

the Light-bringer

# Lucifer<sup>®</sup>

*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*

**The spiritual impulse  
of Helena P.  
Blavatsky**

**Utopia: does the  
happy land exist?**

**The theosophical  
view of our eyesight**

**How to find your  
Work?**

**Atmosphere at birth**

**Influencing karma**

**Does acquired  
knowledge get lost?**

**What is Devachan?**



Illustration front cover:  
statue of Al-Farabi in Almaty,  
Kazakhstan. Sculpture of Ayana  
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Herman C. Vermeulen

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# Editorial

Although Theosophia is the most sublime, noble and profound philosophy of life, which even the greatest thinkers can never fully fathom, every human being can understand something of it and draw his or her own conclusions from it for daily practice. The task of *Lucifer, the Light-bringer*, is to help us with this. We provide an outline of the great thoughts of a theosophical teaching, but we will always elaborate on how that teaching can inspire man and lift society to a higher level.

In doing so, we are trying to connect with that great esoteric tradition, which was revitalized with the appearance of Helena P. Blavatsky. The enormous effort it took her to introduce new ideas to the Western world is clearly explained in the article *The spiritual impulse of Helena P. Blavatsky*.

It is of utmost importance to realize that man is at their very core a divine being. People are therefore capable of creating an elevating, idealistic world. That is why it is so important to imagine such a *Utopia* in one's thinking, something that has been done in all eras. The more diligently we live our Utopia, the more quickly it will become a reality in the outer world.

Theosophia is the synthesis of Religion, Philosophy and Science. Ostensibly, it may seem that the article *The theosophical view of our eyesight* emphasizes the scientific aspect. But if you include philosophy, you more and more understand what “seeing” actually is. Moreover, this article teaches us that if we place our ego less central (a religious aspect) we perceive much more.

*Lucifer, the Light-bringer*, does not shy away from people's issues. This is evident in the article *How to find your Work?* The theosophical view of work is however of a very different angle than what is usually understood by it. This article explores what contribution you can actually make.

Finally, in our Questions & Answers section we dive into a varied number of subjects: the sphere around human birth, our influence on karma, and what will happen with our knowledge when we die — questions that many are asking.

As always, we are open to your comments and questions. The exchange of ideas can make Theosophia stronger. We are convinced that if Theosophia takes its well-deserved place in the world, the conflicts and disharmony will gradually disappear. To this end, every person can contribute.



Herman C. Vermeulen

# The spiritual impulse of Helena P. Blavatsky

To better understand Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's special role as Messenger of Ancient Wisdom, we must delve into the groundbreaking, universal ideas she brought to replace the old, ingrained views of the time. The Theosophia in fact supports one universal teaching: the fundamental unity and inseparable interconnectedness of life. That is its message. Herman C. Vermeulen gave a lecture in 2022 in which he outlined the deeper meaning of the extraordinary life and work of H.P. Blavatsky. The editors edited his lecture into this article.

## Key thoughts

- » Blavatsky gives a deeper presentation of Theosophia for the West.
- » She defines true occultism as altruism, the great renunciation of the SELF.
- » Blavatsky is the gateway to the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion.
- » She comes as a Messenger at an important cyclical moment.

Today is Sept. 21, the International Day of Peace. If there is one thing that H.P. Blavatsky and Theosophy have always given a lot of attention to, it is issues of peace, racism, slavery, child marriage, child labor and the like. This year also includes the publication of the special, 84-page, *Lucifer* Peace issue in response to the war in Ukraine.

The Theosophical Society Point Loma and The Theosophical Society Adyar both have extensive peace traditions. In this regard we have been active for many years. If we base ourselves on Universal Brotherhood, that's a natural thing to do.

## Who is Helena P. Blavatsky?

It is not easy to describe who Helena P. Blavatsky was. An eventful history of her life and the stupendous number of articles, letters, and books she produces can give us some insight, but to really understand what is taking place and why, I want to

approach the question on three different levels: Blavatsky as a human being, as Tulku and as a spiritual transformer. This will also involve highlighting the value of her literary legacy.

Blavatsky was born as Helena Petrovna von Hahn in Ekaterinoslav (Dnipropetrovsk), a place southeast of Kiev in Ukraine. It is July 31, 1831, according to the old-style calendar then in use in Russia; according to our current calendar, it is August 12, 1831, at 02:17 in the early morning. However, the exact time is never officially recorded. An astrological reconstruction, based on a number of important events in her life, later arrives at August 12, 01:42 a.m. local time.

It is a troubled time in Russia and Europe, with cholera claiming many victims. Little Helena comes into the world with weak health; therefore, the family decides to have her baptized quickly, in accordance with the

idea within the Orthodox Church that it will bring calamity if a child should die unbaptized. During the baptism ceremony, a young niece accidentally touches the priest's clothing with a lit candle, causing the man and some bystanders to catch fire and suffer some burns. Thus, this baptism becomes a momentous omen. For if Blavatsky will tear down and criticize one thing in her lifetime, it is the institution of church.

### Some facts at a glance

The life of Helena P. Blavatsky has many important phases and moments. A very brief overview already gives an impression of them. Between 1848 and 1875, Blavatsky travels around the world no less than three times. At that time, with no more than boats, trains, carriages and horses, this is a strenuous and time-consuming activity. All those travels gave her the opportunity to have first-hand experiences with all the different cultures and traditions there were in the religious and philosophical fields.

In 1851, on her 20th birthday, Blavatsky has the very important first (outward) meeting with Master M. at Hyde Park in London. Master Morya asks her there that one, all-important question: are you willing to devote your life to an important work (the propagation of Theosophy) and thus help humanity?

Blavatsky's answer is yes. Many journeys followed, including to Egypt and Tibet, where she spent nearly three years in various monasteries for training with the Masters.

In 1875, on November 17 in New York, The Theosophical Society is founded, with, besides H.P. Blavatsky, W.Q. Judge and H.S. Olcott, among others.

After an apparently quiet start, *Isis Unveiled* is published in September 1877, generating a storm of interest.

In 1888 follows the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*, the voluminous theosophical standard work on the origin of the cosmos and the origin of man, revealing to the West a hitherto hidden, vast amount of knowledge.

Also in 1888, parallel to The Theosophical Society but separate from it, a group is founded: the Esoteric School or E.S., also known as the Esoteric Section.

On May 8, 1891, H.P. Blavatsky passes away — as she herself called it, “I am going back home.”

### Theosophia for the West

Her stay in Tibet is for Blavatsky a period in which she gains a lot of knowledge in a quiet, spiritual environment, under the guidance of her Teachers. But not only that; the training in Tibet contributes a great deal to developing her

spiritual faculties. With this, she will later draw attention to Theosophy in the West by showing that Nature clearly has a non-material side. The psychic abilities in the “phenomena” she produces require great mastery of the elements to perform them without danger.

The Theosophy that Blavatsky brings to the West with the foundation of The Theosophical Society — at the behest of her Teachers — is only *part of Theosophia*. The word Theosofia is a contraction of the Greek words “Theos” and “Sophia,” meaning “divine” and “wisdom”, or “Wisdom of the Gods” or “Divine Wisdom”. What we call Theosophy today is what we are supposed to be able to understand with our Western patterns of thought. Blavatsky gives a deeper presentation of Theosophia to the West, and also to India, who had not received this before. The most important principal thought that Blavatsky introduces is, “everything is alive, everything is consciousness”. A revolutionary thought anno 1875, when people in the West considered matter to be dead substance. A chemist can use atoms and molecules to release some reactions, but that's where it ends, is the belief. Another thought she brought is, “all life is one”. Brotherhood is a fact of life in Nature. Humans are spiritual, *equal* beings — in essence consciousness. Today that thought is already difficult for many people to grasp, but in Blavatsky's time it is completely challenging. Slavery has not even been abolished everywhere by then, and discrimination and racial inequality were still widespread. For example, an Englishman in India is happy with his servants, but cannot imagine that you can also be in the same theosophical study group with them.

Blavatsky especially provides much deeper insights into religion and philosophy, with clear explanations of the original texts of the Old and New Testaments, of the Egyptian Book of the Dead and Greek writings. She also cooperates for this purpose with Dr. Alexander Wilder, who is an expert in this field.

Blavatsky shows that not the body, but the inner consciousness is the true human being — so that is where the focus should be. To begin with, she grounds the entire theosophical thought in *The Secret Doctrine* with three fundamental Propositions, briefly summarized as:

1. Infinity or boundlessness.
2. Cyclic motion: the periodic appearance and disappearance of Universes.
3. The fundamental equality of every being with the boundless; the pilgrimage of embodiments in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law.<sup>(1)</sup>



To show people at that time that we are more than a body, she shows phenomena of a non-material nature: phenomena considered impossible, especially in the West. For example, she has a ring that she always wears, of which she at once makes a duplicate and holds it in her hand. This one is indistinguishable from the original.

### Differences in interested parties

Blavatsky's appearance produces four types of interested people. There are the "phenomenon-hunters," there are those with general interest, then the professional and semi-experts – including the Spiritualists and Spiritists – and finally the truly inspired innovators of society, who are willing to work with Blavatsky.

The phenomenon-hunters find it particularly interesting how to make – for example – a duplicate of a ring, or how to make bells ring that you cannot see. Blavatsky is invited by all sorts of distinguished societies in the hope that she will show some amusing phenomena: Blavatsky as a magician. But these are people who do not understand her method at all, which is that the phenomena are only intended to underpin the teachings she brings. If you start from "everything is alive, everything is consciousness," one's own consciousness can direct other consciousnesses. Thus the cohesive force of atoms can be influenced, which is what happens, for example, with carbon atoms in the air when letters appear.<sup>(2)</sup> We also see the phenomenon of contraction of carbon atoms taking place in every photocopying machine today. The principle is the same, but by electromagnetically generated forces instead of human energy. But for these people, only the phenomena are of interest, not the question of the underlying explanations.

Among those of general interest are many who understand little or nothing of Blavatsky's abilities, such as, for example, quoting from books that are in libraries in a very different place in the world. But contact with her does lead them to believe that Theosophy demonstrates the limitations of what religion, philosophy and science have to say about life at that time. These people are seeking greater understanding, and so they are asking questions about how these phenomena can be brought into being.

### Spiritualists and Spiritists

The demonstrated limitedness of established conceptions of life also arouses much resistance. Thus, while there are those among the professional and semi-experts with religious, philosophical, or scientific backgrounds who are willing to revise their opinions, a large proportion become

frustrated by Blavatsky's denunciation of their alleged expertise.

For example, there are the Spiritualists: scientists and semi-scientists, whose mission is to investigate non-material phenomena. They do not presuppose consciousness or reincarnation. William Crookes is one of them who does take a more open approach to the principle of consciousness and therefore proceeds without much prejudice. He shows that electricity has many other possibilities and is later the discoverer of the radiometer and the so-called Crookes tubes. He will also become a member of The Theosophical Society. He does his research on electrical discharges in vacuum tubes in which light phenomena occur, inspired by his contacts with Blavatsky. He is wealthy and can therefore carry out independent scientific work in his own laboratory. A respected scientist and Fellow of the Royal Society, he investigates a phenomenon of levitation at the request of this Society in Scotland: a person can make objects levitate without physically touching them. When Crookes writes in his report, "My lords, I think we must yet come to the conclusion that there are forces which we do not yet know," he is disbarred.<sup>(3)</sup>

Then there are the Spiritists. They engage in séances and are obsessed by communicating with spirits. This is also more or less the case with the Shakers or shaking Quakers. During their worship services, they can become quite ecstatic. There are Quakers who convey messages that they attribute to higher consciousnesses and also sometimes to God's sayings.

When Blavatsky is instructed by her Master to explain to these Spiritists and Shakers what is really happening in the realms of consciousness in this regard, she of course complies. But she also says that from then on, she will get real enemies. Her explanation that one does not talk to dead people, but at best to their lower parts such as the desire body, the *kāma* part, on the astral plane – a dregs that will also decompose – strikes them very badly. So, after that especially the Spiritists are busy demonstrating that what Blavatsky tells them is fake, nonsense and fraudulent. This leads immediately and also later on to great dramas.

### Working with inspired renewers

Fortunately, there is also a group of truly inspired renewers of society that Blavatsky manages to gather around her. They are responsible for many social changes and are also involved in the creation of The Theosophical Society in 1875. For example, these co-workers help publish *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky's first major work of 1877. This is a

huge job: she writes everything by hand, the texts of the voluminous work must be arranged, and the proofs must be read and corrected. The first edition of a thousand copies sold out within ten days, and the work is still available today.<sup>(4)</sup>

With the publication of *Isis Unveiled* begins the discussion of its contents. What does it say — and also: what exactly does it not say? For example, there is the famous statement that reincarnation of the astral monad is not possible, or only by high exception, and is not in line with nature.<sup>(5)</sup> This causes a lot of commotion, because it implies that there is no reincarnation. But the astral monad is the lowest and that is not the part that reincarnates; that is the Self — written with a capital letter. The Self is permanent and binds to manifestation in cyclic movements.

