

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

Esoteric Teachings
Volumes 5 and 6 of
G. de Purucker

**How do we prevent
mental epidemics?**

**Universal wisdom
in the language of
mathematics**

**Theosophy in
Nature: Do humans
have a magnetic
sense?**

Traveling to Mars



Contents Lucifer — the Light-bringer

No. 3 | September 2021

Editorial

p. 66

Esoteric Teachings Volumes 5 and 6 of G. de Purucker

p. 67

In our series of reviews of the twelve volumes of Gottfried de Purucker's *Esoteric Teachings*, we now discuss Volumes 5 and 6: *Hierarchies and the Doctrine of Emanations*, and *Invisible Worlds and their Inhabitants*. This series provides invaluable guidance to all who seek to pass on Theosophia to their fellow men in a pure and insightful way.

Henk Bezemer

How do we prevent mental epidemics?

p. 71

Are there parallels to be drawn between a physical virus that spreads over the world and a mental virus that infects our thinking? And if so, how can we prevent mental epidemics? On this very topical question, Herman C. Vermeulen gave a lecture in November 2020, which the editors have edited for publication.

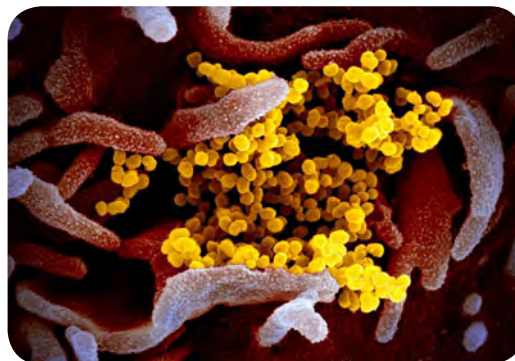
Herman C. Vermeulen

Universal wisdom in the language of mathematics

p. 79

Why were the theory of numbers and geometry important parts of a disciple's spiritual training for many centuries? In a previous article, we explored the roots of mathematics. In this article we examine whether we can find the three fundamental propositions of the Universal Wisdom, the Theosophia, reflected in mathematics?

SC



COVID-19 viruses emerging from the surface of human cells.

Theosophy in Nature

Do humans have a magnetic sense?

p. 86

Do we have a magnetic sense, like some animals do? Based on the theosophical knowledge of the nature and workings of consciousness, combined with interesting results from recent research, we are one step closer to an answer.

Henk Bezemer

Traveling to Mars

p. 89

Is emigration to Mars the solution to Earth's problems?

Barend Voorham

Questions & Answers

93

- » How real are dreams?
- » The role of our intellect
- » Wonderment and intuition
- » Practice what you preach

Agenda

96

- » Lectures and studies on Sundays



Editorial

We live in dynamic times. Life in 2021 looks very different from life a few years ago. Computers and the Internet are taking an increasingly dominant place in society. Video conferencing, partly due to the influence of the Corona pandemic, has taken off.

Now these technical developments are not in themselves bad or good per se. It is the motive with which they are used that determines their ultimate usefulness to humanity. It comes down to our mindset, to our thinking. Humans are thinkers.

It is very important to control your thinking if you do not want to fall prey to a mental epidemic, which can do far more damage than the Corona pandemic. Thoughts may be like bacteria or viruses, they can spread with lightning speed. Especially the unselfconscious thinker can easily become “infected” with certain thoughts. This is explained in detail in the article “How do we prevent mental epidemics”.

That technical developments can also contribute to the spreading of theosophical thoughts – which we think is obviously very beneficial – is proven by *Lucifer, the Light-bringer*, which is distributed to many parts of the world thanks to the Internet. So, thanks to our magazine, and also thanks to the English-language talks that can be found on our YouTube channel, students have enrolled in our course Thinking Differently.

Furthermore, in October we started giving lectures on Sunday evenings (7:30 pm CET), which can be discussed on a following Sunday. All that too thanks to the achievements of the Internet. Elsewhere in this issue you will find more information about this.

The new technical developments certainly do not have the effect of outdating the Ancient Wisdom. In the second article in the series on mathematics, the question is asked whether the three fundamental propositions of Universal Wisdom are reflected in mathematics; a question that is as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago.

Technical developments have also contributed to a sharp increase in the use of fossil fuels. This, as well as the growing consumption of meat, contributes to the emission of CO₂, resulting in global warming. The climate, the loss of biodiversity, and other international issues are perceived by some as such insoluble problems that they are seriously considering emigration to Mars. In an article on this subject, it is clearly stated that this cannot be a solution, yes, the question even arises whether the real Man could go to Mars at all.

In our series on the *Esoteric Teachings* by Gottfried de Purucker, we discuss Volumes 5 and 6 titled *Hierarchies and the Doctrine of Emanations*, and *Invisible Worlds and their Inhabitants*. Although these are very exalted thoughts, these two volumes certainly have a very practical component as well: you will learn how to explain the Theosophia to others. This too has not lost any of its topicality.

Our section on Theosophy and Nature answers the question whether we, like dogs for example, have a magnetic sense.

Finally, we again answer some of the questions we have been asked, including the interesting question of the extent to which dreams are real.

We hope that this issue of *Lucifer* will stimulate further thought, further study, which may raise new insights, or new questions. We hope you will share them with us. It is in interaction with each other, that Theosophia becomes clearer to all.

The editors

Esoteric Teachings Volumes 5 and 6 of G. de Purucker



In our review series of the 12 volumes of *Esoteric Teachings* by Gottfried de Purucker, we now discuss Volumes 5 and 6, titled *Hierarchies and the Doctrine of Emanations*, and *Invisible Worlds and their Inhabitants*. This series contains invaluable instructions for everyone striving to pass on Theosophia to his fellow men in a pure, coherent and understandable form.

Key thoughts

» Volume 5 of the *Esoteric Teachings* describes how a cosmic hierarchy of beings emanates from the apex being who is the source and core of it. In short, it explains what we mean by *emanation*.

» Volume 6 describes the inner and outer structure of the cosmos: the spheres of existence and their inhabitants, in all their degrees of evolutionary unfolding.

» In this article we show something of the wealth of vision and understanding that can be gleaned from these volumes, by citing a few examples.

In these twelve *Esoteric Teachings*, which I.S.I.S. Foundation publishes in their most original edition, G. de Purucker explains the Theosophia in a clear way. Those who regularly study these books attentively, will notice that they become much better equipped to understand the ideas behind great works like *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence* by H.P. Blavatsky: not just the theosophical principles but also its elaborations.

In Volumes 5 and 6, just like in the other volumes, G. de Purucker provides clarity where there was confusion. He takes away misunderstandings, connects several teachings into one view, and provides hints towards deeper teachings. The latter doing so in accordance with the time-honored method: stimulating the independent thinking of the student by suggestive food for thought.

The structure of the series

Where should we place Volumes 5

and 6, in relation to Volumes 1 till 4? Volumes 1 and 2 lay the ethical blueprint for all the other ones. They deal with the attitude we need to adopt in order to assimilate the more esoteric knowledge, including the responsibility that comes with it, and to apply this responsibly. Volume 3 is about Space, Duration and the cause of illusion. In short, the most fundamental concepts we can imagine. In Volume 4, G. de Purucker describes the birth phases of Solar Systems and Planets, and the enormous role of the zodiac. He also discusses the doctrine of cycles, among which the cycle of re-embodiment, to which all living things are subject.

Volumes 5 and 6 follow in this line. Volume 5 describes how a cosmic hierarchy of beings emanates (often translated as “flowing forth” but it is much more than that) from the Top Being who is its source and core. So, it explains what we mean by *emanation*. If Volume 4 explains the theosophical doctrines on Suns and Planets in a

more scientific way, then Volume 5 dives more into the *causal* side of that process: the processes of consciousness that get everything going. Volume 6 describes the inner and outer structure of the cosmos: the spheres of existence and their inhabitants, in all their degrees of evolutionary development. Actually, the cosmic beings do not “inhabit” these cosmic spheres, but they *form* them, they *are* them, for there are no worlds separate from the beings that compose them.

By the way, we consciously write cosmos with a c and not with a k, because G. de Purucker distinguishes cosmos and kosmos. By kosmos he refers to a galaxy with all its outer and inner spheres, and by cosmos he means a solar system with all its spheres, so a much smaller hierarchy of life.

Below, we will give some examples of the wealth of vision and understanding which we may glean from Volumes 5 and 6. We hope that this will help you decide whether you will take up the study of these universal teachings yourself.

Volume 5: esoteric cosmogony

Volume 5 deals mainly about *emanation*: the process of a leading entity manifesting himself in a hierarchy of less developed entities. These less advanced beings are attracted to the sphere of influence that flows from the consciousness of this leading entity. You could compare such a sphere to a magnetic field, radiated from a magnet.

Every cycle in Nature starts with the process of emanation. Our own birth in this incarnation started as an emanation from our own consciousness. This is also the case with the birth of a Planet or Solar System, or a tiny atom — or whatever other being. It is therefore a fundamental teaching. To understand emanation, G. de Purucker tells us, we must realize that beings are centers of consciousness (monads) and in essence boundless, without dimensions. The moment you try to imagine this as a material mechanical picture, you will get lost.

A complete human being, for example, is a spiritual core from which flows a mental-psychological part, from which flows a temporary instrument or body. If you compare yourself to a car including a driver, you must realize that the “car” through which your consciousness works is a living part of yourself. It consists of countless other beings, which are born in the sphere of influence of your consciousness. The image of the snail with its self-excreted shell is perhaps a little better — as long as we keep in mind that the shell is a *living* instrument: a close cooperation of many beings, united and managed by your consciousness.

Furthermore, G. de Purucker describes in Volume 5 the

state in which all beings are during the cosmic pralayas, so, between two periods of manifestation. A very special thought is that the highest parts of the cosmic hierarchy are in a state of very intense spiritual activity during pralayas. All the less developed beings experience this state as “unlimited unity”.

That pralaya state is also called *Swabhavat* in Sanskrit. It is the root of all things, the essence that fills the entire Universe. In Swabhavat, when the time strikes for a new cycle of manifestation, *Fohat* (Cosmic Vitality) and Mahat (Cosmic Mind) awaken. Right from the start, Fohat is guided by Mahat. From Mahat flow 7 (or 10 or 12) rays, called Logoi (plural of Logos): cosmic beings who are the source of all hierarchies below.

But behind the Cosmic Mind lies the Cosmic Buddhi, and behind that the One Cosmic Monad. These form a trinity, a “three-in-one”, often called the first, second and third Logos. We can recognize this trinity in the writings of almost all major religions and philosophies, for example, as Father – Mother – Son, Brahmā – Vishnu – Shiva, the hidden Thought – the Voice – the Word, and many other similar divine triads. Each plane, each being has its own three Logoi. So, the fundamental process repeats itself everywhere in miniature.

G. de Purucker explains how Fohat manifests itself in the physical phenomena we observe all around us. And he discusses the meaning of the term *Aeons*, a term often used by the mystical thinkers from the beginning of our era, the Gnostics. Those Aeons are in fact groups of divine beings who form the “trunk” and “great branches” of the cosmic tree of life, from which all other divisions of the cosmos flow.

Volume 5: the swabhāva doctrine

The second part of Volume 5 deals with the doctrine of *swabhāva*, of “self-becoming”. The term has two related meanings. The first one is: every being is born by its own urge, driven by its own innate capacities for development. The second meaning – which is in fact a consequence of the first aspect – is that every being has its own inherent characteristic. It is always this inner characteristic, that will be manifested.

We therefore see a boundless variety of evolving beings in the cosmos, all of them with their own characteristics following their own evolutionary path. And yet, the cosmos is a comprehensive unity. The multiplicity manifests the unity ...

Now G. de Purucker applies the doctrine of swabhāva to

the composite nature of Man — the monads of various levels of development. These monads, these centers of consciousness that together form Man, each have their own characteristics. And because they work so closely together, forming a whole, each monad contributes to the composite *overall characteristic* of that individual. This shows the responsibility we human egos have for the beings of our lower nature, and in a certain way also for our higher nature.

A human being, says G. de Purucker graphically, can be compared to a lyre with seven strings. These strings vibrate with the universal wind blowing through it. The *swabhāva* teachings show us, when you study them carefully, how fundamentally intertwined we are with the universe, with all the planes of the universe. It is our grand future as human beings to become self-consciously active at all levels, in all *swabhāvas*, of our inner nature. Then we have become self-conscious gods.

The seven main characteristics of consciousness – ātman, buddhi, and the other five principles – are related to the seven colors and seven tones. In fact, they are all vibrations. Each being has developed its own character and therefore sings its own song and radiates its own color. And because each being is composed of countless beings, you can speak of a kind of miraculous musical symphony and a brilliant composition of colors. In fact, sound and color always go together (not just with lightning).

