (temporarily) own money. For doing something for money is something decent people are ashamed of and they want it to stay a secret, he writes. ⁽³⁾ Money is only the compensation they accept, precisely because they do not serve their own interests but at the same time, they have to be able to provide for themselves.

This is not just philosophical theory. Research has been done into communities all over the world that are self-sufficient in this way. ⁽⁴⁾ It even won a Nobel Prize. ⁽⁵⁾

The excessive or feverish state

Opposed to the healthy state, Plato places the excessive state. There people feast on cakes, drink wine, dress up with beautiful clothes and perfume and decorate their houses with beautiful furniture, paintings, gold and ivory. ⁽⁶⁾ They fill their time with chasing unnecessary things, luxury and comfort. He describes that in such a state, war and conflict are inevitable at some point, especially when there is no limit to this state’s desire for money. ⁽⁷⁾ And Plato here deliberately mentions greed for money or profit as a characteristic. For bodily desires for food, drink or procreation are in a sense natural and can be satisfied, but the possession of money can grow endlessly and with this money you can continue to nourish any bodily or sensational desire. ⁽⁸⁾

It is not difficult to see the parallel with our current society. For a long time, economic growth was seen as the Holy Grail. We went along with the story that well-being would improve as the economy grew. Now that we can no longer fulfill luxury needs such as air travel, shopping or watching sports matches due to the COVID-19 crisis, it becomes clear how vulnerable this system is. People’s livelihoods have become dependent on meeting these unnecessary needs of others, fueled by the profit-driven consumer society.

Plato also calls the excessive state the feverish state. It refers to the feverishness of uncontrolled desire, such as the greed for money. This feverishness now even manifests itself physically as a result of the coronavirus.

A parasitic system

The economy is about producing and delivering goods and services to meet our needs in the best possible way. The origin of this “household management” is ensuring that there are sufficient resources to meet people’s phys-

ical needs, such as food, clothing and shelter. Nothing more! In today's capitalist system, we have elevated the means used for this purpose, money or capital, to an end in itself. The system thus ignores what it is supposed to serve: society as a whole.

In the article "What is a virus?" we wrote: a virus multiplies almost indefinitely at the expense of its host. The same goes for what we have made dominant in our current economic system: capital. Capital also multiplies almost indefinitely at the expense of the living totality: animals, people, ecosystems, the global climate. It has the same parasitic characteristic as a virus. This money-minded capitalist system is itself a consequence of the prevailing desire mentality. As we wrote in the previous article, uncontrolled desires, passions and feelings are in the long-term cause of diseases. In our current economic system we have not only made ourselves dependent on these externally oriented desires, the capitalist system even rewards them. It is a system that makes the world sick. How this works is explained below.

Capitalism: institutionalized greed for money

Money is basically an abstract thing. It is an agreement, a sign of trust that has a certain exchange value for goods or services.

Now money can also be saved and lent to others who need it in between. You can ask a fee or interest for that. For example, because you are making expenses to keep money safe. Or because you run the risk of someone else not paying it back. In both cases you assume something negative: a form of theft. So, in an honest society this would be superfluous. In some traditions, interest is therefore forbidden.

Many owners of capital ask for more in return than they have lent and need to break-even. They make a profit and thus generate money with money, without adding real value to society. But this also means that the person who borrows money, the debtor, has to obtain the interest he has to pay back from somewhere. The debtor has to make a profit as well, for example by a higher production, a reduction of costs, paying lower wages or lending money to someone else at an even higher interest rate. This is the principle of the capitalist system in a nutshell. If we want to maintain this system, it means the economy must continue to grow. The consequences of this growth addiction we will mention below. They can be seen as the symptoms of the disease.

The urge to consume

In today's economy, products are made with a limited lifespan, so we keep buying new stuff. It is all about consumption. Animals are also being bred for consumption on an increasing scale. Consumption hunger causes a lot of energy consumption, CO₂ emissions and pollution. It exhausts nature.

Both the bio-industry ⁽⁹⁾ as well as the increasing air pollution ⁽¹⁰⁾ by the way, can be linked to the emergence of virus epidemics. Both factors are likely to be involved in the coronavirus outbreak.

Low-wage countries

Labor and natural resources are limited. In order to continue to grow, companies are therefore looking for ever cheaper labor and raw materials, also across borders. They move factories to low-wage countries and buy pieces of land, sometimes even from corrupt governments that collect the money themselves instead of letting the capital pass on to their own people.

The negative consequences of this form of globalization become visible during this crisis. Millions of textile workers in Bangladesh lose their jobs because people in the West no longer buy clothes. And in the West people have to rely on the face masks that are manufactured elsewhere. If countries are limited in providing for their own necessities of life because they have been made dependent, they are also unable to help others properly.

Monetize everything

In a world without capital, there would be a natural limit to what people would use to meet their needs. Why would a man own dozens of houses if he could only live in one at a time? Why would he grow more food than he can eat or keep? As soon as money no longer serves only as a means of exchange, but is used as capital to pile up, it gives the illusion that we can possess something.

Suppose we had a mechanism that would allow us to possess air and commercialize that possession. Others would have to pay for the air they breathe. Something like that would lead to speculation, to people who owned much more air than others.

Of course we think it is logical that air cannot be claimed as property by anyone and, albeit a little less obvious, that we are all responsible for its quality. In our current society, however, there is a price for land, for what nature produces in terms of food or for raw materials, for knowledge and even for time. As long as this is a fair price, purely to

facilitate the exchange of what we produce, this is not yet the biggest problem. But, in the pursuit of more capital, almost everything has been given a business model in addition to a price: travel, art, culture, sport, relaxation and even spiritual development. What was formerly seen as a public good and maintained with collective money, must now follow the laws of the free market. And if it is not profitable enough, it runs the risk of being abolished. Like a virus, the multiplication of capital destroys many sectors from within. In the pharmaceutical industry, for example, the money is no longer primarily earned by developing, producing and selling drugs, but by purchasing and monopolizing intellectual property on new drugs, which is much more profitable. ⁽¹¹⁾

Privatization

Making a profit from public sector work is more difficult, think of medical staff, teachers, police officers and judges. Those public services that could not be privatized were cut back considerably. Under the guise of market forces and efficiency, their work was eroded. In general, their protests did not yield much.

The fact that in previous economic crises it was not the private sector but the state that had to take control, shows that a fanatically driven form of free market does not function in many respects. Even governments and presidents who held market forces in high esteem, who were in favor of a “small government” and believed that market forces would solve all problems, were forced by the crisis to put their philosophy aside. If they had not intervened, the economy would have collapsed completely.

The irony is that where the private sector could benefit from the profits in times of growth, they were saved with public money during the splash of their self-blown bubbles. And that subsequently the increased public debt led to even more cuts in the public sector. As one has paraphrased Chomsky ⁽¹²⁾: we are privatizing the gains and socializing the losses.

In the hypercapitalist United States, in particular, people have ended up in an upside-down world. In the richest country in the world, basic services such as good care, education or a social safety net have become scarce for the majority of the population, because an ultra-rich upper class has swallowed all capital. ⁽¹³⁾

Increase of inequality

The capitalist system has led to an enormous inequality of wealth, which continues to grow. According to Oxfam,

by 2019 the richest two thousand people together owned more than the “poorest” 4.6 billion. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Wealth at the top continues to grow exponentially, while the poorest people are earning comparatively less and seeing their debts grow. There is a reason why this system is leading to an expanding gap between rich and poor and also why it leads to the exhaustion of nature. There is no limit to the desire for more capital, but there is a limit to the availability of labor and natural resources. Money is essentially immaterial and abstract and can therefore grow endlessly. But the consequences of the institutionalized greed for money are not so virtual. The maximization of labor productivity leads to ever longer working days and more stress in the underclass, while the top earns the money. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Because capital at the top of the pyramid, among the rich, is growing faster and faster, they can also claim more and more material and scarce possessions, slowly but surely depriving even the primary necessities of life of others. ^{(16), (17)}

Since this crisis, there has even been a kind of “bank run” among investors that has led to a general devaluation of money, particularly in the developing countries at the bottom of the pyramid. Their debts are only getting bigger, without them having much influence on it themselves. ⁽¹⁸⁾

How we mistook appearance for reality

Plato defined ignorance as mistaking appearance for reality. ⁽¹⁹⁾ This time of crisis suddenly makes us very aware of our collective ignorance. At the same time, this means a new mentality is beginning to emerge. “Never let a serious crisis go to waste” is a well-known quote.

We now see that it is the essential workers that keep the necessary economy going. Because as long as there are nurses, teachers, farmers, agents and bus drivers, the country will not come to a standstill and at least there will be no unnecessary casualties.

Now that large parts of the – partly excessive – economy have come to a standstill, we seem to have come to our senses. Here, too, illness provides introspection. We ask large companies and banks not to pay dividends for the time being. ^{(20), (21)} We ask the pharmaceutical industry not to keep its knowledge to itself for now in order to profit from it. ⁽²²⁾ We give priority to the vital sectors. It suddenly becomes clear how the economic interest is subordinate to the general interest. And of course it should always be that way.

