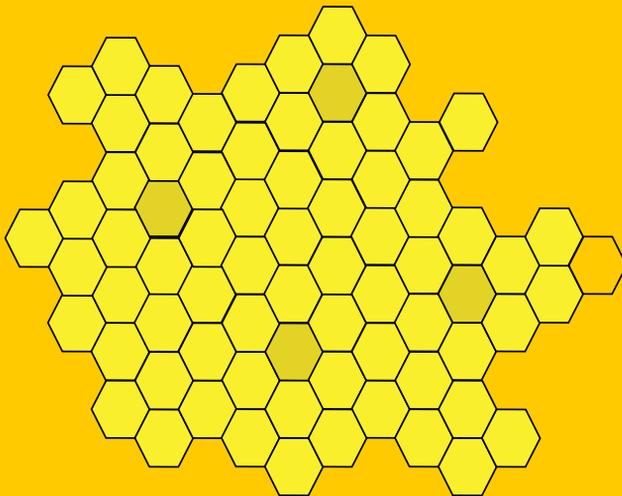


International
Theosophy
Conferences

July 26 - 29 2018
Berlin, German



What is A Life worth living?



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WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

THEOSOPHY AND A LIFE WORTH LIVING

July 26–29, 2018

First edition © 2019

Publisher

I.S.I.S., Stichting

The Hague, The Netherlands

www.theosophyconferences.org

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978-90-70163-77-8

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Printed by

I.S.I.S. Foundation

International Study-centre for Independent Search for Truth

Blavatsky House

De Ruyterstraat 74

2518 AV The Hague, The Netherlands

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Opening to what is a Life Worth Living

Gene Jennings, President of ITC

I would like to open, with a few thoughts regarding Theosophy, ITC and why we are here.

Each person here, as well as all who might be listening, or any who have seriously examined and been inspired by the teachings of Theosophy, owe their spiritual life, allegiance, and inner thanks to H.P. Blavatsky and her Masters.

In Mahatma letter 47 to A.P. Sinnett, one of the teachers said, “Ransack the spiritualistic literature if you will till the year 1877. Search and find in it if you can, one single word about occult philosophy, or esotericism or anything of that element now so largely infused in the spiritual movement. ... Ask and enquire whether the very word of occultism was not so completely unknown in America, ... that no one ever heard of elementary spirits and astral light – save the petroleum manufacturers ... Well ascertain this and compare ... *This was the first war cry.*” (italics by speaker). The Chiefs want a Brotherhood of Humanity, a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds”

They would like each, to be a co-worker, and helper in the sphere of the world for the betterment and amelioration of the condition of humanity, for the awakening of its Spiritual Divine instinct, as well as contribute to awakening the Buddhi Manas of the Race.

Their war cry being for the establishment and study (as they say) of the “highest philosophy of Universal Ideas. Ideas, “That

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touch man's true position in the universe, in relation to his previous and future births; his origin and ultimate destiny; the relation of the mortal to the immortal; of the temporary to the eternal; of the finite to the infinite; ideas larger, grander, more comprehensive, recognizing the universal reign of Immutable Law, unchanging and unchangeable in regard to which there is only an ETERNAL Now.¹" This is the type of philosophy they wish made clear to help on with the evolutionary growth and development of humanity.

This "Highest Philosophy" (in its many forms of expression) is the study of Theosophy, *AS OUTLINED AND PUT FORWARD BY THEM*, its "Realization, Assimilation, and exemplification" in life, here and now, practical and otherwise. In realizing a portion of this Ocean of Theosophy, ...in realizing the Ground within which *it is, exists, and has its being, arisal and dissolution*, we come to a fuller and deeper, more resonant understanding of this *temporary and transient condition called life, with all its ups and downs, ... moments of joy, extended periods of suffering*, and the purposes with which it is affiliated. As our teachers put it, "THIS, is what we study, and what many have solved."²

It is these Universal Ideas, known as the Philosophy of Theosophy, which give us the answers needed to determine, both deeply, in the examination of self and ITS inner life of subjectivity, as with things and others objectively in the world, "*What is a Life Worth Living*", the title of our Conference. So we look forward to this joint exchange, and problem-solving endeavor, *THIS NEW PHASE OF EXPERIENTIAL CROSS POLLINATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH FELLOW THEOSOPHISTS that will follow.*

Secondly – Brief words Concerning The What and Why of ITC.

The International Theosophy Conferences Inc. is the

1The Mahatma letters, facsimile edition Letter VI page 24. TUP, Pasadena, California, 1975 second edition, (ninth impression?) 1975.

2The Mahatma letters, facsimile edition. Letter VI page 24. TUP, Pasadena, California, 1975 second edition, (ninth impression?) 1975.

most recent evolutionary version of what used to be a simple gathering at the home of a Theosophist named Willie Dade, in Brookings Oregon going back to the days before 2007-2008. This initial gathering, has currently evolved, in one of its expressions, to become a Virtual Platform that operates in real time, once a year, at a designated location, *to simply provide an opportunity for the bodies, souls and minds of theosophists, young, old, veterans or new students, of different theosophical affiliations, organizations, groups, persuasions, or as individual students, to come together*, and mingle at a meeting place. Its reason for Being, is to foster deep, meaningful intercommunication, exchange, respectful listening, empathic understanding, and if necessary peaceful and amiable disagreement concerning the different Views and levels of understanding, each has regarding Theosophy, its truths and its way of expression, that individuals may have, ... all connected by a Spiritual Unity and profound understanding of the Cause of Theosophy, and *ITS REASON FOR BEING IN EXISTENCE*.

ITC is also an effort to further inspire, connect, share, and engage in a process of ***cross pollination*** concerning the Genius that each has to share in Light of the Teachings as provided by HPB (and her Masters).