Explaining such deeper meanings in various publications again involves a lot of work, and so it is bustling with activity. For example, Blavatsky at this time also writes articles for the abolition of slavery, for women's emancipation, against child marriage and widow-burnings in India, for the abolition of apartheid and colonization and for India to become independent. For the latter, the Theosophists have done much work; after Blavatsky, Annie Besant, among others, plays a major role in this.

In this way, the spread of knowledge of Theosophia is begun and many initiatives are also taken at the social level. The reactions in society are divided: on the one hand there is enthusiasm among people who therefore look forward to more publications by Blavatsky, on the other hand there is, especially from church and scientific circles, much resistance from people who completely disagree with her. It is therefore a difficult time for classical physics, which in the late 19th, early 20th century sees the old ideas further undermined, with, for example, Henri Becquerel concluding in 1896 that radiant matter exists. Then the perception tilts further thanks to physicists such as Max Planck (1900: quantum theory) and Albert Einstein (1905, 1915: special and general theory of relativity). Einstein, according to a cousin of his, always had a copy of *The Secret Doctrine* on his desk.

So, Blavatsky faces a lot of resistance, but as the Master also says — I say this briefly in my own words: *There have been few messengers who have been received with open arms. Not even the Buddha.*

## H.P. Blavatsky as Tulku

Most imputations toward Helena P. Blavatsky arise because people understand little of what she brings of theo-

sophical teachings and understand absolutely nothing about the “phenomena” that underpin her explanations of the non-material worlds. How do these “tricks” work, what lies behind them, what are these forces we do not know? To understand a bit of Blavatsky and her work, we will have to fathom a piece of the teachings she brings. And this starts with the concept of Tulku: H.P. Blavatsky as Tulku. In Blavatsky's literature we see that sometimes she does not sign with Blavatsky or H.P. Blavatsky or Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, but with the abbreviation H.P.B. This is her Tulku name. This means that when she uses this name, she is in a different state, and is not the person Blavatsky but a being, a Master, overshadowing her and thus working through her.

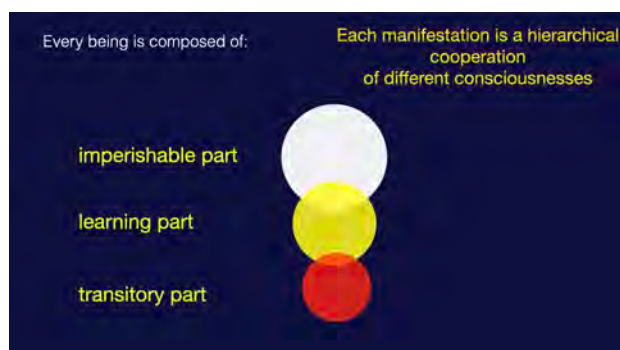
The term Tulku — the Hindu terminology speaks of Āveśa — we know in the Western world mainly from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. In Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhism, the term Tulku is used in the succession of great, important Lamas such as the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. However, because at some point people unjustly claim that status while not being of the corresponding spiritual level, the Dalai Lama removes the term Tulku from Tibetan Buddhism. But the principle is occurring sometimes and can actually function.

## Special cooperation

The Theosophia teaches that the human being, like any being, is a hierarchical cooperation of different qualities of consciousness. The core idea in understanding Tulku is that certain aspects of consciousness of a human being can cooperate with the qualities of consciousness of a higher being. To see how this works we first look at the composition of the human being. In the left image on the next page, we see a human being represented as three vertically positioned circles, three focal points working closely together. Each focal point is a monad, a center of consciousness. On the left are the names of those focal points. The highest focal point is the imperishable part, our inner core, what we call the spiritual Ātmic monad. The middle focal point is the learning part, also called the intermediate part. This developing part is what we call Manas, or the thinker. The lower focal point is the impermanent part, which contains the energies we use to express everything in the outer realm (Kāma and Prāna), and also the physical, our vehicle.

In the picture on the right, we see two triplets side by side. These represent two beings. The first triplet here is of a Mahātma, an advanced being, by the name of H.P.B. The





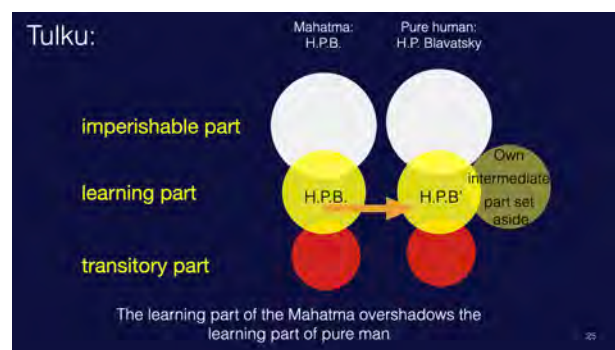
second triplet is of a pure human being like H.P. Blavatsky. We see here how the learning part of the Mahātma overshadows the learning part of the human being Blavatsky. In other words, the intermediate part of H.P. Blavatsky “makes way” in favor of the intermediate part of the Master. Thus, two distinct consciousnesses, two beings of different quality, cooperate with each other. The higher being, the Mahātma, overshadows the lower being.

Blavatsky learned this form of cooperation during her training in Tibet. The moment she is overshadowed by H.P.B., Blavatsky is the outward instrument for expressing, writing down or narrating the inspiration and insights she receives. And so, it works with the texts she gets through for her literary assignments, such as *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, and so on. Besides the Mahātma H.P.B., Master Koot Hoomi, Master Moria and still other Masters use her with the same technique.

We can understand this form of cooperation between different qualities of consciousness only if we can picture the composite nature of man and the characteristics of those individual parts. It cannot be explained or understood on the basis of materialistic thinking. Even the many interested people around her could not grasp this, and this lack of understanding became the greatest source of the imputations against Blavatsky. For example, once a visitor sees her writing intensively at her desk, without understanding that at that moment she is connected to the source from which that knowledge came. Direct collaborators do know about this and write in their observations that they see the outer Blavatsky present, but also know that someone else is at work there.

## Consequences

That this form of cooperation has important ethical and moral consequences may be obvious. Blavatsky must rely completely on those who overshadow her intermediary for the purpose for which she has made herself available. And



for that cause she strains herself, until her last breath in 1891. All those years of labor for humanity involve much effort and demand much energy from her. Consequently, at times she falls ill. The imputations and accusations of all kinds also put a great mental strain on her.

In Blavatsky’s splendid ethical book, *The Voice of the Silence* we find a typical indication of her cooperation with other advanced consciousnesses. In her own copy she writes the dedication, “*H.P.B. to H.P. Blavatsky with no kind regards.*” By this she indicates that this unusually poetic little book comes straight from one of the Masters.

The way Tulku’s and Avatāras work is also described by Blavatsky in her article on the life of the Buddha.<sup>(6)</sup> Dr. G. de Purucker, the fourth Leader of The Theosophical Society Point Loma, also explains that principle in a very structured way in the *Esoteric Teachings*, Volume 10.<sup>(7)</sup>

Thus Blavatsky works not only with faithful Theosophists, but also with Masters, members of the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion – a concept to which I will return later – and their disciples. She therefore embodies what we might call a *central receiving station* of knowledge and instruction, vital to the spread of Theosophia during that period. A very important thought in the light of what the longer-term theosophical impulses are, which were given at that specific time.

We still see the Tulku principle today. I call that “light forms” of Tulku – the influencing of someone else’s thinking. I regret to say that the examples of this in our society are all negative: there is much abuse of this principle, consciously or unconsciously. Powerful thinkers sometimes overshadow others in their thinking to such an extent, without their consent, that these are in fact no longer capable of independent thought. They then lose – perhaps temporarily – the ability and incentive to look consciously and critically at their own thoughts. During our symposium *Independent Search for Truth*, which we held in September 2022, we gave extensive consideration to conscious independent thinking.<sup>(8)</sup>

## Engaging in occultism

In addition to a deeper presentation of *Theosophia*, it is also an objective of H.P. Blavatsky, as she herself says, to encourage occultism. Now occultism means nothing more than “the science of hidden things,” but Blavatsky clearly gives it a much deeper meaning. Knowing those hidden things is not risk-free; there is a moral and ethical responsibility attached to any possession of knowledge. “As a rule, Occultism is a dangerous, double-edged weapon for one to handle, who is unprepared to devote his whole life to it.”<sup>(9)</sup> By this she means to say that it does not work to handle occult forces a little. Either you fully experience the discipline that comes with it so that you also enjoy protection, or you do not engage in it. A little involvement is not wise.

Elsewhere she defines true occultism as altruism, the great renunciation of the SELF, from the principle that the Divine is hidden *transcendent, yet immanent*. We do not see it, but it is there, present in every living being and functioning in the background. And when asked how occultism relates to spiritualism, she notes very early on that this is something like infinity in relation to finitude — or in other words that relationship is completely inconceivable.<sup>(10)</sup>

## 1888

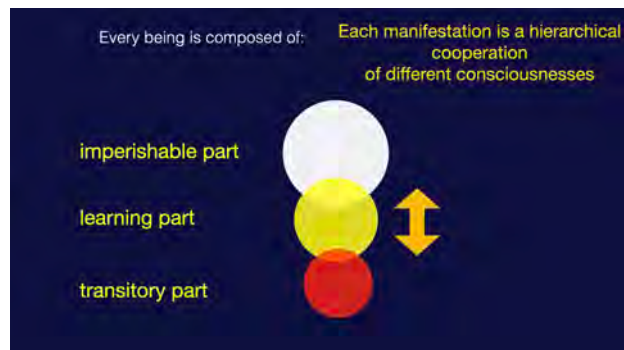
With the founding of the Esoteric School and the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*, 1888 becomes a crucial year for H.P. Blavatsky and The Theosophical Society. Quite soon after the publication of *Isis Unveiled* in 1877, Blavatsky begins to work out the idea for a more developed and complete account of cosmic and human evolution. This results several years later (1885) in the Würzburg Document, named after the place, where Blavatsky then resides. However, this outline of *The Secret Doctrine* of more than three hundred pages does not receive the approval of the Masters and Blavatsky has to start practically from scratch. Finally, in 1888, *The Secret Doctrine* is published (Part I: Cosmogogenesis and Part II: Anthropogenesis). These two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*, totaling some 1,500 pages, constitute a gigantic source of information. Publication is not an easy process. The costs of the proofs, with many corrections to them, are considerable. And after collaborators such as cousins Bertram and Archibald Keightley read the proofs, they suggest to Blavatsky that she writes an intro. What can the reader expect and, with the core ideas clearly in mind, how is this work best studied? This becomes the Proem, which

comes before the first Section in the book. The reader is certainly advised to study this Proem first, as well as the brief summary on the core of *The Secret Doctrine* that Blavatsky gives at the end of this first Section.

The founding of the Esoteric School marks a second milestone for The Theosophical Society that year. Blavatsky announces the founding in the then just one-year-old magazine *Lucifer* with an appeal for interested persons to apply. She also publishes the Vow containing the ethical rules to which probationary students of the Esoteric School will then commit themselves.<sup>(11)</sup>

Why this organization in parallel with The Theosophical Society? Blavatsky sees that some members of the organization are having a hard time with all the slander and imputation surrounding her person. And she sees in this the need to secure the work of The Theosophical Society for the future, with a small group of people who will always support each other and can keep the organization up and running in difficult times.

Moreover, as members of the Esoteric School, the students in this close association are given the opportunity to make esoteric teachings their own, thus forming a nucleus that can properly transmit this knowledge to humanity. As students, they must also ask themselves the fundamental question, “What do I want to be focused on”?



If we take another look at our tripartite division with the imperishable, the learning and the impermanent part, we can see how, as human beings, from the learning part, we have a choice between the imperishable – the spiritual, enduring essence within us – or the connection to the impermanent, limited outer world. In the Esoteric School, the student faces that choice explicitly, in the growing awareness of the karmic responsibilities inherent to all knowledge.

## Helena P. Blavatsky as a spiritual transformer

Not only is Blavatsky, as mentioned above, a central

receiving station of knowledge and instruction, she is more than that. She constantly fulfills the function of *spiritual transformer*. This is a very apt description of what she, as a receiver, does with that theosophical knowledge and instruction: to *transmit* it in such a way that interested parties at their level can pick it up again. The spiritual transformer, like an ordinary transformer, can take something from a higher to a lower level. However, it only works if the sender and the receiver have developed a more or less corresponding characteristic, allowing the receiver to come into resonance with the sender and understand the message.

Now wisdom can be transformed, but if it loses its essence, it degenerates and ceases to be wisdom. So, to do justice to wisdom, texts and examples must be simple enough for anyone to pick up, but they must not be allowed to flatten and degenerate. And so, Blavatsky, as a spiritual transformer, has the task of translating a higher spiritual influence in a pure way to a level that humanity then and now can understand. She is the gateway to the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion, which has served humanity for millions of years.

### Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion

The organization that we know by the term Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion consists of many human and more advanced beings who work together to spread the knowledge of Theosophia, that Divine Wisdom, in such a way that humanity can learn its lessons without first getting into all kinds of karmically painful situations only then to realize that they could have been avoided. It is also the oldest Brotherhood known to mankind. We are talking about a period of at least eighteen million years. It guides us in the development of our ability to think from its earliest stages.

The Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion is also at the base of the Mystery Schools. Institutes where people, who have made themselves qualified to go through an accelerated development of their consciousness, can receive the proper knowledge and training for it, guided by advanced beings who want to help humanity out of compassion. We still know the examples of such Mystery Schools from Egypt and Greece, as well as from other parts of the world.

Blavatsky, as a spiritual transformer, is in direct and open contact with members of the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion. This has been well known since the founding of The Theosophical Society: people know that she is in contact with her Masters.

Now this overt contact is a great rarity. Therefore, in the light of the eighteen million years that the Lodge has been active, we must conclude that Blavatsky's appearance as an intermediary nature for the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion is not a random phenomenon. No, Blavatsky comes as Messenger and Teacher at a planned and important cyclical moment. For example, there is the cosmic cycle of 2160 years, in which the previous Messenger is Jesus the Nazarene. But there are many major cycles; Blavatsky also fits into a larger cycle of ten or thirteen thousand years.<sup>(12)</sup>

### One essential message

The history of mankind has a long line of Teachers, where it is notable that their appearances are spread across the continents. For example, in the sixth century before our era we see in China Lao-tse and Confucius, in Greece Plato, Parmenides and Empedocles, in Iran Zarathustra and in India Mahavira and Gautama the Buddha. They all bring – and this is essential – the *same* message, the message that Blavatsky also brings from 1875 onward. Each time period thus has its Teacher. Blavatsky publishes in English and her language, her choice of words and symbolism are considered to be understood by the people of her time. Teachers like Plato and Confucius do the same in *their* language, *their* time, and *their* culture. So, it is important that the essence of the message delivered by all these Teachers *is* and *remains* the same.

That is the challenge that Blavatsky faces, and that we face as well. With translation upon translation from different cultures, there is not always a pure transmission, and much knowledge is lost. Despite the fact that much knowledge can still be found in the ancient scriptures after successive translations, we must note that the legacy of Messengers like Jesus the Nazarene and Lao-tse has degenerated over the centuries. Some people use it for personal purposes and manipulate their fellow men with it. Blavatsky therefore comes not only as a Messenger to express the universal Wisdom of the Gods in the (Western) language of the time, but also to make it available again in all purity.

### The Secret Doctrine

H.P. Blavatsky publishes a vast amount of knowledge: her literary legacy is enormous. *The Secret Doctrine*, her magnum opus, comes out in two volumes. The subtitle reads: *The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*. Part I deals with Cosmogogenesis, or “The Origin of the Cosmos,”

and Part II deals with Anthropogenesis, or “The Origin of Man”.

In her preface, Blavatsky writes that these volumes do not accomplish the full work plan. If the volumes are received positively, the rest will follow: “The third volume is completely finished, the fourth almost.” These volumes are to deal with mysticism and ethics. Part III and Part IV, however, are not published — leading to much speculation after her death in 1891.

Boris de Zirkoff, the compiler of the *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, publishes in Volume XIV the material found on her desk after Blavatsky’s death. However, that does not contain the contents of volumes III and IV, possibly some articles.

The contents of *The Secret Doctrine* raise many questions even among faithful collaborators. In 1889, therefore, there are study evenings for them at the London house where Blavatsky is staying. At those meetings she answers many of those questions; a record of the conversations results in the publication of *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries* in 2010.<sup>(13)</sup>

Yet even Blavatsky sometimes has to search for the right wording, she herself says in *The Secret Doctrine*. On several pages she excuses herself that she has to use some words to describe something for which Western languages have no terms. She then reaches back to previous “incarnations” of Theosophia, such as the Old Testament, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, parts of Hindu literature, Lao-tse, and so on. Taken together, the teachings that become available to mankind from 1875 onwards are good for the coming period of some ten thousand years. So that is quite a number of incarnations. Is Theosophy therefore at a standstill now? No, certainly not.

### **The ribbon around the bunch of flowers**

Blavatsky is the living example of someone who sacrifices her life entirely out of compassion for her fellow human beings. The work is a heavy physical burden for her, but resistance to her actions also weighs heavily. Yet, “at slander she smiles with silent contempt.” She knows how to use serious accusations instead to show what her position is. When she is accused of making things up herself, her first reaction is always, “That is too great a compliment, I absolutely could not have done that, I am nothing more than the ribbon around the bunch of flowers”. Her preface to *The Secret Doctrine* begins with: “The Author – the writer, rather – ...”. In this function of narrator, she takes full responsibility for her work, by which she means to say:

I have tried as best I can to make what has been given to me comprehensible to this world at this time.

### **An awesome impulse**

I am deeply appreciative of the tremendous effort H.P. Blavatsky makes as a Messenger. The karmic responsibilities she assumes are very numerous. It is also an honor for her to serve as Messenger: for more than a hundred years the Masters have been searching for someone suitable to act with this task as a representative of the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion. And never is Theosophia expressed in such a comprehensive and detailed manner as in Blavatsky’s publications. Knowledge that has been kept secret for many centuries, maybe even millions of years, is now available. The spiritual impulse of H.P. Blavatsky is awe-inspiring.

We may ask: Is humanity anno 1875 developed to the point of being ready for this? Or is that humanity then in such a critical situation that the impulse is necessary? Is the security, the protection of spiritual knowledge perhaps contained in the fact that many people even now do not have the insight to understand and apply the Wisdom contained in all that knowledge?

Indeed, that protection lies in our own limitations. That does not sound flattering, but it is up to us to work on our spiritual development. We can, however, ask ourselves whether the work of the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion is still continuing in our time, and whether the impulse of H.P. Blavatsky is still continuing.

I am convinced that we are still receiving the support from the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion today. Not in the sense that from time to time a book is delivered that I have to do something with, but inspiration can be received in different ways. And I also do not want to say that I am the only one in that regard.

We live in a dynamic, interesting time, and so does the Theosophical Movement. After 1891, The Theosophical Society goes through a period of many tensions. This leads to a split in 1896, creating two organizations: on the one hand, *The Theosophical Society Adyar* and, on the other hand, *The Theosophical Society New York*, which will later be called *The Theosophical Society Point Loma*. I can only talk about the movement I represent: The Theosophical Society Point Loma. And I see in all kinds of activities and developments many examples of the support that the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion continues to give.

With the teachings that Blavatsky gives us, with all the old and new, universal thoughts and explanations of how to



live Theosophia, Theosophy is also now an active source of knowledge and wisdom. Further and deeper elaborated than ever, with all necessary references to previous Messengers. The prerequisite for remaining active and continuing to grow, however, is that all new forms in which Theosophy is published continue to be based on the same old, universal principles.

## Karmic consequences

Finally, something about the karmic consequences of all this. H.P. Blavatsky, as mentioned, experiences great and numerous personal karmic consequences from how she fulfills her function as Messenger. Her Teachers do not help her in this directly, perhaps giving cautious advice here and there. Therefore, she is also connected to the karmic consequences of The Theosophical Society she founded and all that comes from it. This *personal* karma she must resolve herself. Everything she causes in this life and previous lives in the personal field, she will also have to correct and improve herself. Only with *organizational* karma does she get help from her Teachers on several fronts.

This works exactly the same for us. We too face our own *personal* karma to solve. Someone else cannot do it for us; it is not transferable. But if we connect with an organization and there are all kinds of challenges waiting for us there, we can expect quite a bit of inspiration from time to time to understand how to do things better. And so, we can ask ourselves: I had a good idea today, where did that come from? What does the personality recognize as a source of inspiration?

“True Occultism is the destruction of the false idea of Self, and therefore true spiritual perfection and knowledge are nothing else but the complete identification of our finite selves with the Great All.” — H.P. Blavatsky.<sup>(14)</sup>

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## A shortlist of literature

Much has been written about the life and work of H.P. Blavatsky. Her own production of books and articles is extremely extensive. However, the titles on this shortlist of literature already offer the reader a wealth of information. For the titles listed and more, see The Theosophical Society Point Loma Blavatskyhouse website: **blavatskyhouse.org**.

### About H.P. Blavatsky

- Sylvia Cranston, *HPB. The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky. Founder of the modern Theosophical Movement*
- Charles Ryan, *H.P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Movement*
- Geoffry Barborka, *H.P. Blavatsky, Tibet and Tulku*

### From H.P. Blavatsky

- *Isis Unveiled*
- *The Key to Theosophy*
- *The Secret Doctrine*
- *The Voice of the Silence*
- *H.P. Blavatsky, Collected Writings* (15 volumes, compilation Boris de Zirkoff)



Cover of the book *Utopia* by Thomas More. 1516 edition.

# Utopia

## Does the happy land exist?

**Throughout the centuries, people have invented stories about Utopias: ideal countries, where people are happy. Are these nothing more than castles in the sky? Or can Utopias be of use in the development of humanity?**

As difficult, unjust, and almost hopeless as the state of humanity may be, there is nothing more natural than to paint a picture of how things could be. Although some believe that contemplating an ideal world is unrealistic dreaming and a waste of time, without such idealism, man would lapse into a lethargic state of consciousness. We would wither. Growth in knowledge and wisdom would cease to exist. We would merely vegetate and sink into an almost animal state of consciousness. Without Utopia, no hope, no growth.

### What is Utopia?

The word “Utopia” was coined by Thomas More, the 16th-century philosopher and writer. It was the title of a book in which he described an imaginary country. (See below.) The word itself is an amalgamation of the Latin: *ou-topos*, a non-existent place and *eu-topos*, a place of happiness. In speech, the word “utopia” took on the meaning of an unachievable ideal. But cannot Utopia be “discovered”? Does it not exist? Is it a chimera?

How often are young people with shining ideals “called to order” by older people saying that they should not have “illusions”? Thus, ideals are equated with illusions.

However, we dare to say that what can be thought of can also be realized. Ignorance of what a person really is, makes one think that one cannot achieve lofty ideals.

### Imagination

Everyday human consciousness is focused on the normal things. The thousands of thoughts we think mostly relate to what is necessary in our daily lives. “What time does the train leave?” “Are you doing the shopping?” “I have to hurry because my favorite TV show is about to start.”

This type of thinking is what we call our brain-mind. It is the often restless thinking, focused on the external world. It is not bad per se but does not give insight nor does it penetrate deeply into the background of all things and events. It is not creative and will never think about a Utopia. But everyone will also sometimes

### Key thoughts

» Since time immemorial, people have formed ideals of a harmonious society.

» Thanks to deeper knowledge about the Cosmos and Man, we know that these Utopias can be realized.

» Thinking about an ideal world is very inspiring.



have thoughts related to something that does not yet exist *in the outer world*: a vision of the future, an ideal. An ideal is a thought image that has not yet become reality and can only be realized in the future. It does exist, but only in the world of ideas up until now.

Ideals that transcend one's own personality and relate to large groups of people or even all of humanity are generated by our imagination. It is a characteristic of the spiritual aspect of our consciousness, which is called *buddhi*. Buddhi enables us to see the inseparable links between beings and events, because with it we penetrate behind the veils of the outer world. Then we see how everything is interconnected. Then we understand something of the inner structure of life and can try to shape that inner connection. Thus, we create our ideals that transcend our own personal lives.

Can you live without an ideal? We do not think so. Everyone has to think, even if limited, thoughts whose realization can only take place in the future. Often these are personal ideals, such as an ideal home, a nice job, a partner.

Few people also develop a superpersonal ideal. That is a future image of a neighborhood, a city, a country, a world in which *everyone, without any kind of distinction or discrimination*, leads a happy and meaningful life. Yet every human being has within him the ability to shape such a lofty ideal according to his ability in his thinking.

Such an ideal is a Utopia: a "good" world that does not (yet) exist in the external world.

## Jumping pole

It may sound strange, but it is difficult to imagine a "good" world, a Utopia. When we do, we tend to use our own world as a starting point. For everything that does not meet the requirements of our ideal, we place the words "not" or "no". Our Utopia then is a country where there is no war, no gap between rich and poor and no nitrogen problem. However, your Utopia is much more powerful if you formulate it positively. Then you have to build concrete images and it is not enough to deny undesirable things. This will take much more power of your mind, much more imagination and inspiration, but it will also be much more inspiring.

In the Utopias of world literature, the writers often set themselves against the negative phenomena of the civilization in which they live. It is also difficult to think of yourself apart from your own time. After all, you are born in a certain era for a reason.