In this time of crisis, we suddenly seem to be more aware of the necessary ethics. It is almost inconceivable that after this period we will go back to business as usual. Because

why should we not be able to keep this up? It is time to use our imagination again and show our idealism.

Ideas rule the world

A society is formed on the basis of ideas. As said before, we have not all been equally aware of the leading ideas in this world and their consequences. Or to put it in a negative way: we were dulled into our habitual patterns such as comfort, luxury and – strangely enough – stress. Because in a way, being busy is also an excuse not to dwell on the things that compel change. ⁽²³⁾

However, the capitalist system is not a given. It is based mainly on myths such as the *homo economicus* ⁽²⁴⁾ and outdated ideas like the struggle for existence. ^{(25), (26)}

There are plenty of alternatives imaginable. For example, if we would start to put the basic needs at the center of the economy, like Plato in his sketch of the healthy state: then we would make sure everyone has a roof over their heads, enough food and clothes to wear. Nature easily provides for the fulfilment of these needs, as long as we make a joint effort and one does not demand more than the other.

We could extend this with public services such as education, care, public security and justice. We are actually referring to the essential workers that still keep our countries going.

They currently make up about at least a third of the working population. ⁽²⁷⁾ In other words, if we divided this work over the entire working population, we could complete the necessary work in one third of the time. Think about what we could do with the time that becomes available. All of a sudden, we have all the time we need to develop as people together. To inspire each other with music, art or literature. We can still organize as many sporting events, cultural festivals or gatherings as we want, as soon as the conditions allow. But then without a revenue model, on a voluntary basis or with a fair subsidy.

We would not have to outsource care for children, the elderly and the needy and we would create much more *quality time* with each other. Maybe we would no longer be able to fly three times a year, but with all the time we have to spend in nature, we might not even have that need anymore. Moreover, we can then contribute to nature instead of polluting the environment.

In the last article of this issue we will further elaborate on a society aimed at the joint spiritual development of all living beings. And as far as the role of economics or money in it, there are many more ideas, as Plato for example outlines

Plato on the limitation of money

In view of all this, I'll never concede to them that the rich man can become really happy without being virtuous as well: to be extremely virtuous and exceptionally rich at the same time is absolutely out of the question. "Why?" it may be asked. "Because," we shall reply, "the profit from using just and unjust methods is more than twice as much as that from just methods alone, and a man who refuses to spend his money either worthily or shamefully spends only half the sum laid out by worthwhile people who are prepared to spend on worthy purposes too. So anyone who follows the opposite policy will never become richer than the man who gets twice as much profit and makes half the expenditures. The former is a good man; the latter is not actually a rogue so long as he uses his money sparingly, but on some occasions he is an absolute villain; thus, as we have said, he is never good. Ill-gotten and well-gotten gains plus expenditure that is neither just nor unjust, when a man is also sparing with his money, add up to wealth; the absolute rogue, who is generally a spendthrift, is quite impoverished. The man who spends his money for honest ends and uses only just methods to come by it, will not easily become particularly rich or particularly poor. Our thesis is therefore correct: the very rich are not good; and if they are not good, they are not happy either."

The whole point of our legislation was to allow the citizens to live supremely happy lives in the greatest possible mutual friendship. However, they will never be friends if injuries and lawsuits arise among them on a grand scale, but only if they are trivial and rare. That is why we maintain that neither gold, nor silver should exist in the state, and there should not be much money made out of menial trades and charging interest, nor from prostitutes; the citizens' wealth should be limited to the products of farming, and even here a man should not be able to make so much that he can't help forgetting the real reason why money was invented (I mean for the care of the soul and body, which without physical and cultural education respectively will never develop into anything worth mentioning). That's what has made us say more than once that the pursuit of money should come last in the scale of value. Every man directs his efforts to three things in all, and if his efforts are directed with a correct sense of priorities, he will give money the third and lowest place, and his soul the highest, with his body coming somewhere between the two. In particular, if this scale of values prevails in the society we're now describing, then it has been equipped with a good code of laws. But if any of the laws subsequently passed is found giving pride of place to health in the state rather than the virtue of self-control, or to wealth rather than health and habits of restraint, then quite obviously its priorities will be wrong.

(Laws, 743a-744a)

in his dialogue *Laws* (page 58), or as current economists put forward, who speak of a *post-growth* era.⁽²⁸⁾

A mentality change emerges

As is often the case with pandemics in history, a mentality change in the social and societal field takes place at the same time.⁽²⁹⁾ The corona crisis can be seen as one of the ways in which that change expresses itself. Karmically speaking, in a certain way we evoke the circumstances ourselves, once we are internally ripe to overcome a certain characteristic. This is equally true for group karma. Whether we learn the lesson is up to us!

If this corona crisis evokes anything, it is the need for solidarity. We are all doing our part to prevent the further spread of the virus. We stay home. We keep our distance from each other. We wash our hands. Thousands of people apply to be a volunteer. We sew face masks for healthcare workers. We bring groceries to the neighbors. We continue to support our local shopkeepers, gym and restaurants. In a way, the interconnectedness in the world has also become very clear. What began in a Chinese city has now seized the world. Scientists around the world are working together to exchange knowledge.⁽³⁰⁾ The Dutch are nursed in German intensive care units. China provides knowledge and assistance to the United States. Cuban and Russian doctors work in Italy.

Of course, we also see the excesses, such as American senators selling their shares with insider information just before the outbreak,⁽³¹⁾ big pharmacists trying to make a profit out of the crisis,⁽³²⁾ or the U.S. president offering large sums of money to German developers to get exclusive rights of a possible vaccine.⁽³³⁾ However, the protests against these excesses are becoming louder and louder. The two schools of thought we started this article with can be recognized in society. Do we opt for the general interest or self-interest? Do we identify ourselves with the transient, external, material side and imagine that we are separate, or do we identify with the imperishable, inner, spiritual side and see connectedness and unity?

We see that more and more people recognize that material prosperity or growth in capital does not equate to well-being, but that it is merely the appearance of well-being.⁽³⁴⁾ We recognize that the growth in gross domestic product is not related to people's experience of happiness.⁽³⁵⁾ And we realize that the current system, aimed at a growing economy, also creates an increased inequality. A growing inequality, which in turn is associated with detrimental consequences for society as a whole, such as an increase

in crime or a deterioration in both mental and physical health.⁽³⁶⁾

Sham solutions

In the coming period we will be tested even more on our ability to distinguish between appearance and reality. How do we ensure that the billions that governments are now releasing really go to the people who need it instead of to the big companies that have been financially stripped down by shareholders, who, in their focus on short-term profit, have made it difficult for these companies to add value in the long term?

And what if we assess the damage after the crisis? Are we going to cut back on the public sector again or are we going to make sure that the richest will actually pay a proportional part of tax?

There are more and more ideas for a society that is more fair. Ideas such as a basic income, a different approach for treating animals and a more sustainable economy.⁽³⁷⁾ But if we really want to learn from this crisis, we need to go a little further. A virus is also a cleaner, we already wrote. And the disease it causes is a cleansing process. This crisis, too, can have a purifying effect, provided we are prepared to break down our disharmonious thinking patterns.

A different view of man

Self-knowledge is the real solution to grow out of ignorance. As long as we have a limited vision of life – the materialistic vision – selfishness lurks. Whatever system we come up with.

That is because we then attribute reality to what merely appears as real. In fact, as we started this article, it is the spiritual part within us that makes who we really are, not our outer part, nor our possessions, nor our social position. Seen from this spiritual part, and the laws of nature such as cyclicity and karma, we can really gain insight into the meaning of life; that it is in fact about the spiritual development of all beings.

This joint spiritual growth can be sustained endlessly without ever coming into conflict with others, because from this perspective we no longer see others as separate from ourselves. If, in this day and age, we are able to focus on (further) going through this change of mentality, then we will also be able to set up a social system in which compassion is centralized. A system in which we treat animals in a natural way, work together internationally to really help others and also act in harmony with the living totality of which we are an integral part. In the last article

we sketch a picture of what this can look like. But first, in the next article, we describe what we can already do now based on these principles.

The trial to come

The corona crisis is in fact an expression of an ethical-mental crisis in which, as Churchill quoted, “we are at the end of the beginning, but not yet at the beginning of the end”. The virus is now raging in the relatively affluent West. The virus is now also beginning to spread in less prosperous countries, where in densely populated areas one and a half meters distance is hardly an option. So, there will be an appeal to our international solidarity. All of us who make the wise part within ourselves leading, support the wisdom this world needs to make the right choices at this crucial time.