An ethically important point is this: G. de Purucker shows that a person whose main characteristic is buddhi (the insight principle) does not need to be nobler than someone whose main characteristic is desire. If the latter thinks and lives in the universal, compassionate side of the desire principle, he is actually much more spiritually active than someone who lives in the lower sub-elements of buddhi. So, each human being, no matter which basic characteristic he has, can live in the spiritual parts of it. A very inspiring thought!

Volume 5: architects and builders

The third part of Volume 5 discusses the so-called *two cosmic hierarchies*. In *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky distinguishes between the architects and the builders among spiritual beings. Those who lay the foundations, the architects, and those who elaborate and shape those foundations, the builders.

G. de Purucker explains that architects and builders are relative concepts. How far developed a divine being may be, compared to an even further developed being he is a

builder, following the general patterns of that higher being. So, a being whom we may presently call a builder, will one day develop into an architect – which he already is in essence NOW – and yet may be called a builder again, as he becomes active in a more divine hierarchy.

G. de Purucker also explains a bit more about the *Lipikas*, the mysterious beings known as the “recorders of Karma”. They are the first beings to become active when a cosmos awakens and are active on the highest cosmic plane. Since all other beings are within their sphere of influence, every action of each being, down to the smallest finger movement, prints itself into that sphere. Once imprinted, each cause will inevitably produce its effects, exactly in accordance with the character and force of the cause. The so-called *four Mahārajas* in Indian mythology are a designation of the four groups of *Lipikas* that encompass the four lowest planes of the cosmos.

Volume 6: the cosmic principles-elements

In this first part of book 6, we see how beautifully Nature is *unfolding from a unity* into an ordered series of planes of existence. And by Nature, we mean all planes of being, from the relatively divine ones to the material ones. The highest plane emanates the second highest, and this one the third highest, and this way a complete universe unfolds step by step. This goes on until the lowest point is reached and the evolutionary “road back to unity” starts. We humans can become familiar with all cosmic realms because we, being a child of the cosmos, carry all the forces and substances of those realms within us.

G. de Purucker pays special attention to the meaning of the *elements* of the ancients: Aether, Fire, Air, Water and Earth, as well as to the beings that inhabit these elements, usually called the *elementals*. These elementals are beings at the very beginning of their development. They are, so to speak, just entering the first, lowest step of the ladder of cosmic life. These elementals lay the substantial foundation at the birth of a Solar System or a Planet. Upon this basic structure, the more advanced beings can build.

Volume 6: the cosmic planes: lokas and talas

All in Nature is alive. Therefore, *the cosmic planes are in fact states of consciousness*. They are referred to by different names in the various traditions: principles, tattwas, essences, elements, worlds, lokas, talas, prakritis, vikritis, and so on. In essence, they refer to the same thing, but each term emphasizes another aspect of it. For example, principles and lokas refer more to the consciousness side, the energy

side of these planes, and elements and talas refer more to the substantial side. But both sides are like the sides of a coin: mind and matter are inseparable from each other. The lokas and talas should be considered as two poles of one magnetic field.

G. de Purucker shows how, with help of Theosophia, we can understand the various teachings by the philosophical schools of the Hindus and Buddhists on this subject and recognize in all these descriptions the same fundamental teaching. The seemingly huge differences between the 3-, 4-, 5- and 7-fold divisions of the cosmos are actually *darśanas*: points of view.

All planes of the cosmos emanate from the ONE Life and are therefore inseparably connected to each other. Each plane, sphere of life or loka-tala combination therefore carries the characteristics of all the other areas, as sub-characteristics within itself. Through its sub-characteristics each plane resonates, so to speak, more or less with the events in all the other planes. The planes are constantly interacting with each other.

The Theosophia paints us a very dynamic picture, for every being in the cosmos evolves, while going through all the 7 (or 10 or 12) cosmic planes and sub-planes, cycle after cycle. Not only man evolves in this way, but also beings like the Globes of our Planetary Chain, and our Planetary Chain itself.

The *essence* of each plane is ātmic, “pure spirit” so to speak, and each being, in whatever plane he is now operating, is able to do so from a unity perspective, and thus live and work fully beyond all the limitations and illusions of that plane.

All “layers” in our inner nature are permeated with the spheres of influence of the cosmic beings in which we live. We humans for example, carry within us the loka-talas – with their associated capacities and substances – of the Earth, the Solar System and the Galaxy. We are “flesh of the flesh,” “blood of the blood” of the universe. This fact is the fundamental source of our ethical sense. Unity is a fact. If we harm one another, we simultaneously harm the whole community and so, ourselves. And if we help another, we are essentially helping the TOTALITY. It shows us one of the great reasons why karmic action is perfect, why it is infallible.

Volume 6: on the twelve classes of monads

A monad is a spark of boundless Life. Every point of Space is actually a Monad, an indestructible, eternal consciousness. Everything is alive.

Each monad begins its evolutionary journey in our cosmos on the lowest rung of the ladder. Gradually, from within, he unfolds his infinite latent faculties as he goes through learning cycle after learning cycle. Therefore, when we talk about a “human monad,” we actually mean a monad going through the human learning stage at this moment. It is a grand picture. At every moment, there are monads in all stages of development, which, complementing each other, form the cosmos.

How can we picture these stages of development? For instance, as three phases: first the physical-astral-vital, then the mental, then the spiritual-divine. These growth stages can also be represented in other ways. We can also speak of seven or ten or twelve phases: of monads in seven or ten or twelve major classes. Each division stresses another aspect of the Theosophia.

By the seven classes we mean the most manifested classes. The stages above them form three classes — which are for *our* consciousness a unity, a divine unity. And if we want to complete the cosmic picture, we must add two classes, which brings us to twelve classes. These different levels of monads are directly connected to the cosmic principles and elements we discussed before. The monads learn to express these inherent principles better and better.

From these teachings we can conclude that we humans can see ourselves as children of the Globe Earth, as children of the inner Sun, because of our mental nature, and as children of the inner heart of the Stars, because of our monadic nature. And our evolution is *threefold*: a simultaneously ascending development of our spiritual, mental and physical parts. A splendid picture. All mysteries are contained within us.



How do we prevent mental epidemics?

Key thoughts

» There are many parallels between a virus and a thought.

» Thinking is not toll-free. It is almost as powerful as performing actions.

» The ease with which a mental epidemic can be unleashed, using software and social media, is unprecedented.

» We must learn to control our thinking process, not just for ourselves but certainly also for our fellow humans.

» It is much harder to influence active thinkers than passive thinkers.

» With our higher qualities of consciousness, we can gradually improve our ability to distinguish the universal from the temporary.

» Everything is alive and has consciousness, no matter how primitive or lofty it is.

» All processes, all habitual patterns in nature take place on the same universal basis. These processes are colored, inhibited or supported by the individual behavior of the responding entities which are subject to it.

There are clear parallels that can be drawn between a physical virus that goes around and a mental virus that can infect our thinking. This is what Theosophia teaches us, if we assume universal laws that apply to all consciousnesses on all planes. Herman C. Vermeulen discussed this in November 2020 in a series of lectures on mental epidemics. The positive conclusion was: we can train ourselves to prevent mental contagion. His closing lecture, *How do we prevent mental epidemics?*, was edited for this publication.

Consciousness underlies all manifestation, nothing excluded. This principle of the Theosophia is essential in this lecture in order to compare viral epidemics with mental epidemics. It is *consciousness* to which we attribute the ability to *act* and *react*. In doing so, we do not distinguish between spirit and matter. We do recognize beings with higher or lower qualities of consciousness. These constitute, reasoned from the human perspective, a vast array from exceedingly primitive to extremely advanced beings. These myriads of beings all interact with each other in numerous relations: no consciousness is on its own. Each consciousness, according to its qualities, functions only in cooperation with other consciousnesses. The Theosophia assumes universal laws, patterns that apply on all planes of manifestation. On each plane they are expressed according to the development of the beings or consciousnesses living there. We

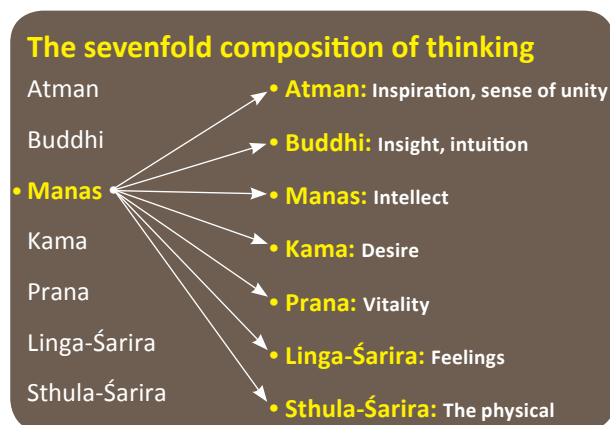
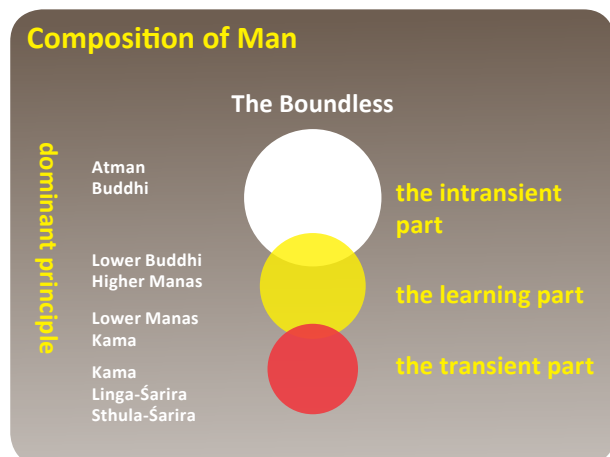
will see that for our material realm and other less material realms, the universal laws run parallel. This can also be understood if we consider that spirit and matter are the higher and lower states of a consciousness. This consciousness expresses itself, manifests itself, according to the qualities it has already developed, and always does so in cooperation with other consciousnesses.

This picture applies to all ten Kingdoms in nature (see section “The Kingdoms of Nature” p. 72), whereby the ‘distance’ between a virus and a thought, as we shall see, is not really that big. And we shall also see that man, as a cooperation of lower and higher developed consciousnesses, has his specific place within the hierarchy of the Kingdoms of nature.

Mind

Man concentrates his development of consciousness in the thinking faculty. It is what makes humans human

— *Manas* (Sanskrit for *man*, *thinker*). It is the fifth of the seven universal principles found in every being. The illustrations below show those principles and how we can recognize them in the seven thinking aspects of our minds.



Consciousness is also *perception* and in the characteristics of the thinking aspects we can recognize where we place our emphasis and how we color our perceptions. The three highest thinking aspects are Ātman, Buddhi, Manas.

Ātman – inspiration – the ability which we have hardly developed yet, is the most spiritual and the most Universal. Buddhi – insight, intuition – is what we are slowly developing, it is the visionary aspect.

Manas means man and thinker: that is what we are focused on as humans, where our main focal point is and what we are developing.

Now again each thinking aspect has its sevenfold subdivision, a broad spectrum on which it can be focused — from the physical to the most exalted spiritual realms. All of our thinking aspects can be developed further, but we must remember that it is always our consciousness that perceives. *It is not the eye that sees, but the consciousness that sees with the eye.*

A virus and a thought

To compare viral epidemics with mental epidemics based on the universal laws, we first compare a virus and a thought to see if the processes that occur in the viruses also occur in the realm of thoughts.

- What is a virus? According to science, it is a microscopic particle consisting of hereditary material wrapped in a protein shell. A virus only becomes biologically active when it invades cells of living organisms. Within science there is some debate as to whether such a virus is a living being or just a certain combination of DNA that can invade cells and multiply within them. But if we start from the theosophical idea that *everything* is a living being – think of the definition of life, saying that something must be able to act and react, and viruses can do that very well – then that particle is in fact a living being: albeit at a very primitive level. A number of viruses are harmful to humans, but there are also ‘good’ viruses that protect us against harmful bacteria.
- What is a thought? A thought is also a living being, a consciousness, as you can read in the definition above. An elemental being that can only become active if it can cooperate with a more advanced (thinking) being, a host, thus manifesting itself in a cooperative relationship. *We* create this cooperation. Human beings think thoughts and those thoughts – living beings – go through a development in cooperation with us. This allows them to behave in a certain way and have influence. Like a virus, some can be called harmful to us, but there are also many “good”, often selfless thoughts.

In both cases, of both the virus and the thought, you have a living being which can enter a host, which serves as a breeding ground and gives the invader an opportunity to multiply and spread again.

The Kingdoms of Nature

In order to place viruses and thoughts in the range of living beings, we look briefly at the structure of universal Nature. It is hierarchical in structure, as Theosophia teaches us. Nature can be divided hierarchically into ten Kingdoms of Nature, from the highest consciousness to the lowest: three Kingdoms of Gods, the Human Kingdom, Animal Kingdom, Plant Kingdom, Mineral Kingdom and three Elemental Kingdoms.