This includes understanding that statements and beliefs by others, may be expressions concerning theosophy as understood in different ways; To *better explain*,... At times there may be clear *verbatim expressions* from the teachings, at other times “*interpretations*”; There may be, for better or worst, *attempts at clarifications* of the Teachings; *application* of teachings, *possible expansion of ideas* into other domains of science, religion or philosophy; *derivations from fundamental* or other tenets of theosophy; *deductions and inductive* thinking or application concerning those truths we accept as Theosophy. All of this work, this sharing and exchange concerning theosophical expression, when properly understood, is *purposeful and meaningful communication*, which should be not only encouraged, but also backed, and supported by the teachings, if it is to be accepted as such.

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ITC then, the place where all of this can happen, is for those that want it, for those that can recognize its place, value, and importance, regarding a pluralistic, integral, and at times, occult and transcendental understanding of “Theosophy, Theos Sophia, or the Wisdom Religion”, and who are ready for it, according to their devotion and development. They are those, perhaps, who are ready to rise above Theosophic divisions, holding to the Truth of Theosophy as given, in a common endeavor to simply, and empathically know each other, to share, communicate, and respect each other, as well as to recognize and appreciate, instead of condemn each other, or each others differences and genius.

As our teachers have said in Mahatma Letter VI, regarding the different ways in which Theosophy works in the world, “Europe is a large place but the world is bigger yet. The sun of Theosophy must shine for all, not for a part. There is more of this movement than you have yet had an inkling of, and the work of the T.S. is linked in with similar work that is secretly going on in all parts of the World.” ...

And perhaps it is because of such work that there are differences in certain aspects of theosophical expression as evidenced by the different organizations.

The importance, then of ITC, of coming together, speaking and sharing together in the work of theosophy, a force of understanding that *should Bind, not separate*, H.P. Blavatsky has said in message four of her five messages to the annual theosophical convention of 1891 “The critical nature of the stage on which we have entered is as well known to the forces that fight against us as to those that fight on our side. No opportunity will be lost of sowing dissension, of taking advantage of the mistaken and false moves, of instilling doubt, of augmenting difficulties, of breathing suspicions, so that *by any and every means the unity of the society may be broken and the ranks of our fellows thinned and thrown into disarray*. Never has it been more necessary for the members of the TS to lay to heart the old parable of the bundle of sticks than it is at the present time; divided, they will inevitably be broken, one by one; united, there is no force on earth able to destroy our Brotherhood.”¹ (italics by speaker)

If every fellow in the society were content to be an impersonal force for good, careless of praise or blame so long as he subserved the purposes of the brotherhood, the progress made would astonish The World and place the Arc of the TS out of danger. Take for your model in conduct during the coming year; peace with all who love truth in sincerity and the convention of 1891 will bear eloquent witness to the strength that is born of unity. ... After all, every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, *the never dormant wish of my heart*, Be Theosophists, work for Theosophy! Theosophy first, and Theosophy last; for its practical realization alone can save the Western world from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race, one nation from the other; and from that hatred of class and social considerations that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples. ... I ask you, in return, to strengthen the cause, by the triumph of which, that true light, made still brighter and more glorious through your individual and collective efforts, will lighten the world. ...

With those last words, we welcome you to the 2018 International Theosophy Conference, here in Berlin, *WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING? THANK YOU.*

What is A LIFE worth living?

Herman C. Vermeulen, Vice-President of ITC

It is always a privilege as vice-president to have the opportunity to say a few words and try to set a certain tone. The title of this conference is quite clear. First of all, our idea for this conference arises from Compassion: to transform metaphysical theosophical ideas into practical, useful ideas for suffering humanity. I think that is what we are trying to do in the coming days.

As ITC, I think we have two aims, two parts of a mission: a short-term and a long-term mission. They are not separate. Like washing your left and right hand at the same time, working on one aim means also working on the other.

For our short-term mission, it's our responsibility to make the existence of Theosophical teachings widely known and to show the value of these teachings with examples.

To be clear: it is not our responsibility to make everybody a Theosophist. There is free will of course, and it is everybody's responsibility to choose their own way in life. But you can keep us responsible for the fact that people outside the Theosophical Movement do not know about Theosophy. So, I think our duty is to make it known. Allow people to make their own choice. They might like to do something with Theosophy, like to study it – or just put it aside and go on with their life.

Now, over many years, I have learned that the best way of demonstrating the values of Theosophy is not only to speak about it, but to live Theosophy — being a living example. Show people that if you have problems in life, the theosophical approach to those problems is the best way to solve them.

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You know, in the 2014 ITC we first studied the Letter of the Maha-Chohan. We used this letter as one of the themes of that conference, and to me, that letter is the most modern way to describe what our duty is. It is straightforward and practical. It is time that Theosophy – Theosophists – should enter the arena. That is one of the key ideas in the Maha-Chohan Letter. We have to go out, and we have to do something, we have to show something, not only do we need to study at home and discuss Theosophy in small groups, but we also have to demonstrate it, we have to popularize Theosophy. Not by making concessions to the principals, but by presenting it in daily words, in everyday examples. We have to transform highly metaphysical theosophical ideas into practical, understandable ideas for people in difficult situations, searching for solutions, says the Maha Chohan Letter. In scientific research – for example in medical, physical or astronomical research – we should be able to translate the current ideas and discoveries back to the basic theosophical principles, showing that there is the main principle that explains all the phenomena.

This transformational point of view is essential. People are searching for solutions to the many questions the world community is facing. We use a variety of theosophical terms, but outsiders often need layman's terms in order to get the idea.

Now I have recently learned that 'solutions' may be a dangerous word. Some people might think that it means you work something out and say to the other: here is the solution, this is the way you have to do it. But of course, this is not the way we like to work at this conference. We want to work out (elaborate? Figure out?) the theosophical principals and show people how the laws of Nature work and how to implement them in their lives. This enables everyone to use their own free will and see how to handle an individual situation.

Last year in Philadelphia, there was a great atmosphere as we felt the need to act more practically. We worked this out in the light of the Philadelphia Declaration, which is part of your program. For now, I like to emphasize the numbers 1 and 5:

1. Identifying suffering/hot topics that need a solution from a

theosophical perspective

5. Inspire, encourage or facilitate theosophical branches or organizations to enter the arena', to offer these solutions

So, for this conference, we have three hot topics: Religious intolerance, Depression and End of life issues. We all have to address these topics from the spiritual, mental, and physical level because if we are applying Theosophy, we know these levels are connected; no one issue is concentrated in just one level. So we have to understand how the combination is working. Looking for solutions, we have to take into account the consequences for all three levels.