References

1. Plato Complete works. Edited by John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis, USA 1997. Republic / Politeia 341-345.
2. See ref. 1 371b-d.
3. See ref. 1 347b.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commons>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elinor_Ostrom#Nobel_Prize_in_Economics
6. See ref. 1 373a.
7. See ref. 1 373d.
8. See ref. 1 580e-581a.
9. https://blavatskyhouse.org/uploads/files/Lucifer_EN/lucifer-en-2020-1.pdf
10. https://blavatskyhouse.org/uploads/files/Theosophical_literature_about_epidemics_and_pandemics.pdf
11. <https://www.somo.nl/somo-reveals-the-financialisation-of-the-pharmaceutical-industry-and-the-potentially-deadly-costs/>
12. https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Noam_Chomsky#Sovereignty_and_World_Order,_1999
13. <https://eand.co/capitalism-is-literally-killing-america-4e05fee5ffa7>
14. Clare Coffey e.a. (2020) Time to Care. Oxfam. <https://www.doi.org/10.21201/2020.5419>
15. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/04/1036851>
16. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/world/africa/coronavirus-hunger-crisis.html>
17. This is apart from the fact that some capitalists throw themselves into philanthropy. But even in this they have become so powerful through capital that without democratic control they can follow their own agenda. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/24/no-such-thing-free-gift-gates-foundation-philanthropy-review>
18. <https://www.thenation.com/article/economy/economy-fed-imf/>
19. See ref. 1 Protagoras, 357d-e.
20. <https://www.bankingsupervision.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2020/html/ssm.pr200327-d4d8f81a53.en.html>
21. <https://fd.nl/beurs/1339499/oproep-aandeelhouders-aan-bedrijven-vergeet-het-dividend>
22. <https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/roche-releases-recipe-after-public-pressure-while-european-commission-considers-intervention-due-to-coronavirus-test?share=0BoE4sQAB%2FM44cPopy4WXbb3TQKfJJiGg1NWU6T9jK5hrqsJ7EZRDcfiiYdzQw%3D%3D>
23. E. Bomas, “Why are we so busy? And how do we stop being so busy”. *Lucifer – the Lightbringer*, No. 3, October 2019, p. 83.
24. <https://www.oecd.org/forum/oecdyearbook/towards-a-caring-economy.htm>
25. <https://eand.co/how-coronavirus-proves-americas-a-failed-state-f89edd6358e6>
26. B. van den Noort, “How “the struggle for existence” gets more and more out of fashion”. Article in *Lucifer – the Lightbringer*, No. 3, October 2018, p. 84.
27. In the Netherlands this is a third of the population <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/faq/corona/economie/hoeveel-mensen-werken-er-in-cruciale-beroepen-> and in the US their share is estimated between 34% and 43% <https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-to-protect-essential-workers-during-covid-19/#footnote-1>
28. <https://thecorrespondent.com/357/outgrowing-growth-why-quality-of-life-not-gdp-should-be-our-measure-of-success/6132269682-f81be934>
29. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/how-pandemics-change-history>
30. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/01/world/europe/coronavirus-science-research-cooperation.html>
31. <https://www.ft.com/content/e3a82b44-6a3f-11ea-800d-da70cff6e4d3>
32. <https://theintercept.com/2020/03/13/big-pharma-drug-pricing-coronavirus-profits/>
33. <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-confirms-that-donald-trump-tried-to-buy-firm-working-on-coronavirus-vaccine/>
34. https://www.communio-icr.com/files/SchindlerDC_Money_Format.pdf
35. See ref. 28.
36. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Spirit_Level_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Spirit_Level_(book))
37. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/opinion/which-world-do-we-want-after-covid-19>



Sunrise in Cuba.

Acting *now* in the light of Theosophia

What should we do now? Theosophia is timeless, and for this very reason offers a practical philosophy of life for the present, for our actions now, in the midst of this mental, social and physical crisis.

Key thoughts

- » It's time to work consciously on a philosophy of life.
- » With the fundamental principles of Unity, cyclicity and equality, we can easily answer practical questions.
- » Being meaningful keeps us going. Helping our fellow human beings is the key to this.
- » The crisis is a litmus test for who we are.

With the world in various variations of a lockdown, one of the most important questions people ask themselves individually, but also collectively, is: what should we do *now*? Organizations, policymakers and governments, but also students, parents and the elderly, everyone is looking for answers. The thought behind this question is of course: how long will it take? — which almost everyone realizes that we do not actually know. The present is relative. At the moment you read this, the picture of this crisis is already different than when it was written down. Snapshots in a crisis always show an image of confusion. What are the best measures? How do we work on the discipline to maintain these measures? How do we help each other, from those nearby to world-wide? How do we deal with what is happening now?

An acute crisis like this shows how often we are still wallowing in short term thinking, and are therefore not well prepared for calamities. Those who are considered Wise and “experts” explain to us what we have to take into account in the near or

distant future, but they are usually listened to with reluctance.

The Theosophia offers a practical philosophy of life for the *present*. At the same time, this synthesis of religion, philosophy and science is timeless, or rather, for all times. For an answer to what we have to do *now* in the light of Theosophia, it is therefore wise not to focus on the short term only. After all, our actions can have a long-term effect. Selfish self-interest may seem beneficial in the short term, but it can be the source of a new crisis in the long term. In other words, acting *now* with compassion and wisdom requires a vision that extends to the long term.

So how can Theosophia help us? It is always practical to start from the three basic principles. And that is what we will do! The three propositions on which Theosophia is based are described in detail in the first article in this *Lucifer*; for now, we summarize them in three keywords: *Unity*, *cyclicity* and *equality*. Let us keep these basic propositions in mind when looking at some important, now urgent topics.

Oneness and health

The essential Oneness that underlies all beings tells us that the essence of everything was always there, always is and always will be. Consciousness is therefore eternal, in which only the forms of life are temporary. This virus did not suddenly come out of nowhere and will not suddenly cease to exist. Only the outer form has now come into being and temporarily plays a dominant role on the world stage. But the nature of the virus and how people react to it, is not just a physical matter. Rather, it is about the underlying processes, as explained in the article on *what is disease*. Therefore, the effects of efforts to contain the virus cannot only be measured with figures on infections and immunity. Now we must also work towards a healthy climate of thought, as we sketch out in the article on *a healthy global society*. Nevertheless, in addition to social care, we must also make every effort to keep the consequences of the pandemic as bearable as possible.

The medical care of people who become seriously ill is under severe pressure. But the efforts of many to help people is remarkable. Not everyone will realize it – they don't have to – but the compassion that underlies this willingness to help is rooted in the Oneness that we all essentially are. That compassion must be nourished, with each other, as a powerful medicine. And not only in small circles, but worldwide. Every human being is equal.

Medical knowledge and the availability of resources in the world must therefore be separated from political and economic interests. The dissemination of knowledge and the production of resources must be regulated as much as possible through independent channels that can ensure a fair distribution. Here the WHO (World Health Organization) could play a pioneering role. But the policy of this UN organization is unfortunately under pressure from international political tensions. Even more reason to put global interests first.

There is another reason to keep this global interest pure. Starting from an integral, global vision, we can give everything a place without having to choose between A and B, without having to choose between fighting viral suffering and economic distress. If we think in separate sub-interests, we get bogged down in a hopeless battle between groups of people for whom the idea of unity is totally absent. If we do see this totality, we can work constructively on solutions.

Vision on mortality

What should we do if we're quarantined? At least we will

have time to think. In the meantime, the virus has made it clear how we are generally still struggling to accept our mortality, while Theosophia shows us that we are essentially immortal. The body may be mortal, but our core consciousness is not.

If we start from the cyclicity of life, from re-embodiment, our present life is one step of a walk into eternity. We take our experiences with us, nothing is lost. Is not such a period of quarantine therefore very suitable to analyze (once again) our vision of life? And thanks to all modern media, we can also share our life questions with whom we want from our semi-isolation.

Then conversations may arise, for example, in response to a question such as: "Do you, if you find yourself in the medical situation, want to or not want to have mechanical ventilation?" In other words: why would you want to stretch a life with a hopeless perspective? What do you think about life and death? Such a conversation can not only be enlightening if you are still healthy, but it can also prevent a lot of emotion if the situation does occur. Also for the health professionals.

At the beginning of April medics and nurses feared a dilemma in the face of impending capacity problems at intensive care centers: who would be eligible for intensive, heavy treatment and who would no longer be eligible? They worked hard to prevent such moments. But we should not leave a difficult choice like that to people in health care.

Of course, not everyone will embrace the basic theosophical ideas after a first acquaintance, but the crisis makes it meaningful for everyone to think about life. Do we look at ourselves as the personality who "deserves" this life, or are we able to experience some of that Oneness and realize that we are part of a larger process, in which the common good is our inspiration? Finding meaning eventually starts with a growing insight that the personal human being can look in the mirror, but will never see his true Self, his own essence in it. As a person we are mortal indeed, but as human consciousness, as the spark of Oneness, we are immortal. That insight is not easy to obtain, but it is easy to begin with. Even in this crisis, we are faced with the question of how we behave. And it is a simple, but fundamental choice: do we choose for ourselves or for society and everyone who in any way needs our support?

Everyone has the free will to make those choices, no one can decide for another. But whatever it is we want, it is important *to work consciously on a vision of life*.

Being meaningful at home

Parents with children at home will have their hands full and be thankful for every minute of rest. There are also many people who fill their forced home life with watching movies, “gaming” or providing the room with a new wallpaper. Of course there is nothing against that in itself, but from the idea that we still remain part of society we can ask ourselves if we can do something more meaningful. For example, we could take up a study of mathematics (again), or follow an online course for a position in the local community. We can also, as an extension of our refocusing on the meaning of life, study Theosophia further, read *The Bhagavad-Gītā* again and “sparring” with our partner or, online or otherwise, with our friends. There is plenty to do, if we are looking for it. In short, we can enrich our thinking intellectually and spiritually.