Now we definitely do not find the Kingdoms of the Gods in present-day science, but the Theosophia defines them

as higher consciousnesses that do not express themselves through a physical body — a physical vehicle. They do have a vehicle, albeit of a very different, higher nature. On the other side of this hierarchy we find, below the Mineral Kingdom, three Elemental Kingdoms. A virus such as the one we know so well in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, is a being belonging to one of the Elemental Kingdoms. In fact, it resides on the boundary of the highest Elemental Kingdom and the Mineral Kingdom: it can take a form, but it can also retreat into what is formless to us. It is a transitional form between these realms of manifestation.

If we elaborate on the question of what a thought is, we see an elemental being at the lowest rung of our hierarchy, the first Elemental Kingdom. A thought, in consciousness the least developed, is a “building block” for us, of which we can distinguish a whole range of different types. From high spiritual thoughts to low and gross thoughts. Important here is the power that thoughts can develop within us.

The well-known fairy tale of the genie in the bottle gives us a typical example of an elemental over which one lost control and which could exert terrible power. We will see some more contemporary examples of the consequences of obsessive, compulsive and uncontrolled thinking a bit later.

We as humans — as hosts of a thought — can nurture, activate, and also educate a thought. What we cannot do is create thoughts. With our thinking we perceive them and give them a form of manifestation. We can attract thoughts — feed them — or repel them. In the latter case, we no longer nourish the thought, thus ending the cooperation.

What is thinking?

This allows us to further map thinking as an ability to perceive. By thinking thoughts, we perceive living beings that we attract or repel. Now our thinking about ourselves, our environment, society, the world, and life is a complex and dynamic process. The Theosophia teaches us that with our thinking we form images, “astral paintings”, in the astral realm — the slightly less material realm than what we perceive as physical — composed of the elemental beings that are thoughts. It is a dynamic process. We paint a layer over a layer each time.

We can also share images with other thinkers and add them to our own paintings — this is how we share thoughts and ideas. The analogy with a transmitter that

can send and receive images and sound is very apt. Together, we are transmitters and receivers who thus make a dynamic, total picture of society.

Jumping elementals

What does a thought-being need in order to manifest itself? It always lives: the Theosophia teaches us that emphatically. But manifestation always takes place cyclically and a being is therefore not always manifested. If we then compare the process to that of a virus, we can already see some parallels. Such a being needs a suitable host, food, and reproductive capabilities.

In addition, a virus has the ability to jump. We know the phenomenon of zoonosis, where a bacterium or virus is transmitted from an animal to a human. Among these are several well-known viruses, such as, for example, the Ebola virus, the Zika virus, the Avian flu and also COVID-19. Now, to a certain extent, thoughts can also cross over to such a disparate level. We can become receptive to thoughts — living beings — that are far below our general quality of thought, but for which we can still act as a breeding ground.

The world knows terrifying examples of this, as far as viruses are concerned. We may not yet know scientifically what viruses are potentially capable of, but the fact that viruses are also being developed as biological weapons means that we, as thinkers, have first build up the ideas for this. It is needless to say that when such a virus becomes active, it will often be extremely difficult to control again.

Thought streams around the earth

The maintenance and nourishment of our astral paintings, of the thought atmosphere that we as humans create, takes place in the thought streams around our earth. We sometimes speak of the thought atmosphere or the “mental bloodstream” of the earth. The wide range of thoughts, thought by the wide array of thinkers, circulates the earth. Streams that flow from all the thoughts we have about life, society, and ourselves. From fantastic, elevated ideas full of compassion to sometimes very negative, evil ideas as author Stephen King knows how to describe in his horror stories.

Impact of COVID-19

Looking now at the COVID-19 virus, we see that the current pandemic has two main aspects: a physical and a mental/spiritual one. In addition to the physical infections and all their physical consequences, we see how people

allow their mental health to be affected by the fear and uncertainty that comes with the physical spread of the virus. The anxiety about COVID-19 and its impact can be overwhelming. With the thought patterns surrounding the virus, and if people unconsciously feed those fears and insecurities, they can become even more susceptible to mental and to physical infection than one already was. It is much wiser to keep our thoughts consciously clear so that we can approach the situation calmly and be prepared to face the need for physical measures as well. As far as this discipline of balanced thinking is concerned, we as a society still have quite a few steps to take.

From the foregoing we can clearly see the parallels between a virus and a thought. The processes of keeping them alive, and growing, multiplying, and exchanging them, are identical.

The word epidemic, derived from the Greek *epidēmios* or ‘over the (entire) population’, we know mainly with a negative association, as something beyond our control. However, there are certainly also examples of a more positive epidemic, such as thoughts of peace and optimism flowing over parts of the earth. The word pandemic, with the Greek *pan* (whole), is similar to the term epidemic but the phenomenon then takes place worldwide.

During the current pandemic, we also learned about the R-number. This reproduction number indicates the average number of people infected by one patient. If the R-number is lower than 1, the number of infections decreases. If it is higher, then the number of infections increases.

Mental thinking characteristics.

For our question, *How do we prevent mental epidemics?* we now look first at the process of the creation of such epidemics. We already saw that our minds have a broad spectrum of thinking characteristics. Now while our thinking process is the basis for our individual lives, we can only function through cooperation. And so, globally, the thinking processes of society come together in the mental bloodstream of the earth. Digital technologies have also allowed those thought streams to flow more strongly around the world in recent decades. However, mankind has been struggling for centuries to control mental thought characteristics such as feelings, vitality, and desire. Therefore, man is still very susceptible to mental infections.

Mental epidemics, therefore, are unfortunately not new. Millions of people have died from them in the past centuries. Examples of the effects of mental epidemics are

all forms of discrimination, especially racial and religious discrimination, and the world-wide feeling of separation, which resulted in countless armed conflicts including World War I and World War II.

When a particular pattern of thought infects people who then pass it on to each other, the process is almost impossible to control. Greed, the negative form of desire, is one such characteristic that plays a major role. Politicians can promise people all sorts of things, suggesting that people deserve it. When you promise people economic prosperity many become enthusiastic, without realizing what the accompanying price tag is. Or they do not consider whether these plans will lead to situations that one would *really* like to have. And also, the – sometimes even unconscious – discriminating thought that we are better than *they*, is a form of separateness that can degenerate into a mental epidemic.

What do we perceive?

What kind of thought images do we perceive and what do we do with them? With our focuses we mainly see what we *want* to see. Our glasses are often colored in this regard. That is why we can be surprised that people draw very different conclusions from the same situation. We take in images according to our characteristics – our quality of consciousness as well – and reinforce them with our energy. And this energy is again radiated by us. We are transmitter and receiver at the same time; we add our thoughts to the broad stream of thought images in the wide environment around us. And this last fact we often hardly realize.

In our society, certainly in the Western one, it is often stated that thinking is toll-free. Nothing could be further from the truth. Thinking is almost as powerful as performing actions. Excluding people mentally is often worse than putting them on a second place physically. The uncontrolled amplification and spread of certain thoughts can be a run-up to a mental epidemic.

With the focus of our thinking, we look at society in a certain way. We have trained our thinking faculty to pick out *those* things we *want* to see, those we *want* to hear. If we look at ourselves critically, we can discover that we may consciously direct that process and, for example, shut ourselves off from other people’s problems. But then we do not realize that we live in a society where everything is connected to everything else — that all life is essentially one great collaboration. We can also unconsciously look with those colored glasses and easily

pick up an idea thinking that it can be beneficial to us. But then we should ask ourselves what the further karmic consequences might be, for others and for ourselves. With Stephen King's horror stories, for example, we can imagine that by reading them we are reinforcing those images and, as transmitters, spreading them. The question, of course, is whether we consciously want to do that.

When does it become epidemic?

When do we reach the point where the spread of uncontrolled, negative thoughts becomes epidemic? For this we can look at the R number just like with a viral epidemic. Currently, social media is of course *the* tool for spreading thoughts – positive or negative – with an uncontrollable avalanche effect. For a *hot item*, the phrase “going viral” has even become quite common. There are funny and innocent videos that make millions of people laugh for a moment, but unfortunately there are also countless examples of discriminatory thoughts going around, often full of hatred and frustration, sowing discord, denying human rights, and affecting many people compulsively. The negative consequences of these videos for society as a whole are huge.

And then there are also, through the Internet and social media, the advertising campaigns conducted with aggressive methods. For a phenomenon like Black Friday, which originated in America, the special offers for all sorts of things go viral. In the Netherlands, the advertising campaign for this is gradually becoming even larger than for our traditional celebrations such as Saint Nicholas and Christmas. Thus, we see many viral events taking on epidemic proportions, because people apparently consider these processes completely normal.

With all this, we must conclude that our ethics and morality are far behind the development of modern technology. The ease with which a mental epidemic can be unleashed using software and social media is unprecedented. The developers of that technology are taking advantage of the fact that there are almost no laws to stop them. They use algorithms to see what our interests are and sell that knowledge to “the market”, without any checks on ethics. We are dealing with totally unethical software, which, for commercial or political gain, filters out what is going on among different populations, and thus has a great influence on the streams of thought. Only recently there have been calls to restrict these processes in some way.

As an additional consequence we see especially young people who literally become addicted to social media

and waste their time with the exchange of the most insignificant things on a daily basis. They fill their lives with emptiness instead of really developing themselves.

How critical is our receiver?

With the image of the sender and receiver in mind, the foregoing raises the question: how critically is our antenna adjusted for reception? Are we susceptible to a very wide field of thoughts coming towards us, each with their specific characteristics? When all these “frequencies” come in at the same time, it is not easy to filter this stream and consciously select what really concerns us. In addition, if we do not adjust our receiver critically, everything comes in unconsciously. How consciously or unconsciously do we then transmit all kinds of thoughts into the world ourselves?

In these processes, the thought characteristics that we are most sensitive to and that come in to us most powerfully predominate. If they come in and we are not critical enough, we immediately form an opinion and with that we broadcast the thoughts again.

This is how mental epidemics are being fed. The contamination of our thought processes knows various forms of infection. Such as taking something “hearsay” without thinking critically about it. Gossip, slander, prejudice, and distrust are also well-known pollutants of our thinking.

Cancel culture

A harmful thing that can also be clearly observed in our social life, is known as the cancel culture. What in one way or another does not meet our requirements – seen superficially – must be “eliminated”. The program “The Philosophical Quintet” of broadcaster “Human”, has devoted an interesting broadcast to this on October 25th 2020 with the question: “Are we allowed to silence each other?”⁽¹⁾ People who make critical remarks in their (work) environment – remarks that are often justified – are ignored, are stripped of their influence to such an extent that they are no longer in the picture. We see this *cancel culture* in many media, companies, and administrative bodies. And in politics. A wry example of where this mentality can lead to an autistic form of power over a large group of people is the affair with respect to the childcare allowance in the Netherlands. Did those who set up and implemented this mismanagement actually realize what they were doing to another?

Unfortunately, there are countless other examples available. It is sometimes called the democracy of the megaphone:

the one who shouts the loudest is heard the most. Related to the *cancel culture* is also the negative use of the phenomenon *framing*, where one deliberately puts someone in an unfavorable light.

Mental resistance

I have outlined some examples of the creation of mental epidemics due to the pollution of our thinking, and the disastrous consequences of this. What can we do about it? Let us take a simple example of physical contamination. If we would just drink water from a river, we could get all sorts of infections. Because everyone knows that such water must be purified first, we do not do it. But we do not apply this insight to the world of thoughts. We often drink unsubtly from many astral streams of thought. We should purify those streams.

A kind of mental vaccination to gain immunity against harmful thoughts we nowadays see in the form of “disclaimers” to posts on Facebook. These then state that the source is unverifiable, or unreliable, or that an assertion is demonstrably false. This development shows that it is possible to do something about *fake-news*, which spreads all too easily when people hear something that they apparently like to hear. It is a warning. But such a warning does not really tell you *what* to watch out for, much less what to *do* to discern things properly.

A better antibody against contamination of thought streams is, of course, the gathering of knowledge oneself. Sober facts can adjust our colored impressions, but we then must be open to that. If we are prepared to do so, we can build up a mental resistance: strengthen our mental immune system.

Changing an uncritical, lazy attitude into an alert self-awareness, however, requires a solid mental effort. To go from *believing* to *knowing* each person will have to actively ask himself some primary questions. Examine the habitual thinking with its familiar assumptions. What are the backgrounds of what is happening, where are people’s statements based on, where are my own impressions based on, how do I get reliable facts and how should I interpret them?

Mental hygiene

We must not only learn to control our thinking process for ourselves, but certainly also for the benefit of our fellow human beings. After all, with our thinking we are receiver *and* transmitter at the same time: we usually almost automatically link an interpretation to an incoming thought.

Nowadays, we understand the sense of physical measures such as one and a half meters distance, mouth masks and washing hands, but with mental distance it is less simple. In the law of gravity, we also recognize the physical properties of mass and distance, but that law also applies to the mental areas. In fact, the law of attraction and repulsion is a very universal law, states the Theosophia.

