

The Messenger
of Light

Lucifer

For seekers of Truth

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

**I.S.I.S.
Symposium
2016**

***Universal
Rights of the
Reincarnating
Man***



Universal Rights of the Reincarnating Man

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Universal Rights of the Reincarnating Man

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The esoteric origin of human rights

The inner power to change the world

Key thoughts:

- » The basis of all legislation is the Theosophia or esoteric philosophy.
- » According to Theosophia life is boundless. Everything lives.
- » Laws of nature are the actions and interactions of all the living beings in a hierarchical structure.
- » There is a natural dynamic Eternal Harmony to which all life aspires: Dharma, LAW, Duty or Compassion.
- » Through Knowledge of the Self each being can become an expression of the highest Dharma.
- » Each individual living being has its own Dharma or Duty in totality, its own characteristics. When everyone does his duty, laws are unnecessary.
- » E-ducation is the answer to human rights violations.

This article is an abridged English lecture that Erwin Bomas held on May 8, 2016 in the Blavatskyhouse in The Hague. Because the contents form an essential basis and are a significant addition to the thoughts expressed in the I.S.I.S. Symposium, the editorial board felt the need to share these fundamental ideas about human rights.

It was a major milestone when Eleanor Roosevelt presented the first Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. It was the first time in recorded human history that such a worldwide Declaration of Human Rights was formed. The articles below are examples of human rights that are included in the Universal Declaration:

- Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
- Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
- Article 14: Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.⁽¹⁾

It was obviously a special achievement that global acceptance was

reached on these basic human rights. However, when we think of these rights and follow the daily news, unfortunately we must conclude that these rights are still far from being universally applied. Moreover, it is sad that we have to state that countries that advocated for these rights are now fleeing from their responsibilities. Take for instance the 'European refugee crisis' in which Europe tries to 'outsource' the problem to other countries.

Why are these universal human rights not yet universally applied? To answer this question we will need to dive deeper into the essence of law, beyond what is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In this article we will explore the esoteric origin of human rights, Laws of Nature and the application of human rights.

How do laws come into existence?

You can ask yourself, why do we have documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? The answer in short is, because we do not (yet) act the way we should. It is important to realize that this document emerged just after the Second World War. The second sentence of the Preamble states, “Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind (...),” which refers to the events of the recent past at that time.

A recent example of how legislation follows misconduct, is about flying with drones. More drones than ever before are soaring in the skies, but that does not mean that people are flying them safely. Lately, we regularly read in the news that drones nearly crash into airplanes that are landing. As a response, the government is called upon to provide laws and regulations for flying drones to prevent accidents from happening.

You may wonder whether it is inevitable that laws and regulations are made for all forms of misconduct. The Chinese sage Lao-Tze, who lived around the 6th-5th century BC, speaks in his *Tao Te Ching* about an interesting consequence of continuously expanding laws, rules and regulations:

The more prohibitions and rules,
the poorer people become; (...)
the more elaborate the laws,
the more they commit crimes.⁽²⁾

This text makes you wonder whether legislation makes the world better.

Of course, on average, people know that it is dangerous to fly drones in the vicinity of an airport. And generally people behave well without knowing the law. Each country has its laws and its citizens must abide by them, but most people probably have difficulty citing even a single law. Judges also apply unwritten legal principles as “fairness and reasonableness”. People have a natural sense of what is right and wrong. This notion is based on ‘something’ universal, which forms the basic principle on which law is based. That ‘something’ is referred to in legal circles as ‘natural law’.

Natural law

Natural law can be found, among others, in ancient Greece. It is also reflected in Stoicism, in Christianity by Thomas Aquinas and the famous jurist Hugo Grotius based his ideas on natural law as well. Hugo Grotius even called it valid if God did not exist — and he said this in a very religious time.⁽³⁾

The simplest definition of natural law is, ‘the unwritten law that is more or less valid for every man’. It can be seen as a set of moral principles that are the same for all of mankind and can be recognized by human reason.

Characteristics of natural law are:

- not made by man;
- based on the structure of reality itself;
- equal to all people at all times;
- an immutable rule or pattern, for man to explore;
- the natural, knowable moral law;
- a means through which people, in a rational way, can turn to the right path.⁽⁴⁾

Examples of natural law in legislation and human rights

These natural moral principles form the basis of many laws and rights. For example when you look at the *Preamble* of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, its the first sentence:

Whereas recognition of the *inherent dignity* and of the *equal and inalienable rights* of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world ...⁽⁵⁾

Note the ‘inalienable rights of all members of the human family’ and the ‘inherent dignity’ that refer to something natural that every human being has in common.

In the last draft of the Declaration of Independence of the United States (1776), Thomas Jefferson writes:

We hold these truths to be (sacred and undeniable) self-evident, that all men are created *equal and independent*, that from that equal creation they derive in rights *inherent and inalienables*, among which are the preservation of life, and liberty and the pursuit of happiness.⁽⁶⁾

Again: “inherent” and “inalienable” rights. Finally, in another famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789) which was made just after the French Revolution, is also mentioned “... the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man...”.⁽⁷⁾

What are these inherent qualities and inalienable rights based on? In all of these declarations, these natural rights are a starting point. The question of their origin, however, remains unanswered.

When we again consult the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao-Tze, he shares several interesting ideas about the basis of (human) rights.

When Tao is lost, there is virtue (“Te”),
When virtue is lost, there is benevolence,
When benevolence is lost, there is justice,
When justice is lost, there is ritual.⁽⁸⁾

According to Lao-Tze we have lost something and justice is what remains, or even worse, mere ritual. Maybe if we can retrace the path to Tao, laws (an expression of justice) are not needed anymore.

Before we go into this, however, we must answer the question where Lao-Tze has based his ideas on. Like many other world teachers, Lao-Tze was one of the messengers of the Theosophia, the universal wisdom that forms the basis of all the great religions, also known as the esoteric philosophy.

The esoteric origin

It is striking that when you look at pictures of Lao-Tze, he always sits on a bull. This bull is a symbol of “Dharma”, in other words, the esoteric religion.⁽⁹⁾ This brings us to the definition of “esoteric”, which is also connected to the meaning of Tao.

Let’s start with Tao. Lao-Tze writes: “the Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.”⁽¹⁰⁾ This means that when we speak about the Tao, talk about it, give it a name, this can never be the real Tao. The eternal Tao is something that is impossible to explain, it is beyond our imagination. In Theosophia we refer to it as a boundless Principle,

... on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or

similitude. (...) One absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being.⁽¹¹⁾

In order to penetrate to reality we must look behind the outer appearances. What is the driving force behind that which our limited eyes can perceive?

The idea that there is a force behind phenomena, a hidden reality which lies behind the world as we perceive it, is linked to the definition of “esoteric”. The word esoteric comes from the Greek *esoterikos* which means “belonging to an inner circle”, or *esotero* which means “more inwardly”. It points to something in us, something hidden. Esoteric is the opposite of exoteric, that which is outside of us and can be observed. In Theosophia this distinction is also expressed as the doctrine of the Eye and the doctrine of the Heart. The first doctrine refers to what we can understand with the head, our intellectual logic, aided by external sensory perception. The second doctrine refers to what we can know with the Heart and inner qualities, our understanding, insight, intuition, aided by our sense of unity.

Every religion has its esoteric side. The Heart Doctrine is generally known in Buddhism and in particular in the Mahāyanā tradition. You have the Kabbalah in Judaism, Gnosticism in Christianity, Sufism in Islam and the *Upanishads* in Hinduism, that represent the esoteric side. Those who wrote about the esoteric side, used exoteric symbolism that can be found in the Sacred Books such as the *Bible*, the *Torah*, the *Koran* and Buddhist Sūtra’s. The inner meaning of all the parables, metaphors and myths of these books can be unraveled with esoteric knowledge.

Can you also speak of an esoteric side of laws and rights? Definitely. From the perspective of the esoteric origin, we can describe the highest LAW of Dharma and the Laws of Nature more thoroughly.

The LAW – Dharma

Dharma comes from the Sanskrit root *dhri* which means “to support”. In general it means LAW in capital letters or Duty. G. de Purucker describes Dharma as “true religion, true philosophy, true science and the right union of these three.”⁽¹²⁾ Here we see a similarity with one of the definitions of Theosophy that we find in the subtitle of Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine*:

“the synthesis of Religion, Philosophy and Science”. Blavatsky gives another definition of Theosophy in her book *The Key to Theosophy*: “the quintessence of Duty.”⁽¹³⁾ Here we come back to Dharma as Duty, with a capital letter. From the Theosophia or esoteric philosophy, Dharma can be understood more clearly. Theosophia literally means Divine Wisdom or Wisdom of the Gods. The basis of the Theosophia can be found in the book *The Secret Doctrine* and consists of three fundamental propositions. In short, *Boundlessness* is the first proposition: “An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE. One absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being.”⁽¹⁴⁾

The second proposition is *cyclicity*. Blavatsky describes it as the incessantly periodical manifestation and disappearance of Universes.⁽¹⁵⁾

The third proposition is *as above, so below*: “The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul (...) and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul.”⁽¹⁶⁾

When you assume Boundlessness, nothing exists outside of it. Every being is part of the Boundless or rather, is in essence equal to the Boundless. One of the main conclusions that we can draw from these fundamental propositions is that Consciousness, or Life, is the force behind everything that manifests.⁽¹⁷⁾ In other words: everything is alive. An important conclusion if we want to understand what we mean by the Laws of Nature or natural laws. Nowhere in nature can something like dead matter be found; there is only boundless life or consciousness that expresses itself cyclically and in various degrees. In terms of esoteric and exoteric you could say that there is a clear distinction between the outer vehicle and the inner consciousness which operates herein. The inner consciousness manifests itself through the physical vehicle that we can perceive. We call this the spiritualistic perspective.

Laws of Nature

Assuming that everything is alive and life is universal, we can get more insight into the “Laws of Nature” and the physical laws. This will clarify the link between natural law, the LAW and human rights.

Everything lives, Nature forms a living collaborative totality. Everything we observe in Nature coexists of



actions and interactions of living beings or consciousnesses of different levels: from human to atomic behavior, from the interaction of the kingdoms of Nature in an ecosystem to the weather conditions, including cosmic influences on the weather like solar storms, et cetera. Gottfried de Purucker defines the “Laws of Nature” as the

... action and interaction and interplay of consciousnesses and wills – in the Kosmos – not so much considered as personalized consciousnesses and wills, but by us those words are used more as abstractions, meaning the combines and aggregate action-results of all consciousnesses and wills in the Kosmos.⁽¹⁸⁾

This action and interaction, these behavioral patterns in Nature, have two sides: an *active, conscious* side and a *passive, unconscious* side. Take for example our blood circulation, the air we breathe in and out, our metabolism: all of this happens unconsciously. It simply happens without us having to do something active. It is a passive habit for us. For the cells, molecules and

atoms that compose our vehicles, our bodies, these habits are like physical laws.

The active side of the Laws of Nature is mainly determined by the beings who have already reached the level of self-awareness. From the stage of human consciousness, in parallel with the development of the faculty of thinking, self-consciousness develops. A human being can reflect upon himself and act *self-consciously*. A human being has desires, thinks about them and acts accordingly. This forms the active or positive side of Nature. This shows the responsibility that we have, as human beings, for living beings who are less developed, from the animals and plants in this world to the cells in our body. They are strongly influenced by our habits

“As above, so below”, such is the third fundamental proposition of the Theosophia. This means that what applies to the cells of our body in relation to us as human consciousness, can be seen as an analogy for what applies to us human beings in relation to the Cosmos. We experience and discover all kinds of physical laws, such as the speed of light and the force of gravity. Behind these physical laws, as we human beings perceive them, there are beings at work. The passive and unconscious habits of cosmic beings form these physical laws.

From this esoteric perspective we are able to explain a physical law such as gravity much better. It is caused by the interaction of consciousnesses.

There is a continuous attraction and repulsion between consciousnesses. We human beings, including the life-atoms of which we are composed, are attracted to the sphere of this planet Earth, the atmosphere of a being with a consciousness of cosmic level. In the same way, our life-atoms with their atomic consciousness, are attracted to us human beings. The interaction, on the basis of free will, of the characteristics of their and our consciousness, produces this attraction. Not all of these atoms are attracted by us. Some are repelled by us because we have no correspondence with them.⁽¹⁹⁾ So, the physical laws that we perceive, are the effect of the passive side of higher conscious beings of cosmic level. Can we experience the active side of higher beings as well? In general, the following applies: the higher the level of consciousness of some being, the less its active side is reflected on lower planes. No more

than we, active thinkers, consciously deal with the weal and woe of one of the cells in our body.

The Law of LAWS, Divine Compassion

However, there is a habit that characterizes the higher, spiritual hierarchies, which is part of their active side and that we can experience. It is the Law of LAWS and it is also described as Eternal Harmony or Divine Compassion.⁽²⁰⁾ It is the eternal harmony that supports Nature, the divine compassion that flows from the spiritual hierarchies of the Kosmos to support totality. Hence we return to the previously mentioned concept of Dharma or LAW in capital letters.

We can also experience this LAW. This requires understanding of what is known in the Theosophia as the seventh Jewel of Wisdom: Knowledge of the Self. We will discuss now how we, as human beings, can experience this. With this knowledge we can come to an answer why human rights are not (yet) universally applied.

The highest Dharma: Knowledge of the Self

Knowledge of the Self, or in Sanskrit Ātma-Vidyā, is one of the seven universal teachings, referred to as the seven Jewels of Wisdom in the Theosophia, and which are reflected in all the great world religions and philosophies. When we speak of Self with a capital letter, we refer to the Self that is equal in all beings. It refers to the common source from which all consciousness springs and it shows the fundamental Oneness of everything. Each being is able to experience this oneness, each at its own level. From this sense of oneness naturally arises a basic attitude of compassion. With knowledge of the Self you also have knowledge of the highest LAW of Dharma. In ancient India people also spoke of to *Paramātmān*, Sanskrit for ‘the Supreme Self’. It is described that the highest, the best, the most beneficial and omnipresent Religion or *dharma* of a rational being is not only to know, but also to experience personally, i.e. to feel, this unconscious immateriality or Paramatma — the Infinity and Eternity of Existence and Happiness.⁽²¹⁾

An important conclusion of this teaching is that the Self and the highest LAW that flows from it, is not something outside of us. The word ‘Self’ indicates that in essence, we are it. However, in this text is referred to

rational beings, self-conscious beings that have developed the faculty of thinking. Starting from that stage of development it is possible to self-consciously climb up to the level of the Self. Everyone can learn this. More about this Jewel and the other Jewels of Wisdom can be found in the symposium contributions in this issue.

That every being in essence is this Self, does not mean that the evolutionary course of life is the same for each being. The path of development is unique for everyone. The unique, individual characteristics of all beings complement each other and together form a unity in this world. This brings us to a second meaning of Dharma, that is particularly important for the application of laws and justice.

The second meaning of Dharma: Self-becoming

This second meaning of Dharma is according to G. de Purucker: “essential or characteristic quality or peculiarity”.⁽²²⁾ This refers to the individual duty of a human being, something that he naturally should do in the light of oneness.

This is very close to the meaning of Self-becoming or Swabhāva — the fourth Jewel of Wisdom in the Theosophia. Its meaning is that a being always expresses that consciousness which it has developed thus far. A rose-consciousness manifests itself as a rose, a cow-consciousness as a cow and the consciousness of a human being as a human being, with a character composed of all characteristics that he, in this life and previous lives, has developed.