The challenge for this 2018 ITC is working together from different theosophical traditions, finding universal theosophical principles applied to each of the subjects and transforming these principles into daily language or layman's terms.

Over the years, I have learned that working with different theosophical traditions can give us real enrichment in understanding Theosophy. Within our theosophical tradition, we know how to communicate with each other, we are accustomed to a certain theosophical terminology and an understanding of those terms. But discussing questions with fellow workers from other theosophical traditions can help us be surprised and say: this is something I have to rethink because I was always thinking... That is a rich moment. Then we are just on the edge of making a big step forward. We can open up our mind, start rethinking and see how things are somehow fitting. So, by doing this, we can work on the transformation and implementation of theosophical principles into the practice of daily life and the general language. This is a big challenge.

During our presentations in The Netherlands and other places, we asked people attending a lecture for the first time to what extent they were able to learn something. That turned out to be very little. We often don't realize that we are using so many theosophical terms that have no meaning at all for them. They need more explanation.

In this conference – and this is a real challenge because we

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have never done it before – we are going to practice a type of training, a new field in which we work together.

You know Dutch people like iceskating. We have a saying in Dutch that reads ‘No iceskating without falling’, meaning ‘We will make mistakes for sure’. Now, we have to help each other in correcting these mistakes. We certainly should bear in mind that another way to fall on the ice is not sharing your knowledge and your information. We are a Brotherhood, and we are open, we know each other reasonably well. We should exchange all our ideas. We can help one another to understand, correct, and work out our theosophical visions. So, not helping is also falling on ice.

This is our mission for the coming days. But of course, there is also our long-term mission: to support the work of the Masters of Compassion. Studying Theosophy is only the first step; to live Theosophy is the main thing. And that leads us to help develop what I have called a new type of humanity. A type of humanity that can think from the wisdom-part of their consciousness. This is a long-term process.

What’s the reason why everyone in the world isn’t interested in Theosophy? There is a lot of discussion about this question within our theosophical organizations. As we speak about spreading Theosophy, I think we don’t have to think in years, but in incarnations. Some people we inspire today will inspire others soon. But also some people we inspire today, will inspire others only in their next incarnation. And that may take hundreds of years. Or 1500 years, as H.P. Blavatsky mentioned as the average.

With these 1500 years in mind, we can realize that we need continuity in spreading Theosophy for at least 1500 years before we have addressed everyone. That is a real long-term mission.

It is also a very important mission because this is what will happen, what we have to take into account. So, we don’t have to be disappointed because we only attract a limited number of interested parties and not a stadium filled with 50,000 people. That is something for the long-term.

I think this is our mission for the coming days and the future incarnations. So, let’s see what we can do!

Greetings from Brasilia

Jan Nicolaas Kind

Hello Berlin, hello fellow seekers,

From Brasilia greetings to all participants assembled in Berlin for ITC 2018. The theme for this gathering “What is a Life Worth Living?” is a true invitation for deliberations, dialogues and lots of intensive listening.

Our spiritual quest, at times it looks more like a struggle, is not always an easy one. Our world in its current state challenges us. When there is much potential, light and hope for a better world, the counter, or dark forces at the same time become dangerously active, trying to eliminate the good, causing disharmony, depression and conflict. We can observe that all around us, it is an occult law. We don't have search for it, it is so visible: intolerance on many levels, while many of our sisters and brothers who, in spite of the so-called connections through smart phones and social media, are so terribly disconnected.

In order to make certain that Theosophists in years to come will still be able to shine light in the darkness, our commitment and trust are essential. It was often said that Theosophy is not a noun but that it is and will always be a verb. ITC is working for the future and it is doing that here and now in Berlin, because the now is here, another time does not exist. It is the only true moment in which one can express life: the eternal active present.

ITC is on-going experiment, a work in progress of which all of you are a part. Theosophy as such cannot solve the issues the world is facing, but through Theosophy mankind is able to find keys to go inward and start the so much needed process of regeneration and self-realization.

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Our lives are worth living and when we listen carefully to the call from within, we know that our daily work, our relationships with others, our contributions, our certainties and uncertainties, our pain but also happiness are deeply interwoven with our Dharma, which stands for righteousness of action, deeds and thought. Most of you present in Berlin are well acquainted with Theosophy, many of you have done remarkable work already, but more is to be done and that's why you are together participating in yet another ITC gathering. The Masters of Wisdom are to help humanity to come to listen to that call from within. Obviously they aren't able to do it by themselves. They sow the seeds that will sprout in the consciousness of each of you since it is clear that enlightenment must come from within.

We are not meant to “spread” Theosophy” in a conventional sense, as if it were a religion. Dan we come together, we work together to make sure that what was brought to us through the works of Helena Blavatsky and others remains accessible, so that those who knock may catch a glimpse of that majestic panoramic view that appears once one starts to grasp the basics of the teachings. We are seekers and it is not an intellectual kind of exercise; Theosophy and its concepts are not for the happy few but for all to take note of. The various streams are not organizations for believers, because the idea is that one will come to know, through one's own self-effort.

The Ancient Wisdom was specifically designed for the task of introducing harmony and peace in situations of apparent fear and separateness. Therefore, we need to take a firm step back from the workings of the phenomenal world and carefully observe what we can do through our work, bringing Theosophy into practice and being true philanthropists and free thinkers. There has to be clarity of what the nature of this universe in which we reside is, if we really aim to achieve unity and wholeness, doing away with all that kept us apart. We do need to understand this and look at the tasks that lie ahead of us. There is so much work to be done.