We can keep mental distance if we do not nourish certain thoughts, do not pay attention to them, and by immediately putting another thought in their place. Bombarding people with thoughts, such as in aggressive advertising campaigns, is in fact a form of mental coughing. A mental mouth mask then exists in the form of critically examining whether this is worth the attention. With active thinking, we have to wash our thoughts by opposing them with pure thoughts. Active thinkers are much harder to influence than passive thinkers.

Our susceptibility to thought images is reflected in the degree to which we believe, trust, and know. What do you believe, what do you trust, and what do you know? This determines how receptive we are. And that knowing – building truth – is an individual process.

From a certain authority like a well-known scientist, we may be more inclined to assume something than from an actor in a commercial. But even if we trust that scientist, it has not yet become knowledge for us. Sometimes we need a long time to get knowledge through insight. This requires active, personal research. It is a challenge to get from believing to knowing. In doing so, we must also be very conscious of our thought processes.

Learning

Our education system plays an important role in sharing reliable knowledge with each other. Growing up with a solid chain of primary education to higher education is indispensable for every generation. And for the Theosophia, good education does not consist of learning all the rules of the game intellectually, but much more of building and understanding of the *why*. Here, an important role is reserved for those two inner, higher faculties in development: Buddhi – insight, intuition – and Ātman — inspiration. Along with Manas – intellect – these are the thinking faculties that determine our ability to learn. Therefore, to build group immunity against polluting thoughts, mental and spiritual training is also essential. It involves learning to understand thought processes and the world of our consciousness. And there are, in addition to the mainstream educational systems, schools based

on the ideas of, for example, Rāja-Yoga as taught at the Theosophical Society Point Loma in the period 1900-1942. And now we have Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner Schools in which some of the basic theosophical thoughts still resonate.

Learning is actually much more than schooling. Education we usually translate as upbringing, but theosophically it also means *leading outwards* what is already *in us*. The educator is the midwife who helps to give birth to what is already within.

Theosophia teaches that we essentially have *all* possibilities within us. What we have developed life after life, we can *re-activate* during our youth. Learning is *re-mem-bering*. In addition, we can develop new (for us) capabilities in this lifetime, which involves growth in consciousness.

Important in all these learning processes is that we know how to use the lessons from previous lives, for example signals from our conscience. Experiences from the higher realms, universal truths gained during previous lives, can be further developed by us with our higher thinking characteristics Ātman, Buddhi and Manas. Intuition can sometimes broaden our vision of life like a revelation. But we will also have to keep asking ourselves critical questions: does some new idea fit into the universal law we are starting to see, where does this knowledge come from? Because our thinking takes place on different levels simultaneously. As a result, the lower thinking can “pollute” the higher, or become a valuable tool for it.

The flow of inspiration

To think actively, critically, positively and with an *open mind*, the conclusion is that we can best rely on our conscience and our intuition. In this way we learn to see the interconnectedness in the higher, spiritual spheres of consciousness, we can “resonate” with it and we learn to distinguish the universal, the everlasting, from the perishable ever better. From the spiritual, imperishable part of the human being there is a *continuous* flow of inspiration, and it is up to us – the learning human being – to strengthen the connection with it.

The Path of Wisdom

In this way we can also work on mental prevention against negative thoughts. The illustration above of the three monks or three monkeys is known in the West as a depiction of an expression by which is meant: I see something that cannot be tolerated but I do not say a word about it. But this interpretation is incorrect. The origin lies with

the Chinese sage Confucius and the meaning is:
See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil.



If we have grown beyond generating negative thought images, then we do not see evil in the world, we do not speak evil – we do not pass it on – and we do not hear or listen to evil. Does this mean that someone who is wise goes through life as some sort of blind person and is, so to speak, completely handicapped in terms of speaking and hearing? No, absolutely not. Such a wise person will perceive the imperfections of others clearly and distinctly, recognize the incompetence in a certain stage of development and deal with it compassionately. He will see all learning, imperfect people as reincarnating thinkers with great potential. The wise person will be above imperfection, evil will not touch his lower thinking aspects. And we can train ourselves in this: see no more evil, speak no more evil, hear no more evil.

Lao Tsu called this *virtue*. In the Pāramitās from Buddhism we find described with what qualities we should live without thinking evil or acting evil.⁽²⁾ This is an important challenge for us. We have already learned many lessons in previous lives; we can use that wisdom. Therefore, we do not have to do everything to know what is not wise to do. We are able to act from wisdom and insight if we practice it. Let us continue to follow that Path.

References

1. Special: *Cancel culture – mogen we elkaar het zwijgen opleggen?* [in English: Special broadcast: *Cancel culture – may we silence each other?*] Episode of The Philosophical Quintet, broadcast by “Human” on October 25, 2020. Source (Dutch): tvblik.nl.
2. See for example: H.P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of Silence*, “The seven portals”, verses no. 12-19 (enumeration of Pāramitās), many editions.

How people infect each other

Adam Kucharski, epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene *Tropical Medicine* has come up with a model that allows you to track the spread of infectious diseases and therefore take appropriate measures to contain them. The interesting thing is that this model is not only applicable to epidemics of infectious diseases, but also to mental epidemics.⁽¹⁾

DOTS

In order to describe the laws of the spread of a virus, Kucharski rewrote an already existing formula as $R = D \times O \times T \times S$. Where R stands for the *reproduction number*, i.e., how many other people are on average infected by one infected person. D stands for the *duration*, O for *opportunity*, T for *transmission* and S for *susceptibility*.

The DOTS formula shows that each aspect affects the R. For example, with respect to the coronavirus, if you limit the number of contacts (O), or if you are infected and you reduce the contagious period by quarantining (D), you further contain the pandemic. Face masks and keeping your distance lowers transmission (T) and thus also curbs the spread.

Depending on the infectious disease, you can take measures. AIDS can be fought, for example, by abstaining from sexual contacts (O) or by using condoms (T).

Now you might say that such a formula is not really groundbreaking; it is in fact a systematization of what is generally known. What is interesting however, is that Kucharski argues that this formula can also be applied to mental epidemics. Political polarization, fake news, riots, computer viruses, panic, financial crises, fear and aggression behave exactly like the spread of infectious diseases, and the DOTS model can be applied to them as well. Kucharski is mainly talking about all the information that is spread through social media and the Internet.

Because there's a lot of statistical data available online, you can easily calculate the R. You can look at how often something has been retweeted or shared on Facebook. As an example, Kucharski mentions the *ice bucket challenge*. People threw a bucket of ice-cold water over themselves to raise money for the disease ALS. The R was 2, but the time scale (D) was very short; the videos were shared within seconds, which is much

faster than with COVID-19 or other germs, where it takes days or sometimes weeks.

DOTS in mental epidemics

Thoughts are living beings and behave like viruses. The DOTS formula is therefore well applicable to thoughts. Let's take an example: the thought that vaccination against COVID-19 will insert a chip, that will make people slaves to others.

D (duration): This is often a few seconds to a few minutes: a single one-liner or a short article that you read, hear about, or that is retweeted.

O (opportunity): Because of social media, the opportunity for spreading is very large. The O factor can be contained if social media have a stricter policy regarding posting of ideas.

T (transmission): Thoughts do not know physical barriers; people can infect each other over very long distances.

S (susceptibility): Among thinkers that are not self-conscious and those who are not very knowledgeable, susceptibility is very high.

The conclusion you can draw from this is that the factors D, O, T can be influenced by policy. You could, for example, reduce the O-factor to basically zero, through strict supervision of the internet. In democratic countries this – fortunately – does not happen. For free countries, the most efficient way to contain a mental pandemic lies therefore in the factor S. Only when people start asking themselves where an idea comes from, on which arguments it is formed, whether these conflict with other facts, and so on, they will see that it is not correct. Self-conscious thinking is the “vaccination” against fake news. Teach people to think and mental epidemics will cease to exist.

Reference

1. Many sources, e.g. this interview with Kucharski: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-GID3oVxE8>. We also used the interview with Adam Kucharski published in the Dutch newspaper NRC of 8 May 2021, titled “De wetten van besmetten” [“The laws of contamination”].



Universal wisdom in the language of mathematics

Why were the theory of numbers and geometry important parts of a disciple's spiritual training for many centuries? In a previous article, we explored the roots of mathematics.⁽¹⁾ In this article we examine the question: can we find the three fundamental propositions of the Universal Wisdom, the Theosophia, reflected in mathematics?⁽²⁾

Key thoughts

» Spiritual mathematics is the description of axioms, numbers and figures, which form the ground patterns of all manifestations in the living Cosmos — albeit always expressed in an imperfect way.

» We could represent the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* as a “zero”, in the philosophical sense of boundlessness, not-something limited.

» The second proposition is expressed in many mathematical figures, each representing a particular aspect of Universal Wisdom: circular motion, expanding waves, spiral motion.

» The third proposition gives us the key to the meaning of many mathematical relations, such as the number pi, the golden ratio and fractals.

Spiritual mathematics

The boundless Universe is a collaboration of beings, not one part of it being lifeless. In other words, consciousness is the guiding force behind all things. This is the basic thought behind the Theosophia.

The most advanced beings play a leading role in the Cosmos. All less advanced beings live and work within the general patterns that these divine beings have laid down. The goal of these “older brothers of the cosmos” is to create the right conditions for the inner development of all beings within their sphere of influence, by guiding the processes as harmonious as possible.

The characteristic of their consciousness is so universal, so continuous and so harmonious, that we experience their influence as “immutable universal laws”. These laws express themselves on all levels, including the physical level, which is the field of our scientists.

It has been proven time and again by modern science that these laws of

nature manifest themselves as *mathematical relations*. We can describe all external processes in mathematical formulas, numbers and figures, but behind the ordinary mathematics lies the spiritual mathematics, which we may define as the *explanation* of the role numbers and figures play in the Cosmos. The source of the ground patterns of Nature is cosmic life, consciousness, intelligence. We, human beings with our limited rational mind, can form a limited conception of the (for us) perfect unity and perfect harmony of the leading beings of the Cosmos, by means of the mathematical axioms and all their consequent derivations. Mathematics itself is a perfect unity of propositions, which are perfectly attuned to each other. So, mathematics reflects the basic characteristics of these leading beings, which — by their sphere of influence — permeate the whole Cosmos.

Approaching the ideal pattern

So, ideal mathematical patterns are

found to be the invisible models of all external forms and processes, although these models are never perfectly expressed in a manifestation. We do not see an absolute straight line or a perfect hexagon in the manifested world. If anything resembles it, just look a bit more closely, and you will see the many irregularities.

A honeybee makes hexagonal combs with a – for an insect – surprising accuracy (see figure 1). Once you take a closer look however, you will see that this is an approximation of the ground pattern.



Figure 1. The hexagonal honeycomb is a marvel of regularity. Of course, its precision is limited: it is an approximation of the mathematical pattern.

Crystals grow with extraordinary regularity, but even there we see irregularities. The conditions during their growth never remain completely the same, so, one layer is slightly different from another. In theory, a ray of light may follow a perfect straight path, but every ray of light is deflected by the gravitational influence of large celestial masses. What causes these deviations? As mentioned before, consciousness is the guiding force behind all phenomena. And every being is a *growing* being, and therefore limited in his consciousness. Furthermore, every being has developed a certain amount of *free will*: he chooses his own path within certain margins. So, we are never certain how a being acts or reacts. And finally, we have to remember that all beings in the Universe *interact with each other*. All beings develop within the influences of all other beings, which may stimulate or inhibit their actions. That is why deviations from the ideal patterns can never

be avoided, not even in a laboratory. Sometimes these deviations are so small that we do not need to worry about them, for instance when we make calculations for practical purposes.

The first fundamental proposition: Boundlessness

The universal laws have been recorded by humanity's greatest thinkers in an inspiring system of wisdom and knowledge, known by names such as Theosophia, Wisdom of the Gods, Divine Wisdom or Universal Wisdom. H.P. Blavatsky points out in her book *The Secret Doctrine*, that the whole system is built on three fundamental ideas, from which all other theosophical teachings can be deduced. In this article we will investigate whether these are found in mathematics or not. Is there indeed much more in and behind mathematics than people generally suspect?

The first fundamental proposition states:

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.⁽³⁾

Life in itself is without limits, even though its expressions, its beings, are always limited in their present forms. We humans too are in our deepest core the Boundless, the Ineffable, and therefore one with all other Life.

This is the most fundamental of the three propositions. It means Boundlessness in all respects. Do we recognize this idea in mathematics?

Ordinary mathematics describes *partial* infinities

And here we discover something: present mathematics is constantly engaged with infinity and has various symbols for it, but about *infinity in all respects* it remains completely silent. Why is that?

Let us look at a few examples. A mathematical point has no thickness, has no dimensions and is therefore infinitely small. A straight line, by definition, goes on forever, from and to infinity. A circle can be given an ever-increasing circumference, you can expand circles endlessly. Sequences of numbers can be made infinitely long, for example the sequence of natural numbers: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, ... ∞ . That last symbol means "and so on to infinity".