However, it is important to see ourselves in the light of totality, because each being is developing in connection with other beings. We grow jointly and the Dharma or Duty that each individual has, is always expressed in his interconnections. Take for example a small village in which some farmers grow food, a tailor makes clothes, a shoemaker makes shoes, et cetera. Each member of the community contributes what he is able to do, naturally and characteristically.

Self-becoming and justice

According to Plato, this is the definition of justice: each one does his duty for the benefit of totality, according to his abilities. Each one gives what he can

give and receives what he needs.

At any point in time and place, there is a certain duty for us to fulfill. To be able to do so, however, it is necessary to have a picture of that totality. Similar to a musician who must follow the music of the entire orchestra to be able to add his contribution in harmony with it.

This harmony is never static. It is continuously subject to change, because each being continuously contributes according to his growing abilities. If, at some point, someone cannot or will not do so, with misbehavior as result, then, according to Plato’s definition, the only just solution is to help this person retrace his place in totality.

Restorative justice is based on this principle. In *Lucifer* we have already discussed many examples of restorative justice. A recent example: high schools increasingly experimented with so-called teen or youth courts.⁽²³⁾

Instead of imposing punishments from above, students themselves think about appropriate actions to deal with misbehavior. Following the same procedure of a regular court, students fulfill the roles of judge, lawyer and prosecutor. Justice is always aimed at restoration, the defendant should first consider the consequences of his act. Who has suffered from it? And how could he restore this? The measures are aimed at compensating the effects imposed by the act.

Jurisdiction shows that restorative measures lead to better results in the long term: reduced recidivism and better reintegration into society. Law cannot be imposed from outside, justice is something natural that comes from within. Therefore, education is the appropriate response to crime, rather than punishment. A human being is not a predator that needs to be locked up in order to protect the environment. A human being is a thinking being and by using that thinking faculty independently, he can control his free will and align his actions with Nature. In the thinking faculty of man lies the answer to the question of how human rights can be applied universally.

Independent thinking the first step

Human beings express their consciousness by means of their thinking faculty. Thoughts precede what human beings do: act, consciously or unconsciously. Our thoughts and actions follow a cyclical pattern.

For example, every morning we ask ourselves what the weather will be like, or we look at our calendar to see what is on our to-do list and what appointments we have made. Our lives often primarily consist of such habits: recurring cycles of thoughts and actions. A human character is formed by such habits of thinking and acting. The more crystallized these habits are, the more rigid the character. In other words, our thoughts eventually define our character, and thus who we are.

This leads to another important consequence of Self-becoming: nothing that happens to us, comes from outside of us. The responsibility for our lives lies with ourselves. We always become ourselves. The environment we are in, the events in our lives, are without exception consequences of our own actions in this life or previous lives. We develop our own character by the choices we make with our free will, choices in thought and action.

Because all beings are interconnected, each being forms, by the influence of its own character, the “character” of this society, of this world. With the development of independent thinking man can direct his own actions more freely than for example the animals, for whom freedom of action is more limited, as they behave instinctively. Therefore man has a special responsibility.

He can use his thinking faculty to come ever closer to the Knowledge of the Self, thus becoming an expression of Dharma himself. When he has reached oneness with universal life, he naturally acts according to the highest LAW. He commits himself unselfishly and to his best ability to everything that lives, and thinks and acts compassionately. The first step is to recognize this LAW, the Tao.

Why Lao-Tze is right

Returning to Lao-Tze:

When Tao is lost, there is virtue (“Te”).
When virtue is lost, there is benevolence.
When benevolence is lost, there is justice.
When justice is lost, there is ritual.⁽²⁴⁾

Understanding the Laws of Nature and the Dharma
– the highest law that arises from the unity of all ex-

istence and which is our highest duty – will lead to greater justice, benevolence, virtue, and finally even a Self-conscious return to the One or the Tao.

Now we can understand Lao-Tze better in the first verse we quoted:

The more prohibitions and rules,
the poorer people become; (...)
the more elaborate the laws,
the more they commit crimes.⁽²⁵⁾

We know that laws are only required if we, consciously or unconsciously, do not keep to our natural duty. We also realize that human laws themselves solve nothing, as long as people do not recognize their natural duty, towards themselves and the totality. More laws always lead to more thieves and vandals, because more people will be labeled as thieves and vandals according to those laws, while they are actually ignorant, as they do not realize their natural duty. Laws only confirm the illusionary idea that something is needed from the outside in order to get people into line. While true justice, benevolence, virtue and unity exist within people themselves. Education, or literally “to lead out” what is in us, is therefore the only appropriate response as long as human rights, or any rights whatsoever, are not applied. To end with a fitting final paradox of Lao-Tze:

I am good to people who are good.
I am also good to people who are not good. [To help them to become good – E.B.]
Because virtue (Te) is goodness.⁽²⁶⁾

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Introduction I.S.I.S. Symposium 2016

Universal Rights of the Reincarnating Man

Ladies and gentlemen, we are glad that you have come, also because this is a topic that is, so to speak, on our doorstep. We are all forced to think deeply about it.

Human rights, not only a problem of today

The human rights issue is nothing new. When you look back in history, you can see that the problem has always, you could almost say as long as humanity thinks actively, played an important role. There has been continuous thought on how to deal with each other: which basic ideas, which basic patterns do you use for it?

There are many examples that prove this, from long before our era to the present day. We are continuously making efforts to agree on values, on a basis that is as broad, as international as possible. The aim is always that we treat each other humanely.

And when you consider that long history of human rights with all the laws and agreements that were made, then you see that a new impulse is unfortunately often initiated at the end of a period in which it went terribly wrong. For example, after we have fought a war and came to the conclusion: we must never let this happen again, let us make a few agreements on this. Not only wars were an impulse to deepen and improve agreements, but also other situations in which people had no guarantees anymore to basic living conditions. For example, think of the feudal systems of the past

that rulers maintained. These were all reasons to do something about it.

The list of examples that is shown below, is far from complete. Think too of our own William of Orange, for example, of people like Gandhi and Mandela; they are all people who have worked to improve human conditions.

A limited overview of the history of human rights:

- The Cyrus Cylinder, Persia (539 BC)
- Ashoka, India (304-232 BC)
- The Magna Carta, England (1215)
- Petition of Right, England (1628)
- American Declaration of Independence (1776)
- The Constitution of the United States (1787) and Bill of Rights (1791)
- Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, France (1789)
- Treaty of the first Geneva Convention (1864)
- The establishment of the United Nations (1945)
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

From compulsion to insight

The challenge we stand for is: on *which* basis do you deal with each other, which thoughts and

assumptions do you choose for it? Then we quickly notice that we have our mouths full of rights and duties. But there is a great disadvantage attached to the terms “rights” and “duties”. In all cases they have a compulsory connotation. When you think you have the right to something, then you, so to speak, stand for your right. Then you want to have that right, you want to obtain satisfaction. And when you must do something for totality, then you are talking about it as a duty “that you must do”, which has a compulsory connotation as well.

We must rise above this, above the idea of external compulsion, because it contradicts acting in the public interest as a matter of course. After all, we can build up an *insight* in our society, an insight in totality, that makes us think, with each other, very differently about it. And then we must point to the beginning of the Theosophical Society, to the knowledge that Mrs. Blavatsky gave about Theosophia since 1875 — in fact, *gave back again*, because that knowledge once was ours. However strange it might sound, you can lose knowledge when you do not properly maintain it and continue to think about it. And that is exactly the great challenge that we take on with each other in this symposium.

Universal patterns

So H.P. Blavatsky brought Theosophia to us again. Which is a very comprehensive system of, you might say, religion, philosophy and science. It is a synthesis thereof. And she showed us that it is a matter of course that you develop universal ethics and morality from that vision as well. This universal vision and these ethics are called *Dharma* in Sanskrit. That is different from generating laws, because *Dharma* is a challenge we all face in fact.

Mrs. Blavatsky, as mentioned, gave us back that which is our inheritance. And when we understand that inheritance well, we can treat each other much better, we can generate much more respect for each other. That is what we want to do together in this symposium: look from the universal patterns that form the basis of the whole universe — in other words, from UNITY — at what should be normal in all of our connections with our fellow men. How you can, when you understand this well, respect each other.

Such visions are often interpreted as rights and duties. But I hope that if our two days are successful, we have risen above that limited view on rights and duties, and we can speak much more from a moral and ethical perspective that we have developed in ourselves.

Rights of the Reincarnating Man

In this symposium we explicitly want to put the issue of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a different dimension. In fact, we want to work towards the Universal Declaration of the Rights of the *Reincarnating Man*.

And this is a significant step further. Because, when you think about it, you see that the term reincarnation adds an important dimension. That this dimension is exactly that which possibly greatly changes the way we deal with each other, and gives us a substantially different view on what we take for granted and what not. So we will discuss the consequences of reincarnation, that you interact with each other in multiple lives. The much longer time frame is a big challenge, because you can no longer rely on the idea anymore: “great, the problem is solved because this or that person is out of my sight, in other words: to me he is no longer there, I do not have to take him into account anymore.” No, we say from the perspective of reincarnation: that connection, that link, remains, and shall present itself again after a shorter or longer time. Reincarnation gives you the notion that our interactions and all agreements that we make about it, are affecting us for much longer than one life. And that you must train your mind and consciousness so that from the moment you make agreements, you already do this with this longer time frame in mind. You will realize that you will meet your current enemy — with whom you have such a hard time dealing with — again in next incarnations and that you will stand for the challenge again, how to get along with each other.

Inner growth and free will

We have worked very hard with our symposium team this past season to compose, from a theosophical perspective, the Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Reincarnating Man, formulated in such a way that you can immediately apply it. And our *Preamble*, that you will hear soon, adopts the basic thoughts of the

Theosophia: the three fundamental propositions and seven very practical universal principles. Together we will work these out.

Our purpose is not to give absolute laws or regulations, because that is not possible. We all grow, we grow in consciousness, in insight. Our social rules – if I may call them that – are also dynamically growing, and should become increasingly refined, in the course of incarnations that we go through with each other. We consciously do not use the word ‘law’, because there is free will throughout the whole Universe. Like in physics there are always a few electrons that behave very self-willed, we see this in our human world as well. Therefore, we will have to come up with social rules, we must find a method, by which we stimulate each other in such a way that our freedom of behavior is not at the expense of others. Each of us has a universal sense of justice. That sense is trainable and that is the challenge.

Activating format

We will build up that sense, that vision, by working on it together. That is why we decided upon an *activating* format for this symposium — with plenty of moments for exchange, for dynamic. We are very pleased with the audience that are following us via live stream, and are listening to us now. But the audience here in this room is very important, because you, by joining us in the dynamic, help shaping this symposium.

The method we have devised for the next two days is: every morning and every afternoon there will be an introduction in which a principle will be explained, followed by a workshop in which you and the workshop leaders will work with that principle. We discuss it with each other, look at what it means and what we can do with it. And the outcome of the workshops will be included in the subsequent lecture on the consequences – which is given by the same speaker that gave the introduction – and placed in a deeper and broader picture, a picture that we already prepared partially. Therefore, it is important that you realize that we expect very much of you the next two days. And feel completely free in this topic: it has many sides, and we are prepared to share all of these with each other in the workshops. In this way we try to get this principle activated as it were inside of you. You have it already

in you: it only needs to come out.

Now I will give the floor to the next speaker, who will present us the first principles: Linda van Noord.

What is I.S.I.S. Foundation?

I.S.I.S. Foundation is the international executive organization of The Theosophical Society Point Loma – Blavatskyhouse The Hague. The name I.S.I.S. means International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth. So, the emphasis is on independent, non-dogmatic search for truth. The Foundation wants to support people in their search for answers to the questions of life, and who want to acquire knowledge with an open mind and a critical view.

What does I.S.I.S. Foundation has to offer?

- Courses in Dutch, English and German, also worldwide via Skype:
 1. Course Thinking Differently = building self-knowledge
 2. Course Life Wisdom = building a life vision
- Lectures in Dutch, English and German
- Books, magazine *Lucifer*. Also available on the internet
- Audio, video, live streams



Universal Laws, humans, rights and duties

This is, as we know, a theosophical symposium and therefore we will look at human rights these two days from a theosophical point of view. What does that actually mean? At the end of the 19th century, H.P. Blavatsky came to, and these are her own words, break the “molds of mind”. Not just to bring in a single thought, so to speak, but to shift the complete perspective from which humans see or consider themselves, others, the world and the universe.

Was she the first who did this or strived to do this? No, many have preceded and many will follow her in a long tradition of great thinkers who have continuously showed us in all times and cultures that Universal Brotherhood is the true foundation of our society: apparently we are indeed our brother's keeper. This symposium is about this other perspective in which we see ourselves, life and therefore also human rights. Why is there Brotherhood and how does this relate to human rights: its creation, compliance in some areas but also the gross violations which we see so often? How far does our relationship with and our responsibility for each other go? Why do our solutions seem so unsustainable? What should we do instead?

Two starting points

Let us start by clarifying what makes this other perspective so different. Simply said there are two different starting points from which we can observe life: starting from unity or from what we call separateness.

What exactly do we mean with these terms?

From the first starting point, the one of unity, we state that all life emanates from one single Source and because of this it is inseparably interconnected. There is One Life, which expresses, manifests itself so to speak, in a wide diversity of beings, such as humans or animals for example.

From the second starting point, the one of separateness follows that everything that lives is in essence separated from each other, independent of each other. Alongside with this goes that not everything we observe is alive because there is “dead” matter, and what we call life has originated spontaneously from this matter or it has been added, was “given” to us by, for example, a personal god. This is what is also known as the materialistic principle: prior to life as we know it lies matter. This perspective is also why we spend so much energy on searching for extra-terrestrial life: we assume a thorough foundation of dead matter on top of which life may or may not start to exist and if this is indeed the case this life exists separated from each other.

These two different starting points, also called the spiritual versus the materialistic principle, or in other words considering life from a sense of unity or a feeling of separateness, will logically lead to different experiences in our life and in our world. However, with the term materialistic principle or even the feeling of separateness we do not mean to say that people

who reason from this principle cannot be social or cannot experience the feeling of belonging together or to a bigger group. The theosophical idea of Unity goes way beyond this: not only do we belong to each other as a group, for instance all of mankind, but we are in essence One and the same Life. Let's explore this idea first.

When we look around in the world we fortunately see many expressions of compassion and collaboration. We all know people who rise above their self-interest, who commit to a greater collective interest and sometimes, even risk their lives for the protection of dignity and justice. Whether this is for environmental protection, animal rights, the fight against poverty or human rights. Everywhere we see the least attractive side of humans, we also encounter brave people who like nothing more than to help others. In this light we saw very different reactions to the arrival of large groups of asylum seekers in the Netherlands. Thousands of volunteers signed up to help with the shelter and guidance of these people, while others showed anxiousness or even hostility. Also in Syria we see that some people fight to outcompete each other while others stay behind in for example the torned city Aleppo, risking their lives, to help others. These are the many brave doctors and nurses of whom a part was recently lethally hit by bombers, which again destroyed large parts of the city thereby also hitting a number of hospitals.