In making your own Utopia, you jump, as it were, from your own country or your own level of development, to an imaginary country in the future. You take off from the world you live in. If you have a jumping pole, you jump further. And what is your pole? That's your religious-philosophical-scientific baggage. The more you have thought about life, about the cosmos, about the relationship between man and the cosmos, the longer is your pole and the bigger is your imaginary jump. And a bigger leap results in a loftier ideal. You do not think about yourself as a poor sinner, but you know that positive thinking and action will eventually lead to results.

Since time immemorial, there have been thinkers who have created their Utopia. Some had a short pole and their Utopia was far from perfect. Others relied more on Universal Laws and their Utopia was therefore much more than just and harmonious.

Throughout all time periods and under a variety of literary forms, writers have described their ideal community. Some did it as a thought experiment, as if they lived in a country in the distant future, for example. Edward Bellamy did this with his novel *Looking Backward: 2000–1887*. Others imagined themselves as if they had discovered an unknown happy land. The second-century BC Greek writer Iambulus did just that in *Islands of the Sun*. *Peach Blossom Spring* by a Chinese writer from the 5th century, Tao Yuanming, is another example.

We take a longer look at some of these writers below.

## Plato

Like almost all of Plato's works, *Politeia* or *The State* <sup>(1)</sup> is written in the form of a dialogue between Socrates and one or more others. In the beginning of Plato's masterpiece, Socrates refutes the view that justice is nothing but what is advantageous to the strong man. It does not take Socrates too much effort to demonstrate the incorrectness of this sophistical proposition through question-and-answer play. But at the insistence of his interlocutors, the conversation continues, because they want to know what justice is and where justice is in man. To find out, Socrates "enlarges" man into a state, because then it is easier to discover what justice is and where it resides. Thus begins the description of the ideal state.

Now human society, as Plato describes it, goes through several stages. First, he describes his ideal society as a country in which all people do more or less the same work, where there are no trappings and luxuries and where simple harmony prevails. In fact, this is a description of the



early stages of humanity, when thinking was just beginning to shimmer within us. This simple society does not please Socrates' interlocutors. Therefore, he describes that as people grew and wants and desires increased, society also became more complicated. A form of state was needed.

Plato assumes that people are equal but not identical. There is a difference in development. He distinguishes three groups of people, corresponding to the three aspects in human consciousness. For this he uses three Greek words that have hardly any equivalent in our current language and are therefore translated differently by different translators. Some translate those three aspects as: the *knowing soul*, the *striving soul* and the *desiring soul*. Others translate: *reason*, *will* and *desire*. Either way, the human soul (consciousness) is hierarchically composed, in which the higher aspects have greater insight and thus should be "in charge" within us.

These three aspects can be recognized in a society based on these cosmic laws, that is, we can also find this hierarchy within human beings. And for the sake of clarity, we note that when we talk about more and less developed, we are not talking so much about the intellect, but about the spiritual, the insight, that which Plato calls the knowing soul. The least developed group of people are the workmen. They correspond to the desiring soul. They are by far the largest group. The middle group Plato calls the *Guardians*, the administrators, and enforcers of the laws. They have neither privileges nor possessions. Their duty is to serve

the state. The best of the Guardians become *Philosophers* and the best of that group is given leadership in the State. This is not a privilege; on the contrary, sometimes you even have to force the true leader to perform his function, says Plato.

Justice now lies in the fact that each person in society according to his individual characteristic – that is, according to his level of development – contributes to the community and receives from the community the means to do so. If everyone makes their specific contribution, there is never a deficit, everyone lives according to his own intrinsic characteristic, and there is a just society. In doing so, it is not that the philosophers and guardians have more economic advantage than the workmen. On the contrary. In fact, the guardians control their desire best. Therefore, they live on communal property, have no family of their own and own only what they need to fulfill their function within the whole. The education they receive is tough. Plato pays great attention to this.

To fully understand the background of this society, one must realize that according to Plato, this outer world is nothing but a shadow, a reflection of a much more real world. We actually belong to that invisible world from which the outer world emerges. Into this shadow world we are always born to learn our lessons. (At the end of *The State*, Plato describes the process of reincarnation.) We pick up in each new life the thread we had left behind in the previous life. That is why there are differences in development between people. We are not born identical, although in the heart of our being we are the same. What we do have in common is that all of us, living in this shadow world, can develop ever further so that we eventually rise above this illusory world. In Plato's ideal state, everyone can work on liberation, indeed, by making our specific contribution, we can encourage and inspire each other to develop ever greater awareness of the *background* of things and to rise above illusion.

Therefore, the Utopia described by Plato offers to *all* people – far or less developed – the best conditions for growing in consciousness. The ideal state described by Plato is the best school of learning for every human being, precisely because we can practice living from our own character for the total.

## Al-Farabî

*Politeia* has been the model for many utopias. In the Islamic world, too, this Magnum Opus of Plato was a source of inspiration from which many thinkers have

drawn. One of them was Abu Nasr Al-Farabî, who lived in the 10th century of the Christian era.

In his book *The Virtuous City*<sup>(2)</sup>, the influence of Plato is clearly present, for that matter also that of Plotinus and Aristotle. Unlike *Politeia*, this Arab philosopher takes as his starting point the structure of the Universe. The origin of everything lies in what he calls the *cause of existence*, an otherwise undefined principle, from which everything, in a process of emanation, comes to being. Remarkably, he does not call that first cause Allah, as there are hardly any Islamic terms to be found in his entire philosophy. He builds his philosophy on the basis of reasoning. Perhaps he believed there is no place in philosophy for faith, dogma and the authority of others.

Then he gives a description of the cosmos and what he calls the *undermoon* — the earth. In the third part comes a description of man and only then does he describe the virtuous city. Evidently, Al-Farabî considered it necessary to dwell at length on the cosmos and man before describing the virtuous city. After all, that city must reflect the laws of the cosmos. Al-Farabî compares the virtuous city to both the cosmos and the body. There is a hierarchy in both. This must be reflected in the city. Al-Farabî classifies the hierarchy based on whether or not one possesses philosophical knowledge. Those who are most skilled in philosophy are in charge in the city.

He further distinguishes ignorant cities, in which there is no happiness to be found; wandering cities, which have a wrong conception of happiness. Only the city with the right knowledge — and thus the right leaders — knows true happiness.

Precise elaboration of the virtuous city Al-Farabî does not give. But the main conclusion to be drawn from his — sometimes difficult to read — book is that the state (condition) of man — that is, the presence or absence of philosophical knowledge about the cosmos and man — determines the character of the state. Only sufficient knowledge makes the city virtuous.

## Thomas More

The most famous utopian description of a country is that of Thomas More, the Englishman we mentioned at the beginning of the article. In his book *Utopia*<sup>(3)</sup>, he has a Portuguese explorer, Rafaelo Babellario, describe of a country that must lie somewhere in the southern hemisphere. Geographical knowledge at that time was still very limited, but intelligent readers, even of that time, will no doubt have understood that we are dealing here with a

fictional society.

At the time of Thomas More, the new ideas of the Renaissance were just beginning to spread, although the strait-jacket of medieval thought was still tightly laced on many. Before this we said that the philosophical-religious pole determines how far the leap to the new Utopia is. And although More was, certainly for his time, an enlightened thinker, he was in part still stuck in his own time. Consequently, there are elements in his happy state that we, people of the 21st century, would certainly not consider happy.

With More, as with Plato, the source of his ideal country lies not so much in the laws of the land but in the mentality of the people. The country has a kind of federal structure with indirect elections. (Very progressive at the time!) There are 54 independent city-states, each headed by a magistrate who holds office for one year. The head of state is appointed for life.

The 54 cities are divided into smaller communities called families. All these cities and families live in harmony with each other. There is a constant exchange between them. Because there is no private property — the houses have no locks — there is also little envy and competition. People eat together. The meals are good but simple.

There is very little legislation in Utopia. Therefore, no lawyers are needed. The few who shirk their duty or have otherwise caused harm are punished very mildly. Often they only have to repair the damage.

Because everyone works, one need only work six hours a day. (Here More is giving a sneer to the nobility and clergy of the England of his day, who indulged in idleness.) On top of that, society is very simple. It somewhat resembles the first phase of the State as described by Plato. All wear the same clothes, live in the same houses.

Although there is heavy labor on the land, it is organized in such a way that everyone has to engage in it every few years. So there is a lot of free time and it is spent mostly on study. For example, there is a lecture every night.

Money, gold and silver have no value and are used for everyday items such as dishes, pots and even for the chains of slaves.

## Less attractive traits

Slaves? Yes — and this is one of the less beautiful aspects of his Utopia for us — there were slaves. Compared to the cruelty with which, for example, prisoners of war and serfs were treated in More's time, the slaves of Utopia were treated reasonably humanely. Still, today we would not

like to see people doing forced labor, chained to chains, even if they were made of gold.

You could only become a slave if you had done something horrible or if you had been sentenced to death in another city for committing a crime. Slaves had to perform forced labor, but apparently there were people in other countries who were even worse off, because workers from other countries wanted to be slaves in Utopia of their own free will.

Nevertheless, More here precludes to something advocated today by enlightened thinkers regarding prisoners. One can think of slavery in this context as a re-education method for people who have lost their moral compass. Their freedom is restricted for the benefit of society as well as themselves. But if a slave sincerely repents, Thomas More describes, he could regain his freedom. The sovereign therefore had the right to pardon. The people could also, through a vote, mitigate the condition of slaves or restore them to freedom.

Not only do the slaves detract from the high status of More's Utopia, for it was also not entirely immune from war. Usually, the Utopians tried to make peace by trickery or by offering gold, but when they were unsuccessful in doing so, despite their strong distaste for violence, they waged war. They did so only to defend their country or that of their allies.

Finally, a word about religion in Utopia. It was, especially when compared to the intolerance of the 16th century, a model of tolerance. The country had all kinds of religions that differed from region to region, even from person to person. Nevertheless, all believed in "one unknown, eternal, immeasurable and inexplicable God, incomprehensible by man, present in everything, not physically, but as a creative force". Entirely free to believe what you wanted; however, you were not. Atheism was forbidden. It would destroy the dignity of man. Atheists lost their civil rights and were not allowed to practice their faith publicly.

Thomas More ends his book by saying that he could not agree with everything about Utopia. Did he want to cover himself here for possible criticism? Or could he, too, not entirely free himself from the prejudices of his time? We said it before: the pole determines how far one jumps to an exalted future. Nevertheless, More believes, and thus concludes his book, that there is much to be found in Utopia "that can serve as an example for our part of the world".

## Political philosophy

Thomas More may have written fiction with his book

Utopia, but it is fiction on which strict logic and philosophical principles are based. Utopian thinking is not dreaming. It is not a fantasy. It describes a world that *could* exist.

Unable to think completely apart from his own time, More's Utopia was also an implicit critique of the England of the 16th century and of King Henry VII. Utopia became a political philosophy, a blueprint for a new society. After Thomas More, many other utopian works were written. The number of genres is seemingly inexhaustible. Socialist, capitalist, monarchist, democratic and anarchist have been described.

In *New Atlantis* (1627), Francis Bacon describes a country, in which science and technology are practiced at a high level, which led to prosperity. We might now call it a technocratic country, for Bacon it was the ideal.

In contrast, Samuel Butler's Utopia rejects all technology. Instead, in his book *Erewhon* (1872) – an anagram of *nowhere* – all machines are banished from the land, after which a happy time ensues.

Although he never wrote fiction, you could also call one of the founders of communism, Karl Marx, a utopian. His Utopia was the communist utopia, in which the workers had power and capital had been abolished. Unlike the fiction writers, Marx, as well as his followers, paid much attention to how that utopia should be realized: the class struggle.

Now therein lies a mortal danger. The more you emphasize the way in which the Utopia is realized, the more you place the ideal outside yourself, and before you know it you are using methods that are diametrically opposed to the ideal you want to see realized. Tellingly, then, according to Marx, the new world can only come into being if violence is used, because, he said, "violence is the midwife of every society that is pregnant with a new one".<sup>(4)</sup> History has shown the disastrous states to which this leads.

Finally, we would like to shed some light on Bellamy's remarkable book: *Looking Backward: 2000–1887*. The main character, Julian West, lives at the end of the 19th century, goes into a deep sleep and awakens in the year 2000. A certain Doctor Leete now lives in his house. In a question-and-answer game, he learns how the world has grown in humanity. Poverty has dissolved, there is no inequality, the disadvantage of women no longer exists. Furthermore, prisons have been abolished and Europe has become one. Although he lived in a dark time with child labor and inhuman poverty, Bellamy believed in the ideal of a happy society.



## Effects of Utopias

It is often difficult to determine whether Utopias were the impetus for social change. Nevertheless, we think they certainly have an influence. Society is built on ideas, and Utopias can make certain ideas so appealing that they are (partially) realized. They can be guidelines; signposts that show humanity the way and sometimes lead to tangible changes in society.

Take Plato's *Politeia*: although this ideal state was never fully realized, it had great influence in the Christian and Islamic worlds and was imitated in certain respects, albeit always very imperfectly.