Staying busy at home does require an exercise in discipline that we are not usually used to. It is best to apply a fixed regularity in our days. A schedule for yourself offers something to hold on to. Get up at a fixed time, do some gymnastic exercises, for example, and spend the rest of the day working on tasks you have previously set for yourself. Being meaningful keeps us going. First of all, there is of course helping our fellow human beings. When we help others, we feel good. Why is that? It is a wonderful synthesis of the basic principles of Oneness, cyclicity and equality. We help in the growing awareness that we are in essence one, and therefore in fact can never look away. With every help we offer, there is the recurring experience that this is in accordance with Nature. And we help in the growing realization that everything is in essence equal as part of the bigger picture.

So now we can help each other in this crisis, mostly in a smaller context, sometimes in a larger context if we have built up a broad network. A message for the neighbors, arranging a collection for the community center, keeping in touch with the elderly and lonely. The examples of help we see in the media are heartwarming and show how much empathy and compassion is being exercised in this time.

If it doesn't go well

The image of a society that in this day and age is the model of togetherness and charity does not always hold up. That will come as no surprise to anyone. Selfishness manifests itself not only in panic-stricken hamster behavior but also in more serious abuses of the situation, particularly in the economic sphere. Fraud with the trade of face masks, for example, shows how far some people distance themselves

from solidarity and ethical awareness. We need to show these people that they, too, can never be happy about this. In fact, they commit themselves to the parasitic nature of the virus. But even on a smaller, domestic scale, things do not go well under the pressure of this crisis. For example, there is a marked increase in marital quarrels, divorce petitions and mediators have to get to work. Domestic drama, in which partners quarrel when they are too close for too long. The crisis shows the vulnerable sides of our personality. It is a litmus test for who we are without the sea of external liberties that life normally offers. Here, too, there are very useful lessons to be learned, for those who want to be open to them.

This is also a difficult time for people who are lonely or feel lonely. When you are older and all your trusted contacts are gone or out of the picture, it is certainly understandable. Yet loneliness is an experience that can affect our personality, but not our true humanity. Because if we are all part of one whole, if we are essentially one, then loneliness is an illusion. In practice this illusion has many faces. We can describe it with the following “formula”:

Loneliness = the relationships you desire minus the relationships you have.

If you think about the three basic principles and realize that you actually have a relationship with everything and everyone, the feeling of loneliness will gradually disappear. For the deeper causes of loneliness lie in the vision we have on life. For how is it that one separates from his partner, and perhaps lives on even less than the social minimum, yet does not feel lonely in any way; while another, as his partner travels for a week, feels alone in the world. And some people can be alone for days, without feeling any sense of loneliness at all. Elderly people who feel abandoned may also be able to see points of light by thinking about life outside their own realms of thought.

Whether it is going well or less well in the limitations of our time, it is an exercise in patience. We can form a mental picture of someone who embodies patience. We can feed that image very well. H.P. Blavatsky speaks in *The Voice of the Silence* about the golden key of *Kshanti*: patience sweet, that nought can ruffle. So we can see quarantine as a welcome exercise. If we get through this properly, we have taken a big step forward.

Togetherness

In the articles above we have shown how the characteristic

of parasitic behavior can break us down as humanity. And if we are honest with ourselves, we also know what mental selfishness does, and which forms of parasitic thinking and acting we as humanity have developed, perhaps for several cycles. We know the consequences: for example the neglect of human rights, the global economic inequality, the selfishness of a “free market” on a global level, the massive abuse of almost the entire animal kingdom for our food chain and the damage to the environment and climate.

We can, no, we *must* engage – in thinking and where possible in acting – in all the positive initiatives that are now being taken everywhere. In the international initiatives, but also in the countless local initiatives of people who support each other on the spot. We can build on the solidarity that we now see on a large scale to help overcome this crisis, to work towards a unity for a better world. In this sense, the virus can also contribute to restoring harmony. We have a wealth of knowledge in Theosophia. We are also a little used to the prolonging of measures. Now let us prolong the togetherness — and do not let go.



Sunrise in Chili.

A healthy global society

Immune to all germs

Key thoughts

» The new society is based on a spiritual image of humanity. The goals in life become different. Ethics is a logical consequence of this.

» Every crisis, such as this pandemic, arises because a new phase is emerging. We are not yet in control of the capacities for this new era.

» In today's world, borders have disappeared, but the mentality is still often focused on the "own group".

» Each country or region should be an independent, powerful unit within the world community and possibly help other regions to become such a strong unit as well. *Think global, act local.*

» The infinite potential of every human being and the awareness of connectedness create a healthy climate of thought.

» Be the change you want to see in the world.

If a seriously ill patient survives his illness, his doctor often advises him to rearrange his life so that he remains healthy. If he falls back into old habits, the disease reappears. It is good to look back and see what caused the disease, but then you better look to the future and make a plan to stay healthy.

When a society affected by a pandemic gets back on its feet from its sickbed and carefully takes its first steps again, it is wise to arrange life in such a way that the disease does not return. So, although we are still in (the aftermath of) the pandemic, it is good that society as a whole develops a health plan so that we become immune to any new germs.

From materialistic image of man to spiritual image of man

To develop a clear health plan, we will first have to ask ourselves what a human being really is. If you know what a human being is, you can also organize the human world in a humane way.

As the two introductory articles of this *Lucifer* showed, man is consciousness. That consciousness has always been and always will be. Periodically it envelops itself in a form, which is temporary. Our focus should therefore be on consciousness, not on the body.

Looking back over the last two centuries, we have to conclude that the image of mankind was mainly formed by a materialistic science, which undermined the illogical doctrines of the Church. The idea that life stems from matter and that man is nothing more than his body gradually became the prevailing opinion, especially in scientific circles. Regarding man, the idea arose that we would have transformed from an ape man to the man we are today. Many biologists are therefore inclined to explain all kinds of human things – both psychological and physical – with this idea. They believe that our current tendencies would be a legacy of this. Another dogma is that our character would be determined by hereditary material, DNA. In both, scientific and popular publications, physical, psychological and mental properties are “explained” by DNA, although it is already ascertained that DNA does not determine who you are.⁽¹⁾ An awful lot of people have listened to this materialistic vision. It has

determined their actions. It was at the root of countless selfish deeds. It is the main source of cynicism. Although during the crisis many people sincerely believe that everything must change after the pandemic, we also read cynical pieces that man is falling back into his old pattern of habit. Indeed, even during the crisis one sometimes falls back into old habits. We must also realize that old habits built up in many lives do not suddenly die. Change does not happen so quickly.

Man, however, is not doomed to evil. On the contrary. Man is essentially a noble being. In the more spiritual layers of his consciousness lie exalted abilities. There is wisdom and compassion in man. We can develop that wisdom. The most important change that should take place after the crisis is to develop a different view of mankind. The views of mankind from Antiquity, and those of the Eastern religions, should be studied seriously, not out of some kind of historical curiosity, but because we can learn something from them. The different aspects and abilities, which Theosophia shows so clearly in its teachings, can be part of those psychological studies. If each individual has determined for himself at least, that there is a personal and a suprapersonal side of his consciousness – in his thinking – and that the suprapersonal side can be further developed, then cynicism and the tendency to selfishness disappear. Even if we would not yet live (completely) in that suprapersonal side of our consciousness, but at least we knew that it existed and what it is worth, we would already have made a big step forward. After all, then we would have found the compass within ourselves with which we could determine our path and, if we were lost, find the way back again.

A spiritual image of humans, a virtuous society

A different image of man leads to a different image of the society in which we should live. If you see a human as a *homo economicus*, prosperity and luxury is your goal in life. If you see man as a spiritual being, developing spiritual abilities is your goal. Of course, you will also have to pay some attention to the mental and physical in order to create a harmonious cohesion of the whole human being. Just like a human being, society also has a spiritual, mental and physical aspect. The spiritual part gets much more attention in a new society. The spiritual progress of everyone is the general striving. The thinking is directed towards the spiritual, so that we can control our desires. The physical part of society will also receive an appropriate amount of

attention, although this will be much less than it is now. So, there will certainly be an eye for healthy food, which is cultivated without harming the environment, pleasant housing, durable clothing and other physical things. But all these things will be realized from a spiritual perspective. The most important thing is that every human being has the totality in mind and attunes his actions and thoughts to it. This means that we lead an ethical life, considering all people, yes, all that lives.

Ancient philosophies and religions often talk about virtues such as truthfulness, patience, courage, respect for life and above all, compassion. If these virtues are more valued in the new society, many of the old habits, which are based on vices, will disappear. This appreciation arises, when we realize that ethics is not a human invention but reflects the habitual pattern of the universe. The cosmos is a great collaboration. No entity stands on its own. Everything is connected. That is why it is so important to constantly reflect on theosophical principles. Then you get an ever clearer understanding of how the cosmos is built up and how the truly spiritual human being lives and what the society in which he lives looks like.