Nowadays the monster of separation is roaring its ugly head: it is us against them, it's gay against straight, neo-Nazis and white supremacists are marching again with the objective to humiliate

those who have a different color, background or accent, families looking for a better future are being separated and religious fanatics are mutilating all their teachers and founders tried to convey. It is religion against other religions, the rich are suppressing the poor, while a lost and overweight populist wants to build walls. Well it is the same old story, nothing new under the sun, all this being a consequence of our artificial separateness, our being in the illusionary realms of divisiveness.

Through what we have learned we can set examples and a first step is to eliminate the barriers separating Theosophical streams, all of them, an initiative so well underway now through the platform ITC offers. Being together as you are right now in Berlin is actually a breathtaking experience, you will find that there is so much you have in common and although there are differences, in the core we're all one and able to show, as in that song, our true colors, like a rainbow.

On this platform it is essential that there is willingness to step away from the characteristics one is accustomed to in one's own environment, and that prejudices are put aside. ITC is NOT TSPL, NOT THE TS ADYAR NOR THE ULT. Once on the platform we are equal seekers and part of the Theosophical movement. Tolerance for the other seeker isn't sufficient. Principle should always be that there is unconditional respect, even if there is a difference reading or idea concerning what was brought to us by H.P.B.

I rarely quote, repeating what others have written or said BUT I would to make exception here in order to illustrate what I have just said. William Judge in one of his articles wrote the following: " If we attend strictly to our own duty all will act in harmony, for the duty of another is dangerous for us. Therefore if any member proposes to spread the doctrines of theosophy in a way that seems wise to him, wish him success even if his method be one that would not commend itself to you for your own guidance."

So another ITC is about to take off and I am so sorry I can't be with you. Our lives are worth living and our Dharma will bring us to that level where we are able to connect and make sense

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of all the nonsense in the world around us. Let's work, ponder and dream together. Our movement, our vehicle has only been on the road for 147 years, we've just started, let's think of those who come after us, let's make Theosophy truly a living Wisdom.

My love and good thoughts are with all of you, so it's goodbye for now from Brasilia, until we meet again.

Freie Universität Berlin

Veritas, Justitia, Libertas

Sieglinde Plocki



The Latin words *veritas*, *justitia*, and *libertas*, which frame the seal of Freie Universität Berlin, stand for the values that have defined the academic ethos of Freie Universität ever since it was first founded, in December 1948.

Veritas

Veritas – truth – is the highest aim of the research and teaching activities pursued at Freie Universität. In the modern sense, this focus on truth means outlining a clear interest in new findings and insight for the university's academic activities, protecting those activities from the risk of arbitrariness, and observing the standards of good academic practice. It is in the quest for truth that academia finds the core of its intellectual self-image, its methodological sustainability, and its internal drive and dynamism.

Justitia

Justitia – justice – refers to the university's alignment to a generally acknowledged canon of values led by personal commitment and social responsibility. The term also stands in no small measure for an academic education that is open to young people from all over the world – regardless of social status, sex, national origin, religion, creed, or ethnicity.

Libertas

Libertas – freedom – is the basic prerequisite for research and

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teaching activities to be successful. Only if academia determines its own goals and responsibilities, independently of external influences – whether from the state, the church, the business sector, or the wider society – can it meet its standards of achieving new knowledge with social consciousness.

As important as each of the university's three guiding principles is on its own, the interaction between them is also fundamental. Truth without freedom becomes rigid dogma; justice without truth, an empty norm; and freedom without justice, a game with nothing at stake. Only where truth, justice, and freedom come together as values to form a greater whole is there space for intellectual commonality and open discourse in an unrestricted interchange of ideas.

Freie Universität believes its role is to provide exactly that kind of space for ideas and its guiding principles to resonate – a place that brings together innovations, researchers and students, concepts and ideas.

Commitment

The responsibility that arises from the three guiding principles enshrined in our seal is a living commitment. That's why now, in the 21st century, Freie Universität still remains true to the impulse behind its founding, taking that idea as guidance for its future development.

1946: Founding of SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany/ Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands) – on soviet pressure Socialist PD and Kommunist PD united in this party.

1947:

The American Foreign minister George C. Marshall proposes a reconstruction program for the European economy.

March 1947:

Georg Wradzilo, medical student, leading mind of the student council was arrested by the Soviet military government in March 1947, stayed arrested until October 1956 because he wanted to submit the University administration to the Berlin urban administration (Magistrate) instead of the Russian Head Office

for National Education (controlled by pro-Russian forces).

Dr. Horst W. Hartwich, in 1946

Member of the student council, also a medical student, reported as contemporary witness on the reaction of the students on Wradzilo's arresting: "Those Students like Wradzilo were in the eyes of the soviets prominent anti-russian Germans. They could only be fascists. The normal, unpolitical students at the Berlin University reacted either frightened or they just kept silent. The world does not consist of heroes. But there were enough students who reacted first disgusted and this disgust turned into rejection and even hatred – because of the unjust and false reasons: to call us Fascists was really an insult. Only from my family 14 relatives have been murdered in the concentration camps of the Nazis and there were many similar cases. Of the first elected student council of 28 at the Berlin University, 11 were victims to fascism."

These students, who already under fascism had suffered a lot, were especially sensible for new indoctrinations and were ready to act for their ideas. Among them there were so-called half Jews like Horst W. Hartwich, who had not been allowed to finish their school with the Abitur, or german-polish students like Stanislaw Kubicki. His father was a friend of the Anarchist Erich Mühsam whom the Nazis had murdered after the occupation of Poland. Especially because these students had the courage to openly utter their criticism, was it necessary that the Americans granted permission to Otto Hess and Joachim Schwarz from the students workgroup to publish their students journal "colloquium". This journal became a forum for non-communist students where they could give insights to the public on the real situation at the Berlin University.