We are struggling, so to speak. A struggle in which we are happy to see many inspiring and uplifting forces playing a role. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself, as Herman Vermeulen mentioned in the introduction, is a (relative) concluding piece of a centuries-long process in which often courageous people at the expense of themselves have fundamentally acted up for the protection of human dignity. The horrors of the Second World War were not the main cause for this, however they were an important reason: for once and for all people had to be protected from oppressive and exploitative regimes; this should never happen again. An important step for mankind!

And very slowly, step-by-step, a lot of people gain a growing insight that a life, which is fully focused on ourselves or on our own group, is harmful for us as

a totality, especially in a world in which the interdependence and interconnectedness become more and more evident. A good example of this is the ambitious climate agreement that was recently signed in Paris, something, which was unthinkable a few years ago. Our personal world has, so to speak, expanded over the years and it will be harder and harder to ignore each other. It means that we are confronted with dilemmas in all fields of life every day: do I choose what is right for me or do I choose what is right for somebody else or for all of us in the long term? Do I buy a shirt that is indeed cheap but has been fabricated far away through child labor? Do I vote for a political party that represents only my interests or do I want the whole society to benefit? In this context the collective human conscience is being recorded in a multitude of laws and rules in an attempt to establish order in this world with all those personal and group interests. Recording human rights in a Declaration and after that in binding treaties, as we already mentioned, is a good example of this. Unfortunately we all know that it is difficult for us to comply with this. What is causing this?

Thinking from the feeling of separateness

And then we come back to the sensation of separateness, because that is where we think the core of the problem lies. If we don't recognize that we are One, but experience ourselves as separated from all other living beings, we automatically feel vulnerable. If we add to this that many also believe that we only live once, this vulnerability will only increase: after all, we have to get everything out of this one lifetime. The Theosophical view is that man is part of One Eternal Life and that we only sort of have forgotten this. The attachment to one finite life results in the personality, the lower self in man, obtaining a central position. Then to subsequently withstand the volatility of the external life, the personality has the tendency to take more than he needs for himself or the group to which he identifies with. From the perceived vulnerability a feeling of "never enough" is being experienced. What he thinks he needs has to be gained from the surrounding world, to which he is surrendered, separated from the rest. What then arises is what we can call a perception of lack or scarcity: always a shortage

and never enough. The personality is therefore sometimes presented as he who quenches his thirst with salt water: the more he drinks of it, the thirstier he becomes. We probably all recognize this characteristic in ourselves. We may experience a shortage of money, desire yet again the latest iPhone or perhaps we are looking for it in intangible things such as the status that comes with a good job or a title or maybe we try to find it in personal love. Subsequently a feeling of competition may arise, because since there is never enough and I am depending on the world around me in order to protect and fulfill myself, we might have to fight each other to make sure that I (or my group) will not be overlooked/trampled.

As contained in the Declaration of Human Rights under article 23, everyone has the right to form trade unions and to participate in these as to protect his or her interests. In itself this is quite understandable and given the current state of mankind it is even good: because we also see that different groups seem to think they have different interests and that means that the weaker ones must be able to protect themselves against the stronger ones, often the rich. So a very good thing in our social context in which competition between personalities and groups may lead to oppression, exploitation or other forms of violence. When we go back all the way to the origin of this we see that the core of the mentality behind it is being formed by ignorance, fear and a sense of vulnerability. And then we come to that other perspective, the spiritual principle. What does that look like?

The three Fundamental Propositions

An idea that we come across in practically all major religions and big philosophical systems, because it has been proclaimed by all those great thinkers is that of the Unity that underlies all forms of manifestation. In Theosophia it is the conclusion of *the first of the three Fundamental Propositions*, in which is being spoken of an omnipresent, eternal, boundless and immutable PRINCIPLE. Maybe it sounds more familiar if we call it “All” or “the Source” or “Allah”, as it is called in the Islam. Allah has 99 names, including the Eternal and All-encompassing. These names are not exhaustive but descriptive of 99 aspects, features or prin-

ciples. The All is of course boundless and therefore there is not anything that Allah is not, He or rather It encompasses everything. The Chinese philosopher Lao-Tze called this Source Tao: the Tao that can be named is not the true Tao.⁽¹⁾ When you stick a label on it you limit it and you cannot limit infinity. The apostle Paul said: “in Him (or It) we live, we move, and have our being”⁽²⁾ Everything is alive and exists in the One. Plato described it as “the Deity keeps all living beings enclosed in itself”⁽³⁾ And this Deity itself is thus in essence infinite, as all life is. Everywhere we find that idea of fundamental Unity. And that must obviously be about the same Unity, otherwise there is not one, but then we have several. So, no matter how we call it, there can only be one boundless Unity. From that Source, that Principle, flow literally innumerable limited beings, as parts of the same Life. An illusory limitation of that infinity, paradoxically speaking, a “part” of this infinity. All life IS that Unity and as a manifestation it has its roots in that Unity, like for instance plants, animals, planets and stars. In infinity there exists an infinity of manifested beings: it is utterly full of life. The ancient Greeks used to call this the Pleroma, which means Fullness.

Infinity also presupposes the absence of a starting point or end for every being. As human beings we have an infinite development behind us and an infinity before us. Together with all other beings, hence our Brothers, we are making an unlimited Pilgrimage of development. And this development always takes place in cycles.

Cyclicity or periodicity is *the second Fundamental Proposition of Theosophia*: everything is born, grows and dies, to be born again after a resting period. This applies to larger beings (like solar systems) as well as to very small ones (like a mineral).

The third Fundamental Proposition logically follows from the idea of Unity and states that all beings are completely equal to each other, in the sense of equally valuable. All beings are in their core the Infinite itself, of course, but as manifested beings they differ in the level of development, and also in individual preferences, fortunately (we all are and remain unique beings!) That is why we can observe such a rich diversity around us. But there are also similarities within groups of which the members live on more or less the

same level of development (like the human group, or the animal group and within that one the group of apes for example).

What is a human?

And what exactly is a human then? A human being originates in the Source, just like all other beings, but apparently somewhere along the way he has forgotten the conscious contact with these Higher aspects. In esoteric literature humanity is therefore sometimes called “the great orphan”, disconnected from his parent, no longer knowing where he originates from, where he will be going and what the purpose is of it all. Because of this there is a kind of homesickness in humans, a sense of not being in the right place. Exactly like we just saw in the description of the world taken from the perspective of separateness. But actually, man is what we may call “a spark of infinity” or “a divine spark”. Just as sparks pop from the great fire.

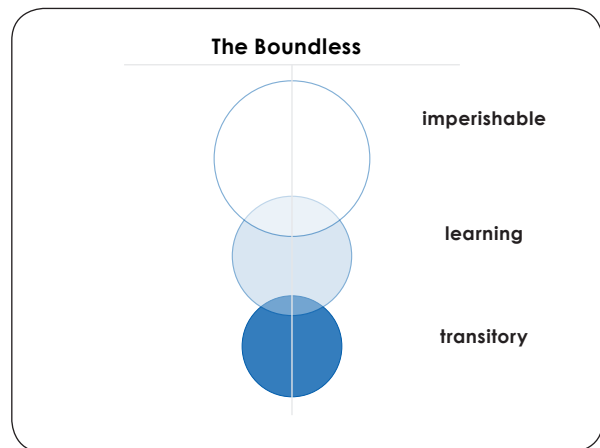
How does a human become a human from this boundless life? The boundless life is in a certain way flooding with life, and that is why a kind of flowing forth, also called emanation, takes place. This emanation from the one boundless life happens in phases, just like a waterfall first fills the top basin with water, until that one overflows and water flows in the next basin below, which eventually also overflows and so on. Here we also state that the higher evolved life brings forth the less evolved life from itself in the same way.

All beings consist of several of these levels and can therefore be called composite. In this way man is also a composite being and we can recognize this idea in many religious systems. Buddhism for instance acknowledges five aspects, but Christianity divides man into spirit, soul and body. These systems do not contradict each other; it just depends on how much you want to go into detail.

From Theosophy we would say that the spirit is our link with the boundless. The soul originates in the spirit and forms the learning, developing part. And the body is our vehicle that we need in order to express our consciousness on earth. It is from within the soul that we can be more focused on the external life and because of this become attached to the personality (as we discussed before), or, we can identify more with our spirit and through this with Unity itself. The spir-

itual lessons we learn when we are more focused on Unity we take with us, life after life. The spiritual in us and in this higher part of our soul is what we call the reincarnating ego.

Composition of man



The logic of Brotherhood

So we are one great Life, which manifests itself in literally innumerable beings. From this can be logically concluded that Brotherhood is a fact in Nature. The different “I’s” are in fact illusory, the One Life is the reality behind all those manifestations. “In essence we are all ONE” should therefore be taken in the most literal sense. And in this One Life we need each other by definition. So brotherhood is not only an understandable and appropriate sentiment, it is a logical result of the structure of Life itself.

When we look at life from this spiritual perspective we feel connected with everyone around us, even with all living beings. To regard another human with a feeling of fear and competition is entirely redundant then, making us lead an entirely different life. We could argue that a sense of Unity leads to a perception of abundance and “always enough” instead of a perception of lack or shortage. Moreover, we realize that we do not depend on the outer world for our happiness, but that we should look into our own consciousness and there we can find all the treasures we think we need and even more, through our inner link, which our spirit is. Jesus stated, like many others in their own words: the Kingdom of Heavens is within you. From this perspective we will not compete with each other anymore, let alone exploit or suppress each other,

but we will work together to express our inner powers and create grand, sublime civilizations. For we really are our brother's keepers. How much more would we be able to achieve on all aspects of life if we would really realize this? What would we be able to achieve if all children in the entire world would be raised with this notion?

Instead of the necessity of defining, prescribing and enforcing laws, however lofty they may be, nothing would please us more than to support Unity. We would not need laws or rules anymore, but happily use our free will to fulfill our duties to Unity for the benefit of all people.

Dharma

In some Eastern religions this idea is called Dharma. Dharma means, among other things, Law and Duty. Another meaning is: to sustain or support. In other words: he, who follows his Dharma, follows the Law and considers it his Duty to let his thinking and acting to be supportive of this totality. So this law is not something that has to be prescribed from outside, but we follow the Dharma voluntary from within.

Blavatsky did not only come to break the molds of mind with this universal view on life. She came, as she described it herself, to give us back our Birthright, as Herman Vermeulen explained in the introduction. A Right that goes beyond all human defined laws. It is the Right to have knowledge and awareness of who and what we really are and how this leads to freedom, justice and peace in the world: like the ideals as they are outlined in the first sentence of the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see page 5). And we would very much like to discuss this with you during this symposium.

Questions that were discussed during the workshop

1. Can you recognize unity? Give examples.
2. If you presuppose unity, there is universal brotherhood. How far does this brotherhood reach?
3. How does this view affect your daily life?
4. Which laws are needed in a society based on unity?

References

1. Lao-Tze, *Tao Te Ching*, verse 1.
2. *Acts of the Apostles*, 17:28.
3. Plato, *Timeaus*, 30d-31a.



Responsibility, freedom and free will

Consequences from the Universal Laws

We hope that the workshops have led to an inspiring and fruitful exchange of thoughts. In this section of the lecture we will go through the practical consequences of the ideas that have been discussed this morning as well as the results of the workshops. Furthermore we will present the theosophical preamble of the Universal Rights of the Reincarnating Man. Because if we really base our views on Unity, thus seeing Universal Brotherhood as a fact in Nature, this will logically lead to a different view on things such as responsibility, freedom and free will and with this also human rights.

Responsibility, freedom and free will

Let us have a closer look at these concepts. We already mentioned that the One Life expresses, manifests itself in an infinity of beings. People, animals, plants and many others. We all have our roots in this One Life and that is why all beings are completely equal to each other. However, the level of development varies as well as the individual preferences and this makes everyone unique. One person is more attracted to art and becomes a painter or perhaps a musician in his life. The other one feels more attracted to scientific research or perhaps education. Luckily, we are numerous and luckily we all bring our unique set of developed talents and abilities. The reservoir of talents and abilities is of course in essence infinite, for we *are* in essence infinite. Can you imagine how much we are still going to learn and develop in the period lying ahead of us!

This learning or developing is not something we do alone of course, we always do this together. We need each other. Not just humans of course, but all other life as well — life we know and perhaps not yet consciously know. Humans need each other as well as a planet to live on, but they also need plants, animals, minerals and elementals. Everything collaborates in order to allow this diversity, which is actually the One Life, to experience itself and develop its insight and abilities collectively. A beautiful composition of the enormous collection of beings who jointly form a harmonic orchestra so to speak. An orchestra, in which everyone has its own place, naturally of course, in accordance with his own characteristics. One is better on the piano and the other one on the bass, but everyone is equivalent and absolutely unique.

Why the world is not always a reflection of a harmonious orchestra has been extensively discussed this morning. The disruptions caused by the sense of separateness unfortunately lead to many forms of disharmony: within ourselves such as feelings of insecurity, unworthiness or fear for our fellow human beings, but also around us, with in extreme cases armed conflicts, repression and exploitation. All of which are violations of human dignity. Actually, these things are far below our level, and deep down in our heart we might feel that we are better than this and that all of us deserve better than this.

So we can make a choice ourselves. Do we connect ourselves with the lower parts in us, the personality who thinks he only lives once and is disconnected from the Great Life, or do we at least try to reach towards the Universal Idea of Brotherhood as a consequence of Unity? Do I predominantly try to make a career at work or is that not even on my mind and am I spending my time and effort on the organization and for example a team or department in it? Is living a comfortable life important for me and can the rest of the planet be used for that goal, or do I wonder what the planet needs from me? This is the choice we have to face on many different levels, in our family, our friendships, in difficult relationships, at work, with our neighbors, in our city, in this world. The extent to which we apply our sense of Unity determines how we trade, how we farm, how we treat animals, how we deal with crime, how we interact with groups of people who have different standards than we have, how we associate with other countries and of course also how we look at human rights.

Dharma: acting up to your most noble vision

Every man has the responsibility to support the totality, like a player of the wind instrument in an orchestra will aim to harmonize his play with the rest of the symphony up to the smallest detail. Every man has the responsibility to contribute his best self for the benefit of the greater good. This is Dharma. In a practical sense, not a principal one, this might have a somewhat different meaning for every person. The talents and abilities of one person can be in a whole different field compared to someone else's. It is also possible that a person has far less wisdom compared to his neighbor. However, it always stays this person's Dharma to think the most noble, wise and compassionate thoughts he can and to act accordingly in a certain situation. That is Duty, the Law with a capital letter. And for everyone this will be accompanied with trial and error, with making mistakes and learning from these mistakes. That is part of the boundless development and this is absolutely not a problem. We must not judge ourselves or others because of this. Making mistakes should actually be the most normal thing in the world as well as helping each other up again after falling and continue on the Path together. Even

with all our shortcomings we can still ask ourselves in every situation what this situation needs. Then we can contribute to it with all our abilities.

So this can be realized in a small context, for example in your village, or perhaps the situation involves that you are the president of a large country and in this role you have to support the totality there, everything that lives in the country. The different roles are absolutely equivalent and a human being will, in light of eternity and cyclicity – or in this case reincarnation – of course change roles continuously. We sometimes have the tendency to get attached to these roles and consider one more important than the other. The roles, however, do not matter. What matters is that we express Dharma, wherever we are, with whomever we are and whichever role we fulfill.

When are you truly free?

But what about freedom then? Let us start with the free will, because that seems essential for any form of freedom whatsoever.