In this article we will outline – of course only briefly – a picture of a world that is built based on that suprapersonal side of man and that is therefore less or even not at all susceptible to pandemics. It is not a utopia, because every human being has these spiritual aspects in his consciousness. If we develop these aspects then administration, economics, industry, education, agriculture and cattle breeding will be completely different.

First things first. So, the right order for redesigning our society is: firstly a different vision of life. This results in a new mentality. Then comes change in society.

Change of mentality

If we are susceptible to certain influences in our thinking, then our physical nature will also be susceptible to those influences of the same characteristic. We have already talked about that in *What is a disease?* So whether the virus originated in the marketplace of Wuhan or in the P4 laboratory in that city, if we humans would have had a different mentality and, as a result, a different physical constitution, the virus would not have affected us or made us ill. The disruption of society is just as much a consequence of the thinking patterns of mankind. After all, our whole society is built on thoughts. So, the real cause of the crisis lies in our thinking. Really curing a disease is therefore a mental process.

In fact, a disease presents itself, so that man can develop new faculties and insights in himself and thus grow in consciousness. This also applies if the disease is an effect that occurs afterwards. Karma is the best teacher.

Take AIDS as an example. All over the world it has made people seriously ill: men, women, heterosexuals, homosexuals, young and old, even children. It is a relatively modern disease: real healing occurs when one deals differently with blood, drugs and vaccination. This disease actually announces a new phase of development; it is a new lesson for everybody, for the evolving human race. Medicines do not cure, although they sometimes give some comfort. They only suppress the symptoms, but the cause, which lies in the mind, has never been changed by any medicine. Yet, we do not want to ban medicines. They can relieve the pain and help guide the disease outward.

Every new disease is like a new chapter in the textbook "How to become a perfect human being". A new phase in human history has presented itself, which we have not yet mastered. If we think carefully and remember our previous lessons, we can also get through this new phase unscathed. But often we make beginner's mistakes and society becomes unbalanced. We then receive, as it were, extra practice material, which we can only master if we approach that lesson from a suprapersonal point of view. To explain this somewhat with an example: after the Second World War there was a clear global ethical impulse. The establishment of the United Nations and the Declaration of Universal Human Rights were milestones in human development. The recognition that every group of people had the right to its independence became evident, albeit sometimes after violent resistance from the colonizer. We seemed to have learned the lessons of the Second World War.

Unfortunately, as the years went by, and new generations came to the helm, we forgot a few things. Again, population groups were discriminated. The signed treaties, such as those on the rights of refugees, were not respected. The atmosphere of fraternization, cooperation and the will to live in peace was taken less and less seriously by many. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, when many borders disappeared, there was more contact between nations, but the question is whether we gained more understanding for one another. If the mentality is dominated by selfish desire, disharmony arises again in every new situation, even in a world with fewer borders.

We will only be ready for the new chapter in our development when we show in practice that we have processed

the lessons of the past. So: respect human rights, including those of refugees. Work for peace. Do not sell weapons and certainly not to warring countries. Encourage international cooperation and avoid the pitfall of nationalism.

The healing of a sick world is the same as that of an individual patient, because as above, so below. The current pandemic came about partly because a new phase has begun, which presents us with new challenges. A new mentality needs to be developed. We are ready for a new chapter in our book to become fully Human.

A small mentality in a big world

When you are in the middle of an era, it is hard to see its characteristics and discover what specific lessons mankind needs to learn. We already referred above to the dominant materialistic thinking in Western thought, which originated from the Enlightenment. If we try to zoom out even further and look at our Western era in the perspective of, say, the last 1000 years, we see that our world has become smaller and smaller. With technical tools we can have a conversation with almost everyone on this earth as if it were our neighbor. By plane and internet we have made the earth a *global village*. However, the question is whether the human mentality has grown alongside this massive change. Or do we still think small? Do we identify with our group, our "caste", those of whom we think are "equal to us"? Because the boundaries have disappeared, the power of desire is often applied unlimited and uncontrolled, which has led to a chaotic, unjust and sick world.

Now it is not a question of closing the borders, which some countries have decided to do for fear of the virus spreading. We should not retreat behind the dikes. We have to create a world without borders *with a different mindset*. What changes could occur if we could live more from our suprapersonal aspects and control unrestrained desire and vitality?

Back to basics

Our entire economy will undergo a radical change, as we made clear in *Diseased civilization*.

In an ideal society where everyone is living from their suprapersonal aspect, any monetary form would be unnecessary. Everyone would contribute to society in their own way, for the whole, regardless of payment. This seems far away, but we can work towards it in small steps.

If the economy only serves for maintaining the basic necessities of life, it is better to give each adult citizen or student a certain amount of money with which he or she

can fulfill those basic needs. In other words, *basic income guarantee*. Free money for everyone.

Perhaps people still have the reflex that it is odd that you get money without working. However, that is not the case. If you look at a family, for example, then every family member is sure of a roof over his head, food and other basic needs. Isn't a society a big family?

Now each family member will also contribute to the jobs that need to be done to the best of their ability. That's why there should in fact be a *basic job* in addition to the basic income. Everyone should be able to make his or her contribution to society.

By virtue of the laws of reincarnation and cause and effect, each family is the result of the thoughts and actions of all family members. This applies equally to a "large family", such as a city or a country. That is why it is not only logical but also a duty that everyone contributes to the whole of which they are part of and that they receive from the community what they need to make their contribution. In doing so, each has his own talent, his own degree of development. No one should receive more than another because he has greater talents. In this light, universal basic income and universal basic work are very natural.

Because we do not yet live in a fully harmonious society, a society that is a perfect copy of the hierarchical structure of the universe, you could, in a kind of transitional situation, perform paid or unpaid work in addition to your basic income. You are free to decide for yourself.⁽²⁾

Even governments that in no way supported the idea of a basic income are forced by circumstances to (partially) introduce it. In the US, for example, a country in which the government traditionally does not interfere with citizens' incomes, the plan has been made to give everyone 1200 dollars. Although this will only take place on a temporary basis, there are already those who believe that it should be more structural in nature. A permanent basic income is more efficient than a system of benefits, allowances or tax deductions.

If everyone has a basic income, we probably will not have to work 40 hours. There are organizations that have calculated that if every citizen works 28 hours, the economy can run harmoniously without loss of any prosperity. The benefits, on the other hand, are great. No one would get stressed out. There would be no unemployment. Overtime would be a thing of the past. In addition to our contribution to the economy, we could develop spiritually and occupy ourselves with the countless other, intellectual, artistic and spiritual facets of being human. The barren

battle that, due to the pandemic, has taken place in many countries in all kinds of cultural institutions would be turned around. The libraries that are closed would open their doors again. The music schools and theatre companies that have gone bankrupt get a new start. The artistic life in every city is flourishing. Museums are free. Science, philosophy and religion, and the exchange of ideas between them, are at the center of attention.

What is more, people would have time for each other again. Social cohesion in society is increasing. We have time again to visit our old mother or father or to have a good conversation with the neighbor whose husband has just died.⁽³⁾

A system focused on the development of consciousness

If the economy no longer serves for profit, there is no longer any need to make the factors of production as efficient as possible, even at the expense of the quality of work. The system of globalization meant that production was divided into many facets, which were transferred to those countries where costs were lowest. One medicine, for example, sometimes required fifteen different factories spread over many countries. If one of these factories failed, the drug could not be made. The crisis showed how dependent and weak countries become when they are no longer able to support themselves in all sorts of ways. In a spiritually oriented society, the efficiency of production is not a priority. Why should the production process take place as efficiently as possible? Because it makes us richer, at least some of us get richer? Yet it makes many of us poorer. The rich may live in even greater luxury. But is that the purpose of life?

If you start from a different view of humans, the goals change. It is all about spiritual development. Does a human being develop through his work when he has to perform a certain, mechanical action for hours, like a robot in a car factory?

Globalization and automation have reduced a working man to a cog in an engine that he himself does not understand. Therefore we have to return to a situation in which people know what they are doing, what they produce or what services they provide.

So, no factories that make one specific part for a mobile phone, but a work process in which someone oversees the entire work process and can be deployed on all parts, at least as much as possible. This may seem a bit less efficient, but in the long run it is much more effective, because

you turn people into independent, thinking and creative workers, who also have much more job satisfaction.

Creativity is needed, not only for manufacturing products but also for the development of working men and women. We once heard the story of an entrepreneur who was known as a supplier of stairs. However, he himself claimed that he did not so much manufacture stairs, but that the purpose of his company was to devise a way to take people from one floor to another. This may seem like a game of words, but it shows that creativity is developed through a different way of thinking.

That is why it would be better if each country or region took the entire production process back to hand, at least to the extent possible. A country should not focus on just one economic activity. Countries should be self-sufficient. In other words, a country or region should be responsible for its own food supply, but also, as far as possible, for the manufacture of all kinds of necessary products and services. Then a country is strong and independent, and can stand on its own feet materially, mentally and spiritually. As a result, such a country or region is also able to contribute to the greater whole. Because, of course, no community stands on its own, it is part of a greater whole. Consequently, there is no question of nationalism. On the contrary. Although economic activity takes place in one's own region, this is done based on a universal awareness. *Think global, act local.* Some restaurants already apply some of this principle by mainly putting products from their own region on the menu.