But these are all aspects of limitless, not the Boundless

itself. The reason for this is that these reasonings *always start from something limited* (a certain figure or certain numbers) and then imagine that it goes on infinitely. While the Boundless has no relation to any limited thing whatsoever.⁽⁴⁾

The mathematicians themselves talk about “various levels of infinity”, one infinity being “more infinite” than another. So, they still talk about relative ideas.

Boundlessness in philosophical mathematics

Perhaps, we may express the ineffable Boundlessness in a philosophical way as the zero. Not the zero as a total absence, but as the philosophical “no-thing”, that is to say, not-something-in-particular. After all, Boundlessness is nothing in particular, just because it is everything. It is “not this, not that”, as the Indian sages said. It is not an empty thought, for it is the origin of all things, but it can never express itself fully: all things are limited expressions of it. It is always more than the deepest we can now imagine. And that is an inspiring thought. We can always look at our own lives in light of that bigger totality of which we are a living part and which we still only partly know. Living according to the first proposition means daily expanding of your vision, opposed to any crystallized dogma.

The second fundamental proposition: cyclic movement

The second proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* reads:

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 appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb, flux and reflux.”⁽⁵⁾

This is an elaboration of the first proposition. *Boundless Life* is described in three aspects: Space, Duration and Movement. It talks about an eternal, boundless plane within which worlds appear and disappear.

This boundless plane is sometimes called the Great Void (*Sunyata* the Buddhists say), and sometimes the Great Fullness (*Pleroma* in Greek philosophy). These are two designations of Boundless Life, but one emphasizes the super-spiritual unity, the source without boundaries, the other emphasizes the boundless fields in which it expresses itself cyclically.

This super-spiritual unity cannot be grasped by any em-

bodied being within a Cosmos. It is therefore, when looked at from below, “Dark and Void”. We could represent it geometrically as a black plane without boundaries.

The Great Fullness is somewhat simpler to imagine. This represents the countless numbers of appearing and disappearing worlds, which collectively fill a playground without limits, or rather, which ARE this playground. We could represent this as a white plane without boundaries, filled with centers of consciousness. An ocean of life.

When you look at the starry sky on a clear night, far from any habitation and preferably high up in the mountains, you will be surprised how many stars there are: their lights seem to fill the whole sky, like an ocean in which every point radiates.

The inner meaning of circles and spirals

Reimbodiment is a universal process. Active material life and inner peace in the spiritual areas alternate in time. This process, which all beings necessarily follow because they are part of the boundless Life, can be found in mathematics as vibrations, waves and – in its perfect form – the circular motion around a center. It is the alternation of the breathing in and breathing out of Universal Life.⁽⁶⁾ We should not consider these cyclic movements as blind or mechanical processes. They have their origin in consciousness itself, which is sometimes attracted to the external life, and then again attracted to an inner rest period. We, too, feel the need for a period of rest after an exhausting day. And after a healthy dose of sleep, we long for new experiences again, and reawaken.

We can recognize the second fundamental proposition in many mathematical figures, each figure highlighting a particular aspect of the Theosophia. We give three examples.

Example A: how far do transmitted waves reach?

For example, there is a wave that propagates in space; think of the ripples in water. According to the propositions, the Universe is constructed of beings that are indissolubly connected. Therefore, every action or thought will cause a ripple or vibration, which *spreads throughout the whole*. Of course, the force of the wave diminishes as it expands, but there is always some influence.

Well-known examples are the radiation of a radio station, real news or fake news on the internet, or the moods of a stock market, which can spread very quickly to all other stock markets.

This is one of those ethically important universal teachings

that are so obvious, that we tend to overlook them. All beings are indissolubly connected, and thus brotherhood is a fact.

Example B: cyclic unfolding

If we, while making a circular movement, simultaneously move forward, we produce a spiral, a corkscrew like movement. In Theosophia, a spiral implies that each new cycle starts at a higher point, because all beings involved have grown in consciousness through the experience of the previous cycle. They are ready for the next step.

The expansion of our understanding may also be depicted by a spiral movement that revolves around its center in ever larger loops. Think of a child who gains experience in ever widening circles (broadening the boundaries of his living area) and at the same time explores more aspects of *inner* life (broadening the boundaries of his consciousness). Again, this is not a mechanical process: each being has free will and determines for itself how fast it learns and grows. Well-known examples of spirals in nature are Milky Ways. These have a special structure, see figure 2.



Figure 2. Spiral galaxies are constructed according to a “logarithmic spiral”: no matter how large the spiral becomes; it essentially remains the same in shape.

Example C: changes described as vibrations

A very interesting mathematical method is known as Fourier analysis, after its developer, Joseph Fourier (1768-1830). What does this Fourier analysis mean? In technical terms it means that all functions of a variable can be decomposed into a series of sines (a specific undular motion). This can be applied to both continuous and discontinuous functions. Translated into theosophical terms this means that all external things are built or composed of a series of major and minor cyclic motions.

Let us start with a practical example. Our voice is composed of a combination of vibrations or tones. A pure tone in itself has a regular form (the sine wave form), but the sum of many different tones, each having its own frequency, becomes of course extremely complicated. Yet you can unravel our voice into its various constituent tones. And that is called the Fourier analysis.

Is it just a theoretical trick? It may seem so. But then we don’t recognize the deep philosophical thought behind it. It is an affirmation that all life expresses itself in cycles or vibrations (described in the second proposition).

The significance of this is immense. Let us give you an example. We humans are capable of thinking thoughts, that is, giving thoughts the opportunity to manifest themselves, to be born, in our mental nature. Thoughts are also living beings, with their own characteristics or *vibrations*. And all these thought vibrations together form our habit pattern, our character. And we always act in line with our thoughts. So, if we analyze our thinking and find out what types (“frequencies”) of thoughts we are thinking, we are doing exactly the same thing as the mathematicians do. Then we are making a mental Fourier analysis.

By honestly determining the character of our present thoughts, we can draw our conclusions and decide to direct our mind toward kinder, more noble and truer ideas. In this way, we progressively align our character with the spiritual keynote of the Cosmos.

The third fundamental proposition: the cosmic web of life

The third proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* was phrased by H.P. Blavatsky as follows:

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.⁽⁷⁾

This third proposition is an elaboration of the unity-idea from the first proposition and the cycle-idea from the second proposition. Our cosmos can be seen as a vast, living web of interconnected beings.

The third proposition emphasizes *unity in diversity*: each being expressing its own individual character within the encompassing unity. Each being has developed his character – which has limitless potential – to the point where

he is today. Therefore, he performs a unique function in the whole.

In mathematics this basic idea is reflected, among other things, in the simple fact that numbers only acquire meaning in their *relation* to all other numbers. What would the number 1 mean if there were no 0 or 2 or 3? Absolutely nothing at all. What is a sage without people, a teacher without students, a parent without a child, a bus driver without passengers ... you name it. We can never see ourselves separately from all other beings in the cosmos (although many seem to be sticking their heads in the sand and act for a while as if they could ...).

The third proposition is manifested in mathematics in many ways. Here are a few examples.

Example A: the tetractys of Pythagoras

The tetractys of Pythagoras, shown in figure 3, depicts the cosmos in all its various degrees of consciousness.

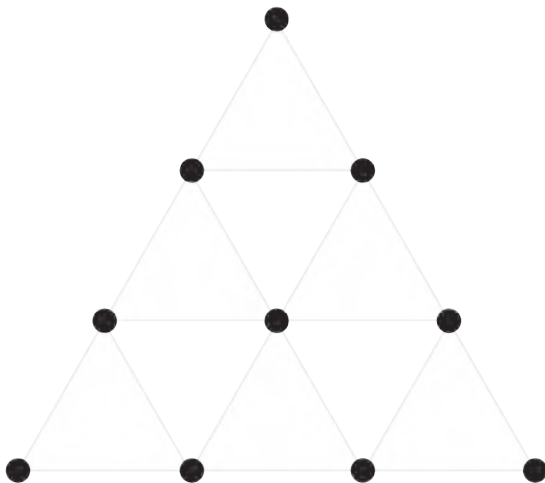


Figure 3. Tetractys of Pythagoras.

The entire cosmos originated from one Universal Source, the supreme point. The tetractys thus points to the basic unity of each hierarchy (the “1”, the top), but at the same time shows that each subordinate being within this hierarchy is in his turn a supreme point or “1” for an entire pyramid or hierarchy of lower beings, which constitute its vehicular nature. The human consciousness for instance, is the divine hierarch for the beings in its body.

This teaching offers us a universal key, a great tool in our quest for truth: “as above so below, as below so above”. Every being, great or small, is a child of the Cosmos and has therefore the same universal structure: a spiritual

core, a psychic or intermediate part, and a physical shell in the form of a body. Each part of the cosmos reflects in miniature the whole. We can see this beautifully shaped in the triangles designed by the Polish mathematician Sierpinski (see figure 4).

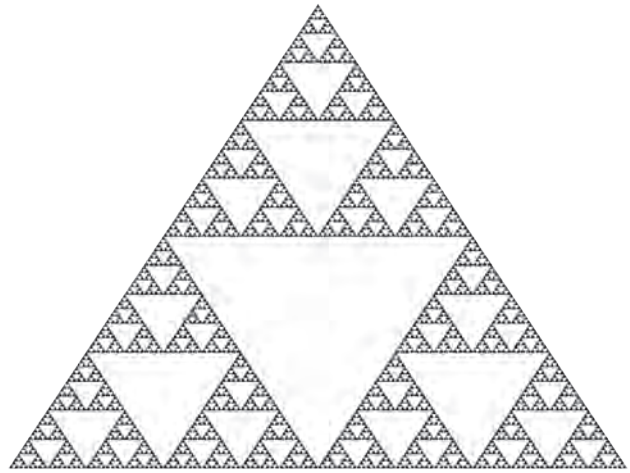


Figure 4. The so-called Sierpinski triangles are based on the ideas of the Polish mathematician Sierpinski: they beautifully show how the large is reflected in the small, in a never-ending process of miniaturizing (called *fractals*).

The tetractys of Pythagoras has many meanings. See also the article on mathematics and Theosophy in our previous issue, the second-to-last paragraph.⁽⁸⁾

Example B: the number pi and the birth of a cosmos

There is an orderly outward flow of beings at the birth of a cosmos, from the most advanced divine beings to the most material atomic beings.⁽⁹⁾ The profound teachings regarding this process are incorporated and symbolized in mathematical ratios. For example, from the ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle (the number pi, or 3.1415...), it can be deduced how the different groups of cosmic beings derive from each other, relate to each other. On this subject, H.P. Blavatsky gives some valuable clues in her book *The Secret Doctrine*.⁽¹⁰⁾

Example C: harmonious growth

We mentioned the orderly birth process of the leading beings in a cosmos. We also see in the lower realms of nature that birth and growth proceed according to mathematical proportions. In some trees, for example, the number of branches increases each year according to a mathematical sequence: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55 ... You see what happens? The last number is the sum of the two preceding

numbers. This is called the Fibonacci sequence. By growing in this way, each branch (and therefore all the leaves of the expanding tree) receives a proportionate amount of space and sunlight, so that the whole tree works as efficiently as possible. This is an example of harmonious growth. And if we divide the number of this year's branches by last year's, we get (approximately) a number known as the golden ratio. The next example further elaborates on this.

Example D: the inner meaning of the golden ratio

We speak of a golden section or ratio when you divide a line segment in two but in such a way that the ratio of the larger and smaller part (large : small) is equal to the ratio of the total line segment to the larger part (large+small : large), as shown in figure 5. In other words: $AC : CB = AB : AC$. This creates a very harmonious impression.

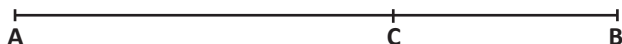


Figure 5. The golden ratio.

Again, mathematics expresses a spiritual idea. We get the most inspiring and sustainable cooperation when we work together for the whole community. Our relationships between each other (large : small) become harmonious, if we have aligned ourselves with the whole (total : large, and indirectly also total : small). An unselfish goal will bring very different characters together into a close-knit team, that may exert a great influence in the world.

We encounter the golden section in many fields of nature. For example, the physical growth of plants, crystals, animals (like the nautilus) and human beings all follows the golden ratio. Anything made according to this proportion has a particularly harmonious effect. The great pyramid of Giza and the Parthenon in Athens, two magnificent ex-



Figure 6. The ratio of the width and height of the front side of the Parthenon, in Athens, is an exact golden ratio.⁽¹¹⁾

amples of religious architecture, are based on it (figure 6).

Example E: fractals

The principle “as above, so below” got considerable attention in the mathematics of the 1960s. At that time, scientists were investigating the properties of *fractals*, a term for a geometric figure that is *self-similar*, e.g., composed of parts that are similar to the figure itself. A mathematician calls this a recursive pattern. In Dutch shops you can buy a pack of cocoa on which you see a nurse with a pack of cocoa, on which you see a nurse with a pack of cocoa, ... and so on.

Thanks to the computer, brilliant pictures can be created today (Figure 7).