The book *Emile* by Jean Jacques Rousseau is another example. While not a Utopia, it describes a utopian education of an imaginary boy who grows up naturally. This book provided a breakthrough in the education process and still the book is an ideal to be pursued by some in education land.

And Bellamy's description of the disappearance of borders in Europe, is now largely a reality. By the way, this writer inspired many people to try to achieve the changes from his Utopias, not through class struggle but through cooperation. Bellamy parties are active to this day.

## Dystopia

When idealism disappears, man becomes cynical. You then see only the misery in the world and believe that this is the natural course of events. It can only get worse, is the general idea. Then dystopias arise. A dystopia is the opposite of a utopia: an image of a bleak future. Dystopias are the result of *doomsday thinking*.

A dystopia can only come about because of a limited view of man. If dogmatic Christianity – especially Calvinism – teaches that man is doomed to evil, and if materialistic science assumes that man is nothing more than his body, then you have little philosophical footing to build a harmonious worldview.

George Orwell's famous novels from the 20th century, *Animal Farm* and *1984*, paint an extremely bleak picture of the future. *Brave new world* by Aldous Huxley also describes a dark future. It may be that he wrote his book as a warning of what might happen if the trends of his time (the 1930s) continue. Whether either author really meant whether humanity would develop further and further along the lines of these totalitarian states and their mutual wars, we do not know. Their dystopias, we believe, have inspired few people. The major difference between them and someone like, say, Bellamy is that the latter believed

that injustice, unfreedom and inequality could be resolved, probably because he had a more positive view of humanity.

## Develop your own Utopia

Theosophia does not deny that man can do the cruelest things, but it recognizes – and this is much more important – that man is capable of love, harmony, and justice. Still too often we leave these characteristics untapped, but that does not take away from the fact that man is essentially a noble being. When we realize that our innermost being is a living deity, then we know that we have all the abilities to create an ideal world.

Therefore, the advice of Ancient Wisdom has always been and will always be: be aware of your inner greatness and dignity. Think about that. And think about a world with people living in the awareness of their inner divinity. In other words, create your own Utopia. Be creative. Form a thought image of what that ideal world looks like.

Nurturing Utopias should not lead to daydreaming. They are based on clear reasoning, on knowledge of man and cosmos, on the laws of nature. A Utopia is not a refuge, in which you retreat because daily life is so hard. Be the change yourself.

Keep the ideal alive, do not cast it in concrete. Do not see it as an absolute end point, for you can ennoble your Utopia more and more. Those who try this will find that it is a very inspiring activity and has a beneficial effect on your own world.

Every thought you think makes an impression in your consciousness, but also in the sphere of thought that is in and around the earth. Therefore, that sphere of thought is made up of all the thoughts that have ever been thought. There is nothing new under the sun. When you create your Utopia, focus on that part of the mental sphere in which those noble, harmony-based ideal images are engraved. Think of yourself as an antenna, all too often focused on every day, personal thoughts. But you can turn your antenna and catch another “program”: that of the “Utopias”. These are thought images that reflect the harmony of the entire Cosmos.

There are beings who are one or more steps further along in their spiritual development than present-day humans. They are wiser and live in complete harmony with each other. They cooperate dynamically with each other. What to us is a Utopia – the noblest selfless Ideal we can conceive of or that has ever been committed to paper by a writer – is to them a *reality*. Yes, their inspiring society is

so exalted that even our Utopias sometimes pale in comparison. These beings live in the more spiritual realms of the Planet, in what is symbolically called the heavenly Jerusalem. They are constantly active. Their influence can be absorbed by us. If we are able to do so, we reflect this cosmic harmony in our daily lives.

The great writers of the Utopias such as Plato and Thomas More and all those others we have not mentioned here caught at least something of that influence. Depending on your own level of development, that is, depending on how far you have opened your inner eye, you see much or little of that thought picture. The more you focus on it, you start to see it more sharply. People are not perfect, so therefore their Utopias are not perfect either. Therefore, constantly try to perfect your Utopia.

Utopias already exist. They exist on the mental plane. They have been thought of by great thinkers, Masters of Life, who are far ahead of the average human being in development. Many ancient peoples even assumed that these blissful lands existed on earth and they gave them names like Shangri-La and Śambhala, as the Chinese and Tibetans did. Some Hindus still assume that at the top of Mount Meru is the paradise city of Indra. Some may argue that this is symbolic, but really it is not important. Awareness that a better world exists and that we can build it together in our own country is the driving force for further human development.

Utopia is the “good” place. Form that good place in your mind and live according to the patterns of your own ideal. As you do so with more devotion, you will discover that ideal world really exists.

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**Edward Bellamy’s utopian book *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* was an inspiration to many, certainly including Theosophists. In *The Key to Theosophy*, Helena P. Blavatsky says of it:**

The organization of Society, depicted by Edward Bellamy, in his magnificent work “Looking Backward”, admirably represents the Theosophical idea of what should be the first great step towards the full realization of universal brotherhood. The state of things he depicts falls short of perfection, because selfishness still exists and operates in the hearts of men. But in the main, selfishness and individualism have been overcome by the feeling of solidarity and mutual brotherhood; and the scheme of life there described reduces the causes tending to create and foster selfishness to a minimum.

(...)

Have not you heard of the Nationalist clubs and party which have sprung up in America since the publication of Bellamy’s book? They are now coming prominently to the front, and will do so more and more as time goes on. Well, these clubs and this party were started in the first instance by Theosophists. One of the first, the Nationalist Club of Boston, Mass., has Theosophists for President and Secretary, and the majority of its executive belong to the T.S. In the constitution of all their clubs, and of the party they are forming, the influence of Theosophy and of the Society is plain, for they all take as their basis, their first and fundamental principle, the Brotherhood of Humanity as taught by Theosophy. In their declaration of Principles they state: — “The principle of the Brotherhood of Humanity is one of the eternal truths that govern the world’s progress on lines which distinguish human nature from brute nature.” What can be more Theosophical than this? <sup>(5)</sup>

**Edward Bellamy, in addition to: *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, wrote the novel *Equality*. In the preface he writes:**

He (Julius West) told them of his dream and what it had taught him of the possibilities of a juster, nobler, wiser social system. He reasoned with them, showing how easy it would be, laying aside the suicidal folly of competition, by means of fraternal co-operation, to make the actual world as blessed as that he had dreamed of. <sup>(6)</sup>





# The theosophical view of our eyesight

## Key thoughts

- » Actual seeing takes place through our mind. Seeing is seeing a thought image.
- » What we see depends on the characteristics and state of our consciousness: our interests, our focus.
- » The process of seeing is as follows: an etheric ray flows out of our eye, touching an object. That etheric ray returns combined with the visible radiation emitted by that object. Our eye captures this combined beam, which carries the properties of the object.
- » Your perceptions become more reliable when you do not allow yourself to be carried away by your ego-centered desires and instinctive impulses.
- » Perceiving is an exchange of influences with other beings. This involves an ethical responsibility. In what light do we view our fellow human beings?

What happens when we *see*? What conditions determine our eyesight? We discuss this topic from the knowledge of Theosophy, because there is a wide interest in it. The article is also a response to the topical question: can I trust that what I see, actually exists? What is, for example, the value of testimonies?

## The physical description of our eyesight

Current mainstream ideas about vision describe only the physical side. After all, that is what current scientists can see or measure. The facts are probably familiar: our eyes capture light, which, thanks to our eye lens, is projected onto the retina, at the back of our eyeball. The optical cells there are sensitive to certain frequencies of light. These cells translate the captured light particles into electrical impulses with a certain frequency, which pass through the optic nerve to the optical brain regions. There, “they are united into a single overall image”.

But how are they selected and made into a single image? How are these signals interpreted? And by whom or what? This is unknown. After all, *seeing images* is a function of consciousness, and scientists do not know what consciousness is. Is it something our brains create, or does the brain only transmit the signals to the perceiving consciousness, which is the invisible center working behind?

## Consciousness, the underlying source of all things

Are we consciousness and do we have a body? Or are we a body, producing consciousness in our brains? We have raised this question many times in this journal, because it is so important to our view of life. All theosophical philosophy is based on the idea that consciousness is the underlying source of all forms and phenomena in Nature.

Speaking about human beings from Theosophy, therefore, human consciousness is the core and source of total man. That total man also includes our outer vehicle, our physical body. Our brain, like all other organs in our body, is just the tool by which the true human being, the center of consciousness, gets in touch with the physical world in which we live.

Furthermore, the consciousness of a human being – unlike that of lesser or more advanced beings – is typified by the ability to think. And by “thinking” we mean forming mental images based on the influences and

stimuli we receive. And these stimuli are diverse in origin: stemming from inspirations from our higher nature; to the thoughts and feelings of our fellow human beings; to our sensory perceptions. By continuously bringing our thought images in more alignment with truth, we hopefully improve this thought process utilizing the life lessons we learn. Thus we build an ever more understanding view of life.

## We see through our mind

From these basic ideas we can deduce this: *actual seeing takes place through our mind*. What we humans call seeing is in fact seeing a *thought* image. Our mind gives content and meaning to all that our senses present. It is our mind that selects what we pay attention to. We cannot look without interpreting. William Quan Judge explains this clearly in his book *The Ocean of Theosophy*.<sup>(1)</sup>

We can distinguish between looking and seeing: looking we do with our eyes. Seeing we do with our human consciousness, our mind. In ancient India they described it this way: it is not the eye that sees, but that which sees through the eye. And so it is with the other senses. In our mind we form a representation of the external world. We give some examples below.

## Examples that support this teaching

Two people can look at the same painting and yet give a completely different description of it. Why? Because what has meaning for one, has no meaning at all for the other.

If someone who has always lived in a city walks through a tropical forest, he probably sees only “lots of trees and buzzing insects”. While someone who is familiar with it, sees much more. Some see “a sports car” driving down the road, others see a Ferrari SF90 Stradale. We see what we can associate with the knowledge and experiences we have already had, unless we try to expand our knowledge with our thinking skills.

Babies can look, but have to learn through experience and through the lessons of their parents the meaning of all the things they see. In fact, this involves *remembering*, for the child during its childhood recalls all his faculties and knowledge which he has built up in previous lives.

What we see also depends on our mental focus at the time. That’s why much can elude us. Consider this. We may have great difficulty retrieving our keyring, if our search image is incorrect. If we search for a bright red keyring, when it is actually dark brown, we may search for a long time even though it lies before us. A telling example of the

effect of focus can be found on the internet. It involves a video of people playing basketball, in which you, the viewer, are instructed beforehand to count how many times the ball is passed from one player to another. Nothing special seems to be going on. But in reality, during the game, a person dressed in a bear suit (!) walks right across the player field. And yet, few people see that bear, it turns out afterwards.

## Sources of Universal Wisdom

An interesting question is: if it is true that present day science can only describe the physical side of vision, what is then the more inner side of the mechanism?

The Teachers of Universal Wisdom, the Theosophia, tell us a few things about this in their writings. We have a few sources at our disposal: the description of Plato, in his dialogue *Timaëus*.<sup>(2)</sup> We also have the explanation of Gottfried de Purucker, in his book *Man in Evolution*.<sup>(3)</sup> In that text, by the way, De Purucker points out that what Plato said about eyesight, was in fact taught by all the great thinkers of antiquity. Some mentioned a bit more than others, or talked about different aspects, but generally they taught the same thing. Unfortunately, in later centuries, those theories were dismissed by Western researchers as fantasies, although, factually, there is nothing crazy about them.

## The theosophical explanation of the viewing process

What information do these Teachers give about the viewing process? Our eyes are not only receivers but also senders of radiation. An etheric ray flows out of our eye: a beam of light, invisible to us, hitting an object. That etheric ray returns *combined with* the visible radiation that the object emits. Both streams of light thus form a unity, so to speak, carrying with them all kinds of information about the outside of the object. Our eye takes in this combined beam and passes the information on to our brain, which passes it on to our mind. Our mind creates the perception image.

So, to see something, both types of radiation are needed: the etheric radiation from our eyes and the visible radiation from the things around us. If it is dark, then the visible rays from the objects are missing, and we see nothing. If we have physically limited eyes, then we only partially succeed to see.

What things do we see? That depends on what we radiate. The beam from our eyes carries our characteristic, so its

reflection can only contain what we have radiated. So *the state of our mind largely determines what we see*: is our mind calm and clear, or very one-sided, or disturbed? That state determines what kind of radiation emanates from our eye, and therefore what it can take back in terms of information. We see only that which resonates with our characteristic. We perceive only those outside vibrations that bring something that is inside us, into vibration.

## Seeing is touching

Seeing with the eye is essentially touching. Plato called the current that goes out and into the eye, and thus connects eye and object, a “body”: it is a feeling antenna or tentacle, a kind of connecting matter. It is like the tongue of a snake that “sees” its surroundings.