If a country is strong, it is able to help other peoples, who may have less potential. Helping does not mean that you make another nation dependent. No, the help serves to make other nations strong, self-confident and altruistic as well. All knowledge in such a country is therefore shared with other peoples. The idea of patents is of course out of the question, which after all only exist by the grace of the economic model of earning money. A nation likes to share its knowledge and skills with others. Knowledge belongs to everyone. This independence within a larger whole is in fact a copy of the hierarchical structure of the universe. An entity has a certain autonomy within the greater whole. When every nation realizes this, it actually forms a channel through which more spiritual forces can flow for the benefit of all mankind. Then, in case of need, we can help each other much better and reduce the risk of disasters.

In fact, every region learns to be universal. Universal in the sense that it is a copy in miniature of the richness of

the totality of human life. It therefore teaches that the objective of the economy is not to make profit but to maintain the community.

Room for animals and plants

The cruelty of the old economic system is most sadly expressed in the treatment of animals. In the modern profit economy, animals have become objects that we, as if they were industrial products, piled up by thousands in far too small places. But animals are intelligent beings who have the same emotions as we humans do.⁽⁴⁾

There is a close relationship between humans and animals.⁽⁵⁾ In fact, humans are the examples on which animals – unselfconsciously – focus. However, instead of stimulating them in their animal development, we deprive them – literally – of the room to do so. We deprive them of room by destroying their habitat and by breeding them as pets. In the latter case, we prevent them from following their natural instincts.

In the post-crisis world we should have a completely different mindset towards our younger brothers. We would give them part of the land and the proceeds of the earth. This is not a new policy. The Bishnois in the desert in Rajasthan, India, have been doing this for centuries. They donate part of their harvests to animals and birds. Overproduction is thus returned to nature. Compare that with food exporting countries: do we give the “overproduction” of the proceeds of the land to the poor in other parts of the world?

The Bishnois respect the other realms of nature in all their actions. They start from a few simple virtues and principles, such as that you can never get more energy out of an organism than it can handle, without endangering the organism itself. If you live like this, then you always work with nature and nature can never backfire in the form of disasters and crises.⁽⁶⁾

Why should not we use that principle? Why should we not return more (agricultural) land to the animals and trees? Why do we reduce the habitats of animals by increasing the number of roads, houses, golf courses, parking lots, distribution centers, industrial estates and especially arable land for the production of food for animals, so that we can eat more meat? Does that make us happier? The same principle applies to humans. Why should one person be allowed to earn millions, while the other is homeless and barely able to eat? Such an imbalance, too, will recover one day and is therefore the cause of new crises.

So we do not breed animals anymore? Where would we

get our milk, meat and eggs from?

It would undoubtedly be the best for the animals if we would no longer breed or train them for the benefit or amusement of humans. We must learn to feed and amuse ourselves without our younger brothers.

Now the use of animal products in our diet is so general that we need this reduction to take place in phases. But as long as we still keep animals in captivity, let us at least make sure that they can follow their animal instincts as much as possible. Do not take a calf away from its mother. Give chickens room to peck. And if you want to ride a horse, do it without hurting the horse with a bit.

As a matter of fact, we should develop this same responsibility towards the even less developed consciousnesses, the plants. Of course, we cannot do without food. But there are plenty of farming methods that do not pollute the soil and the air and that do not require the manipulation of plants. Monoculture is an unnatural way of agriculture. Moreover, the yield per hectare in agriculture is much higher than in livestock farming. The earth is big enough to fill eight billion stomachs.

If each region has its own level of food production, food exports only take place in small quantities and to places close to the producing land.

Mentally healthy world

If the real cause of disease is in our thinking, it is obvious that mental health care will become very important. A mentally healthy climate is the best guarantee for mental health.

In our current world there are thousands of people with psychological problems that are not or hardly solvable. No matter how different these problems are, they are all caused by a certain imbalance in thinking, which causes all kinds of influences to enter the consciousness. It is very difficult to restore the balance, especially because the world we live in is also disharmonious.

When the three propositions and the basic thoughts we presented in the first two articles are more widely known, there will undoubtedly be a greater awareness of togetherness and mental peace: the basis for a mentally healthy world. The awareness that we have infinite abilities and that we are inextricably linked, gives us the strength to solve all challenges and problems. It is the medicine for any psychological ailment.⁽⁷⁾

In fact, no doctor can heal someone, because no one can think for another. However, it is the duty of physicians to help and guide all sick people, mentally or physically,

in the process of working out their disease. But that is actually the duty of every human being.

Education in the light of the development of consciousness

If in the new society the economy is no longer the most important thing, this has a direct effect on education. Nowadays, we mainly train people so that they can contribute to the economy. The important subjects that children are taught always have as goal that they will make their contribution to the economy later on in society. Art and music are taught, but are regarded as amusement subjects that have no practical value.

In many countries children are being prepared for a role in society. Sometimes they have to drop certain subjects at an early age because they do not fit the profile of the profession they were obliged to choose.

But it is much better to train children as broadly as possible. Why should you drop math if you are not good at it? No, then you should be given the help and opportunity to develop that skill. If you are a typical A-student, then it is also good for you to learn how to work with your hands. If you are a science student, you should be taught art subjects and languages as well. Furthermore, students need to learn to work together and appreciate each other's talents.

In this respect, we can learn a lot from the Finnish system, where all children up to the age of eighteen receive a broad education with a lot of attention for creative subjects. At that age they are trained enough to choose which profession they want to pursue and what further study they need to carry out.

The main purpose of education is to enable reincarnating souls to continue their spiritual development and unselfishly take up their task in society again. The more universal humans are, the better they can perform this task. We need universal, creative men and women. That is what the focus should be on, also in education.

Be the change you want to see in the world

Real changes only take place if we change our vision of life. If we cannot answer life's questions satisfactorily, then it is much harder to motivate you in imagining a better world. Therefore, it is not only for yourself but for the whole of humanity to think carefully about questions such as: what is the meaning of life? What happens after death? Why do I live here and now? A spiritual philosophy of life is the best guarantee for social changes.

Of course, the changes will not happen all at once. Revolutions usually do not take humanity any further. A revolution means that one group of rulers gives way to another. However, if the mentality of the people has not changed, the old habits will soon reappear.

So real change is a change of mentality which does not happen at once. Thoughts may be “tough guys” which we have nurtured for many years or even lives. Therefore, they do not die all of a sudden. It will sometimes have to be done with challenges and struggles.

Already now, or soon after the crisis, the first tests will come. How do we treat people or countries with less financial reserves and who have therefore come out of the crisis much worse? How do we deal with those millions of men and women who have lost their jobs? How do we deal with refugees?

We do not have to fall back on old reflexes. Change is possible. We can start thinking new thoughts. Ideas rule the world. That is why we need to have a view in our minds of how it can be. We must continue to nourish our suprapersonal ideal with our mind. And although we cannot immediately live in an ideal society supported by everyone because of the inertia of the masses, we can let the ideal live *in* us and shape it as much as possible in every detail of our daily lives. If you start from the theosophical principle that everything comes from the same source and brotherhood is, therefore, a fact in Nature, then you give form to these principles in everything you do.

Therefore, if we feel that money should not be spent for unethical purposes, open a bank account with a bank that only supports social and environmentally friendly projects. If you think that a Bangladeshi worker should earn a fair wage, do not buy a five-dollar T-shirt, because then it can never have been produced fairly. Do not let the price of the product be the motivation for your purchase, but the way it has been produced. If you think the bio-industry abuses animals, do not eat meat or other animal products anymore. In short, be the change you want to see in the world. With every action you can ask yourself whether you are serving yourself or the totality.

A new phase in the development of mankind has dawned. You are a part of that when you live in the suprapersonal part of the compound consciousness that you are. Every monsoon shower starts with the first drops. We could be those drops. For although one starling doesn't make it summer yet, it does announce it.

References

1. Bouke van den Noort, 'Why heredity is so difficult to predict,' *Lucifer, the Light-bringer*, 2017, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 25.
2. See: Rutger Bregman, Ted talk, Why we should give everyone a basic income, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIL_Y9g7Tg0; Rutger Bregman, Why we should give free money to everyone, *The Correspondent*, 24 December 2013.
3. The scientific community is also calling for a change in the way our economy operates. In a manifesto entitled “We can make the Netherlands radically more sustainable and fairer: five proposals for the Netherlands after Corona”, 170 famous Dutch scientists working in the country's best universities argue for a development model that is not based on growth, but on redistribution, circular agriculture, reducing consumption and travel, and cancelling debts. See: https://www.voetafdruk.eu/nieuws/_20200411manifestnederlandnacorona.html
4. Frans de Waal, *Mama's Last Hug, Animal Emotions and What They Teach Us about Ourselves*. W.W. Norton Company, New York / London, 2019.
5. Theosophy clearly shows the relationship between humans and animals. See for example: G. de Purucker, *Man in Evolution*, chapter 13, *Man the Repertory of All Types*, pp. 195-211, 1st edition 1941.
6. More about the Bishnois, see: <https://www.sahapedia.org/bishnois-of-western-rajasthan-culture-of-nature-conservation>
7. See: Erwin Bomas, 'Why are we so busy? And how do we stop being to busy,' *Lucifer the Light-bringer*, 2019, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 83.