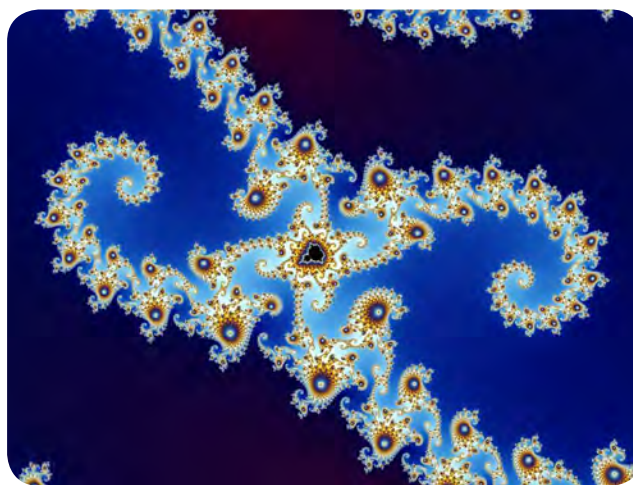


Figure 7. Thanks to computer calculations we can make fractal pictures like these. In these structures, the patterns repeat themselves endlessly. You can keep zooming in or zooming out, and the same pattern will unfold itself.

Do we find fractals in nature? We may recognize them everywhere, because the small reflects the large everywhere. We already saw that every being, cosmic or micro-cosmic, expresses itself cyclically, driven by his inner impulse to expand his consciousness and powers (the spiral symbol). Now, each cycle in nature consists of the same life phases: from birth to adulthood to death to rebirth. A Solar System also goes through these phases, but of course at its cosmic level. And as a solar cycle is made up of many planetary cycles, which in turn are made up of smaller cycles, we can thus go down the hierarchy until we arrive at one human life of eighty years, reflecting these same phases. In our earliest childhood we develop our bodies, then our sensory faculties, then our vitality, and so on. So, each of our human qualities or characteristics has its appropriate

period of development within one life cycle.
This inner structure is what a mathematician would call a fractal structure.

Keys to wisdom lying hidden in mathematics

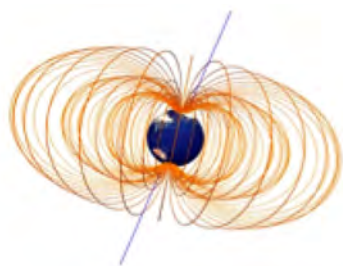
H.P. Blavatsky writes in *The Secret Doctrine*:

Let them [who doubt the extraordinary knowledge of the ancients, SC] turn to such works as those of Vitruvius Pollio from the Augustan age, on architecture, for instance, in which all the rules of proportion are those *taught anciently at initiations*, if they would acquaint themselves the truly divine art, and understand the *deep esoteric significance hidden in every rule and law of proportion*.⁽¹²⁾

The ancient sages knew that mathematics is a pure expression of the universal processes and structures of Nature. Much of the knowledge they had, has been lost over the centuries. Thanks to the work of H.P. Blavatsky and the entire Theosophical Movement she founded, at least some key thoughts have been revealed, allowing us now to understand some of the wisdom behind numbers and figures. But those numbers and figures only really come to life, when we put these fundamental ideas into practice on a continuous basis.

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9. This "outward flowing" of different groups of beings from a top being is called "emanation". Previous *Lucifer* articles have explored this fundamental theosophical doctrine, including: H. Bezemer, "Like a stream from its source. How we emanate from our spiritual core". 2013, No. 1, p. 15-20; J.J. Smits, "Emanation and Fohat as the fundament for the Electric Universe". 2015, No. 1, p. 20-30; Editors: "Practical examples of emanation, spiritually and physically". 2013, No. 1, p. 38-39 (Questions and Answers).
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Theosophy in Nature

Do humans have a magnetic sense?

Do we have a magnetic sense, like some animals do? Based on the theosophical knowledge of the nature and workings of consciousness, combined with interesting results from recent research, we are one step closer to an answer.

Magnetic orientation in the animal kingdom

For quite some time we have known that animals which travel long distances often make use of the earth's magnetic field for their orientation. They sense the direction of the North and South Pole. Species that are capable of doing this are whales, sea turtles, bats, bees, pigeons and many migratory birds, among others. Recently dogs have been added to this list. While hunting game in a dense forest, some hunting dogs exhibited a very remarkable behavior. At the moment they decided to return to their owner, they ran back and forth in a north and south direction a few times, exactly in line with the direction of the magnetic field. After this, they were able to return to their owner – waiting at the edge of the forest – in a straight line. All this occurred without the dogs being able to see or smell their owner, as these possibilities were excluded in the experiment. For more details on the methodology, see the box “How was the magnetic sense of dogs demonstrated?”

These findings allow us to understand better why some dogs are capable of finding their owner over surprisingly long distances. For example, dogs were used in the First World War to convey messages successfully over long distances. Whereas dogs are no migratory animals that travel hundreds of kilometers. Yet they have this sense. Researchers therefore do not exclude the possibility that many more animals can detect the geomagnetic field (to some extent).

Every being is essentially a magnet

What clues can we find in Theosophy concerning these observations? According to Theosophy, all things are alive: galaxies, solar systems, planets, human beings and atoms, for example, are the visible manifestations of conscious beings. And each of these beings is fundamentally bipolar during its period of existence. The consciousness of every being works like a magnet. While constantly changing, due to the ongoing process of its inner growth, every being is

Key thoughts

- » More and more animals appear to be using the earth's magnetic field to determine their routes.
- » The principle of magnetism is a fundamental property of consciousness: every being attracts and repels other beings at all levels of consciousness.
- » The lower nature of man may be sensitive to the earth's magnetic field, but this does not play a significant role in his waking consciousness, because his consciousness is active in a much more spiritual realm of existence.

constantly attracting and repelling other beings — who also function as magnets. Beings that have a corresponding character at that specific moment attract each other. For a shorter or longer period of time, an intensive interaction may take place. When their common characteristics become less similar over time, these beings “grow apart”. They expel one another.

Let us take ourselves as an example. We humans are thinkers, our consciousness is primarily active *on the mental plane*. We all attract certain thoughts to our minds (those that have meaning for us), while other thoughts do not affect us at all or only slightly and briefly. We are indifferent to these last thoughts. This means that we are continuously attracting and repelling thoughts. Our mind works as a magnet.

It is important to realize that attraction can be either positive or negative. We are attracted to the things we love but also to the things we fear and loathe. We tend to think about both all the time. Letting go of something therefore means being detached from it, by neither having feelings of sympathy nor antipathy for it. That is the only way to expel thoughts.

Countless examples can be found of our magnetism *in the spiritual realm* as well. Someone who guides his life in accordance to his conscience and his noble motives, attracts like-minded people. Everything he does or says, appeals to the higher nature of the other. By radiating his idealistic aspects, he activates the similar aspects in

his fellowmen.

The same principle holds for our *psychological and emotional nature*. We are in constant psychological interaction with other human beings, by the emotional influences we radiate. Some external emotional stimuli may affect us strongly, while others do not. That is a very individual matter. Some people are not even sensitive at all in an emotional respect.

In every part of *our physical body* we also see attraction and repulsion occurring. Our skin, lungs and intestines actively or passively absorb certain substances while excreting others. And so does every single cell in our body. So theosophically, every being is magnetic in every layer or level of his being. That does not necessarily mean that every being expresses this *on the level of the physical geomagnetic field*. We already know that some animals are much more sensitive to that magnetic field than others. We also know that some planets in our Solar System express a very active bipolar magnetic field, as we know from astronomical measurements, while this field is latent in other planets. In our Earth it is active, in Mercury and Venus for instance, it is largely passive (on the *physical plane*!).

Can man perceive the earth’s magnetic field?

The question now arising is: do we humans also have a magnetic sense? How sensitive are we to the magnetic fields that our physicists can measure? If you examine this,



There is evidence that bottlenose dolphins are capable of perceiving magnetic fields. The researchers just do not know yet with which organ they do this.

you will find interesting facts. Let us mention a few. The HeartMath Institute in the United States has measured that our heart produces an electromagnetic field that is many times stronger and more powerful than that of our brain. So, both our heart and brain may be influenced by other magnetic fields.

Next: people have a better rest if they sleep with their head facing north or north-east, and therefore lie in harmony with the geomagnetic field. This last point might raise a

How was the magnetic sense of dogs demonstrated?

Hunting dogs are trained to search for game themselves and to return to their owner at regular intervals. They are able to do this even if they have run through a dense forest for a while. In the experiment, transmitters and cameras were attached to the dogs. It turned out that some of the dogs, on their way back to their owner, followed their own scent, along the trail. They walked along the same meandering path they had previously taken, which was a relatively long walk back. Another group of the dogs, approximately half of the experimental group, walked back to their owner in a straight line. How did they do this? At the moment they decided to return, they ran about 20 metres in a S-N or N-S direction, sometimes several times back and forth. This strongly indicates the possession of a magnetic sense. After this, they were able to take the direction that led straight to their owner. They were even able to correct their course when they encountered obstacles. This last means the dogs did not “simply walk one direction”: they apparently had an idea of their relative position in relation to their owners — although they could not see or smell them.⁽¹⁾

question. After all, we then lie with our north side (our head) towards the north pole, and equal poles repel each other. But that is not how it works. By lying with our head towards the north pole, our “direction of flow” (from north to south) is similar to the “direction of flow” of the planet, and therefore in harmony with it.

Furthermore we know that certain processes in our cells can be disturbed by powerful magnetic fields. It is known that certain parts of our brain produce the highly magnetic mineral magnetite, so, these cells are very sensitive in this respect. This holds in particular for the brain stem and

the cerebellum. An experiment has shown that these parts of the brain indeed react to changes in the geomagnetic field.⁽²⁾ However, the test subjects themselves were *not* consciously aware of this! This is understandable, because the brain stem and the cerebellum perform *automatic* coordinating functions, of which we human consciousnesses are not aware. Our consciousness, our mind, functions on a much more ethereal level than the physical geomagnetism.

What can we conclude from these facts? The process of attraction and repulsion is the fundamental process behind the interaction of all beings. On every level there is magnetic interaction between beings. However, we human thinkers, in our present state of evolution, seem to have passed beyond the stage where we are consciously using the geomagnetic field — although our instinctive, animal nature has a certain sensitivity to it. So yes, our instinctive organs have a magnetic sense, but we human thinkers do not consciously use it. Our focus lies on the mental-spiritual level, on the realm of thoughts: that is our field of action in which we learn.

For us humans, the “north pole” — symbolically speaking — is our spiritual, unselfish pole. It is our sense of interconnectedness with all living things. And the opposite pole consists of all thoughts about the ups and downs of our lower nature, our physical existence and our selfish desires. We expand our consciousness by living in the sphere of our “north pole thoughts” and training our lower nature to become a pure transmitter of these ideals and insights in the external world.

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Traveling to Mars

Key thoughts

» From a common sense view, it is already evident that we should solve our Earth problems on our Earth and not transport them to Mars.

» We humans manifest on Earth because our thinking consciousness has an Earth characteristic. Only within this Earthly sphere can we express our current consciousness. Mars – and all its beings – has a different characteristic.

» Physical travel does not change a human being.

» As we learn to attribute reality to the spiritual element within us, we will be able to gain experiences beyond our Earthly sphere.

Is emigration to Mars the solution to Earth's problems?

The idea that we, as humanity, will go to another planet and perhaps settle there, dates back to the time that the first human being went into space. The almost romantic megalomania to travel to another planet has been growing steadily since a few people walked on the moon in the late 1960s, demonstrating that such a thing was not technically impossible. The enormous problems with which humanity is currently struggling fueled these space travel plans. After all, there will be few who deny that we are going through a difficult time. The pandemic is still disrupting many aspects of daily life worldwide. Yet many consider global warming a much bigger problem, because it is structural, and its solution seems further away than ever. And we are not even mentioning the countless wars and threats of war, the refugee problem, the glaring inequality between rich and poor, overpopulation, the loss of nature and biodiversity. Some see only one way out of this chaos: emigration to Mars.

Colonization of Mars

By now there have been dozens of flights to our neighboring planet. There is an organization preparing

the colonization of Mars including training programs for people who want to go there. Yet there are still some obstacles to overcome. For although Mars is the closest planet to Earth after Venus, a journey still takes about ten months. To avoid making the journey too long, the missiles can only leave once every two years or so. This has to do with the revolution of Mars around the sun in relation to the revolution of the Earth. Furthermore, the means to make a return trip have not yet been developed. Thus, it is a one-way trip. Should it succeed in bringing a group of volunteers to the red planet, they will not find very friendly living conditions there. The temperature varies between 20°C and -140°C. The surface is barren, desert-like. Mars has a very thin atmosphere with little oxygen. The conditions for human life are, in one word, deadly. That means, one must build a kind of greenhouse in which to live. There the seed brought from Earth must be sown; perhaps one must even bring the soil on which to sow. Moreover, there is insufficient water for growing crops. Therefore, the question is whether it will ever be possible to harvest. If not, what can be eaten?