1947

A look at the elections to the students council of Kaiser-Friedrichs-Universität in 1947 gives a clear picture. 76% of the students voted (a percentage students nowadays would dream of) to fill 28 seats of which 12 fell to students with any political position, not belonging to any political party

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5 to SPD (Social Democrats)

2 to CDU (Christian Democrats)

3 to SED (Socialists/communist party of the GDR¹)

1 to LDP (Liberal Democrats)

November 8, 1947, the Berlin Newspaper “Der Tagesspiegel“ published an article with the header “Universitas or Higher Party School” commenting the politically motivated admission policy at the Berlin University, which meant e.g. that lecturers and professors with the correct political opinion replaced those with key-positions at the university, student vacancies were filled with students of SED etc. The conclusion was that it would have been best to give the university in the custody of municipal authorities. Should this not be possible, then it would be the best, to call for the Elite of our country and with them build a new Universitas Literarum in Berlin. – The idea was born!

Five months later:

This idea became the ignition spark. After the following event, when on April 16, 1948: Otto Hess, Otto Stolz and Joachim Schwarz, who had published an article in the student journal “colloquium” with critical remarks on the election of the Rector of the in 1946 reopened Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, were expelled.

Their criticism was that it became more and more important to be a member of the correct political party (SED), than to be able to study. Even former members of the NSDAP were admitted if they claimed strong enough to have changed their mind, but students from middle class families, the so-called Bildungsbürgertum (well-educated middle classes) were refused just because of the family background.

On April 23, 1948 1.500 students took part in a large protest demonstration in the British sector of the city outside the hotel Explanade, where Otto Stolz, the expelled member of the SPD-student group demanded the founding of a free University in the western parts of the City.

¹German Democratic Republic

On May 11, 1948, the municipal council assigns the municipal authorities of Great Berlin to take means for the establishment of a free university. Of 105 delegates 83 accepted the motion of the SPD. The SED rejected it and the 5 CDU-members abstained from voting.

June 19, 1948: About 50 leading personalities of Berlins political, intellectual and academic life decided that a free university was a necessity in the struggle for a free City of Berlin. Students had demanded this, the city parliament had decided with a broad majority but could not put the plan into practice without the consent of the four-powers (Soviet Union, Britain, France, United States). Every possibility to bring the old University Unter den Linden under the auspices of the municipal authorities was depleted.

Convinced that only a free unification of citizens could fulfil this task, the assembly formed a committee and elected Prof. Ernst Reuter, the then-mayor as chairman and Prof. Edwin Redslob of the newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* (with the interesting motto: *rerum cognoscere causa*) as deputy. Other members were Prof. Kurt Landsberg (CDU), Prof. Kurt Schwennicke (LDP), Prof. Paul Altenberg of Technical University, Otto Hess, one of the expelled students and other representatives of Berlins cultural life.

This committee has examined the possibilities regarding departments, faculty staff, rooms, books and financial means and stated, that the undertaking can be accomplished. It is planned, to start in October.

A manifest was published, calling the general public at home and abroad who felt bound in honour for freedom and truth, to support the formation of a free university in service for all, where students could research and study in the sense of real democracy, without fear and free of any party political indoctrination. This University should be a new spiritual centre of a free Berlin and serve for the recovery of Germany. Representatives of the German and Allied Forces and Administrations were called to action, especially the students of universities working for freedom, academies and colleges. Professors and teaching staff as

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well as academic teachers abroad were called to support this endeavor with lectures or in any form possible. Friends and sponsors all over the world were asked to support the foundation with money and teaching material.

June 24, 1948: Beginning of Berlin blockade. The situation between East and West deteriorated due to the currency reform.

June 26, 1948: Western allied forces began to support West-Berlin by the Airlift.

With the help of General Lucius Clay and Kendall Foss it was possible during the currency reform to save some of the money earned by selling a newspaper (Neue Zeitung) and a licensed journal (Heute) on a special account opened by the publisher of Der Tagesspiegel, Erik Reger, for the start of the new university.

A crucial point for the destiny of the foundation of a university was to gain distinguished scientists. Ernst Reuter made this possible. He convinced the German historian Friedrich-Meinecke to act as founding rector. He then was already 86 and his commitment was only possible because of the help of the art historian Edwin Redslob, who then as acting rector supported him.

December 4, 1948: Friedrich Meinecke was ill and could not personally attend the opening festivities, but his speech was broadcasted to the Titania Palast, where he stressed, that the newly founded university was not meant to fight against the old one but to enter a scientific contest.

In November already, the teaching program had started with 2.140 students who had been chosen from 5.500 applicants. 21 professors were ready for teaching. The medical department did not have an own clinical centre but worked with the Westend-hospital. A library of already 350 000 books were assembled, but there were not enough rooms for lecturing and lectures were therefore given in a cinema and even a shed of the underground.

For its start, Freie Universität Berlin received some buildings of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft (which is nowadays the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft), and in 1949, town major Frank Howley arranged for the take-over of 16 institutes of the Humboldt

University situated in the American sector of Berlin.

From 1949 to 1954 The United States supported Freie Universität Berlin financially, more so the American Ford Foundation with which town major Howley had established good contacts, but also the American High Commissioner John McCloy with his director for public relations Shepard Stone worked for this purpose (a former student of Kaiser-Wilhelms-University).

Help was urgently needed, what was demonstrated by the increasing numbers of students. In 1951 there were already 5700 of which more than one third, namely 2000 came from the East. The teaching staff counted then 225 people, including Professors and research assistants. When the leading representatives of the Ford Foundation, President Paul Hofmann and Henry Ford II visited Berlin in 1951, they were so enthusiastic about the developments at Freie Universität Berlin, that they decided to Build a new Auditorium maximum, a Library and a Mensa-Building, they supported exchange programs for students and professors with American universities, as well as the set up of research institute for Eastern European Studies as well as the North American Studies Institute. Of special importance was the support of a program for visiting lecturers who helped to fill the gaps in the teaching staff.

When in 1953 John F. Kennedy, before his famous speech in front of the Rathaus Schöneberg, was awarded the honorary citizenship of Freie Universität Berlin, he again expressed the vision of a free university, which is interested in the education of World citizens, of humans who are willing to face the difficult task which we as free men and women are confronted with, in service of the progress of a free society.

And in **1968 Eleanor Dulles** together with the Benjamin Franklin Foundation took care that Freie Universität Berlin received its clinical centre by financing a big part of the costs.