From the Theosophia can be stated that man, who is in essence boundless, does not have a free will but *is* free will. This is because there is no limitation of the Self and of its inherent powers. It is in the manifestation that we experience a limitation and the more we attach ourselves to this manifestation the more limited we feel. When we grow in consciousness, the extension of the free will expands so to speak. This can easily be recognized looking at the different kingdoms in nature. A human being has more options to choose from compared to an animal and an animal can make more choices than a plant.

When we get attached to our personality and centralize it in our life we actually become a slave to our own lower nature. We react mostly instinctive to what is heading our way or we create ideals focused on the wellbeing of the personality, for example this beautiful house or that dream holiday. By the way, this does not mean that we are not allowed to dream about a beautiful house or a relaxing holiday. In Theosophia we say that it is not the external things themselves, but the attachment to it which is problematic. When our personality thinks it needs these things, believes we depend on them, we are actually caught in that perception. Then we are not free and we will most

likely spend too much of our effort on obtaining them. What is freedom? When is man truly free?

The advice given to us by many great thinkers in all kinds of religions, philosophies and cultures is to walk the path inward, where we will find happiness and peace. Man Know Thyself, is one of the more generally known esoteric incentives. When we acquire knowledge of and insight in ourselves, we will remember and feel that we are One with the boundless Life and then we can rise above all the limitations that we have imposed on ourselves and from which we look at others. That is where our true freedom lies, the Kingdom of God is after all within us.

Are we obliged to make this choice? Do we have to do this? No, Nature does not know coercion, they say. We can co-operate with Nature and that is when we live our Dharma, striving to support all life with our thoughts and actions. However, we can also act against Nature. We can find daily proof of this freedom of choice in the newspaper, in our neighborhood or at work and most of us also in his or her own life. Hence, acting against Nature, meaning living with a sense of separateness, is allowed. It just results in disharmony, usually deep and widespread; often resulting in a lot of suffering.

The difference between a law and the Law

There is a big difference between Dharma, following the natural Law voluntarily, and the man-made laws which are being enforced. Life does not impose anything on people or any being at all; it is people who impose something on each other. One comes from within, the other from outside. It is of course quite easy to argue that when we live with the perception of separateness, these laws seem to be very necessary. Just look at human rights. They are nota bene designed to protect one person against another, which is, from the thought of Unity, obviously a ridiculous idea. Unfortunately this is the current reality in which many people find themselves.

Lao-Tze already said it: laws are necessary when Tao disappears. This is when man is no longer consciously aware of who he is, when he does not know himself any longer and accordingly does not recognize other people as his brother. It is because of this that we want to contribute to this awareness in this symposium,

exactly in line with Blavatsky when she came to give back man's Inheritance. So we have also developed a Declaration, a Declaration of the Universal Rights of the Reincarnating Man. This Declaration, as will be shown in the next two days of the symposium, consists of a preamble and seven articles.

Preamble

Let us start with the preamble and after this morning this should sound familiar:

When we talk about the Universal rights of the reincarnating man, we assume three key thoughts.

Boundlessness

There is an omnipresent, eternal, boundless and immutable PRINCIPLE. One absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned being.

Cyclicity

In this boundlessness all life manifests cyclically.

Equality and growth

All beings originate from the same source, are therefore in essence equal and develop cyclically in cooperation with each other through cause and effect.

As we propagate the ideal to cooperate with Nature, it will not be surprising that our preamble is based on the three Fundamental Propositions as we already discussed this morning. These are the Propositions for all life and logically these should therefore also form the basis of our society. From these three Fundamental Propositions follow what we call the seven Jewels of Wisdom, which are actually the further elaborations of these three Propositions. Jointly we also call them: the Laws of Nature. And these are not the laws that are imposed on us, but habitual patterns which are recognizable in Nature, on a universal scale, as they are valid in the whole universe. We can learn to understand these laws and apply them in our life.

How do these habitual patterns arise actually? This morning we briefly mentioned the process of emanation or outflow. We also said that the higher life always produces the lower life from within itself. In this process the higher beings lay down the pattern,

the laws of nature, in which the lower beings will have their existence. Man, for instance, determines by his consciousness which pattern the body, consisting of numerous beings (cells), follows. After all, humans determine things like waking and sleeping patterns, nutrition and the overall atmosphere of their thoughts in their consciousness. For a cell these are the laws of nature. The higher beings in which we exist (life within life), also called gods, lay down the patterns for us with their habits, in their turn. The ancient Hermetists therefore stated: as above, so below. What applies to the Higher, also applies to the lower. Nature continuously repeats itself.

What are these habitual patterns in Nature, what are those big Laws?

Laws of Nature: seven Jewels of Wisdom

We have placed the seven Jewels of Wisdom in a row below as well as a short summary.

1. **Reincarnation:** literally ‘becoming flesh again’. The idea that beings are born, die after a period of manifestation to be born again after a period of rest. This is of course applicable for everything that lives and is in a broader context therefore also known as the teaching of reimpodiment. We recognize in this the thought of cyclicity.
2. **Karma:** literally translated as act, action or deed. The law of cause and effect or as we also call it, the law of recovering harmony.
3. **Hierarchies:** the hierarchical structure of the Universe. This jewel is about how the vast diversity of beings is ordered.
4. **Self-becoming:** everyone will always become himself. A person becomes in this life what he has made of himself in his previous lives, what he already has developed. And, as an in essence boundless being, he will always become more him-Self.
5. **Progressive evolution:** the higher powers that we already developed in ourselves, we cannot lose anymore.
6. **Two paths:** these stand for the two motives; do you use your knowledge to accomplish your own happiness or do you devote yourself to everything that lives, no matter the consequences for yourself.
7. **Knowledge of the Self:** when we know our Self, we know everything. This Jewel is about our in-

ner union with our deepest core, our Self which is equal in all beings.

Undoubtedly not everyone will instantly have the same image of these concepts and that is of course not a problem at all: this symposium is not finished yet and all of them will be elaborated extensively.

The seven articles which we set out in the Declaration of the Universal Rights of the Reincarnating Man logically stem from these Laws of Nature, and these as well will be discussed extensively in the following contributions and workshops. Because we are part of the Great Universal Life, of Nature, we study both ourselves and the world around us when we consider these laws. We think that knowledge of and understanding of ourselves and therefore also these laws will inevitably lead to the ability to accomplish sustainable freedom, justice and peace in our world.

It is eventually important to apply the Fundamental Principles and the Jewels in interrelationship to each other, on a subject. In the next article we will start exploring the first two Jewels of Wisdom: Reincarnation and Karma.

So man know thyself. Know yourself and you will rise above all limitations and recognize the other again as part of the same Life. We are gathered here as a few hundred drops (or maybe more ...) in that infinite ocean, or as sparks of that One Fire. Everything we need is within us, all ideals, powers and talents. This Inheritance shows us that we don't have to feel small and powerless, but that we have the power to create a life and a world which truly does justice to everyone's inherent dignity.



Karma, cycles: connection and dynamic harmony

Introduction

A few weeks ago during a talk show a certain football expert stated that the Moroccan youth are creating a lot of problems in Dutch football clubs. To make it easy, he placed all of the Moroccan boys into the same basket. The next day it was a news item, but the news channel came with a surprising angle. They visited a football club where the same Moroccan youth played, but this one functioned just fine. That was because the club functioned as one unit. Rules were clearly discussed two times per year and parents who just dropped off their kids and afterwards picked them up, were addressed by saying that they were members of an association, and that an association means that everyone participates. The result was that everyone got involved and also felt connected. Moroccan parents were active participants, and the club was anything but in trouble.

Here we see two reactions to the same situation: one based on separateness (finger pointing at the Moroccan boys) and one based on unity from the idea of the association (in which everyone is actively involved). One disconnects, while the other gets connected. The one is part of the problem while the other is part of the solution.

This example is only about a football club, but wouldn't the same principle also apply in situations of discord or conflict at a national or international level? And if so, is there something we can do to become part of

the solution? Do we have an influence on something that takes place on the other side of the world?

If we assume the unity of all life, which we talked about this morning, then this must indeed be the case. That unity, that connection means that everything within that unity has an influence on everything else and that would also mean that we have an influence on the circumstances around us. This will be the case also when we cannot recognize all these links.

But to understand how it works and to what extent we can be of influence, we must first build a vision of how the unity works and what the natural laws are to which all in the totality are subject.

Those laws are the Seven Jewels of Wisdom that Linda van Noord just introduced. Seven universal principles of which the first two we will examine in this lecture: reïmbodiment or reincarnation and cause and effect, or karma. Two keys that show us how we got to where we are now and how we, as part of the whole, can influence the future.

Karma, understandable only from the idea of unity

Karma is the principle which underlies a corresponding effect in each cause. Without even realizing it, perhaps, we assume this principle on a daily basis. When we make an appointment, water the plants, or drop a glass, then we know what is going to happen. These are simple examples of actions from which we expect

a certain result. And science is also entirely based on this principle: scientists foretell a certain effect, by formulating their hypotheses. But karma is more than cause and effect on the physical plane, it is the universal law that *everything* is in infinity cause and effect. How this works can only be understood if we approach karma from the idea of unity, in which one always has an effect on the other. And actually we shouldn't speak of this one or that one, because unity means that essentially everything is the other.

This is rather philosophical, but think of a pond as a metaphor for the unity: as soon as you put your hand in it you create a ripple and if you wait you will see that this ripple comes back to your hand after having reached the edges of the pond, until finally the equilibrium of the smooth surface has been restored. Nature, that unity in which we live, also has a state of equilibrium, which is harmony. This equilibrium condition or state of balance should not be interpreted in this context as a static thing, but as one vivid whole of consciousnesses which are subject to continuous change and growth, and influence one another. It is a *dynamic* harmony in which all life has its own place and fulfils its mission to serve the whole.

Corresponding characteristics

At the moment that we act (and that is what karma literally means, action), we cause a ripple in the proverbial pond, we exert a force or energy that has an impact on the whole. And from that totality it comes back to us in exact accordance with the *characteristic* in which it was sent, and this last bit is essential. If we do something discordant to that harmony, then a discordant result will come back to us, and "odds are against us", we call it the so-called "bad karma". But if we act in accordance with that unity then we will also reap according to the seeds that we have sown, but this, we often seem to forget, is also karma.

So there is no such thing as good or bad karma, because that does not exist. Karma is a strictly neutral law: each result being in accordance to the causative act or thought. Even thoughts belong to the unity and in their sphere have corresponding effects. Think about the great influence of some powerful thinkers we have had in history, positive and negative, or think of the outbreak of mental epidemics such as fear for

terrorism. The natural law is universal and works on all different levels of our composite nature, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Not only is the characteristic, the quality, of an act in accordance with what comes back to us, but also the intensity with which you put something into motion. Step slowly into the pond, then you only have a little jitter, jump into it, then you'll have to deal with the splash.

Karma means that nothing that happens to you does not belong to you. Which means that coincidence does not exist; so everything is just. Where we incarnate, when, with whom, in what circumstances, with which body: all are the effects of causes which we have set into motion by our own thoughts and actions. Instead of saying we *have* karma it would actually be better to say we *are* karma; and our circumstances are in fact a mirror of our own actions.

Everything is karma, without exception. Even if we don't know the cause of something, or the effect of an action fails to appear: when the ripple in the pond comes back to us not in this but in the next life. And then we come to the next Jewel, the Jewel of reincarnation. Karma and reincarnation cannot be separated from each other and are therefore also called the twin doctrine.

Only when you look at them together, in connection, can you see the justice of your circumstances and explain the world around you.

Cyclic movement

When we go back to the first two fundamental propositions: infinity and cyclical movement, this means a coming and going of everything in that infinity, from atom to universe. Everything is subject to the universal law of cyclic movement. Everything is consciousness, that expresses itself time and again on this outer plane to then go back to the inner planes for a period of rest. A general term for this process is re-embodiment. It is called reincarnation in the specific case of people and animals, because our bodies are flesh and reincarnation literally means "becoming flesh again". But reincarnation is only one form of expression of the universal law of cyclic movement.

Birth and death are therefore nothing but transitions of states of consciousness. This morning Linda van

Noord showed the difference between our reincarnating part, our higher nature which is in essence immortal, and the transitory vehicle that we rebuild every time we return, so we are able to get our lessons here on earth. Every time we incarnate we learn and we develop a little more of that spiritual core that we in essence are. Cyclical movement is not only a circle but there is also an element of growth, and in the lecture of Barend Voorham we will elaborate more on that. We have therefore existed before this life and we will exist after this life and that thought is essential to understanding the justice of karma. Karma could in fact occur in three ways:

- Causes you sow in this life and reap in this life (you see an immediate relation);
- Causes you have sown in past lives and you reap in this life;
- Causes you have sown in this or previous lives, which will have an impact in a next life.

Free will

So whatever happens to us, we at some point set that cause in motion ourselves, based on our own free will. And this is an essential idea. The free will is fundamental and is the basis of all the choices we make, conscious or unaware. Karma is therefore also referred to as the law of free will. It is set that we must reap what we have sowed in the past. But on when we reap and how we reap, we have an all-determining influence with our own free will. This is very easy to see when two people are in exactly the same condition, but one is happy and positive and the other unhappy and just complaining. Because we can choose how we respond to our circumstances, and that is the key to take the future in your own hands.

Opportunity to correct errors

Karma gives us the opportunity to correct past mistakes, and we determine if we are able to do that successfully by handling the consequences this time in the right way. The point is: every effect has at the same time a new cause in itself, and depending on how we react, we break the cycle or we pursue it, we create harmony or disharmony.

But what is the proper response, how do we achieve that harmony? For this it is important to distinguish

two ways in which we can respond to karma, one that can and one that does not lead to a solution; one in which there is a treatment of symptoms, and we sweep our dirt under a carpet, and one in which we tackle the real cause at the root.

Two ways of reacting

These two ways of responding can be traced back to the duality of our nature: the two windows through which we can look at the world: from the personality, our perishable part, or from our higher nature, our imperishable part. Depending on which we identify with, where we consciously tune in, we react to the world around us.

If we identify ourselves with our personality, then we react from our feeling of being separate, from our desire and emotions. And these aspects of our consciousness change each moment, and do not give us a clear view on the situation. We react impulsively on what our senses take in, without reflecting on the situation. Cause and effect expresses itself here as “action is reaction”, a direct reacting on the outer circumstances without searching for the underlying cause.

If we identify ourselves with our higher nature, then we react from our sense of unity and from our ability to understand. You approach the situation not subjectively, not from your own standpoint, but by looking at it objectively. So, you investigate things to find the underlying cause. You see things in a greater context and from there try to restore the harmony.

If you live in your personality, then you experience circumstances as coming from outside of yourself, and completely separate from you. Life happens to you and you are always a *victim* of causes that happen to you by so called coincidence.

If you act from your higher nature, then you are never a victim. You know that the situation you are in, you once caused yourself and nobody else can solve it but you. You go to yourself for counsel and take responsibility. By composed and well considered actions you take the future into your own hands. Your wellbeing is not determined by your circumstances, but by the vision you have on them.