Altruism

Gottfried de Purucker explains here, in a way that directly appeals to our hearts and minds, how normal, how universal and essential Altruism is.⁽¹⁾

Human nature is so prone, when hearing about Altruism or reading about it, to imagine that it is something foreign to us, lugged into human life as a most desirable thing to follow, but, after all, highly impractical, and therefore impracticable — that it is not inherent in the characteristics of human beings to be altruistic naturally. In other words, they are all fascinated with the idea of isolated self-interest. Is not this virtually universal supposition of men utterly unfounded in Nature herself? For wherever we look, whatever we consider or study, we find that the individual working alone for itself is helpless; wherever we look in all the great kingdoms of the Universe, it is union of effort, co-operation in living combines — to use the slang of the street — which is not only what Nature herself is working to bring about and therefore which we find everywhere; but that anything that runs counter and contrary to this fundamental law of the Universe — which is unity in action — produces disharmony, strife, and what in our own bodies we call disease. Health is that condition of bodily structure where all parts work to a common end in what we may call friendship, in what we may call union. Consider the stones: are they not combines, are they not unions of individuals composing, making, producing, a thing? No single atom of any of the chemical elements of which any stone is composed is the stone itself. How about the lovely flower? How about the bodies in which we live? How about a single man? Could he produce the great works that men have bent their genius to achieve, alone? What is civilization but the combined efforts of human beings to produce great and noble effects in human life — increasing comfort, dispelling danger, bringing about the productions of genius from the greater men which redound to our own comfort and use. Show me

a single instance where pure self-interest has produced anything. We find naught, if we consult Nature in all her kingdoms, but unity of workings brought about by multitudes of individuals co-operating to a common end. And what is that but Altruism? Altruism is the word we give to this fact when we see its ethical significance, and this significance is in no wise, nor in any great way nor in any small, different from what we see in the world physical. Altruism means the one working for the all — Nature's fundamental law in all her grand structures — and the all standing as the guard and shield and field of effort of the one. Think of the deep moral lesson, the deduction, to be drawn from this greatest of the universe's — not mysteries but verities; so common around us that usually we pass it by unseeing, with unseeing eye. Show me anything that can endure sole and alone for a single instant of time.

Two or more atoms uniting make a molecule; two or more molecules a larger production; and it is the countless multitudes of such unions which produce the universe. Any single entity essaying to follow the ignoble path of isolated self-interest sets its or his puny will against the force which keeps the stars in their courses, gives health to our bodies, brings about civilizations among men, and produces all the wonders that are around us.

There is a point of teaching in this connexion which it is very important to introduce into the world today, and that is Hope. You know the old story, the Greek story, about a certain very curious and inquisitive person who opened a box and all the evils in the world fled out, and there remained therein only Hope? Now I think this contains a great deal of truth which has a practical bearing on life's problems. As long as man has hope he does not despair. Weak or strong, it matters not; if he has hope, something

to look forward to, if his inner spirit, the spiritual being within him, teaches him something of hope, he not only will never despair, but he will become a builder, a constructor, a worker *with the Universe*, because he will move forwards. And this is Altruism.

We are all children – to use the vernacular of the half-philosophical schools of the day – of the Universe, of its physical side and of its spiritual and divine side. This being so, there is in every human breast an undying font not only of inspiration, but likewise of growth, of hope, of wisdom, and of love. So that the world today, although apparently in a parlous condition, in a desperate state, still contains men and women enough in it to carry the evolutionary wave of progress over its present turmoil and strife; for the majority of mankind are essentially right in their instincts, especially the higher instincts.

Therefore, I do not see anything horribly hopeless about the world's condition today. I believe not only that there is ground for hope, but that the undying spark of spirituality, of wisdom and love of altruism, always living in the human heart, will carry the human race not only out of its present series of impasses, of difficulties, but into brighter days, which will be brighter because wiser and gentler. It is not the crises, when things crash or seem to crash: it is not the horrific noise of the thunder or the crash of its bolt, which govern the great functions of life, human and cosmic; but those slow, to us men, always quiet, unending silent processes which build: build when we wake, build when we sleep, build all the time; and even in the human race carry it through folly after folly into the future.

There is the ground of our hope; and it seems to me that all good men and true should rally to the defense of these primal, simple verities which every human heart can understand, adult or child. I believe it is about time that men and women began to look on the bright side of things, to see hope around us, to forget themselves and their petty worries, and to live in the Infinite and in the Eternal. It is easy — infinitely easier than making ourselves continuously sick with frets and worries! Within each one of us there is something divine to which we can cling, and which will carry us through!

Don't talk to me about Altruism being something foreign or exotic to us, unusual, impractical, and therefore impracticable; for it is the only thing which perpetually lives, the only thing which endures for aye. When any single element or part in a human body endures for aye. When any single element or part in a human body begins to run

'on its own,' we have disease. When any single element or part in any structural combine which helps to compose the world around us begins to run 'on its own,' i.e., what we call self-interest, there we see degeneration and decay. Deduction and question: Which of the twain should we follow? — the pathway of the cosmic Intelligence bringing us health inner and outer, peace inner and outer, strength internal and external, by union inner and outer? Or the teaching of a tawdry and isolated self-interest which seeks its own to the prejudice of all?

Is it not high time that we as Theosophists should give to the world a few of the simple inner teachings of the God-Wisdom of the ancients? And will you show me one more sublime, more appealing to human intellect and to the dictates of human conscience, than that of Altruism, which puts us in intimate union with the throbbing of the Cosmic Heart, and which idea, if we can pass it over into the minds of men, will more than justify all the work that the Great Masters of Wisdom have been doing for mankind since time immemorial? Ethics above all!

Theosophy: principles and practice

What is Theosophy?

The name Theosophy stems from the Greek 'Theos' and 'Sophia' meaning Divine Wisdom. It is no religion but a philosophy of life, which offers to every human being the possibility to find a solution to the many problems of life.

Theosophy forms the basis of morality. This morality follows logically from a monumental number of teachings about the laws in the Universe and the structure of Man and the Universe. These teachings are not based upon belief but upon knowledge, that has been tested by all great Sages of past and present.

Theosophy stimulates independent thinking and the search for truth. Theosophy gives explanations as to the how (science), the why (philosophy) and the what (religion) of life.

The three propositions

H.P. Blavatsky mentions in her book *The Secret Doctrine* three theosophical propositions. The propositions are no dogmas. By examining their value in daily life, you gain an understanding of Life.

Propositions: quotations from <i>The Secret Doctrine</i>	Explanation	A few conclusions
1st: Boundlessness An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. One absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being.	There is a causeless cause of all beings. This is not an entity. Not only did we spring from IT — we <i>are</i> IT in our deepest core.	All beings are inseparably connected. Universal brotherhood is a <i>fact</i> in Nature. All beings are of equal value. The numberless differences between them do not alter this fundamental fact.
2nd: Cyclic appearance and disappearance The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically “the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing”, called “the manifesting stars” and the “sparks of Eternity.”	LIFE manifests periodically. After each period of manifestation it withdraws again.	All things are ensouled. Each form is the result of the consciousness that is working through it. Attempts to reform yourself and the society will never yield permanent results unless mainly directed to the reform of your consciousness.
3rd: Mutual dependency, universal patterns and growth of consciousness The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul – a spark of the former – through the Cycle of Incarnation (or “Necessity”) in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term.	Being a child of the Boundless, you carry boundless capacities in yourself. Each being is developing its latent capacities. Thus, it gradually grows from ‘atom to god’ — and even further, without end.	The Cosmos is a great coherent organism, and each entity is a living, growing part of it. There is always a greater truth hidden behind the knowledge you now have: Theosophy gives a death blow to each kind of dogmatism.

The seven Jewels of Wisdom

A study of Theosophy will make you familiar with a number of core ideas like reincarnation, karma and inner development. These core ideas can also be found in eastern philosophies, where they are called the “Seven Jewels of Wisdom”: *Sapta Ratnāni*. They all follow from the three propositions of Theosophy.