This strong American support over the years with millions of dollars and otherwise can only be explained by a deep change in views from both sides. The victorious and occupying powers first turned into protectors and during the blockade and airlift they

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even became friends. Freie Universität Berlin became a symbol of German American Friendship. You can imagine, why this made the situation so difficult during the 1968 manifestations against the Vietnam war.

The official seal of Freie Universität Berlin, which is part of today's logo, contains the motto:

Veritas, Justitia, Libertas – Truth, Justice, Freedom – Values which are universal ones and worth supporting. Aren't we theosophists totally in line with those values? As seekers of truth we strive for Justice and Freedom in all fields of life. Freedom of thought is a very important factor in the search for truth and the development of a harmonious society. We can feel at home at these university grounds!

Berlin's theosophical Influence on Arts & Design
From Blavatsky to iPhone

Bouke van den Noort

Good morning everybody.

When I was asked for this introduction I already had a few ideas. This year Herman C Vermeulen had a lecture series on the Spiritual function of Art & Design, (www.Blavatskyhouse.org) so I had a starting point but I was curious what to find more. And when I dove into the subject I discovered a few surprising things where Theosophy had impact on today – through art & design in Germany.

One of those things for example is this iPhone. So I added a little subtitle for this overview: From Blavatsky to iPhone. You might wonder now what Blavatsky has to do with iPhones, but I'll show in next 15 minutes that there is a relation and that Berlin had a role in it.

But before we start in Germany, I'll give a quick overview what happens in the art-scene in the rest of Europe for the necessary context. Because, just as in Theosophy, there are no absolute beginnings, there is no absolute beginning of theosophical influence on art & design in Germany.

So first a short overview of what happens in Europe – just after the secret Doctrine was published in 1888 – and then we'll see that a few lines come together in Germany and here in Berlin.

Blavatsky came, as she said, to break the molds of mind, to change the materialistic and dogmatic view on life in a universal, spiritual vision. And by doing so, she had a tremendous impact on artists, and art movements. In a way this is not surprising since art is also called the language of the soul, but when you start

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looking for it, you'll be still surprised how many famous artists devoted their life trying to express this spiritual vision in art. Some historians also mention the groundbreaking influence of theosophy on arts and architecture of 20th century. This influence is shown by the sudden change in art-styles.

Simultaneously with the shift from materialistic to a spiritual view on life, we see a change from concrete forms to abstract work. There's a general striving of artists to express the spiritual essence behind the external forms.

And there's a challenge here: that is to express the inexpressible, and use materials to express the immaterial.

But they found some ways to do this and we can recognise these by a few principles that artists started to apply in order to 'dematerialise' their subject.

The first one is the application of geometry, in order to express Universal, Cosmic ratios.

Secondly, we see a tendency to reduce objects to their essence in colour and form, which resulted in the use of primary colours and straight lines only.

And thirdly, the tendency to work formless to get closer to the 'IDEA' of the subject and to leave out all external details that would only distract the viewer from this higher IDEA.

So from 1890 we see a sudden, radical change in application of these elements. Whether they succeeded is another thing, but the point is: they all tried in their own way to

express to the spiritual essence of life. I'll just give a few examples to get an impression.

To start in France, Brittany: the School of Pont-Aven. Characterised by the use of pure colours, geometrical composition, the absence of perspective and shading and the absence of details



1

The painting on the right (*image 1*) is made by Gauguin, one of the pioneers of School of Pont-Aven.

And here we see bright colours, two dimensional plains and reduction of detail.

The same applies for the painting on the right (*image 2*) from Maurice Denis, another member of the Pont-Aven school.



2

Around the same time in Brittany a group formed which called themselves Les Nabis which is Hebrew or Arabic for 'the Prophets' (because they saw themselves as the revitalisers of the spiritual in art). Here (*image 3*) you see a further abstraction of form and colour in a painting by Paul Sérusier, founder of Les Nabis. Realistic elements are now fully replaced by colour interpretations, all for the purpose to express the higher IDEA of the subject only.



3

Another movement that arose somewhat later, with its centre in Paris is Cubism. Starting with Cezanne, but it is this particular painting of Picasso (*image 4*) that is considered as the determining piece for the movement. Within cubism there was a sub-movement called Section d'Or which means golden ratio. This group's aim was to show mathematical harmony and relationships occurring in nature. Interesting fact is that



4

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Picasso studied the Kaballah and that he was a member of the order of Martinists (from Saint Germain).

This work you see here is in general thought to show an erotic scene. But an acquaintance of mine who did an PhD in arts on this piece discovered that the women in the painting symbolise Hebrew letters, forming one of the 72 names for the Divine in the Kaballah.

Another artist, who said that 'Cubism embodies the greatest potential for evolving a truly spiritual form of art' is Mondriaan, a famous Dutch artist known as one of the pioneers of abstract art.

Mondriaan is also known for being a Theosophist. He became a member of the Theosophical Society one year after he attended a lecture in 1908 on Devachan and Kama Loka by Rudolf Steiner, who was still a theosophist by then. Ever since Mondriaan devoted his life to translate the theosophical ideas in his work and express Universal Harmony best way possible. This was an ongoing process of working more and more abstract, as you can see in this example (*image 5a, b, c*) of the tree, evolving over time into a cubistic abstraction.

Mondriaan saw art not as an end but as a means to an end; to spiritual development of the society. To his opinion art wouldn't be needed anymore when this ideal society is realised.

This (*image 6*) is the kind of work he's most famous for. For Mondriaan the most pure way to express the Essence, Cosmic Harmony. And now we see the use of primary



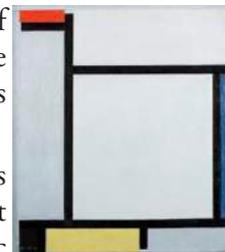
5a



5b



5c



6

colours and straight lines only.

This particular piece was Mondriaan's first in this style and when he finished the painting he wrote a letter to Steiner in which he said something like: "now I've found the art for true anthroposophists and theosophists". But Steiner never replied, which was quite frustrating to Mondriaan.