Practical examples

Take for example a conflict situation. Imagine being

hit in your car while you had the right of way: if you react from your personality then you step out of the car without thinking, to get your justice. You are ruled by emotion. You react immediately to the other person whom you see as solely responsible for your discomfort. The feeling of being wronged, the disharmony that remains, is the seed for a new effect. You perpetuate the cycle which insures that there will be a future encounter of the same sort until harmony is restored. If you react from your higher nature, then it might go something like this: you keep calm and first look to see if there is anyone in danger by the resulting traffic situation and check if the other person is okay. You start a conversation to find out what was going on. And it turns out that the other driver didn't see you because he was blinded by the sun. You understand the situation and together you fill in a traffic report. The harmony is restored, and the cycle of once again sewing discord is broken. From this way of reacting, you could also see cause and effect as a *restoring of harmony*.

In this example, the cause is clear, but you can still ask yourself: why is this happening to me? How can you find out the underlying cause if it's in a previous life? Still, you always can find the answer by looking at the *characteristic* of the situation, which as I said, always corresponds to the cause you've once laid yourself. You ask yourself: what does the situation do to you? If you experience impatience, then that could be your lesson. If you experience a responsibility to help others, then that might be the restoring of harmony.

Only by reacting from this state of consciousness, by responding from the sense of unity, can we achieve sustainable solutions and harmony. We are connected to each other, and on the basis of karma and reincarnation we inevitably meet each other again. Either in harmony or in disharmony. We end up where we have established links through our actions. Do we build those ties based on love and sympathy, or hatred and antipathy?

What is true for an individual is also true for a nation

In the example of the accident it is about two persons, but what is true for an individual is applicable also for a society. We reincarnate as groups. Like people,

nations and cultures reincarnate too. You can see a nation as a dynamic karmic clustering based on a corresponding characteristic. Like individual people who build up bonds together and meet each other, this is also applicable for nations. The same principle, so above so below, and there is only one way to dissolve conflicts: work these out together, stimulate the characteristic which you want to see.

Violence leads to more violence, hate leads to more hate. On contrary, peace loving leads to more peace, understanding to more compassion and compassion to higher understanding. If we react to conflicts on the basis of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, that will lead to a spiral of violence and so you will meet each other in the same quality. Breaking this cycle of disharmony is only possible by looking at peaceful solutions. Only this way you reach a dynamic harmony where everybody at liberty can contribute to the whole. Lao-Tze summed up this old wisdom in all its simplicity as follows:

I treat well who is good;
I also treat well those who are not good,
because this way you achieve goodness.⁽¹⁾

Changing the world is changing the mentality

Karma and reincarnation give us a chance to rectify the disharmony from our past. We determine our future on basis of our free will. And "free" means that you cannot change it by suppression and imposing sanctions from outside. Real change must always come from inside, by changing the *mentality*, the habit of thinking. Only then we will achieve harmony.

This vision is crucial in the context of human rights. Whether it is suppression, poverty or war, human rights violation is always the result of a selfish mentality, a fear to loose things. It is the result of an individual, a group or a country chasing its own advantage, stating its own welfare above that of another. It is the narrow vision that we stand apart from the rest, which is the basis of all selfishness and fear. From this point of view human rights are a set of rules which are complied with for as long as it suits, but are compromised as soon as the own interests are threatened. Unfortunately this is the case in the present refugee issue. If

we live from our higher nature, than we experience the unity; and the human rights are no longer imposed from outside, but a natural and logical result. You then *live* the human rights from inside. Then we will not send people in distress back, but will receive them and provide them security because we would not want otherwise.

We are the unity, but we can only see this if we focus on it, and look at the deeper causes underlying the outward appearances. Dr. De Purucker, fourth leader of the Theosophical Society says, paraphrased: when all men in the world realize that they are essentially One, and that he who injures another injures himself equally and in the first place: than three fourths of the suffering in the world will automatically vanish away.⁽²⁾ Our vision of life determines how we react to the world around us and which causes we sow. Plato said: Ideas rule the world. And by now, we understand why. Do we assume that we live only once, controlled by chance and that everybody lives for themselves, or do we see that universal unity in which the causes correspondingly return to ourselves according to a strict justice? Then we are not a victim of some kind of fate, but we take the lead. Then we do not point to troubled youth in a passive, complaining way but we take the actions to create a dynamic harmony where everybody takes part. With the choices which we make *now* we determine this, taking the future in our own hands. The question is, what are we waiting for?

Questions that were discussed during the workshop

1. How would you deal with people and countries that perform human rights violation from the reincarnation and karma point of view?
2. What is your role in this?

References

1. Lao-Tze, *Tao Te Ching*, verse 49.
2. The complete quote is: "... for on the day when men of whatsoever race or creed realize with both mind and heart that they are essentially One, springing from identically the same spiritual source, and journeying through endless time towards identically the same supremely universal goal, and that he who injures another in any manner whatsoever injures himself equally and in the first place: half, nay, three fourths of the sin and consequent suffering and sorrow in the world will automatically vanish away." Source: G. de Purucker, 'Peace or war: and The Secret Doctrine'. Article in: *The Theosophical Path*, Volume 25, November 1923, no 5, p. 419-429 (quote on p. 423).



Restoring harmony

Consequences of reincarnation and karma

Linda van Noord introduced the three theosophical fundamental principles which form the basis of our view on human rights. We shall now complement these three with two articles that logically originate from our preamble and which are based on the first two Jewels which we just discussed: reincarnation and karma. We repeat the three principles:

Boundlessness

There is an omnipresent, eternal, boundless and immutable PRINCIPLE. One absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being.

Cyclicity

In the boundlessness all life manifests cyclically.

Equivalence and growth

All creatures stem from the same source, are therefore fundamentally equal and on the basis of cause and effect they develop together cyclically.

If you start from these three basic ideas, it is a natural consequence that you:

Article 1. Have respect for life;

Article 2. Bring about universal harmony.

Article 1: Respect for Life

If we take the first article, that you respect Life, we

notice a similarity with article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

The right to live can be supported by a deeper vision on what life is. We wrote Life with capital L, to point out that we are not talking about this one life, but of the Universal life which is the essence of everything, and is infinite in time and infinite in capacity. With respect for life we mean the natural attitude which results from this big picture. An attitude in which we give room for development of all life.

Article 2: Achieving universal harmony

And so we arrive right away at the second article: *that it is a natural consequence that you bring about universal harmony*. Maybe this sounds too obvious, but what are the practical consequences of this? What does this mean concretely for approaching the wrong doings in the world?

If we start from karma, restoring harmony is the only way to find a solution in conflict situations and human rights violations. And on the basis of this vision we can underpin the articles from the human rights document which relate to law and punishment.

As an example we take article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Now we understand why letting a personality suffer will never lead to a better human being. At the individual as well as at society level, punishment can never lead to a sustainable solution. It strengthens only distrust and results at most in abstaining from certain actions out of fear of sanctions. We are not our body but we are consciousness, so there lies the only possibility if we want to realize a change in behavior. If we want to help people to rectify their mistakes, then we must help them to change their mentality from the inside. We must help them to build a vision so that they themselves, based on their own free will and own insight, can make a change. Then they will not make that mistake again, even when there is no supervision. Someone who has committed a criminal offence must be helped to come again in contact with his higher nature. And that can only be accomplished by calling upon and stimulating this higher characteristic. Pointing a finger at a person and telling him how he should live, will never work because in that way you are only addressing the personality. The higher nature can only be encouraged by setting an example, by creating an atmosphere where trust, honesty and sincerity prevails. Appealing to someone's more noble aspects means being a living example, so the other may resonate to it. By giving sincere trust and treating a person equally, his own trust can be re-established. Giving responsibility is an important element here, by which that trust is strengthened. This responsibility can be deployed in activities that are at the same time preparations for his return to society.

In the following movie fragment we see a beautiful example of how this works. You see an ex-detainee explaining how his life has changed by the trust and support he gets. The movie is made in a brownies factory which has the motto that they do not hire people to bake brownies, but bake brownies to hire people. Their social mission is to give everyone an equal chance, irrespective of someone's background. This way the man that is portrayed got his job there. A beautiful example I think, of the change that occurs in someone who is offered trust and is treated without any prejudice. Someone who, in his own words, "be-

came part of something positive instead of negative."⁽¹⁾ A step in the right direction to restoring harmony is in *restorative justice*. In this system punishing the offender is not the central issue, but repairing the damage caused to the victim. This is one step in the direction as meant, but in this form of justice there is still separateness, because the recovery is victim focused and not on the perpetrator, who in fact is a victim too. Understanding cause and effect, harmony can only be restored if the relation between the perpetrator and the victim is mended.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

An example where this kind of restoration of relationship is very plain, is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. South Africa granted amnesty to both apartheid perpetrators as well as freedom fighters of the African National Congress, with the aim to get the truth revealed, and as a result, both groups being able to live together. This amnesty in exchange for truth is based upon the African *ubuntu* philosophy and the word "ubuntu" can be translated in a few ways like:

- Be one
- Humane towards the others
- I am because we are
- Become human by others

Unity and solidarity are evident in this concept. By ubuntu you address a deeper level towards the mending of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim. The perpetrator may "become more human" so to say, by facing the consequences of his action. But maybe the most important result of this form of recovery is that it can remove the anxiety and the feelings of hatred of the victim. The latter is of ultimate importance if we want to prevent any disharmony in the future. This approach, offering amnesty in exchange of truth, has been applied in several parts of the world and its success has been confirmed every time. All over the world it appears to be that the truth gives more rest and peace to victims than punishing the perpetrators.

Extremism

A very different but current example of the two approaches towards disharmony – from separateness

or from a unity perspective – is the reaction towards extremism we experience in the world. After the attacks in Paris and Brussels the separateness was immediately explicit: leaders reacted immediately with emotional slogans such as “we are at war” and “it is an attack on our way of life”. We against the other. You can ask yourself who they mean by “the other” with whom we may be at war, because no one has a clear view on this. But making this sort of thoughtless statements leads the less independent thinkers to make a link between violence and Muslims. In this way an atmosphere of fear and separation is created, which is not only besides the truth but also adds fuel to the fire and strengthens disharmony. Tensions are not removed but only fuelled.

Restoring harmony

Looking at the events through the window of one’s higher nature, we come to an entirely different conclusion and hence also reaction. The different studies of Professors and terrorism experts show time after time that religion does not play an elementary role, but that the cause of this disharmony is elsewhere situated. Namely in the gap in our *own* society. A disharmony resulting from the exclusion of a certain group, by not treating that group equally in our society. It is the feeling of injustice and powerlessness, of continued deprivation which eventually leads to violence. As it turns out every time, only the final stage is radicalization. Of course this does not justify the attacks in any way, but it gives us insight in why such things happen, and more importantly, where the real cause of the disharmony lies and hence also the solution. The only solution for this extremist violence is to tackle inequality and to ensure that frustration does not get a chance. Through stimulating young people to connect again to society. To ensure they have opportunities and develop the sense of belonging. In short, that they can fully join a society where everyone may contribute, thus reaching the natural equilibrium of dynamic harmony.

Our choice

Are we able to think from a unity perspective, raise above all parties and – also when human rights are violated – set aside our personal interest? Do we see

our relation to the wrong doing elsewhere in the world behind the external circumstances? Do we help a country by expelling a dictator through violence? We all see the terrible consequences of this idea in Iraq, where the resulting disharmony has created a breeding ground for violence, and where bomb attacks are the order of the day.

If we think that a leader must not enrich himself at the cost of people then it is up to us to give a good first example. If we have laws in the Netherlands which permit tax evasion, we are feeding the same greedy characteristic and hence are partly responsible for those who enrich themselves illegally, done in a way that is more striking because they do it less smart. It is the same characteristic but in a different guise.

A mental atmosphere is created by every action: do we react from separateness or from unity? Do we build more walls at our borders or do we start a conversation with the people involved? Do we set up trade barriers or do we offer everyone in the world equal opportunity? Do we trade in weapons or do we refrain because the moral concerns outweigh economic interests? Do we cut back on education and call for severe punishments, or will we invest in education and tackle crime at its source?

These are all examples of choices that disrupt or effectuate harmony in the world. Choices that make a country more or less resilient against human rights violation. When a society is at harmony than crime and injustice do not get a chance.

A society is the sum of all thoughts and actions of the individuals of which it is composed. We always affect the totality, no thought or action is without effect. It is our choice: are we part of the problem or part of the solution?

Reference

1. Television programme “tegenlicht”, VPRO April 3, 2016, titled “Het rendement van geluk” (“The return on happiness”). Dutch website: <http://tegenlicht.vpro.nl/afleveringen/2015-2016/rendement-van-geluk.html>. The example mentioned is the brownies factory Greyston in Yonkers, United States.



Case studies on human rights

On the evening of the first day we applied the theological insights to two current problems: the international food trade and Syrian refugees. This programme was prepared by a team of German members.

The cases were presented in a very strong way through fragments of two documentaries. The first one was “Darwin’s Nightmare” (2004), by Hubert Sauper about the effects of the fishing industry around Lake Victoria on the local people. The facts were serious: while the population of Nile perch in the lake was being fished out for the export of Nile perch filet, a famine threatened the local people, for whom the Nile perch was much too expensive to buy it themselves. The movie also showed that European countries set up aid programmes in Africa on the one hand, and export large amounts of weapons to African countries on the other hand. An airplane pilot said: “At Christmas children in Europe get grapes, and children in Angola get weapons as gifts.”

The second documentary is called “The Island of all together” (2015), and shows the conversations that the movie makers Philip Brink and Marieke van der Velden arranged between tourists and Syrian refugees, on the island of Lesbos. Fascinating conversations emerged about the war and the passage over sea, but also about work, cars, grandchildren and favorite movies.

Both movies invoked relevant questions such as: to what extent are we, in the Netherlands, involved in such abusive situations elsewhere, and what can we

do to alleviate these crisis situations, and preferably prevent them altogether?

Many ideas and analyses were brought up, but one key thought remained: everyone can, from his own place in society, contribute to a righteous, harmonic world, as long as he takes the effort to keep himself informed about what happens in other countries, and discover the close links between ‘over there and here’. This awareness will sooner or later be reflected in our national policies, and the European Union.



Living *human rights*

A lot of people do not believe that human rights will ever be observed worldwide. They have lost the ideal of a better world and believe things will never change. But this disbelief in a better world is not justified, as we all have the possibilities within us to organize this world according to the most ethical guidelines. We are capable of doing this. Everyone has the capacities to observe the human rights. The fact that this is not yet the case is not because man is bad, but because he is ignorant. He is unaware of the possibilities in his consciousness. He lacks an adequate vision on life and lacks the trust in the higher nature of man. In fact, man is not only capable of *observing* the human rights, he can *live* them.

For there is a difference between the two. Observing human rights means that you still need rules to remind you how you must behave and what you should observe. These rules can be found in the commandments and prohibitions of the different religions. You can also find these rules in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and often also in the constitution of the country you live in. There is nothing wrong with this as such. Indeed, we would like to see that many more people would abide by those rules.

But it would be much better if we would live those human rights. By which we mean that your whole being is an expression of the awareness that you and the other are in essence one, and that it's therefore self-evident that you acknowledge the other as equal

and will never do something to harm their happiness. If you *observe* the human rights, you are like someone who is learning a foreign language, and needs a dictionary every now and then. If you *live* the human rights, this foreign language has become your own: you think, dream, write and speak this language.

Every person is capable of living the human rights. And this is not a belief, not a vague, sentimental promise, because every person can come to a more or less clear image of unity. Everyone can, on their own level of consciousness, experience unity and learn to know the fundamental laws that exist because of that unity.