What indications do we have that our eyes work this way? For instance: sensitive people notice it when someone looks at them, also when the looking person stands behind them. That is in fact an experience that almost everyone may have, from time to time. Instinctively, we then turn toward the person who is looking at us.

The question may arise whether our *hearing* also involves the combination of sending out and receiving vibrations, whether hearing is also a kind of touching. We leave it presently as a question. What is certain, is that bats and dolphins orient themselves by emitting powerful sound clicks and picking up the echoes. So these are examples of hearing by sending and receiving. As for us humans, we know of a boy who went blind in both eyes and then taught himself to orient himself in a similar way. He squeezes something that gives a loud croaking sound. The echoes of these sounds give him a reliable impression of everything around him. He can do this also without such a device: he then makes a kind of clicking sound with his tongue.

## How reliable is our eyesight?

We all know that eye witnesses to an event can give completely contradictory descriptions, which cannot be true at the same time. This remains the case when the witnesses are sincere. This leads us to the question: *how reliable is the eyesight of the average human being, at our present stage of evolution?*

Often not so reliable, we may conclude. Its reliability is dependent on several things. Firstly, the limitations of our physical instrument: of the whole chain from eye lens to retinal cells to optic nerve to brain cells. In addition, it depends on the kind of training we received. Police officers

and behavioral researchers, for example, are trained to perceive more factually and inquisitively. And as said earlier, it depends greatly on our inner state. Regarding the latter: are we at any given moment mentally clear and interested in what is happening to our fellows? Or are we agitated or sleepy or disinterested? Are we outwardly alert or have we locked ourselves in some mental bubble? This determines what we notice.

Our perceptions become more reliable as our thinking becomes clearer, more stable and understandable. Our vision becomes more or less uncolored, if we are not carried away by ego-centered desires and instinctive impulses.

So, for us humans, even such a purely physical ability as “seeing” can still be evolved to a much more perfect level, life after life, by bringing our thinking to the level of our spiritual nature, our immortal core. If our most unselfish insights and ideals continually overshadow our activities, we bring harmony into our mind. This harmony will reflect itself in our lower nature, our vital-astral-physical instrument. Our body with all its senses will then be an obedient and reliable servant.

You can remain calm even in emotionally explosive situations, by looking around to find out what would be the best contribution to that situation. This can be compared to a doctor in the emergency room, who is able to figure out the causes of an injured person bleeding on all sides and distinguish between what is life-threatening and what is not.

## Can we see things that are not there?

Yes, people can “see” non-existent things. We always fill in the picture ourselves. All kinds of misinterpretations can creep in, which may have the result that we see things that are not there in the physical world. What is the cause of this? This can be caused by our own wishful thoughts or feelings – *internal stimuli* – or by a thought or emotion of another – *external stimuli* – to which our mind is receptive. A person’s wish that something happened a certain way can be so strong, that a person comes to believe that it really happened that way. “The wish is the father of the thought” is a saying full of significance, and calls us to be constantly alert to the essential difference between a wish and a fact.

Also, someone may believe something because many others say so too ... and so it must be true. Or there is a strong prejudice toward a certain population group. Then every action of someone belonging to that group is distrusted a priori, and very negative behavior is often

assumed, even when there is no factual indication of that behavior. And what one's own group members do, is condoned in advance. All these things can lead to great injustices toward others.

### **The power of suggestion**

As mentioned, we can imagine that we saw something happening because others suggest that to us. When you ask people what they have seen, then the way you ask it is very important. Do you ask "were you also surprised to see ...?" or do you ask "what did you see ...?" In the first case, you will often hear other stories than if you approach the person neutrally and give him the chance to reconstruct the events on its own. Discovering more truth by asking other people is possible only if we ourselves really wish to know more truth, independent of our own views and self-interest.

Theosophically speaking, when we see something that is not there in the outer world, we do still see something: a thought of ourselves or another. And that gives us the means to prevent it: by watching our minds well. Suggestion and self-suggestion can be avoided by continually monitoring our own thinking, with our best ethical glasses. Then we may sometimes discover that our seemingly sure memories rest on a shaky foundation. And that there is all reason to reexamine these events afresh.

### **An example of total suggestion**

That someone with a powerful will can force another with a much weaker will to see something which is non-existent (physically), is recounted by H.P. Blavatsky in her book *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan*.<sup>(4)</sup> In that book she tells about her experiences during her travels through India, in novel form. You cannot take these stories, the sequence of the events and all the details, to be literal reports, but they are all based on facts and events. And that gives great value to the book. There is a lot of wisdom hidden in it.

The story we wish to allude to, goes like this. The traveling party at that time consists of Helena Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, the "Thakur", a person with great wisdom, knowledge and self-control, and a group of other Indians and Westerners. Among them is an Englishman, who shortly before had stated that he did not believe the stories that one person can lead someone else to see something. The party arrives at a lake, with an island in the middle, and mountains all around. A beautiful scene. The company must wait an hour. The Englishman loves to draw

and paint, so he unpacks his easel to make a sketch of the landscape. He spends an hour working intensely, while the others, including the Thakur, sit at some distance beside him. Finally, when Olcott goes to see what he has sketched, he is amazed. The Englishman sketched a seascape with palms and an estate. One of the Indians looks too and says that he knows what the sketch depicts: it is the Thakur's estate, a property lying at a great distance from the lake. In short, the Thakur managed to make the Englishman (a) totally forget what he had first seen when he got to the lake, and to (b) see the seascape as if it were perfectly real.

### **About the unity of our senses**

Our hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell (and two more senses that we will develop in the distant future) are the different manifestations of one and the same faculty, a faculty you may call "our consciousness sense". That's why the operation of all senses is based on the same principles. Above, we already touched upon the fact that our sight has certain characteristics of our touch. Yet, each sense expresses a different characteristic, and is active within a different range of vibrational frequencies.<sup>(5)</sup>

Each sense carries within it the potencies of all the other senses. Therefore, one sense organ can to some extent perform the functions of another sense organ. Some people can read a text on a piece of paper placed on their skin. Others, when listening to music, see images that correspond to the character of the music. Or they get a certain taste of a piece of music: sour, sharp, and so on. There are many examples of this kind of synesthesia. Those who are blind can yet receive an impression of a room they enter — through their other senses, and possibly also their more ethereal senses.

In the theosophical literature we find explanations of the nature and origin of our senses. During our long development as reincarnating human beings, we have developed our senses one by one — although the others have always been there, waiting in the background for their time to ripen. So, some of our senses are more developed than others. Our hearing is the oldest, the most developed one. Another important aspect of the teaching is, that we possess senses on every plane or layer of our consciousness. Thus, there are astral and spiritual senses as well. That most of us know nothing about them, is only because we presently keep our consciousness so focused on the outer world, that our range of consciousness is limited to that area.

## To perceive is to communicate ...

A core idea of Theosophy is that the whole Universe is a grand living organism, which has flowed from one Source of Life or unity point. All beings within our Universe are therefore interconnected. We are therefore in constant communication with each other: each being exerts influences, to which the others respond, to which the first being responds in turn, and so on.

Perception is also an example of *exchange*. We notice this very easily in interpersonal communication. The presence of the photographer affects the model he wishes to photograph. A police officer cannot walk down a street without influencing the behavior of some people.

But it also applies to perceiving objects. Recall that the atoms that make up outer objects, are the bodies of living beings. Each atom is animated by a center of consciousness that perceives, radiates influence and is receptive to certain influences from other beings. When we observe, there is an interaction between us and those atomic beings, and *it is this interaction that ultimately makes us see an object*.

In physics, the “observer effect” is a well-known phenomenon. You can never observe or measure a process without more or less intervening in it, exerting an influence on it. “Objective measurements”, where the observer can look without having an effect, does not exist. When you feel whether a table is smooth or not, you press the atoms of that table closer together than they were before. When you film something with a camera, the thermal radiation and electric and magnetic fields emitted by the camera have an influence – perhaps minute – on the environment. Yet, such a minute influence may greatly disturb very precise measurements, and can render the results of an experiment unusable.

## ... so, communicating involves responsibility!

Every perception we have is an influence we exert on other beings, including, therefore, our fellow human beings. This fact gives us a deep insight into our task towards our fellow human beings. In what light do we see our fellow humans? How do we approach them? Do we see them as equal collaborators within the one humanity, or as competitors or enemies? This determines whether we appeal to the truly human in them, or to the opposite.

G. de Purucker once said: “Have you never looked deep into the eye of a fellow human being, looked with a seeing eye on your own kind? Have you never found marvels

there?”<sup>(6)</sup> Whoever tries to live from the idea of universal brotherhood will discover spiritual wonders in each person. After all, we are all gods-in-development.

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# How to find your Work?

**Work is a natural part of life. Among other things, we work to meet our needs for ourselves and others around us, for food, shelter, care for each other, and so on. It is necessary for our livelihood. But how is it that something so natural causes problems for so many people?**

## Key thoughts

» Your Work is your unique contribution to the whole.

» A society is in harmony and functions as a unit when each part does its Work, adds its unique quality to the whole.

» It is our dharma, duty or responsibility as human beings to think harmoniously, by which we unfold our inner part to lead over our outer part, thus ennobling the latter. This is our Work.

» There is a coherent set of considerations that can help you find your Work: is your Work necessary or not? Is the Work close to your heart and does your inner Work guide the outer? And what is your motive?

Many people struggle to find work that suits them. Or they suffer in their jobs. Worldwide, there is still a lot of exploitation in the work people do. Think, for example, of the fatal working conditions surrounding the hosting of the World Cup in Qatar or the textile factories or sweatshops in low-wage countries where the latest fashion is produced for the rich West. But even in rich countries, many people are suffering from increasing work stress. The rate of burnout is growing worldwide.<sup>(1)</sup> People are also unhappy in their jobs because they do not experience the meaning of their work. They have a crappy job or a “bullshit job”, an often well-paid job that they themselves say is actually meaningless, perhaps even harmful.<sup>(2)</sup> In other countries, there is not much work. Many often highly educated young people spend their days doing nothing without any job prospects.

A clear vision about work is lacking that can put these problems into perspective. In this article we offer a vision from the Theosophia based on the questions: what is work, what do

you work for, and how to find work that suits you?

## What is work?

When most people think of work, they think of paid work or wage labor. It's something by which you earn money as an entrepreneur, self-employed person or employee, on behalf of a customer, client or employer, on a temporary or permanent basis. When working for a salary, work and life are increasingly disconnected. For example, one can recognize this in a statement like “you do not live to work, you work to live”. And in the term “volunteer work,” as a separate term for work that does not involve payment.

However, if you look at work more broadly than paid work, the question is whether this separation between work and life is justified. For an initial “working definition”, you can always turn to *Wikipedia*:

**Work or labor is the intentional activity people perform to support the needs and wants of themselves, others, or a wider community.**



Looking at “activity people perform to support the needs and wants of themselves, others, or a wider community” work is understood more broadly than work for pay. Work, of course, includes cleaning your house, caring for your children or weeding your garden. And if you look at work in the spiritual realm, you could argue that spreading an idea to fix up the street or writing a piece on a social issue for the newspaper or on social media are also forms of work.

With this definition, one might ask where people’s “intentional activity” originate. From ourselves, from our surroundings, from the community as a whole, or perhaps a combination of all three? The latter fits well with the picture from Theosophia, with Unity as the central starting point. Work then corresponds most closely to the concept of *Dharma*.<sup>(3)</sup>

## Dharma

*Dharma* means “right religion, right philosophy, right science, and the right union of these three; hence the Law *per se*”.<sup>(4)</sup> The term dharma also has the meaning of justice, conduct or duty. It is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhri* meaning to support or sustain. You could think of it as the responsibility to support the whole, the unity. It also has the meaning of a unique individual characteristic. What a person naturally has to do is “his dharma”.

In line with this concept of dharma, from Theosophia we can define work as your unique contribution to the whole. This is your Work with a capital letter.

This Work transcends paid work. Intuitively, almost every human being realizes that he has some kind of contribution to make, a purpose or a calling. It is the reason every human being wants to work. Every human being wants to be useful, to have a function, to add value to the whole, and our work is the expression of this.

When people are unemployed for long periods of time, it makes them unhappy or even leads to depression. Lottery winners having millions generally do not stop working. And when they do, they usually regret it. Prisoners generally prefer working in prison to just spending their time in the cell. That includes boring or dirty work, such as ironing shirts or cleaning toilets. It is even a form of punishment to refuse them that work. All this shows that man is not a calculating *homo economicus* who stops working as soon as he gets the chance.