Driven by the universal Ideals of Theosophy, Mondriaan started the idealistic art-movement De Stijl together with Theo van Doesburg. They wanted to create new timeless designs, which they called the new plastic art or Neoplasticism. According to the movement, design had the purpose to elevate people. They wanted to create a world in which people would experience a sense of harmony. Because harmony, they said, is the law of the universe and therefore it should also be expressed in design. This meant, again, reduction to the most elementary basics: primary colours and geometrical forms with straight lines. Here *(image 7)* you see famous chair of Rietveld, one of De Stijl members.



7

Someone who inspired many members of De Stijl is the famous artist and theosophist, Wassily Kandinsky. And now we arrive in Germany! Because Kandinsky, born in Russia, moved to Germany early in his career. He too, is well known for his abstract work and he said the following about it:

“Non-objective painting is the only vehicle for achieving inner knowledge of the intangible spiritual world”.

Kandinsky started a movement in München: Der Blaue Reiter which means the Blue Rider. Members of this group were Paul

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Klee, Lyonel Feininger and Alexej Jawlenski, all involved with theosophy and they all shared a common desire to express spiritual truths by art.

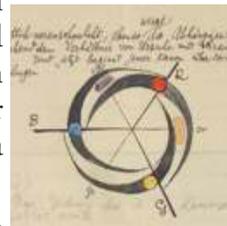
In their paintings, every color had its own symbolic meaning. Kandinsky saw blue as the most spiritual, hence the name of the group Blue Rider.

From here we make a little jump to Bauhaus, the art-school founded by Walter Gropius in 1919. Bauhaus started in Weimar, but moved later to Dessau and finally to Berlin. So now we finally arrived in Berlin. Gropius just as De Stijl movement wanted to build the future. He had the ideal of transforming society by combining art with architecture and design. He too was convinced that an inspiring surrounding will bring out the better in people. Therefore we see the same principles of De Stijl: design should be free of unnecessary details, any ‘untruths or ornamentation’ as Gropius said and design should always be a fusion of arts and manufacturing. For that Bauhaus had an unique approach to teaching, because their workshops were always co-directed by a craftsman and an artist.

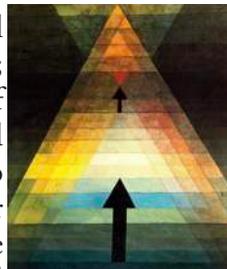
And here in Bauhaus things come together, because who were these art teachers? Van Doesburg & Mondriaan from the Stijl movement, giving lectures at Bauhaus; theosophist Kandinsky and two members of his the Blue Rider group, Paul Klee and Lyonell Feininger; and Johannes Itten, also strongly influenced by theosophy. Together they had a determining contribution to the modernism of the 20th century. Klee and



8a



8b



9

Itten especially with their colour-theories they thought out of created at Bauhaus.

Here (*image 8a, b*) on the left you see sketches of the notebook of Paul Klee, working out his color theory. He was known for his scientific approach, but also made this painting on the right (*image 9*), called Eros. And on Eros he said the following, and keep Plato in mind here:



10

"The future slumbers within man and needs only to awaken. It cannot become. Hence, even a child knows Eros."

The arrows you see, Klee used as symbols for spiritual escape from earthly shackles.



11

Then the other one, Johannes Itten, teaching one of the fundamental courses on harmony and relations among colours. Itten introduced 7 types of color contrast such as warm cold, light dark, contrast of saturation and complementary contrast – visualised in his notebook (*image 10*) and his colour sphere of twelve colours (*image 11*). And still today we make use of his theory. For example the concept of colour temperature he introduced, is now very common and still used. And this one (*image 12*): the complementary colour circle we all had to paint at school and which you'll find in every art class today, we also owe to Itten.



12



13

Not only on colour-theories, but also on architecture Bauhaus was revolutionary. As said before, Gropius wanted to build the future and I'll show just a few examples of it. Like the headquarter of Bauhaus (*image 13*), build in 1925, almost a hundred years ago! As you see, really ahead of time and revolutionary in the use of the materials too such as bent

According to Rams a good design :

1. Is innovative
2. Makes a product useful
3. Is aesthetic
4. Makes a product understandable
5. Is unobtrusive
6. Is honest
7. Is long-lasting
8. Is thorough down to the last detail
9. Is environmentally friendly
10. Involves as little design as possible



14

tubular steel of this Wassily chair (*image 14*) still modern today. This (*image 15*) could be a modern beach-house in California, but it is a Bauhaus design on the world exhibition in Barcelona in 1929! And a picture of the interior taken at that time... how timeless! (*image 16*)



15

Then we make a little jump again. Bauhaus Berlin closed in 1933 due to upcoming second world war, but it had a successor 20 years later: the Ulm School of Design, founded by a former Bauhaus student. Teachings on the school were also guided by the principles of the Bauhaus. And one of the students was designer Dieter Rams, strongly influenced by Bauhaus architects Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, he is often called a protégé of Bauhaus. Formed by his education in Ulm, Rams later developed his '10 principles for a good Design'.



16

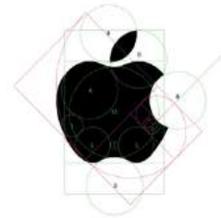
And you can recognise the elements of Bauhaus: design should be functional, aesthetic, involving as little design as possible, modest... But also the social aspect: it should be honest, long lasting, environmental friendly etc.

Dieter Rams is best known for his designs at Braun of which you can see a few examples here (*image 17*). And it is one of these examples, namely the tape-recorder recorder at bottom that caused two gentlemen to become two of his biggest fans...



17

(*image 18*) Steve Jobs & Jonathan Ive from Apple! So here we have it: from Blavatsky to iPhone. With a nice example of golden ratio applied here.