Yesterday we shared with you the fundamental propositions of boundlessness, cyclicity and the fundamental equality of all beings. From these three fundamental propositions stem seven laws, two of which we shared with you yesterday, to wit the teaching of reincarnation or regeneration and karma, the teaching of cause and effect. The consequences of those two laws is that you respect every aspect and form of life, and that you always try to further the universal harmony.

In this lecture we will show you three additional laws, to wit those of hierarchy, self-becoming and progressive evolution. If you comprehend these laws, if you truly grasp them, then automatically there will arise a deep awareness of the inherent dignity of every human being, causing you to respect the rights of every human being in an even deeper sense.

Hierarchies

The consequence of the third fundamental proposition – the hierarchical structure of life – is that everyone shares knowledge and wisdom, or in fact, shares life. There is, as stated, a unity behind the diversity of all life forms. That life ‘streams’ from further developed beings – let’s call them gods – to less developed beings such as humans; from wiser beings – beings with an extensive scope of consciousness – to less wise and limited beings.

For most people this is a strange, unknown thought. Let us therefore try to explain. We will make use of the two laws we explained yesterday: cyclicity and cause and effect.

Well then, every being that is born, is not born for the first time. Re-embodiment takes place in an endless sequence. This means that also a superb, cosmic being that emerges from his period of rest – or: is born again out of what we call ‘death’ – has done so many times before. It may seem that by talking about the birth of a cosmos, we have digressed quite a bit from human rights, but you will see that this has everything to do with these very rights.

Naturally, a cosmic being has cooperated with many other beings in all his prior embodiments. They have forged connections. During the birth process of such a cosmos, the underlying consciousness creates a certain sphere, a certain world. The beings with which the cosmic entity or being has cooperated in his prior embodiments, and who have the same characteristics, will be drawn to that sphere. All those beings have created causes in their former lives, which now lead to the attraction to this cosmic being. In this sphere they re-embody, they are born.

These less developed beings in their turn create also a sphere, that leads to the attraction of still lesser beings with the same characteristics, that also create a sphere, and so on. Thus a chain of living beings is created, a hierarchy, in which life streams from high to low. We call this process ‘emanation’, which literally means ‘to flow from, to pour forth or out of’. Out of higher beings flows a characteristic sphere, in which less developed beings can manifest.

Compare it with someone who starts a business. That business too has certain characteristics, to which people are drawn who feel at home there. These people

become the chef or manager in this company. They in turn attract employees who suit them, and so on. In this way the whole cosmos is built hierarchically. We as a people therefore all emanate from the same Source. What’s more, also animals, plants, minerals, yes all kingdoms of nature find their origin in this Source. That is why we speak of essential unity.

Equality

You should not picture the process of emanation, as if the being that is drawn to the sphere of the higher cosmic being, is independent from this being, which we can call a source being. On the contrary. In fact they work together, as in a truly harmonious institute, where the manager and employees also work together. The employee is in fact nothing else than a voluntary extension of the chef and the chef is the force of ideas behind the employee. They cannot work without each other. They are therefore of equal value.

The fact that in our society managers earn more – and sometimes absurd amounts more – than their employees, is therefore in conflict with the natural order of the cosmos and often an important cause of disharmony.

The natural hierarchy however is always harmonious, because every part of it – all living beings that form this hierarchy – are of absolutely equal value. All beings have their share of the rights and obligations, because they need each other. The further developed beings need the lesser developed and vice versa. Human rights are therefore not a human invention; they are a fact of nature. To not respect human rights is therefore unnatural and will, in compliance with the law of karma, always have disharmonious consequences. Every country, every company and every human being must always live the human rights, in order not to disrupt the harmony.

Everyone on their individual level can do this. You must always take into account the thought that we are all necessary and equal in value. Every country or society – whether big or small – where the equal value of all man is recognized, will be a dynamic and harmonious cooperation.

Take for example a company. When everyone accepts the equal value of all employees, everyone will share their knowledge, their skills, their wisdom with the

other. The chef uses his information, his knowledge, his insights for the good of the whole. He shares thus what he knows. His subordinates and all other employees also share what they know and what they are capable of. In that way the company as a whole grows in a dynamic harmony, whereby everyone grows and develops.

Man is a hierarchy

Now every man is a hierarchy himself, a composite constitution that has a divine, spiritual, human, animal and physical part, as you were told by Linda van Noord. There is within every man an inner 'chef': a divine-spiritual element, we call *Ātman-Buddhi*. We are therefore ourselves the leading force of our hierarchy. The divine is not outside of us, but within us. When the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights speaks of the inherent human dignity, we can substantiate this easily with these teachings. The human dignity lies in the fact that we ourselves are a hierarchy and therefore within ourselves have divine, understanding and compassionate forces, indeed, we are these forces.

Most people live in their personal consciousness. That is to say that they focus on the external side of the world and hold it for the reality. We have to open ourselves to the divine forces within ourselves. We have to attune ourselves to the influence from the higher parts of ourselves. Later on we will give you clues on how to do this.

There are already people who have opened themselves completely to the influence of their Higher Self, as we can call the spiritual-divine within ourselves. These are the natural Leaders en Teachers of humanity. These are people who can speak and teach with authority. And with 'authority' I mean that they have become what they teach.

When a carpenter explains you how to build a house, he does not gain his authority with the theoretical knowledge he learned at school, but on the fact that he already built lots of houses successfully. When a Teacher or Leader speaks with authority about a harmonious society, about the dignity of man, about human rights and obligations, that is not because he has only a theoretical or semi-conscious knowledge of the higher parts of his consciousness, no, he has become these higher parts and knows what he's talking about

in stating that all men derive from the same Source and are therefore in fact part of each other.

Authority and power

To have authority is therefore very different from having power. With power there is always a lot of window dressing, of external means. A teacher who keeps his class in order and puts his students to work by punishing restless students or threats to do so, uses power. The president who constraints the people through the police, laws and punishment, does not have the authority of a natural leader.

You may wonder where these natural leaders in our present world are? Mayby you do not know them. Still they are there, we think, but as long as their authority is not seen and recognized, they are powerless.

You see, a specialist – for example an electro mechanic – can give directions on how to install a socket, but when the layperson is not paying attention or thinks he knows better, then the specialist is powerless and can only hope that not too much damage is done by this person.

There are specialists also in the areas of spiritual matters, of just government, of complying to or living the human rights. These Masters or Adepts really exist, but we have to accept their authority. That means that we have to tune ourselves to their mental sphere. If we don't, they cannot help us. We have to go to them. And we can do this by firstly awaken the Master within ourselves and listen to this inner voice. We first have to develop some of this wisdom within ourselves, before we can see and accept the guidance of the natural leaders.

So why don't we, you may ask yourself.

Self-becoming

The next law – the law of self-becoming or *Swabhāva* – gives us the answer to that question. We are who we are, because we made ourselves this way. We always become ourselves. And if in the past we did not or hardly awoke the inner aspects of our consciousness, then it is logical that we now do not have these powers. It is very simple. If today you do not try to be wiser than tomorrow, after a good night sleep, you will not see any new inner connections.

If in the past, in a former life, we were completely

focused on the external life, if we gave importance to the external differences between men, if we lived with the sense of being separated and therefore were not very interested in the human rights of others, then we take these characteristics with us to a next life. We have become those characteristics and what you are, you will become again. That is our character.

This character therefore does not come into existence at birth. Nor do we inherit it from our parents. We are our own parent. We produce ourselves. We become who we are. So, the powers we express at this moment are the powers we have developed in the past, on the basis of free will. And the same holds true for noble, narrow-minded or even outright contemptible powers.

Each being is unique

In this way everyone, in the countless lives they have lived, have built a unique character. Even though people may look alike, they are always, by definition, different. When even not two blades of grass, two drops of water, why, not even two atoms are the same, how could two developed beings like humans possibly be so?

But do these differences pose a problem? Certainly not. It is this external disparity that is essential in building a dynamic, harmonious world. Indeed, we complement each other. We can use each other's qualities and talents. We share each other's wisdom. We must not want the others to be the same. That is not possible. The other has been through their own development and is therefore unique.

We should also as nations or civilizations not want that other countries become similar to us. Did western countries not try this in Africa and the Middle East? Did we not want those countries to have the same institutions, laws and economies as we have? Just look at the hardship this created. How many violations of human rights are approved within the delusion that the other should be like us. When we think democracy for us is the best regime, then that does not mean this is the case for other countries. To force democracy onto others works just as bad as trying to change someone's character with force or punishment.

We change constantly

Can we not change? Must we always stay who we are?

No we don't, moreover, we can't. Everything in nature changes constantly. Nothing stays the same, not even for a second. But I cannot change for you, and you cannot change for me. I cannot perceive something for you, or experience it. I cannot learn for you, or gain more consciousness for you; and you cannot do this for me. That is the tragedy of leaders or teachers who work with force. They want to force others to become what they think is the right way to be. A natural leader does not use force, he inspires. He gives the example. He is the change he wants to see in society. Because of course everyone can change. Every human being can and will improve, and expand their consciousness.

The law of which we speak, is called *self-becoming*. The word indicates a continual process, a dynamic activity, in which a stand-still is actually not possible. For every new experience is a lesson, with which we become something different than we were. We change constantly, thankfully.

We are not further than we are now, because we did not develop our more noble powers. We do have those powers, but they are dormant in our consciousness. There is therefore no reason for despair or hopelessness. A toddler who cannot make the math equation of his fourteen-year-old sibling, need not despair. If he goes through primary school, he will have developed himself in a way that he will be able to.

It may be difficult for us to compare ourselves to a toddler, that we, in other words, do not know much, did not develop much. But one has to face the fact of one's own imperfection and restrictions, if one wants to expand their consciousness. He who wants to grow, must see that he is still small!

At the same time, this acknowledgment gives a certain amount of hope and inspiration. If we look at the imperfection and disharmony in our world, with its cruel wars, its outflow of refugees, its inequality and severe violation of human rights, then all of this does not derive from an inherent badness of man, this situation has arisen from his ignorance. Lack of knowledge about who we really are; ignorance about the possibilities that lay within ourselves; and ignorance about how we can develop these noble powers. But what is especially crippling is that we think we are not able to improve the world. Of course we can.

Every man, every country has, be it latent, the wisdom and power to live the human rights.

Progressive evolution

The acknowledgement that every man has those powers, gives us a big responsibility. If you think you are not capable to do something, you will not try to do it. If on the other hand you know that you can, you owe it to yourself to develop this capacity.

It is for that reason we always link human rights to human obligations. We can only live human rights if we as men take the responsibility to do our duty towards others. We cannot stand idly aside, complaining and whining, while we watch the world burn. We cannot demand our rights, if we forsake our obligations towards others.

The fifth Jewel of Wisdom especially serves as a wake-up call. There is such a thing as *progressive evolution*. We shall have to develop or activate our inherent qualities. And because we are human beings, and have a free will, we must not do this by following the road of the least resistance and learn the hard way, once bitten, twice shy. It can be done this way, and unfortunately it happens all too often. After the war has ended, we understand it would have been better if it had not been started at all. If we had realized this beforehand, we would never have pushed through. We can after all calculate the effect of our actions.

To do this, we have to take the helm of the ship of consciousness that we are. This is self-guided evolution. That means that we self-consciously have to choose to evolve those noble aspects of our consciousness. We don't let circumstances decide. We make our own plan and deliberately improve our character. If we have learned to recognize the laws of the hierarchical structure of the cosmos and man, as a child of this cosmos, then it is our responsibility to actually develop the more noble aspects.

The question then of course is: how?

Building ideal images

The answer is actually quite simple. It is so obvious that people fail to see it. They expect that you can only grow spiritually by means of a complicated ritual, an expensive course, complex meditation techniques or a long-term psychological investigation. But what in

fact is necessary is that we can *depicture* ourselves the change we want to see for ourselves. We have to use our imagination. We have to create a picture of the noble, the divine, within us. What does a man look like if he lives human rights? How does he think? How does he act? What would society look like if people would live by these principles? What is the ideal world? Building this image is the first step. Everybody can do this. Of course the image will not be perfect at first. It is like seeing a painting for the first time, you have to get used to it.

If you have pictured this image for yourself, imperfect as it is, you will then have to purify your thinking of all thoughts and ideas that do not fit this ideal image. In fact you get rid of all the elements that do not belong in a spiritual, harmonious world. This is an intensive process that requires perseverance, because thoughts are resilient little buggers, they will not be set aside easily. But if you persevere, in the end, there will be no place in all your thoughts, in your entire being, for feelings of separation and the connected feelings of aversion, resentment and even hatred toward other people.

Your whole being will be penetrated by the awareness of unity, whereupon you will always encounter your fellow-creatures in the spirit of brotherhood and kindness. Each of us is capable of doing so. This power lies within you, me, and every human being.

You will not have to follow anybody for this. You will not have to take orders, follow commandments, or heed prohibitions from others. You will not have to disconnect your critical powers. On the contrary. You create your own, above-personal, ideal image, and you will constantly improve it, sharpen it, and to the degree this image lives in your thoughts, you will become this image, you will become this change you want so much.

Consequences for society

What changes will occur when we live these three Jewels? What changes will take place when we activate this creative power, which is within everybody, and create our ideal image? What will society look like? It is very inspiring if you try to imagine this; if you create an image of this. We can give you some clues. Our leaders will not be the persons who flatter the

people the most, not those of whom the people believe they serve our interest best. It won't be an objective to our leaders to ensure re-election. These natural leaders of those days will be the wisest people. They have the vastest insight in the laws of nature and the inseparable bonds between all beings. These leaders will not have power as such, but authority. And because the citizens have already woken up something spiritually within themselves, this authority is recognized.

The common recognition of the authority of the leader does not mean that all men are the same. Everyone has a unique character. That is respected. The individuality, the special competences and talents of all men will be valued. There will be no pressure whatsoever to try and convert people. Everyone respects each other's truth, knowing that every man, with his or her unique character, is necessary.

We do not have to make concessions to our own truth. That doesn't mean that we must hold on dogmatically to what we once saw as the truth. On the contrary, there is constant growth. But we do not have to embrace a certain idea, which we see as untrue or illusive, just because others – maybe even the majority of men – see this as reality. In other words: everyone's free will is respected, so long as no one tries to eliminate the free will of others.

The country is also sovereign. It does not have to get rid of its vision, just because other countries think differently. Sovereignty is the free will of the country, and here also applies the thought that it is to be respected, unless it is employed against the interests of other countries. National interest exists no more, because every form of separation is gone.

Focus on inner growth

All of us bring our unique character to serve the whole. This also means we enable everyone to apply their talents. Nobody can be missed. There is no more unemployment. Furthermore, everybody gets the opportunity to develop themselves according to their own level, spiritually, mentally and physically. Also the wisdom, knowledge and material goods are divided and shared according to individual needs. And contrary to what is common in our present society, leaders will have less need for material goods. They, the natural leaders, have after all spiritually orientat-

ed and developed themselves above all and know that happiness never depends on material goods and are thus not focussed on these.

In this manner we have developed a society, in which every individual grows in consciousness, and while growing is ever better equipped to make a contribution of a higher quality.

Developing the UDRRM

In this symposium we are building up a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Reincarnating Men. Now we can add articles 3, 4 and 5. This gives us the following result:

If you act on the three key thoughts 'Boundlessness', 'Cyclicality' and 'Equality and inner growth', it is natural that you:

1. *Respect life;*
2. *Make universal harmony a reality;*
3. *Share wisdom;*
4. *Express your faculties and talents;*
5. *Grow in consciousness, knowledge and faculties.*

Questions that were discussed during the workshop

1. Can human rights be forced by means of power?
2. What can a natural leader with authority do to let the people live the human rights?
3. Everyone is unique. There is hierarchy of consciousness. There are therefore a lot of differences in the world. How then can there be a dynamic, harmonious society in which everyone lives the human rights?