Should all these problems be solved, which is highly doubtful, the Mars travelers will have to deal with all kinds of psychological, social and physical factors. Are our earth-bodies suitable for a long-term stay in space or on Mars? What do the living conditions do to our psychological and mental well-being? Many of us already struggle with a lockdown. Then imagine living in a greenhouse in a hostile environment. There is no privacy of any kind. You cannot take one step outside. The food supply is uncertain. There are no medical facilities.

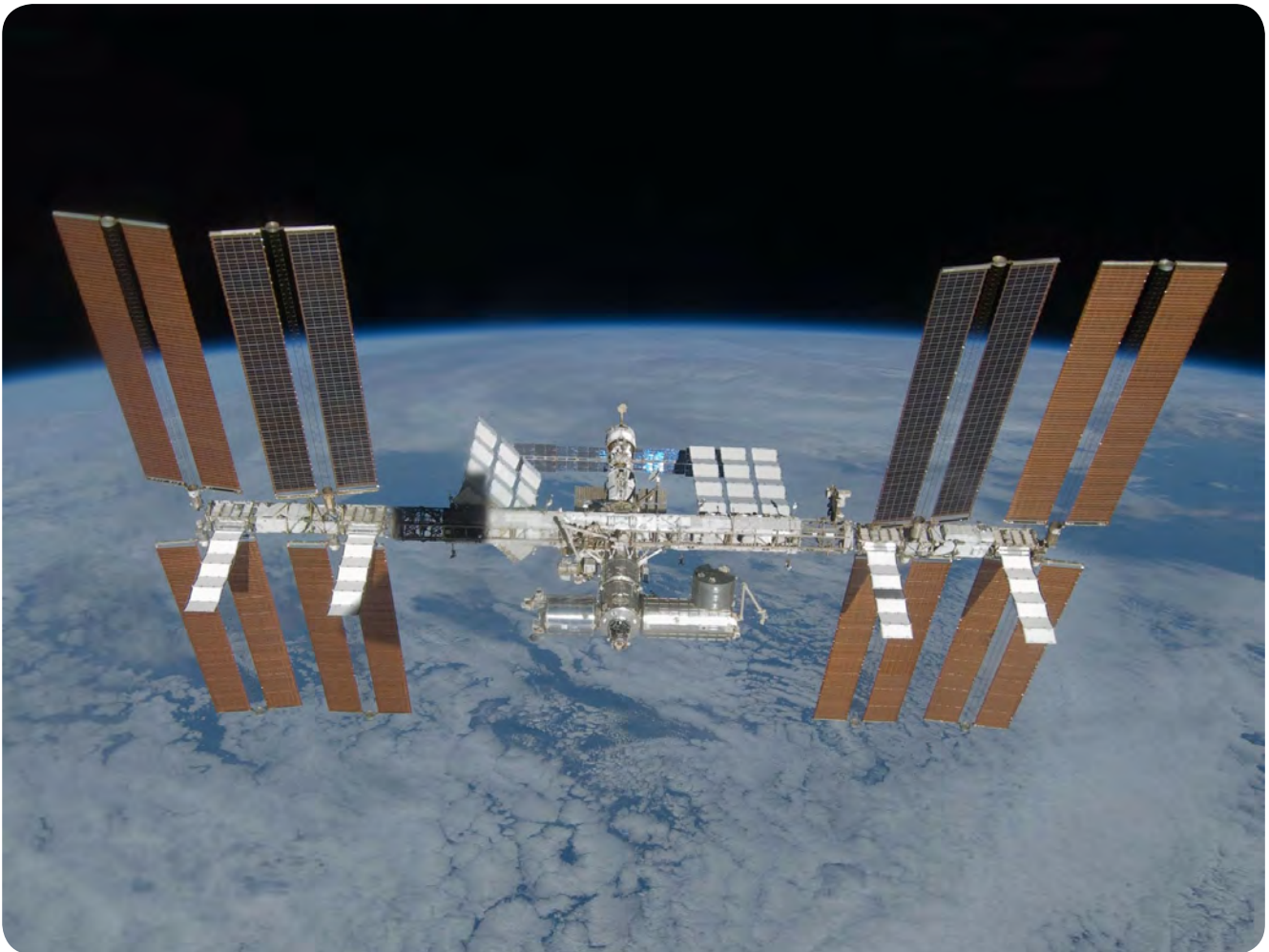
What is perhaps the greatest objection of all, are the expenses. If you would succeed at all in bringing a group of people to Mars, it would cost an awful lot. We would only be talking about a small elite and not about the billions of people living on our planet. If you would spend that same money and that same intellectual effort for such a Mars colonization, on solving the environmental problems such

as CO₂ emissions, we would probably be rid of all fossil fuels. The seas would have wind farms, the deserts would be full of solar panels, our cars would run on electricity or hydrogen, and our homes would no longer be heated by natural gas, coal, or oil. And we are not even taking into account that if we took most of Earth's population to Mars, we would pollute that planet enormously.

Common sense therefore says that we should solve our earth problems on Earth itself and we should not transport them to Mars. In addition, Theosofia has some other arguments as to why it is actually impossible to emigrate to Mars.

Living planets

Theosofia assumes consciousness as the driving force behind *all* manifestations. The far-reaching consequence of this is, that everything is alive: atoms, cells, minerals,



The International Space Station is orbiting the Earth at a height of 400 kilometers. That is still astronomically close to Earth's atmosphere. Nevertheless, a lot of special facilities are needed to make human habitation possible. In addition, astronauts rarely stay in the International Space Station longer than six months, partly to prevent prolonged exposure to cosmic radiation, too much shrinkage of muscle mass and too much decalcification of their bones.

animals, people, planets, suns. Mars, therefore, like Earth, is a living being.

What we can perceive of a being is the vehicle, the body, which, by the way, is also a living thing, and is composed of living entities. Everything is alive! Behind that vehicle works the active, guiding consciousness.

Take a human being as an example: behind or through his body – which is composed of living cells and atoms – works the *human* consciousness, the thinking faculty. Thus, behind the heavenly body Earth or Mars, the *planetary* consciousness works.

All those living beings work together in a grand collective, where one life is composed of smaller beings and it in turn is a part of an even larger life. Just as the human body is composed of living building blocks, our galaxy is composed of living suns and each solar system in turn is composed of many other living beings, including planets. Planets are like the organs in our solar system. Just as our heart, our liver, our kidneys and the other organs in our body perform a function for the benefit of the whole body, so the planets in our solar system perform a function for the benefit of the whole solar system. And just as our heart has a different function from, say, our liver, so each planet plays its indispensable role in the grand scheme of the solar system. Planets and their inhabitants are indispensable in the totality, but they are not exchangeable.

Mars, therefore, has a different characteristic than Earth. This also means that life on Mars has a different characteristic than life on Earth. Exactly as the cells of human beings are different from those of animals or plants, yes, as the cells of an individual human being are different from those of another human being, so all the living building blocks of the different planets differ from each other.

Planets and planetary chains

Planets are much more than what we, earth-people, see of them. What to us is the material plane is only one cross-section of the cosmos.

There are, however, many more planes: both more ethereal and more gross. Life manifests itself in all kinds of gradations. One is the sensory perceptible world; another is the astral world, of which we can also perceive something. Then we speak of feeling. Similarly, there is also a mental world, in which we dwell with our thinking. In the same way, a planet lives in seven cosmic planes or worlds, which correspond to the seven principles of consciousness of man. A planet, therefore, is not only the globe that we can perceive with our senses. It is actually a chain of globes,

of which we see only that globe which corresponds to the sphere in which we live. We speak in this context of a planetary chain.

Moreover, you can speak of a planetary sphere, which is a concentric sphere around the sun. So there is a Mercury sphere, a Venus sphere, the Earth sphere, a Mars sphere, and so on.

Each planet is composed of and is the home of all the kingdoms of nature — Theosophia recognizes ten kingdoms. Those kingdoms of nature move in seven major cyclic movements across the planetary chain. After each such Round, there is a rest period called *obscuration*. Life rests, just as a person sleeps through the night after a day. Our planet Earth is just over halfway through the fourth Round. Mars is in obscuration. It is between the third and fourth Rounds.

Own characteristic

All the beings of those natural kingdoms have a characteristic that corresponds to the planet on which they evolve. Of course, there will be similarities between the living building blocks of, say, Earth and Mars. The thin atmosphere of Mars contains the same elements as those of Earth, albeit in a different composition. Both planets are located in the common solar atmosphere. They are therefore closely related. In ancient times, this was a well-known fact. People spoke of the seven sacred planets, which form a close team and support each other in the construction of their vehicles, which have seven different characteristics. So, you can speak of Earth humans, Venus humans, Mars humans, and so on.

We are thus part of the living planet Earth, our vehicles are composed of living earthly material, and our consciousness has identified itself primarily with our planet Terra.

Behind the vehicle of a being, consciousness operates. That consciousness manifests itself exactly in the vehicle that corresponds to its level of development. Thus, we belong here. At this stage of development, we can only become ourselves on Earth. Our mind has the typical characteristic that belongs to Earth and not to other planets.

Physical traveling does not change a human

Now suppose we travel by missile to Mars — or to another planet. Does our thinking consciousness then change? Our physical part – the vehicle – moves, but does our mental part “move” too? Do we become “Mars thinkers”? Can we become Mars thinkers at all?

If a fisherman *pur sang* goes to live on a farm, is he a farmer

just because he has changed location? His whole being is attuned to catching fish. He feeds on fish. He would search the land for ditches in which to fish.

Or to use another comparison, if you move a dog to the deep sea, is it a sea creature? Or does it remain a dog in the wrong environment?

If we are able to go to Mars in a missile, do we become mentally Mars-thinkers? Our character is that of Earth humans. We live within the Earth atmosphere. Physically going to another environment will not change that.

If you do not expand your mind, and in your thoughts do not grow beyond the sphere in which you are at present, you will, even if you travel to the far reaches of our universe, nevertheless have the same kind of experiences as you are already having — ignoring, for the sake of reasoning, that you cannot live there at all as an Earthman. You would again create exactly the same kind of problems on Mars as you do on Earth; the problems you wanted to escape.

Universal consciousness

Now man, like any other being, is an essentially boundless being. Consequently, there are faculties in his consciousness that make him transcend far beyond the physical planet which provides the living building material for his body.

The great human challenge is to develop those faculties. At the stage of consciousness in which most of us are now, we tend to ascribe reality only to what we perceive with our senses. This is the root cause of all the problems we listed at the beginning of this article. The focus on outer existence created the wish to flee from our planet.

However, if we were to develop the deeper, more universal layers in our consciousness, we would raise ourselves above the merely physical Earth and feel at home in the more spiritual realms of all seven sacred planets. We could then have experiences there and grow in consciousness.

Compare it to someone who lives in a mountain village sealed off from the outside world. He can only live in that village and communicate in the dialect of that village. However, if he develops his capacities, he will also be able to talk to people from other villages in the valley and even to those from other countries, where he might even settle down.

The more universal a being is, the more easily it can live elsewhere. Look at the animal world: crows live everywhere. They are not picky about their food and can make a nest anywhere. The more specialized an animal is, the

fewer the number of places it can live in.

We humans are also quite specialized in some respects. We limit ourselves in our thinking by living primarily in our personal thinking aspects. Only by satisfying personal desires we hope to become happy. That is our “specialization” and also our great hindrance to greater consciousness.

As we learn to attribute reality to the spiritual element within us, we will also be able to have experiences beyond our earthly sphere. We will then be able to familiarize ourselves with the intellectual and spiritual realms of our solar system, and to live and move in them: as familiar as we are now in the physical world. Then we will have connected with the *buddhic* part in us, the part that has learned to see through the illusion of the external world. We would be very different human beings than we are now. At least we would no longer run away from the mess we made ourselves. We would not devise false solutions, such as Mars voyages, as an excuse for our problems, for we would immediately try to solve them here. Our planet would be a model of dynamic harmony, in which all beings could further develop into greater universality.

Questions & Answers

How real are dreams?

During your sleep and your dreams, is there an exchange with the one you perceive in your dream?

Answer

We start with the questions: what is sleep, what are dreams? Sleep is a period of rest, brought about by our consciousness retreating into less material spheres. While sleeping we can experience periods of complete unconsciousness, alternated by periods of dreaming. With special exceptions, all processes during our sleep are uncontrolled, “automatically proceeding”, because we lose our self-conscious thinking when we fall asleep. There are many types of dreams, ranging from restless images after an overly heavy meal, to quite lucid and predictive dreams, albeit the latter are very rare.⁽¹⁾ During our dreams we do not perceive an objective world, no things “outside” us, even though everything seems real as long as we dream. We create all dream images from within ourselves, usually built up from fragments of our memories. Dreams are projections that only we experience as real. If we have had a day in which we were composed and dedicated to our tasks, followed by an evening in which we focused on ideals, then our dreams will be accordingly peaceful and invigorating. If we have had a day full of worries, fears, or thoughtless actions, we may have very restless dreams from which we wake up exhausted.