The idea of Work or dharma as one’s unique contribution to the whole is synonymous with what Plato writes about *dikaosune* or justice in his dialogue called *Republic*. A just

state or society is one in which each member adds his unique quality to society as a whole. Each person offers what he can and receives what he needs. And because everyone contributes according to his ability, there is always enough to serve everyone according to their needs. Plato also makes it clear that contribution is not the same for every person, but that one naturally contributes something different than another based on ability or talent. This also leads to different classes: the workers engaged in the supply of food and the various trades, the watchmen for keeping order and the wise who run the state. Plato’s state and its various classes, however, are primarily a metaphor for man himself. Each class represents a part in ourselves. The class of workers corresponds to our desiderative of desiring part and to the virtue of temperance or self-control. The class of watchmen corresponds to the striving part in ourselves and to the virtue of courage. And the class of the wise corresponds of course to the wise part in ourselves and to the virtue of wisdom. We are in harmony when we make this wise part, the highest part in ourselves, leading. If we zoom in further on those three parts in ourselves, it leads to a deepening of the meaning of our Work.

## What is our Work?

To complement Plato’s division of the composition of human consciousness, we will explain the three-part division from a more modern theosophical perspective. To begin with the innermost part, we will first briefly explain a little about the basic principle of Theosophia, because it is from this that this innermost part has its origin.

The first principle of Theosophia is that there is boundlessness: an omnipresent, eternal, boundless and immutable PRINCIPLE. Everything manifest is essentially inseparable from this principle. Therefore, at its heart, every being is also boundless and imperishable. This heart in every being, this immortal center of consciousness, is also called the Monad, and metaphors are used in various traditions to describe it: a spark of eternity, a ray of consciousness, a drop of the boundless ocean of life. Every being is a manifestation of that spark and is only seemingly separate. Just as a wave is only a seemingly separate phenomenon in the ocean, so every being is only seemingly separated from the boundless ocean of consciousness. Thus, Theosophia points to the unity of all life; one infinite stream of life, of which all life is an inseparable part. At the other end of this tripartite division, there is the most external part. It is the ephemeral part or vehicle with

which we can gain experience in the world; with our body, vital streams and emotional life, we experience this outer world.

Between the inner and outer part is the learning part. The learning part learns by expressing the boundless potentiality of the Monad in a particular area of manifestation. This is who we are. You could also call it the individual character of each being. This is something dynamic. For us humans, we learn to express the boundless consciousness through our thinking capacity. We are thinkers. And by this we do not mean only thinking intellectually: our feelings, desire, wisdom and compassion are also aspects of our thinking. In fact, as thinkers, we can identify with both the outer and inner part in ourselves. And we think most harmoniously when we develop the inner part to lead over the outer part, thus ennobling the latter.

Right religion, philosophy and science are an expression of this inner part of our thinking. These three stand for a sense of unity, of coherence and of logic, respectively. Uniting these, we start from unity and connectedness, arrive at understanding and insight and can reason and explain intellectually. From that inner vision we consequently do all our outer work. In essence, this thinking in harmony is our *dharma*, our duty or responsibility as human beings. This is our Work. We are learning to think harmoniously. And the quality of any work is determined by our inner mental harmony. We make mistakes when we are impatient, for example, and we remain diligent when we control ourselves and keep an overview.

### **What is it that leads you in your work?**

Our society lacks a clear and shared vision of the composite nature of the human being and thus of what Work really means: that we are learning with our thinking to express our inner potentiality for the benefit of the greater whole of which we are an inseparable part. So, we fail to recognize that there are two directions within ourselves toward which we can direct our thinking, inner and outer. This creates a distorted picture and leads to many of the problems around work that we outlined at the beginning of this article.

The knowledge of the composite nature within ourselves gives us the ability to learn to direct ourselves. This begins with becoming aware that the two directions within ourselves often manifest unconsciously in a certain mixture. The one moment we identify with our inner part and start from unity, compassion, connectedness, idealism, insight and are committed to the greater good. The other

moment we identify with our outer part and pursue our personal desires for possession, status or wealth and we choose for self-interest.

As a result, many people are not in their right place. They want to contribute something, but they also get carried away by their desire for a career for the sake of status or a high salary, instead of looking at the value they can add to the whole. At some point they realize that it has not made them truly happy, but even then, some continue to pursue it, fearing they will not be able to continue their standard of living or to support their families.

But perhaps you doubt whether there is a place for you at all in this world and whether you have anything to contribute? That's where the teachings of reincarnation and karma come in handy.

According to Theosophia, we are in essence immortal. Death is merely a rest period in which we let go of our vehicle and, as a learning part, harvest our most important life lessons and "absorb" them into the immortal part. With each new incarnation, we – with the help of our parents – again attract the building blocks from previous lives to build our vehicle. With this vehicle, as a learning part, we continue to learn our life lessons. So, in the present life, we also deal with some consequences of causes we created in a previous life, which we also call karma. Talents are nothing but the result of knowledge, experiences and skills we have already acquired in previous lives. And so, if we lack talent in something, it simply means that we have little investment in that area.

Our life is thus a cyclical continuation of our learning process. Based on cause and effect, we ourselves are drawn again to precisely those circumstances where we reap what we have previously sown. This means, then, that there are lessons for each of us to learn at exactly this time and under these circumstances: our "dharma," calling, responsibility or duty. By following our vehicular impulses or desires, which belong to our transitory part, we will not find it. Rather, we become further removed from it and distracted by it. We can recognize our "dharma" only by following our inner Self, that part of us that identifies with the immortal in us, by "following our heart" as we sometimes somewhat ineptly call it.

### **The jobs in a society reflect the prevailing mentality**

In our society, due to the lack of discernment, work is valued rather arbitrarily and unequally, and this creates a lot of confusion. For example, if you look at added value

to society as a whole, garbage collectors should actually earn more than bankers, as the journalist Bregman already wrote.<sup>(5)</sup>

Now, a society is nothing but a reflection of the average human mentality. For example, you can see that a society is shaped very differently when people consider wellbeing more important than wealth. For example, they will make many more contributions by themselves without any payment in return. Actually, this applies to all communities of life, small and large. Sometimes there can be considerably more understanding and mutual support within a village than in the immediate vicinity of the village or country in which it is located. All this comes from the way people think on average.

Plato also gives a clear example of this in his dialogue *Republic*. In it, Socrates first gives a description of the most basic living community. In this state there is a division of labor to meet the necessary needs for living: one person grows food, another provides the tools and builds and maintains the houses, a third makes clothes, et cetera.<sup>(6)</sup> Socrates' partners in the dialogue, however, see this community of life as one more suited to pigs than to humans. Socrates then proceeds to sketch the excessive of "feverish" state:

The things I mentioned earlier and the way of life I described won't satisfy some people, it seems, but couches, tables, and other furniture will have to be added, and, of course, all sorts of delicacies, perfumed oils, incense, prostitutes, and pastries. We mustn't provide them only with the necessities we mentioned at first, such as houses, clothes, and shoes, but painting and embroidery must be begun, and gold, ivory, and the like acquired.<sup>(7)</sup>

In short, this excessive state is focused on non-necessary needs. Personal desire prevails here, and this ultimately causes problems:

"And the land, I suppose, that used to be adequate to feed the population we had then, will cease to be adequate and become too small. What do you think?"

"The same."

"Then we'll have to seize some of our neighbors' land if we're to have enough pasture and ploughland. And won't our neighbors want to seize part of ours as well, if they too have surrendered themselves to the endless acquisition of money and have overstepped the limit of their necessities?"

"That's completely inevitable, Socrates."

"Then our next step will be war, Glaucon, won't it?"

"It will."

"We won't say yet whether the effects of war are good or bad but only that we've now found the origins of war. It comes from those same desires that are most of all responsible for the bad things that happen to cities and the individuals in them."<sup>(8)</sup>

Plato's lesson is clear. Personal desire for external things – more possessions, luxury, physical pleasure – only fuels the "unlimited pursuit of more" and ultimately leads to strife and disharmony. We see this just as much today: although no longer as often in the form of physical war (although unfortunately still present), but in the form of, for example, growing inequality between rich and poor, depletion of natural resources or damage to the climate. Even if many countries and companies operate according to the letter of the law, the question is whether the work they provide actually contributes to meeting necessary needs, or merely to excess of non-necessary needs for a limited group and thus does not make the world a more just place.

## How to find your Work?

All this leads to a number of considerations that can help you find your Work. The first question ties in with Plato's outline above: is your work necessary or not? Are you actually adding value to society? Are you helping yourself and others meet their needs for a livelihood, or by passing on knowledge or skills they need to do so independently, or with which they can further develop themselves internally? Research on *bullshit jobs* shows that around one in twenty of the paid jobs in Europe fail this test.<sup>(9)</sup> For example, there are jobs that merely consist of keeping track administratively of whether others are doing their jobs. There are also management jobs that are actually superfluous. And jobs without much added or sometimes even negative value — such as in the financial or legal sector where people do work to make a small group of rich people even richer or more powerful at the expense of the whole.

If you look more broadly, this may apply to entire industries. Why do we have 20 kinds of jelly or jam, or 30 kinds of cereals or frozen pizzas? Suppose we were to focus on necessary needs, are departments like marketing or advertising necessary? If no company had lawyers anymore, would lawyers be necessary? If no country had an army anymore, would armies be needed? Costa Rica does not have an army. It does have a university of peace though. All this may sound a bit radical, but at the same time

anyone with common sense will admit that it is not impossible to do things differently or letting them go. For example, the corona crisis proved that from one day to the next we can stop flying. And even though it did not last long, flying has become less obvious than before. In any case, this is a time when we are becoming more aware of the adverse effects of an economy focused primarily on mass consumption and profit maximization. And it is beginning to dawn on a growing number of people that their added value to society is nil or sometimes even negative, even if they earn well.

This relates to the following consideration: to what extent do you do work that is truly close to your heart? Is it work that feels like a kind of calling? Something that your conscience, your intuition, your whole being tells you to do? Work for which you have developed the specific talents, or abilities, and which you know society needs? Or do you choose the work because you hope it will meet the expectations of parents, friends or others? Or simply because it pays well? A sign that you are not really following your heart is if you are constantly coming up with all kinds of reasons for yourself to justify your current or future job. Or there is a fear of disappointment if you let go of your current job or a fear that you will not find something else. When considering this, then, the question is always whether your inner awareness – your conscience, intuition, compassion or sense of oneness – are leading over your outer part: your personal inclinations, desires, drive, feelings or penchant for material comfort.

The third and final consideration concerns the motive why we work. Are we doing the work primarily for ourselves or for a greater whole of which we are a part? For example, you can work for your own livelihood, but also for that of your family or the community as a whole of which you are a part.

Yet even work aimed at the whole can secretly carry some degree of selfishness. For example, because you are very attached to its result: it makes you feel good, it puts you in good standing with others, or it puts you on a pedestal. Or it makes you feel exalted or morally superior. It takes sincere self-reflection to see through this for yourself.

If you truly assume the unity of all life, then you do not fall into this trap. It is not about yourself, you remain focused on the underlying ideal. In short, you do not see this work as something that has to be done and then is finished, but something with which you can continue to be of significance, that requires your attention and through which you can continue to learn. Something you

do and can continue to do from the heart, regardless of what it brings you. As the Indian sage Krishna puts it:

Therefore perform thou that which thou hast to do, at all times unmindful of the event [*i.e.* without attachment to the result E.B.]; for the man who doeth that which he hath to do, without attachment to the result, obtaineth the Supreme. (...)

Even if the *good of mankind* only is considered by thee, the performance of thy duty will be plain;

— *Bhagavad Gītā*, 3:19-20

Every independent thinker makes a difference. And we can always work on our thinking, regardless of the work we get paid for. In time, you will find that by changing your own thinking, your outer work also transforms, or that you attract work that is more in line with you, that allows you to better make your unique contribution to the whole.

In a future article, we will elaborate further on the practical implementation of the theosophical view of work.

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6. Plato, *Politeia*, 369c (universal Plato pagination).
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9. M. Soffia, A.J. Wood and B. Burchell, “Alienation is not ‘bullshit’: an empirical critique of Graeber’s theory of BS jobs”. Article in: *Work, Employment and Society*, Volume 36, issue 5, 2022, p. 816–840. Source: <https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170211015067>.



# Questions & Answers

## Atmosphere at birth

Does a pregnant woman's behavior affect the reincarnating ego of the child she is about to give birth to?

### Answer

First of all, we wish clearly to point out that the pregnant woman and the reincarnating child – as well as the father – have already established a close relationship with each other in previous lives. Children are human beings with their own history, their own qualities and defects that they themselves have developed in previous lives. Therefore, the child's character and abilities are not formed during pregnancy, but already existed before birth.

So, there is a long past history of parents, child, and, perhaps to a more or less lesser extent, siblings, grandparents, uncles and aunts, neighbors, yes, the entire environment, who had built up relationships with each other, creating causes, which in later incarnations manifest as effects. If

there was a harmonious bond in previous lives between mother, father, and child – the three major karmic factors – and they all worked together unselfishly, were considerate of each other, then the mother will adopt a correspondingly harmonious attitude now. For example, she would not drink alcohol or smoke. She would avoid stress and have no selfish thoughts. Her focus is on the well-being of her son or daughter.