Consequences of living human rights

The outcome of the workshops was clear: human rights cannot be enforced. We cannot trample human rights to achieve a situation where human rights are respected. As always, the end never justifies the means. If you want human rights to be respected, you must always and in all cases live them yourself. Then you recognize the rights of all other men. Even people who have violated human rights in a horrible way, should always be treated according to these human rights. So Mohammed B., the murderer of Theo van Gogh has the right to a humane treatment, yes even Anders Breivik, who a couple of years ago in Norway killed 77 young people, has that right and deserves humane punishment. If we do not give him that, we will push him further in his hate for us, and in compliance with the law of reincarnation, in a next life his ignorance and hate will be even stronger. And we have to deal with it then.

But how should we live human rights and implement them in our society? What should a leader do? In fact we are all leaders. When we think of these kind of things and draw certain conclusions that our fellow men did not, because as yet they did not reflect on it, then we are a leader for them. Then we are setting a trend.

About 2500 years ago, the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tze has proclaimed very interesting ideas on how we should live our lives, respecting everyone. Of course he used different words than we do. In the little book

the *Tao Te Ching* he uses paradoxes – apparent contradictions – which give us food for thought. He does not speak of human rights or declarations on human rights, but still we can use his paradoxes to guide us to answers on the practical questions of the workshops.

Leaders

Firstly Lao-Tze states that the true leader does not walk in front of his people, but follows behind.⁽¹⁾

This is peculiar, you would think. Still, to lead is not walking in front of the troops or ordering them to do what you say. If Lao-Tze states that the true leader follows his people, to avoid getting in their way, then he means that people of course should choose their own way and that they should be helped, stimulated or inspired by the natural leaders. So, who are those natural leaders?

On this subject Lao-Tze also says something very interesting: the people will not notice the great leaders. They will support and praise the lesser ones. The lesser ones – they fear them. The even lesser one – they despise them.⁽²⁾

So, it is the natural leaders that are not on the foreground. Their inspiring presence will not even be noticed. They, the true Masters or Adepts, are people who have a greater sense of the unity of all things. They are not the “bosses” or “chiefs” who give orders that others must blindly follow. These are the leaders that are feared or despised. The natural leaders in contrast

understand better than anyone that in a harmonious society people should serve each other. So they serve, although their service is unnoticed. Serving for them is a natural quality that follows logically out of their deeper insight in the underlying Unity of all external differences, which also characterizes the world of humanity. In the philosophy of Lao-Tze this unity is referred to as the concept of TAO.

TAO

TAO is sometimes translated as the Way or Path, but is in fact untranslatable, so perhaps it is better to call it “boundlessness”. It is a comprehensive concept. That is obvious, because boundlessness penetrates everything, because if it did not, it would not be boundless. That is why the *Tao te Ching* begins with the paradox that the TAO that can be named, is not the true TAO. ⁽³⁾ It cannot be limited. It cannot be named. You can’t say: ‘this is it’, because if you do so, it means that it is not something else.

Yet the wise man – the natural leader – can have a vision of TAO. Everyone can have a sense of unity behind all diversity, and that sense can always be active in your consciousness.

If this is the case, you gain a certain mentality, a certain attitude to life and behavior, in which you live the human rights continuously, because you are aware that you are the underlying unity behind all life.

Wu Wei

This attitude to life in China is referred to as *Wu Wei*. If you would translate this, you would get definitions like: “not acting against the nature of things”. The concept is sometimes depicted as *Wei Wu Wei*, which is translated as “acting by not acting”, or “acting without effort”. The *Tao te Ching* states: Tao is always not-acting, and yet there is nothing which remains undone. ⁽⁴⁾

How should we interpret this?

Well, if you constantly live in the sense of unity, you dedicate all your actions to this unity. You do act. Of course you act. You can not live without acting. You must eat, breath, work, talk, see other people, and so on. But all those actions in a way are purposeless, meaning that you do not have a *personal* purpose. You do not act to gain for yourself. You do it for the

common good. You do it, because you know yourself to be part of that unity and intrinsically want to contribute to this totality.

It is this concept that is called *karma-yoga* in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. You act on behalf of the act and not for the result. You do not want anything for yourself. You are like the sun that shines and does not wish anything in return.

Wu Wei is often compared with water. Water flows and offers no resistance. It seems as if it’s weak and does nothing, but it can pulverize the most massive stones. Water flows everywhere, and fills the smallest of spaces.

In the *Tao Te Ching* it is stated that if rulers and kings would abide by the principle of Wu Wei, all things would develop themselves. ⁽⁵⁾ Why is that?

You see, if executives would not strive for a certain position, for promotion, for power, for prestige, then this mentality would spread among the population. This directly relates to the second question of the workshop (see page 38). The wise has no self to call his own, says Lao-Tze. ⁽⁶⁾ He makes the self of the people his own. In other words, he identifies himself with the people in such a way, that he does not wish anything for himself. That is why he does not want a certain position, a certain rank. And this attitude would spread throughout the state. Wu Wei is therefore also teaching without words. As we already said: the true leader follows the people. He is the bright example.

In a society based on the principles of Wu Wei there would be no ambition, and no stress. No one would do things beyond his power, but also no one would stay passive. Everyone has something to give, to wit exactly what he is, what he has made of himself.

True leaders should not have to be chosen. They present themselves naturally. There is a hierarchical structure in nature, and therefore also in mankind. And if we as a whole would follow this natural course of events – if we would live in the awareness of the great TAO – then everyone would, according to his Swabhāva, according to his unique characteristic of being, take his place in society. Our natural leaders as well. The state would be governed by not interfering, says Lao-Tze. ⁽⁷⁾ That is the art of government according to Wu Wei. Then we would not need any rules, regulations, declarations on human rights and even hu-

man laws. Everyone would be given the opportunity to develop himself and to offer the fruit of this development to the good of all citizens. In other words, on the basis of one's own development, own talents, own unique characteristic that one has made for himself in the boundless time behind us, one would work for the totality, without wanting any form of reward. Then a society would arise in which righteousness rules, because everyone does what he can to support the totality, and receives what he needs to do so. There is neither need, nor abundance. Together we have enough to feed everyone physically, mentally and spiritually. In a society based on Wu Wei no importance is set on status, position or possession. You could even ask yourself if there would be such a thing as possession. Possession is indeed an illusion in the light of TAO. Possession is always lost, because everyone dies and leaves what they call their possessions behind. Consider matter therefore not as your possession; consider it as a tool to temporarily manifest yourself on earth. Living according to Wu Wei is the same as living human rights. You will see society as one big organism in which everyone is connected with each other. Everyone has a task or function. Thanks to each other we are empowered to better accomplish these tasks, to become more universal, to experience greater responsibility.

You can speak of a *dynamic harmony*, because precisely due to this interaction between men, everyone is constantly challenged to do their work better, and will do it better, because they do not strive for anything themselves. This is a key thought for everyone who pondered on the third question of the workshop (mentioned on page 38). To perform one's task actually means contributing one's life, insights, wisdom for the benefit of others.

Wu Wei in society?

Perhaps you think we picture a very utopian image. This ideal however is realizable. One day the majority of men will live this ideal. But therefore we have to start now by laying the fundamentals.

How do we reach such a state of Wu Wei in society? By not detaching yourself from such a change. Also, you must not *attempt* to change, you must *be* the change. Be the example, in thought and action. So

you must not think: first we do this, then we do that, and then we have Wu Wei, then we have the ideal society. This attitude is ill fated. In this way you look for the solution outside yourself. You would say: if we would only have a new government first, or: if only the United Nations would reform. No, be the change you strive for. That means that if you want the rights of all humans to be respected, you respect them always yourself. Also in your thoughts. Also when you are angry. Also when the other party did not respect the human rights.

European countries have a distinct talent pointing other countries on the fact that they violate human rights. But when they themselves are confronted with what is in their eyes a big problem, like the outflow of refugees, than they violate those human rights themselves. That is not Wu Wei. If these countries would live according to those principles, than of course they would be the first to follow the treaties they signed and were so eager about to call others to account for.

Ahimsa

As long as we do not live in a society based on Wu Wei, you can use certain methods to approach such a dynamic harmonious society. But you may never do so by not implementing in your own actions the same demands you make of this ideal society.

In that respect we can learn a lot from Mahātma Gandhi. The method of *Satyāgraha* that was developed by him – to live according to the truth – contained also acts of civil disobedience, but always on the basis of Ahimsā. Ahimsā is often translated as nonviolence, but it means much more. It is to renounce any form of evil. So never revenge evil with evil. Neither in action, nor in thought, nor in emotion, nor in any other form, even if someone does not respect human rights. *Satyāgraha* is not deployed to pursue personal goals or ambitions. It always serves a greater goal. It is also never aimed against somebody: it is a positive force, so always in favor of a society where everyone gets a place and the human rights and obligations are lived. We already compared Wu Wei with water. Nothing in the world is weaker and more compliant than water, and yet its attacks on the tough and the strong are second to none. The soft can defeat the tough, and the compliant can defeat the strong.⁽⁸⁾

The soft powers will prevail in the end, poetized Henriette Roland Holst. Which is true. Especially if these soft powers cooperate in their unselfish work. If they form a nucleus, a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, then the stream of Wu Wei-water – not to be confused with the holy water of the Catholic Church – will ever widen, urging ever more people to live from their inner centre and give shape to the actual Brotherhood, the Unity of life.

We will give further thought to this Unity and the motives why one would wish to merge with that Unity, in the next lecture, of Patricia van Lingen.

References

1. Lao-Tze, *Tao Te Ching*, many translations, verse 66.
2. See ref. 1, verse 17.
3. See ref. 1, verse 1.
4. See ref. 1, verse 37.
5. See ref. 1, verse 17.
6. See ref. 1, verse 49.
7. See ref. 1, verse 57.
8. See ref. 1, verse 78.



Universal Brotherhood is the Path

A couple of weeks ago I ended up in a conversation on the topic of human rights, with Kyran, the 11-year-old boy next door, and I was curious about his perhaps unprejudiced view on this topic. “All people know what human rights are,” was his first comment. “We carry them with us, for it is deep within us, although not everybody is able to get in touch with it. Everybody also has *the same* rights, because we are all equal.” “But,” he said: “One needs responsibility for rights. If for instance you would like to stay home alone at night, you must show good responsibility, and if you do so, you’ll *get* that right.” In his ideal world where human rights are being respected, people are always ready to help each other; that’s how he imagined it to be. You can see we don’t need books to gain this knowledge and it is not bound to age either, for Kyran showed that this wisdom is in each one of us.

The origin of Human rights

This reflects very well the key-thought of this lecture. We will show that human rights do not depend on documents or agreements between people or nations, but that these rights, and the ethics and morality on which this knowledge is fundamentally based, have their origin in our own inner Self.

Seen from this view, the document of human rights – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – is already a beautiful exemplar of what the world community of today has generated from within. Barend

Voorham has already shown this when he explained the third, fourth and fifth Jewel of Wisdom. He said that we ourselves carry all possibilities in us to create this world according to the most ethical guidelines. Starting from the hierarchical structure in which there is always life within larger life, human rights are no human invention; they are based on the Spiritual Structure, Patterns and Ethics in Nature.

Universal Brotherhood, everyone matters

In the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we find an important basis for creating another world together. There is written: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”⁽¹⁾

You hear the closing sentence? “... should act towards one another *in a spirit of brotherhood*.” This is an important indication because: starting from the three principles – boundless life, cyclic movement, and equality and spiritual growth – we can already conclude that Universal Brotherhood is the *only* way to accomplish a society of Peace and Harmony.

A society which offers a place to everyone, where every individual matters, no matter his social position, his religious, cultural or social background. We say it is the *only* way, because this brotherhood is based on the essential character, in other words the morality,

of the Universe. It is that universal love that we feel in our innermost being, the compassion, the longing for Peace and Brotherhood, which flows forth from the heart of the Universe. And that Universal heart is our own inner heart as well.

Complete vision of life

We will elucidate this by applying the last two Jewels of Wisdom. The seven Jewels present to us a complete vision of life. The first five Jewels describe life's continuity, in which, during an everlasting journey, every individual tries to remember and eventually becomes his spiritual-divine capacities. We can accelerate this journey by self-directed evolution, as we no longer need to drift like flotsam on the sea, but become self-directing.

Sixth Jewel: the two Paths

The Sixth Jewel, *the two Paths*, is very essential, because it shows us, even if we choose spiritual growth, that there still is the possibility to fall into a form of spiritual selfishness which leads to spiritual separateness. We shall explain this a bit further.

This Jewel teaches us that spiritual growth, which means expanding our consciousness, liberates us from the illusions of life. A life in which pain and suffering always accompany us, because we experience the outer life as the only reality. After seeing through this illusion, we come to meet this moral dilemma: do we want to free ourselves from all suffering and obtain a blissful spiritual condition of consciousness? The Buddhists call this condition Nirvāna. Or do we see the path of spiritual growth as a means to return back our gained wisdom to the Oneness, and thus support all life on its way to liberation?

Motive

This dilemma has everything to do with our motivation: why do we want to expand our consciousness? It is an important choice in our life. This choice we do not make at the moment of our spiritual liberation. In fact, we are taking it *right now*, by the thoughts we think right now, so, how we react and accordingly build up a habit that leads to the formation of our character. A character in which selfishness is being paramount – even if it is spiritual selfishness – re-

sulting from the idea of separateness, or a character where the general interest comes first, where Unity is our main principle.

In other words, the sixth Jewel shows us that the *motivation* behind our action makes a great difference to the outcome: our own liberation, entering Nirvāna and leaving everything behind us, or liberation for all people — to whom we are spiritually equal and inseparably connected, because the One life rushes through everything.

You see: this really gives us something to reflect upon. In all cases, it should be included in our vision of life.

Great Thinkers on the Path of Compassion

All great Thinkers and Sages have inspired us to take the Path of compassion because of compassion, because of Unity. We can rightly wonder, taking into consideration those three theosophical key-thoughts of which the Oneness of life is the essence, whether we can experience happiness if one of our fellowmen is still suffering. In short: the sixth Jewel shows us, when choosing self-directed spiritual growth, that there are two paths, two paths we can follow: the Path of each for himself and the Path of Compassion. On the *Path of each for himself* you perform various acts of Compassion, through which you gain experiences and insights that make you grow in consciousness. But you carry out Compassion with the MOTIVE, with the aim, to eventually achieve rest and bliss for yourself. At the end of *this* Path awaits Nirvāna, after which you cannot help others anymore, that are behind you on the Path. You are driven by a desire for spiritual rest, an escape of the problems that we face as human beings.

On the *Path of Compassion*, flowing from a deep sense of Unity, a deep sense of your connectedness with all life, you have only one MOTIVE or aim, and that is to be a supportive force for all that lives. You are always focused on the spiritual progress of totality, that one life. From there you think and act. By helping others, you gain insights as well of course, and also grow in consciousness. But the greater insights that you gain by helping, you always bring back to that totality, to be able to help even better.

Of course you decide which of the two Paths you choose yourself, because as said before: we have free will and there is no coercion in Nature.