Jewels of Wisdom	Explanation	A few conclusions
1st Jewel: The cycle of re embodiment; when applied to human beings it is called “reincarnation” (<i>Punarjanman</i>)	Every being passes through the phases of outer and inner life, of activity and rest.	Our fellow-humans are reincarnating egos with whom we work and live life after life. So, a new born child is an old colleague whom we help to settle during some years, and someone’s death is a ‘see you later’.
2nd Jewel: The doctrine of cause and consequence (<i>Karma</i>)	Every action in the Cosmos leads to a reaction, a consequence. Thus, all events in your life are consequences, caused by your former thoughts and actions.	Karma is the doctrine of free will. You are the creator of your own destiny. Karma is a result of the Unity behind the Cosmos. Our destiny is interwoven with that of all beings.
3rd Jewel: Hierarchies (<i>Loka’s and Tala’s</i>)	Every being is part of a greater totality and is itself composed of subordinate beings.	More developed and less developed beings are mutually dependent. Development is relative: we are always both teacher and student. So, we should try to be an example for our fellow-men.
4rth Jewel: Self-becoming (<i>Swabhāva</i>)	Every being has a unique character. You always become what you yourself have built up in your consciousness.	You cannot blame your parents, your education, your circumstances or your DNA for what you are. You are responsible for your character.
5th Jewel: Progressive development: learning by enveloping (<i>Nivritti</i>) and developing (<i>Pravritti</i>) of consciousness	Every being develops the latent capacities in its consciousness on its own strength.	There is never any need to think that you are “just what you are”. You are much more than what you manifest now. Our unselfish ideals and aspirations are attainable.
6th Jewel: The two Paths, the Path of “Everyone for Himself” and the Path of Compassion (<i>Pratyeka-Yāna and Amrita-Yāna</i>)	There are two motives to tread the Path: 1) for yourself, for individual deliverance; 2) for the benefit of all that lives. In this latter case your spiritual growth is incidental on helping others.	“Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of Laws.” (H.P. Blavatsky) Practicing compassion is not just trying “to do good deeds”; it is a continuous realizing of brotherhood as a fact in Nature.
7th Jewel: Knowledge of the SELF, the core of all beings (<i>Ātma-vidyā</i>)	You are able to know the One Life that flows through every being, because in the deepest core of your being you are THAT yourself.	Realizing the Unity of all that lives has bearing on all our habits: on which bank do I put my money? How to deal with that annoying neighbor? How can I – or my country – contribute to peace in the world?

More info...

For those who wish to study the current events from a broader theosophical basis, we gathered a number of references to articles and lectures

Articles

What insight can the theosophical literature offer us about a pandemic such as the current corona crisis? To help us find answers to questions, we have collected below some excerpts from theosophical literature by H.P. Blavatsky, W.Q. Judge and G. de Purucker on related topics.

<https://blavatskyhouse.org/news/corona-crisis-theosophical-literature-about-epidemics-and-pandemics/>

In the article “Coronacrisis: danger and opportunity”, in the last issue of *Lucifer – the Lightbringer*, we describe the opportunities that this crisis offers to bring out the more spiritual qualities in us.

https://blavatskyhouse.org/uploads/files/Lucifer_EN/lucifer-en-2020-1.pdf

Lectures about related subjects

“Karma and Reincarnation” – 11 December 2016

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4AfOkdQx20>

part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sj4CAgyZNv8>

part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQfcru4ceLM>

“Karma and the rise and fall of civilizations” – 10 December 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-fUpLqnJcQ>

“Our life is what our thoughts make it” – 20 October 2019

<https://blavatskyhouse.org/lectures/our-life-is-what-our-thoughts-make-it/>

“Universal Wisdom (Religion + Philosophy + Science)” – 17 November 2019

<https://blavatskyhouse.org/lectures/universal-wisdom-religion-philosophy-science/>

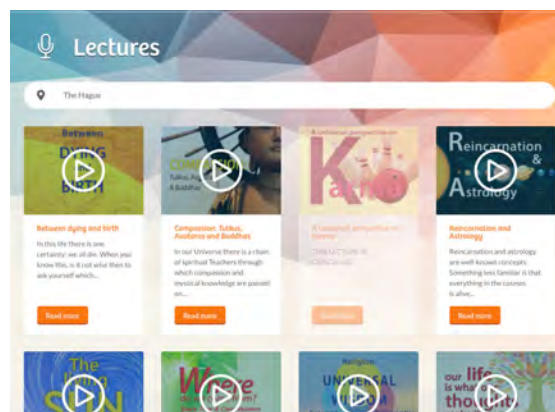
Symposium 13th September 2020



Lectures 2020-2021:

<https://blavatskyhouse.org/lectures/>

18 October	What is Theosophy?
15 November	The <i>good</i> life according to Plato
13 December	Mental epidemics
17 January	The Egyptian Book of the Dead
21 February	Reincarnation and karma
21 March	Selfless love
18 April	Mystic life
16 May	Nature: <i>one</i> Life
	<i>The role of the human kingdom</i>



Lucifer®

Colophon

Editors: Barend Voorham,
Henk Bezemer, Rob Goor, Bianca
Peeters, Erwin Bomas, Bouke van den
Noort.

Chief editor: Herman C. Vermeulen

Editorial office:
De Ruijterstraat 72-74,
2518 AV Den Haag,
tel. +31 (0) 70 346 15 45
e-mail: luciferred@isis-foundation.org

Reactions:
The Editorial Board reserves the right
to make a selection and/or shorten
incoming documents

Subscription:
This is the 21st free sample of *Lucifer*,
the Light-bringer. For subscription:
mail the editorial office: luciferred@stichtingisis.org.
The price of our "paper" issues will be
about € 4,60 and € 9,20 for a double
issue, excluding postage.
Payment by Internet – creditcard (see
website).

Publisher:
I.S.I.S. Foundation, Blavatskyhouse,
De Ruijterstraat 72-74,
2518 AV Den Haag,
tel. +31 (0) 70 346 15 45,
e-mail: luciferred@isis-foundation.org
internet: www.blavatskyhouse.org

© I.S.I.S. Foundation
No part of this publication may be
reproduced or made public in any
form or by any means: electronic,
mechanical, by photocopies,
recordings, or any other way, without
prior permission of the Publisher.

The I.S.I.S. foundation is not
responsible for any statement or
opinion that is published in this
magazine, unless an explicit reference
is made.

I.S.I.S. Foundation

The name of the Foundation [Stichting] is
'Stichting International Study-centre for
Independent Search for truth'. Its registered
office is in The Hague, The Netherlands.

The object of the Foundation is to form
a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood by
disseminating knowledge about the spiritual
structure of human beings and the cosmos,
free from dogma.

The Foundation endeavors to accomplish this
object by giving courses, organizing public and
other speeches and lectures, issuing books,
brochures and other publications, and by
drawing on all other resources available to it.

I.S.I.S. Foundation is a non-profit organization,
which is recognized as such by the tax
authorities in The Netherlands. For the purposes
of the tax authorities, I.S.I.S. Foundation has
what is called ANBI status.

ANBI stands for General Benefit Organisation
(Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling).
The most important requisites in obtaining this
ANBI status are:

- It is a non-profit organization, so it has
no earnings. Any profit earned from for
example book sales, must be fully used
for general beneficial activities. For I.S.I.S.
Foundation, this is spreading the Theo-
sophia. (We refer to the statutes, aims and
principles for further information.)
- Board members must meet integrity
requirements.
- The ANBI must have a separate property,
whereby a director or policymaker cannot
dictate over this property as though it were
his own.
- The remuneration of board members
may only consist of a reimbursement for
expenses and attendance.

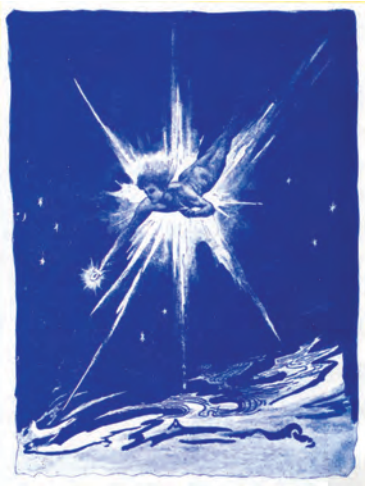
I.S.I.S. Foundation ANBI number is 50872.

 International
Study-centre for
Independent
Search for truth
Foundation

I.S.I.S. Foundation

The activities of the I.S.I.S. Foundation (International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth) are based on:

1. The essential unity of all that exists.
2. By reason of this unity: brotherhood as a fact in nature.
3. Respect for everyone's free will (when applied from this idea of universal brotherhood).
4. Respect for everyone's freedom to build up their own view of life.
5. To support the developing of everyone's own view of life and its application in daily practice.



Why this journal is called *Lucifer*

Lucifer literally means Bringer of Light.

Each culture in the East and West has his bringers of light: inspiring individuals who give the initial impulse to spiritual growth and social reform. They stimulate independent thinking and living with a profound awareness of brotherhood.

These bringers of light have always been opposed and slandered by the establishment. But there are always those who refuse to be put off by these slanderers, and start examining the wisdom of the bringers of light in an open-minded and unprejudiced way.

For these people this journal is written.

“... the title chosen for our magazine is as much associated with divine ideas as with the supposed rebellion of the hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost* ...

We work for true Religion and Science, in the interest of fact as against fiction and prejudice. It is our duty – as it is that of physical Science – to throw light on facts in Nature hitherto surrounded by the darkness of ignorance ... But natural Sciences are only one aspect of SCIENCE and TRUTH. Psychological and moral Sciences, or theosophy, the knowledge of divine truth, are still more important ...”

(Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the first issue of *Lucifer*, September 1887)