The atmosphere in a home already exerts an influence long before *before* the woman is expecting. The mutual relationship of the partners, their goal in life, their dealings with others, in short, the particular mental atmosphere of the couple, exerts an attraction on the reincarnating child. And during pregnancy and childhood, this atmosphere affects both the child's physical and mental development, creating effects which may assert themselves many years after birth.<sup>(1)</sup>

The optimal situation occurs when there is peace and love in the home.

The expectant mother constantly thinks thoughts of beauty, spirituality, and compassion. When the child is born, it gets every opportunity to harmoniously unfold all the different aspects of the character it built up in its previous life. On the other hand, if there is constant strife and emotional tension in the home, this atmosphere has a negative effect on the child. The effects of this influence can continue for many years, even long after reaching the adult age.

So, the importance of building a calm, unselfish atmosphere can hardly be overestimated. And by atmosphere, do not think merely of a beautifully furnished nursery – although that can also be important – but primarily of a mental atmosphere: of the thoughts that the expectant mother and her relatives and friends think. Even before he is born, the human being who returns to earth is tuned into a certain tone by that atmosphere, which gives his new incarnation a benevolent *direction*. In such an atmosphere, his own noblest qualities can fully unfold.

### Reference

1. Much research on pregnancy and early childhood has been done by Tessa Roseboom, Professor at the Amsterdam University. In this video she describes many important research results: Bernard van Leer Foundation, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StuLmPiJtRQ> (20 minutes).

## Karma

No one can do anything about karma. Someone is dying. The



People that live together, radiate a specific atmosphere that attracts certain human egos.

medical profession intervenes. The man gets better. Does man have any influence over it?

### Answer

That no one can “do” anything about karma is a formulation you will not find in Theosophy. “Karma” means action, and we always act. We act because we want to. Our free will is therefore the basis of karma. We are therefore *always* “doing” something about karma.

Furthermore, to get a correct picture of the law of karma, you must be well aware that karma exists because there is unity, because everything is inter-related. So, the dying person and the doctor have a karmic connection. One always affects the other. Isolated karma does not exist. If I tell my neighbor something about Theosophy, I influence him. If I do not, I am actually influencing him too. Not acting is also acting, we read in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. So, we are always influencing each other. The question is: what influence? Positive, selfless influence? Or do we want to benefit ourselves?

Karma is essentially free will. What has been done cannot be undone and leads us to certain situations in the future. But how we deal with that self-created situation is always based on our free will and will lead to new consequences.

In the concrete case of the seriously ill man, as formulated in the question, one can say that the man became ill due to causes from his past. That illness is not a doom imposed from “above”, not a fate external to that man. The fact that he was born at a time when doctors are apparently able to cure some patients, is also karma. That is not “luck”, but likewise cause and effect.

Yet each moment, the man retains his free will. For example, after his healing he can follow the doctors’ advice – and he lives for a long time – or ignore it, and he is back in the hospital after a short time.

### Question

So does luck and bad luck not exist? If a soccer player kicks the ball into his own goal, is that not bad luck?

### Answer

In everyday parlance we call it bad luck, but strictly speaking it is cause and effect. The cause of shooting the ball into your own goal may be that you do not have ball control; and that of course has another cause. Maybe you were lazy and did not train. Maybe you did not concentrate yourself because you slept badly that night, or because you think soccer is not that important. And so, there are dozens of possible causes.

But more importantly, that “blunder” enables you to learn. You learn to put things into perspective. You learn to accept your loss with a smile. And that applies equally well to all the other members of the aforementioned soccer team. Even the smallest events in our lives, and especially those that hurt, enable us to grow in wisdom. This is why it is said that karma is our best teacher.

It is sometimes difficult for us to identify the exact cause of what we call “bad luck” or “being lucky”. And because we do not perceive or discern that cause, we speak of chance or randomness, of haphazard events, of bad luck or good fortune.

But in the entire cosmos, in everything we can observe, events do not just happen. There is always a cause underlying them. The fact that we do not know that cause, does not mean

that it is not there.

## Does acquired knowledge get lost?

Theosophy says that knowledge gained in this life is not lost. Does that apply to all types of knowledge? If you are a lawyer or judge in this life, will you already know the law book in the next life?

### Answer

It depends indeed on the kind of knowledge. There is enduring knowledge, which we call understanding or insight, and that is knowledge about the background of things. And there is external knowledge, which only has to do with the outer world. The first knowledge – sometimes called the *Wisdom from Above* in the Bible – is enduring. If you have gained *insight* into the underlying causes of life, no one can ever take it away from you. The second kind of knowledge, that of the external world, is temporary. You lose it when you die. You have to gain this kind of outer knowledge every incarnation, helped by your educators and teachers. So, to elaborate on the example from the question: Dutch law knowledge will be forgotten in a subsequent life. In this life you may know which article of the Code is applicable to a certain situation, but in a next life that knowledge will be lost. This probably does not matter at all, because in your next life there will be other laws and your knowledge as judge or lawyer of the current Code will be of no use to you. That knowledge is useful only in this life, and you lose it at death. But your *ability* to gain knowledge does not go away. So your *ability* to read, understand and interpret judicial texts, will remain. That ability is



what we call *talent*. But what you do in any life with your past accumulated abilities and talents, depends on your choices now. You can let them germinate and grow, strengthen them, or, on the contrary, put no energy into them at all. In the latter case, they remain as dormant, unexploited seeds in your consciousness.

Another example: if you are good at languages in this life, in the next life you will have to learn the language again – and maybe you will be born in a completely different country – but your *ability* to learn a language, your insight into language, your talent, is still there. The words and grammar of a foreign language you will have to master again, but every language teacher knows that for some pupils this almost comes naturally, while for others it requires a lot of effort. And this applies also to mathematics, knowledge of human nature, biology, to everything.

In short, external knowledge is only useful for this one life, but insight, understanding, wisdom – everything that has to do with the spiritual side of our consciousness – after we have *developed* it, it will never be lost. You have become it. And what you are, you can never lose.

## Devachan

Is devachan a place or a sphere? Are there several people living there? And in what kind of body?

### Answer

After dying, there are several phases through which the exarnated human being goes. The most exalted phase is what we call *devachan*, a word that could be translated as the world of the gods or the divine world. Deva-

chan, however, is not a place, not a sphere, not a world: it is a *state of consciousness*. One can be in devachan anywhere. A person who goes through life dreaming ideals, having no practical insight, not being disturbed by what is going on around him, is in a devachanic state to some extent, though of course very limited. He makes his own dream world and lives in it.

In the devachanic state we relive our most noble thoughts, our spiritual ideals and aspirations of the passed life. That is why everyone has his own devachan, because everyone has his own spiritual ideals. That is why there are also many degrees of devachan: from very elevated to barely rising above our earthly consciousness. If you have not known spiritual tendencies – that is, if you have never thought noble thoughts, never helped others *truly*, never felt love for your fellow human beings, or even if you have never believed that there can be an afterlife at all – then you will not experience devachan. Then for you, after you have thrown off all the lower elements, death is an unself-conscious state, as in a dreamless sleep.

The bliss of devachan is far greater than any happiness on Earth. Why? Because all the lower elements of consciousness – the personal thoughts, desires, and emotions such as worries and fears – are left behind by man at death. Therefore, these cannot disturb the blissful ideal images that the *devachani* perceives.

Nevertheless, devachan is an illusion. It is a beautiful illusion, yes, but the human being is in a dream world. In that dream world – and we use the word “dream” for lack of another word – we dwell with all kinds of other people, our loved ones. But

that is appearance, although we think it is very real. However, they are the projections of our higher aspects of consciousness, which we perceive and hold to be real, yes, which are far more real to us than any experience on earth. Only highly spiritual people – and we are now referring to Masters of Wisdom and Compassion – who die self-consciously, do not lose their self-consciousness after the death of the body. Therefore, they will have outgrown above the illusion of devachan. They are, even after death, in a self-conscious state in the inner Cosmic realms, that is, after they shed their physical vehicle. They know where they are.

Of course, human consciousness must be *somewhere* after death. But the place where it is, is actually unimportant, because the human being does not notice it. He abides in his noble dream world. He is absorbed in what we call “the bosom of the monad”, of our inner god, Ātman.

Here we approach a very profound teaching, of which we can only say this very briefly now. When we have died, our inner god is free and continues its own path of development, carrying us along, as it were, as a mother carries a baby in a travel cradle. Human consciousness is incorporated into the greater whole of the stream of consciousness that we are.

For further information on the processes of dying and states after death, we refer to Gottfried de Purucker’s *Esoteric Teachings volumes 11 and 12*.<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. G. de Purucker, *Esoteric Teachings, Volume 11 and 12* (“Death and the Circulations of the Cosmos”, parts 1 and 2). The Hague, I.S.I.S. Foundation, 2015.

# Agenda

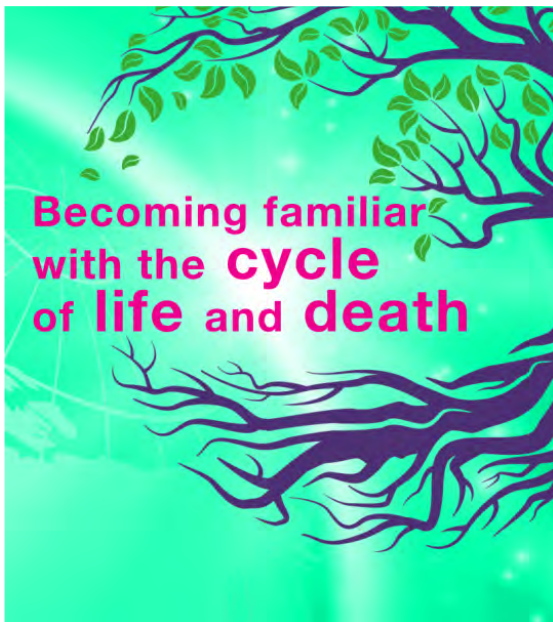
## Online lectures

Starting in October, every Sunday at 19:30, there is a theosophical lecture or study meeting. The first series, “Universal Wisdom”, is also an introduction to the course Universal Wisdom, which start in January 2024. The full program can be found at: [blavatskyhouse.org/lectures/](https://blavatskyhouse.org/lectures/).

### Series 1, October-November Universal Wisdom

- 01-10 A universal vision for your life
- 08-10 *Study meeting on lecture of 01-10*
- 15-10 Discover for yourself the seven facets of Truth
- 22-10 *Study meeting on lecture of 15-10*
- 29-10 The One Life and the Paramita Path
- 05-11 *Study meeting on lecture of 29-10*

### Series 2, November-December Becoming familiar with the cycle of life and death



There is a growing need in society to discuss everything that has to do with life, dying and death. Our attempts to understand life and death, depend very much on our starting points. Do we assume the singularity of life or cyclical-ity, reincarnation? This series of lectures and studies starts with the question whether, and how, we can recognize the

process of reincarnation. This will be followed by a study evening on the subject. In the second lecture we investigate the analogy of the processes of sleep and death, and the internalizing of our learning lessons in sleep and death. This will also be the topic of the second study evening.

- 12-11 Can we recognize the process of reincarnation?
- 19-11 *Study meeting on lecture of 12-11*
- 26-11 Learning processes during sleep and death
- 03-12 *Study meeting on lecture of 26-11*

## The course Universal Wisdom

This course Universal Wisdom starts from a great universal image. This is the basis of true wisdom, which everyone can come to know. This wisdom is not new; it is the core of all great religious, philosophical, and scientific systems. Universal wisdom enables you to solve any questions about life and thereby contribute to a more harmonious world. It explains life, the processes in nature and provides answers to all life's questions.

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## I.S.I.S. Foundation

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

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

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

I.S.I.S. Foundation is a non-profit organization,  
which is recognized as such by the tax  
authorities in The Netherlands. For the purposes  
of the tax authorities, I.S.I.S. Foundation has  
what is called ANBI status.  
ANBI stands for General Benefit Organisation  
(Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling).  
The most important requisites in obtaining this  
ANBI status are:

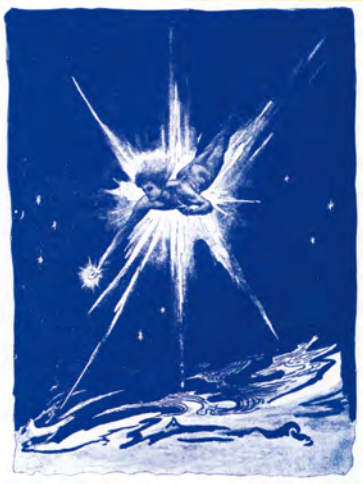
- It is a non-profit organization, so it has no  
earnings. Any profit earned from for  
example book sales, must be fully used for  
general beneficial activities. For I.S.I.S.  
Foundation, this is spreading the Theo-  
sophia. (We refer to the statutes, aims and  
principles for further information.)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

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

## I.S.I.S. Foundation

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

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



## Why this journal is called *Lucifer*

Lucifer literally means Bringer of Light.

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

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

For these people this journal is written.

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

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

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