Compassion as natural attitude

But based on the three key-thoughts and the mentioned Jewels so far, we hereby state that it is a logical consequence *to experience Compassion as a natural basic attitude*. An attitude where there is no longer any doubt – will I help this time or not, will I do this and not that, is it good or not, et cetera – but in which we act at *all times* and *all places* according to our innermost ideals and insights, without any distinction to anyone and always keeping in mind the One life that flows through each one of us. Then, one does not see separateness but spiritual life itself, and tries to act accordingly without desiring any result for oneself or for anything in particular.

It is as the Teacher speaks to the student in *The Voice of the Silence*, on the basis of all the previous:

Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?

And if we clearly see this ideal, also named the Bodhi-sattva-ideal, we already *now* will use all our talents and all the wisdom we have learned, developed and accomplished to benefit society.

Nucleus of Brotherhood

Then we are co-operating in shaping the nucleus of Brotherhood at a level which is within our reach at that moment. While co-operating we learn from each other and grow towards higher levels of understanding and wisdom. We assist each other in our development to become better qualified in helping others. We increasingly call upon our own inner source of wisdom.

Being a teacher

This fundamental attitude of Compassion will make us a teacher. And being a teacher means being of service to the entire community, from a desire to help your fellow-men. Based on the life-vision that everybody is a spiritual-divine being in essence and on its way of realizing this again, helping means: helping the other one *in learning to remember* this capacity again. A teacher is a spiritual midwife, someone who does not convert the ignorant but arouses his inner soul, stimulates its birth, wakes it. Thus, helping out of compassion involves: living up to your vision, being

an inspirational example to others by living from your own highest, noble capacities.

By doing this we learn to recognize these same capacities in others. We learn to understand other people, seeing what they need to become self-conscious of their divine core. We shall never try to “convert” someone. Each one of us has the right to be as he or she is. And every one can develop these noble faculties in his own way.

Being a teacher is doing everything to support and inspire each being, enabling him to develop himself in the light of Unity and Brotherhood.

The seventh Jewel: Knowledge of the Self

Finally, there is the seventh and last Jewel. This Jewel teaches us that our deepest core, which is the same in you and me and all the other life, can be known. It is that one life that flows through everything and everyone, that is the immortal origin of each of us. Hence the title of the seventh Jewel: *Knowledge of the Self*. It teaches us that we can know our true Self, our deepest essence, our core, right here and right now. Maybe not within an hour, but we can start to approach it by applying what we have shown, by living according to your highest vision, in thought and act, day after day, life after life.

In other words, when we ally ourselves with our spiritual-divine core, and therefore with all other life, and above all, try to live from there, we unlock those inner faculties through which it becomes increasingly clear what life is all about. We shall see the origin, nature and destiny of Life ever more clearly. We shall continue to harmonize ourselves with this, thus supporting it ceaselessly. We then become a selfless co-worker of Nature.

And when you succeed in attuning your acts to your inner core, without attachment to any result, whole Nature will reveal itself to you and will share with you all of her secrets. Because it is a natural process that if you fulfill your duty and bring in your talents in the whole, for the benefit of totality, you always will develop what you need in order to fulfil your Duty, your Dharma.

Recently a woman told about her experience of the second World War. As a 10-year-old girl she, together with her two younger sisters, came to be alone. Her

mother was picked up because she hid someone else. During the period her mother was absent, the young girl developed the strength and ability to take care of her sisters independently. She continued to live the way they had always lived, but now she took all initiatives herself.⁽³⁾

You can imagine that a 10 year old child has not yet built up the required experience, so she literally derived everything necessary from her soul. Now you can see my young neighbor is right; we have it all in us, we just have to bring it out.

Why the world is as it is today

As we pointed out before, these last two of the seven Jewels will make our vision on life complete. It is this vision, based on the seven Jewels of Wisdom, based on the spiritual background of life, which distinguishes us from an “ordinary” good man.

Of course you can also do good without a spiritual vision on life, assuming you only live once. But often, due to its limited scope, a person that adheres to this materialistic vision leans to separateness, selfishness and fear. Which may lead to fatalism and discouragement, reflected in expressions such as: “What can I do about it; I’m only human.”

This attitude leads to the inclination to ask for protection from the outside world and place all responsibility on the so-called “authorities”. They should protect us. This prompts them to make agreements or compose laws or documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, often with good intentions. In fact, we make ourselves dependent on leaders and conventions instead of feeling ourselves responsible for the situation in the world.

From dependence to independence

In order to break the spiral of these old thinking patterns, we introduced to you a vision that makes an appeal to your Self, your higher nature and self-efficacy, so that you are independent of others. In your higher nature resides your sense of Oneness, your Understanding, your sense of Justice and Compassion. When you live from your higher nature, it leads to a change of the dominant mentality.

This enables us to *live* the Universal Human Rights. Bombs can *never* destroy a wrong mentality or ideolo-

gy, bombs only invoke more bombs. Neither can laws and rules do that, by themselves. A wrong mentality can only be replaced by a better one, by an attitude to life and a mentality that is based on Brotherhood. This means that our enemies become our friends. Friends that will work with us to establish the ideal of a Universal Brotherhood, in which there is a place for everyone and everyone has significance.

There is no path to Brotherhood, no, Brotherhood is the path

That is why we state: there is no path to Brotherhood, no, *Brotherhood is the path*. And therefore it is this realization of the Unity and purpose of life, that gives us the opportunity to build a world together as it should be: a world built up by these universal ethical guidelines. A world in which there are no exterior rules and laws needed anymore, because there is a different mentality. A world in which people live the Universal Human Rights.

In short: the natural consequence of the seventh Jewel – Knowledge of the Self, becoming more self-aware of the spiritual-divine essence in all life – is that you *form a continuously expanding vision of the Truth and Life’s Unity and live accordingly*.

Meditation inspired by unity

In order to re-experience that sense of unity, the following meditation can help us. As life is boundless, you can expand it ever more. It makes an appeal to our inner nature.

Imagine ... that you are everything, everything that you can imagine: from a grain of sand to a galaxy, and everything in between and beyond. You are your friends, your neighbors, the refugee in need, but also the executioner, the oppressor, your enemies. You are the sun that shines for everyone. In essence, every being is the same as any other being, we are ONE.

Try to imagine in what circumstances your fellows live, what questions they ask themselves. Try to imagine that everything that takes place on the other side of the world, also concerns ourselves here. And then realize that we are all on our way to express our spiritual-divine part. Try to understand what moves the other, why he does what he does. And then try to do, from your spiritual core, whatever is necessary to support

the whole in the spirit of Brotherhood.

Peace, Cooperation and Harmony

Now, after these two days, you know that we have it all in us. You do not need to take a course, or to be dependent on what others think or dictate what is right. Rely on your own divine core, consult it with the right mental attitude, that of compassion.

When we dedicate ourselves to the well-being of all life, and sincerely search and strive for truth, we go through a mental change that leads to PEACE, COOPERATION and HARMONY.

Seven articles

In this conference we have shown you seven articles, in the light of the Universal Rights of the Reincarnating Man. We have structured them from the perspective that each of you, in your own environment, can live them, right *now*.

Living from our highest ideals and insights and have a longing for Peace, Harmony and Justice, we shall:

- 7. Form a continuously expanding vision of the Truth and Life's Unity and live accordingly;*
- 6. Experience Compassion as a natural attitude;*
- 5. Inspire each other, so we will grow in consciousness, knowledge and faculties;*
- 4. Express our faculties and talents;*
- 3. Share our developed wisdom;*
- 2. Strive continuously to establish universal harmony;*
- 1. Respect all life.*

There is no path to Brotherhood, Brotherhood is the path.

References

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Final conclusion I.S.I.S. Symposium 2016

We have talked with each other for two days about a very principled subject, which has global attention, but also global urgency. The key question to our symposium is: what can The Theosophical Society Point Loma mean to you? Or in other words, what can Theosophy mean to you? For us the main thing is that you, yourself, are enabled to develop a life vision.

You have already understood that we do not consider it a sensible idea to impose laws. A step forward is, when we make agreements and rules in a flexible way that we adhere voluntarily. But what we mainly try to say is that if you develop that life vision yourself, you do not need those laws at all. Then you apply the seven articles that we have generated. Those seven articles are not absolute, but relative key thoughts, that you can fill in according to your own level of development. We can adjust these principles to local needs, in our families, in the streets, in the city, in our country, or even worldwide.

Ethics from understanding

We do not favor focusing only on our insights in ethics and morality. Because they are no “things in themselves” but derived from a complete life vision. H.P. Blavatsky has shown that to us clearly, since 1875: our ethics is in fact based on philosophy and knowledge. Therefore, we must combine them.

But if we only study philosophy without acting accordingly, then we would never put our philosophy to the test in practice. What is the basis of our philosophy then? We would gradually fall to belief, something we absolutely do not want that happens. What we learn from the study of the universal life patterns in the Universe, is that those patterns express themselves in an analogous way everywhere: ‘as above, so below’. That is what the third fundamental proposition of Theosophy is about. Therefore, we say that those patterns, small or large, can be recognized and experienced by each of you.

Can we do without human laws?

It is not enough, if you want to become a better man, that you want to be good for your fellow men. That in itself is commendable, but it is not enough. Or that you want to help to make better laws. That sounds positive as well, but is actually not enough either. You are only fruitful if you want to get to know the Universe, and as additional part thereof want to get to know your Self. If you experience the Unity with all that lives, and that you are an integral part of it. And if you have the inner urge to know what your place is in that Universe, and from that vision, as it were, take on a task.

That is a very different approach than foisting and imposing laws on others. So justice does not come from outside, but from inside — ‘from inside’ in the

sense I just explained.

These are a few very important thoughts that we must try to keep in mind. Can we do without human laws? Eventually, yes. Eventually it is of course true, that if we have developed that inner vision and have gained more understanding of our place in the Universe, that it is natural to do several things. We then act from insight, from an ever deeper insight — because we improve our ideas, we can keep growing.

Where lies the solution?

Everyone can be a universal man right now. We often hear in our society, and certainly also in the field in which we are very active: “yes, I want to take on a course and another course after that, and then I can be this or that in the future”. But what we try to say is: improving yourself or finding your place in the Universe is not a projection to the future, but an act right now. You can – whether your limitations are large or small – explore your place in the Universe and according to your limits, shape that place.

Imagine that we would all do this, everybody all over the world, at this moment. Then we would solve very many problems, if not all problems, more or less. Because one of the biggest problems is that we stagnate in our current situation, because we tend to project our ideal to a situation in the future or to a different place in the world, and do not act now.

Last evening we watched a very serious video about Africa. And when you ask yourself: “it is terrible what we have seen, what should we do?”, then it is actually better to ask yourself this question: “what am I doing now, in my current life, in this western world, that creates those situations in other parts of the world, or at any rate contributes to them?” Other parts in which we see so many problems and misery. And I think that acting now, from what we are, is actually the most fundamental thing we can do to apply the Universal Rights of the Reincarnating Man properly. It is not over there, it is not tomorrow or the day after, but it is simply NOW.



Course “Thinking Differently” on Skype

Recently it has become possible to follow our course “Thinking Differently” through Skype. Now, people from all over the world participate in this course, in which you learn to know the different qualities in man. The course offers the opportunity for expansion of consciousness. It is taught in English.

Philosophy behind the course

The course “Thinking Differently” offers an opportunity to those, who are genuinely seeking answers by independently exploring and reforming their way of thinking. It offers the building blocks for a practical life philosophy that provides answers to the many questions and problems that confront us.

The course is based on the core Wisdom that forms the foundation of all major religions and philosophies with which the names of humankind’s greatest thinkers are associated. This core Wisdom, also called Theosophy, is the essence of the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Lao-Tze, Plato, Krishna and many others. At the heart of this Wisdom is a striving for union with the Reality behind and beyond outer life, by changing our way of thinking in such a way that we become capable of leading our life instead of enduring it as something preordained or accidental: a fate over which we have no control.

The subjects under discussion during the lessons are:

Lesson 1. The nature of human thought

What is the focus of human thought? Is our way of thinking sound? What contradictions are evident in our way of thinking?

Lesson 2. Reality and illusion

Are sensory perceptions infallible? What lies behind the world of phenomena? Absolute and objective idealism. Is it possible to learn recognizing reality?

Lesson 3/4. Human consciousness

The composite nature of human consciousness. An investigation into the various aspects that make up our thinking. The way to investigate the orientation of your own thought processes.

Lesson 5. Man know thyself

Guidelines for the investigation into your own character. The notions “good” and “evil”. What is consciousness? Selfishness and selflessness.

Lesson 6. Controlling thoughts

The properties that play a role in all of nature’s processes. Being master of your thought process. Guidelines for analysing thinking processes.

Lesson 7. Thoughts

What are thoughts? Spirit and matter in their interconnectedness. Is it possible to create new thoughts?

Lesson 8. Thought processes

What is “subconscious” thought? How do thought processes work? How can you change the way you think?

Lesson 9. Directing thoughts

Transferring thoughts and “perceiving” thoughts. Is it possible to help others through thinking? How can you use the power of thought safely?

Lesson 10. Changing your thought patterns

“Your life is what your thoughts make it to be.” Is it possible to change one’s character? The power of the imagination. Creating ideas.

Lesson 11. Unveiled thinking – the Socratic method

Knowledge or Wisdom? Judging “facts” and opinions. Developing the power of discernment. What is right? The essence of things.

Lesson 12. What humankind lacks

Is the majority always right? Why do philosophy and religion reach different conclusions? Is a synthesis possible? Requirements a life philosophy must meet.

In Skype sessions the lessons are discussed with fellow students and a trained teacher.

For more information visit: http://www.blavatskyhouse.org/courses/Thinking_Differently

If you are interested, please send us an email with times when you can participate in the course. In consultation a convenient time will be arranged.



Course Thinking Differently



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Search for truth

www.blavatskyhouse.org

Announcement: I.S.I.S. Foundation Symposium 2017

Compassion and Wisdom

Keys to a harmonious and healthy world

It is clear that the world is far from harmonious. But to think that the world will always stay disharmonious, is a delusion based on nothing but prejudice and a limited vision. During this symposium we aim to develop a fundamentally different vision of life, mankind and society, showing that the core of every human being is a source of wisdom and compassion.

The following questions take the center stage

- What is the cause of the sick world and how can we heal it again?
- How do you discover the ever-present Compassion in yourself (and others ...)?
- If we recognize Compassion, how can we apply it?
- Where can you find the solutions to the problems in your own life and in society?
- And, how do you help others to find the same answers in themselves?

A symposium about the deepest Core of ourselves!

The symposium will, similar to previous years, be an interactive process. Lectures will be alternated with workshops in which all visitors can verify the proposed ideas with their own experiences and those of others.

The full programme as well as the location of the symposium will be published on our website www.stichtingisis.org at a later stage.



Lucifer®

Colophon

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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 Theosophia. (We refer to the statutes, aims and principles for further information.)
- Board members must meet integrity requirements.
- The ANBI must have a separate property, whereby a director or policymaker cannot dictate over this property as though it were his own.
- The remuneration of board members may only consist of a reimbursement for expenses and attendance.

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

 International
Study-centre for
Independent
Search for truth
Foundation

I.S.I.S. Foundation

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

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



Why this journal is called *Lucifer*

Lucifer literally means Bringer of Light.

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

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

For these people this journal is written.

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

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

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