So, if we seem to be talking or cooperating with someone in a dream, it is entirely our projection, our interpretation, from

our experiences. The answer to the question is therefore: no, we have no communication with those who appear in our dreams.

Nevertheless, in principle, the person about whom someone is dreaming can notice something of this (and as a result, perhaps think for a moment of the dreaming person), but only if he is awake and if, at that moment, his thinking has *exactly the same characteristics* as the state of the dreamer. If this is not the case, it passes completely over the awake person. This kind of contact is more common among people who have a very close relationship with each other. Finally, one more important aspect: in our sleep, if our consciousness is open to it, we can catch images of the activities of our higher human soul, the immortal Teacher *within* us. Thus, a spiritual influence *from within*. This may include a warning (for the benefit of ourselves or another we know) or a *true* prophecy. Unfortunately, upon our awakening, such images usually get mixed up with our outwardly focused thinking, so they become more or less distorted.⁽¹⁾

Back to the question: if the dreamer (sender) and the dreamed person (receiver) are exactly on the same wavelength, the former may leave an impression on the latter. But that is not a conversation, not a communication in the usual sense of the word.

Reference

1. H.P. Blavatsky, “Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge”. In: *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. 15 volumes, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, 1990, Volume X, pp. 246-264.

The role of our intellect

Intellect is part of the three higher principles of consciousness of the human constitution. Yet intellect is the cause of a lot of problems in the world, because there is little compassion toward one's fellow man. I would say that intellect is an evil. How should I see that?

Answer

Your question is very understandable. Indeed, superficially, it seems that the intellect causes much misery and suffering. However, a deeper analysis reveals that it is not the intellect that causes problems, but desire. In fact, you indicate this yourself, by stating that there is so little compassion.

The intellect is in itself a useful ability. It is our ability to analyze, to dissect, to categorize things. For example, I would never be able to give an intelligible answer to your question without my intellect. I would not be able to bring a correct order to my thoughts, my sentences would be grammatically incorrect and incomprehensible.

The intellect is counted among the supra-personal aspects of thought, because a pure intellectual forgets about himself and immerses himself fully in the subject that concerns him intellectually. It is the image of the absent-minded professor sitting in the laboratory, or fully concentrated trying to solve mathematical problems, without noticing that he is wearing two different shoes and that lunchtime has already passed for hours. He has forgotten himself.

However, the intellect is certainly not,

the highest or wisest aspect of our thinking. It has its limitations. It has no overview. It loses itself in details. It does not see the large connections. Insight or understanding – our *buddhic* aspect of thought – does give us that. For example, you can do chemistry or physics sums applying the formulas correctly with your intellect, without actually understanding what it is about. And above the understanding there is an even grander aspect, which we call the *experience of unity*.

So, why is it that the intellect so often causes so much suffering? Because in our present age it is very often used in combination with desire. Now, desire in itself is not evil – it is a neutral force – but it is often used with a selfish purpose. That is the crux!

To give an obvious example: the discovery of the forces contained in the atom is not in itself evil. Knowledge is neutral. The manufacture of atomic bombs, driven by selfishness, which has made the world a lot less safe, is therefore not attributable to that knowledge per se, but to the selfish motives of people who wanted power or influence.

Another example: the invention and further development of the Internet is a wonderful feat of intellectual ingenuity and offers many benefits to humanity. We can access books from university libraries around the world in our own study room. We can communicate with each other over long distances and exchange movies. Of course, there are also a lot of bad uses of the Internet. I will not mention them, but anyone who reads the newspaper can think of a few. Are those bad uses due to the intellectual achievement per se? No, they have to do with a selfish mentality, born of desire.

This is also exactly the reason why in the ancient Mystery Schools certain knowledge was not communicated to

everyone. As long as you know that the predominant mentality is selfish, restraint is required when providing information.

Wonderment and intuition

Is it wise to seek scientific explanations in the case of wonderment?

Answer

Wonderment is certainly not the final stage of the search for truth. It is the beginning. Plato says that philosophy begins with wondering. In other words, only then does the search begin.

Wondering is a state of consciousness between not knowing and knowing. You cannot call it intuition, because intuition means that you immediately see through something, immediately understand the essential background of something.

Wonderment is very important in finding truth. You are open to new ideas, grander visions. You do not fall back on old ways of thinking, ingrained patterns of thought. Wonderment excites intuition. It challenges. It encourages searching for answers. It encourages philosophizing. Now in the search for answers to life questions, it is not just science that is involved. Science looks for measurable answers to the question of the “how” of things. Philosophy looks for the underlying causes and the interconnectedness of all things, with which it provides answers to the question of “why” things are the way they are. Religion considers the fundamental unity of life and asks the question of the meaning of something, “what does it lead to?” None of these faculties of mind can be missed, otherwise you would be crippled in your thinking.

So, as a direct answer to the question

of whether things that wonder you should be explained scientifically, we can say: certainly, it is good to try to explain wondrous things scientifically. *How* is it constructed. But do not leave it at that; ask yourself also *why* it is so and *what it leads to*. Any kind of one-sidedness detracts from the truth. Always try to build the most universal view possible. Never think that you have found an absolute truth. There are always greater truths.

Question

Mrs. Blavatsky has “released” a part of Theosophia. To what extent can a Theosophist marvel again?

Answer

If it is a true Theosophist, he will continually keep wondering. In the first place it must be said, that although Mrs. Blavatsky has given many teachings unknown to us, as she herself says, there is also a lot she has *not* given. She *could* not give more because we have barely digested what has already been given. In fact, we have only just begun to digest the theosophical ideas that have been made known since 1875.

Moreover, Theosophy is like a boundless ocean. Even the greatest thinkers, the wisest people, cannot gauge its depth. What H.P. Blavatsky and her successors have disclosed, is already so difficult for most of us to grasp, requires so much thought, so much understanding, that there is virtually no one who understands the full extent and depth of the theosophical writings already published. If you think you have understood everything, chances are you still do not understand any of it at all! I think that every student of Theosophy has had the experience, that a certain doctrine that he has been studying for years, or a certain passage from a book that he has read many times,

on one day suddenly brings him back to a state of wonder. “Only now do I really understand what is meant here,” he will say. Suddenly he finds himself faced with vistas of new knowledge, and full of wonder he starts looking for deeper answers.

If this state of wonder were no longer there, rigidity and stagnation would set in. And just as stagnant water rots, the doctrine would degenerate and lead to lifeless dogmatism.

Practice what you preach

I had a lot of dealings with Roman Catholic nuns. They did good works all their lives, received no pay and were super-obedient. Yet they were often jealous, unkind women: joyless and humorless — with a few exceptions. They sacrificed themselves for humanity. Why is it that some of them became such unkind and unhappy women?

Answer

The question does not only concern Roman Catholic nuns, because it actually concerns everyone.

If you are truly concerned with the fate of your fellow men, you consider that more important than your personal desires and feelings. After all, these undermine your sense of responsibility towards everyone you deal with. You will have to free yourself from self-centered thoughts such as jealousy, self-assertion, irritations and dogmatically sticking to rules (which can make life for others a real hell). You learn to understand what other people troubles and how you can truly help them on their path of life. What could be more joyful than that? It is inspiring, encouraging, and ... never comes at the expense of your humor. Usually, the opposite is true.

In short: when I-centered thoughts prevail, there can never be service to humanity at the same time. What matters is our motive, the character of our thoughts.

We have already said, this applies to everyone. But if we use a monastic order as a concrete example: what were someone's motives to enter this monastic order? Are there any (unconscious) personal interests involved? And if these motives were originally well-meaning, does that person keep his aspiration alive in his heart and mind? Did he investigate beforehand in which monastic communities an atmosphere of openness, human understanding without conditions, and independent thinking prevails — and in which ones it does not?

Consider that if, in a given church community, there are few who understand the truly unselfish side of their religion and practice it toward others, then there is no one who can protect and lead that group morally and spiritually. And then, unfortunately, all kinds of selfish characteristics can start to dominate, causing substantial damage — spiritual, mental, psychological and sometimes physical damage — to those who are under the group's influence.

Another point is, that whoever represents a spiritual movement has a certain authority. Everyone expects him to be a positive moral example. Thus, the consequences of selfish actions are more serious for himself and his fellow men, than if he would not have that (supposed) spiritual authority. The point is, he undermines the deep trust that others place in him.

A clergyman has the actual task of being an example of empathy and understanding. If a certain social group is treated unjustly, he has the duty to take a firm stand and act accordingly. And fortunately, there have always been

such clergymen. Ideals are not distant goals: we can practice them every day, every hour.

Is damage to ecosystems repairable?

Yes, ecosystems such as forests and lakes and marshes can be restored, with more or less effort. But in all cases, we must be willing to renounce certain attachments and desires of ours, motivated by our sense of responsibility for all that lives. We restore ecosystems simply by stopping our detrimental actions (pollution, for example) and giving more room for the plants and animals to develop. Usually, it is widely known what we need to do to achieve this. Only by actually doing so, will those ecosystems once again attract their characteristic plant and animal species.

Each ecosystem is the “home”, the “learning school” for many beings. If we decimate certain ecosystems worldwide, we deprive these beings of the opportunity to embody themselves and learn from their experiences. We thereby slow down their inner development. It affects their evolutionary process.

The recovery process of an ecosystem can be short or long. If we have destroyed or polluted an ecosystem to the point of desertification, it can take centuries. Consider, for example, the extensive desiccation, salinization, and pollution of the Aral Sea. But sometimes ecosystems can recover rapidly, as for instance the canals in Dutch cities. After measures were implemented to stop their pollution by sewage, many animals returned: plants, fishes, lobsters, snakes, water birds.

Agenda

Lectures and studies on Sundays

Starting September 2021, TSPL offers a series of lectures and studies on current topics in the light of Theosophy. Every other Sunday there is a lecture that will be broadcasted via YouTube, and each following Sunday there is a study related to that lecture via Zoom.

We invite everyone to exchange ideas about these topics. The lectures and studies are based on the ageless Theosophy or Divine Wisdom. We will study all topics in this series in the light of its principles, formulated by H.P. Blavatsky as the three Fundamental Principles or Propositions. H.P. Blavatsky's successors elaborated on these Principles and explained them with the Seven Jewels of Wisdom: Reimbodiment, Cause and effect, Hierarchical structure of the Universe, Self-becoming, Self-directed evolution, Two Paths in Nature, Knowledge of the Self. Join us in this series of lectures and studies to deepen our

understanding of the Universe and ourselves, to apply this Wisdom in daily life, and to make Universal Brotherhood a living reality.

Practical information

- You can sign up for a study by clicking that study in the overview on our website – <https://blavatskyhouse.org/lectures/locations/online/> – and then by clicking the 'Sign up for this study' button. If you wish, you can register for multiple studies at once.
- The study is organized via Zoom. All participants will receive the link for the Zoom meeting through the email address they have provided in the registration form.
- Only participants who have signed up for the study can participate. The study will not be broadcast.
- All lectures and studies start at 19.30 CET.

Timeless wisdom as a tool for young people

Because of the lockdown, many young people have become isolated and find it difficult to get out of it. However, the crisis is not the cause but the trigger for depression and loneliness. The cause is the lack of a logical, heart and mind satisfying philosophy of life. Yet everyone can discover this timeless wisdom and thereby place the crisis in a broader framework. You then activate the tools within yourself to get out of your depression and isolation.

You will begin to see the value of developing yourself and you will understand your unique role that you have to fulfill.

This timeless wisdom, by the way, is just as necessary for older people as it is for younger ones.

7 November Mental resilience: so why depression?

14 November Study on subject of lecture of 7 November

21 November Discover your unique task in life

28 November Study on subject of lecture of 21 November

Care from the perspective of reincarnation and karma

Care for the body begins with care for the soul. And care for the soul begins with building a universal vision of life. From perspective of reincarnation and karma, you start to look at care fundamentally differently. We realize that we can never pass the care of ourselves off to others. And that we only truly care for others when we help them to care for themselves. What this may look like in more depth, we will explore in this lecture.

5 December Our mind as the foundation of our immune system

12 December Study on subject of lecture of 5 December

The Mystic Birth of the human soul in esoteric traditions

What is this Mystic Birth and why is it related to the Winter Solstice?

19 December The Mystic Birth of the human soul in esoteric traditions

Colophon

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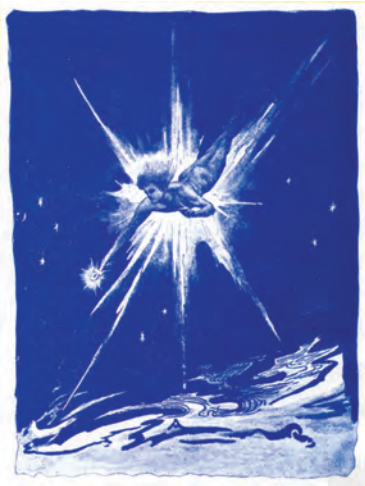
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The activities of the I.S.I.S. Foundation (International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth) are based on:

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)