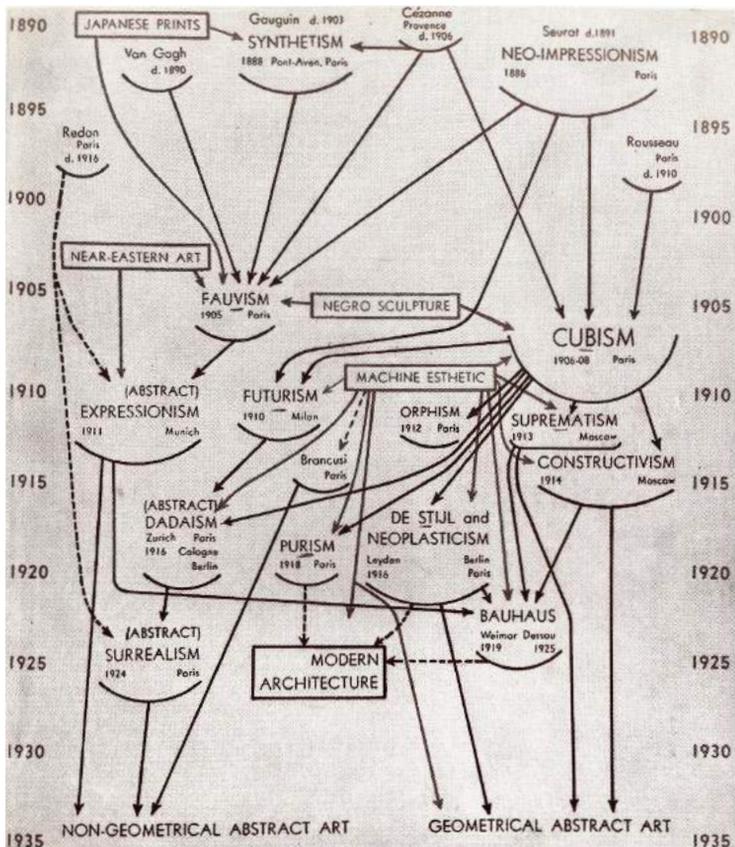
18

To sum it up: a simple clarifying overview(*image 19*), starting in 1890 to 1935.

And as you can see: everything is interconnected and a lot of exchange is taking place between the movements. Many artists visited each other and influenced each other, but one thing is for sure:

Theosophy has its influence on many of them with Mondriaan and Kandinsky being key figures.

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19

Objectives and Process for the Themes of the Conference

Herman C. Vermeulen

In our readings, there is this famous quotation of an article by Damodar, one of the chela's from the time of H.P. Blavatsky and her Masters. The article (1) is very worth reading. This quotation is about how you can approach problems and get a better view of them:

“The student” must first learn the general axioms. For the time being, he will of course have to take them as assumptions, if he prefers to call them so... What the student has first to do is to comprehend these axioms and, by employing the deductive method, to proceed from universals to particulars. He has then to reason from the “known to the unknown”, and see if the inductive method of proceeding from the particulars to universals supports those axioms. This process forms the primary stage of true contemplation. – Damodar K. Mavalankar

The terms ‘deductive’ and ‘inductive’ are not specifically theosophical, they are well-known from science. As general expressions, ‘deductive’ is sometimes called ‘top-down’ and inductive is sometimes called ‘bottom-up’. But the approach of Damodar is clearer and very inspiring.

Quite often people think that with a deductive approach you don't have an eye for the details. Or, if you take the inductive approach, you don't look at the big picture because you are only focused on the details. Now, Damodar makes it very clear that

(1) From *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, no. 11, August, 1884, Contemplation III, pp. 267-8.

See also: Sven Eek, *Dâmodar and the pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar 1978, pp. 397-400.

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this is certainly not a theosophical point of view.

sheet: Deductive-Inductive reasoning

First the student has to comprehend the axioms, says Damodar. And by employing the deductive method to proceed from universals to particulars, he first has to reach from the known to the unknown and then see if the inductive method of proceeding from the particular to the universal supports the axioms.

This is in fact what we like to do in the coming days. An important question at this point: from where do we start, as Theosophists? Well, I think our principles are clear, so we should start from the three fundamental Principals of the Secret Doctrine. I am using a somewhat modern way of describing these.

So, we start from boundlessness. The causeless cause behind every manifestation. There is absolute interconnectedness. We assume a force behind every manifestation, regardless of whether it involves higher or lower consciousness qualities. Nothing is separated; universal brotherhood is a fact in Nature.

Next we assume cyclical movement: Life manifests itself periodically. Each form is the result of the consciousness that is working through it. And here we also look at Karma. Some people think cause and effect is a random process, it happens to you, you have no control over it. But Theosophy does not assume coincidence. Nature has its universal laws. So, when we take certain actions, the results will be in line with them. If we act from a strong emotion, then the effects will also have a strong emotional characteristic. If we act calmly, the effects will be consistent.

Furthermore, we assume growth and fundamental equality. All beings, regardless of their quality of consciousness, are of equal value. Lower and higher consciousnesses are always working together: there is cooperation between all beings. We have infinite faculties, we only have to learn to express them.

So in our program we make this step of investigation: the common perception of the problem. Speaking of religious intolerance, end-of-life issues or depression, what do we mean by

these terms? Do we use the same terminology? Do we understand each other, so that we can start from the same point? In our study-circles, I think 20 minutes will do for this step, because we should not go into emotional details.

The second step is to look for the theosophical causes of the problem. Here we have to leave behind all personal emotions and try to find out, from a theosophical point of view, what type of processes and effects are involved. You can call this the Atmic vision. Look at the problem with a certain personal distance, just observe what is going on from the most abstract level you can reach.

Next we have the important step of going from the universal into the particular. We're sticking to our principles. In science it is often said that you have to skip the theory, start from the details and see what type of theory you can develop from there on. But that's not our mindset. We already have found truth for ourselves in the fundamental principles and we have learned to see them in a broader perspective. With these principles we look at the problem and it's processes and we try to see all the interconnections. You can call this the Buddhic point of view. As all is interconnected and are all ONE, there is no separateness. So there's no problem that stands alone.

sheet: Deductive reasoning: (start from above)

Deductive reasoning: (start from above)

- we hold a theory and based on it we make a prediction of its consequences
- Three fundamentals ...

The diagram shows a vertical flow of concepts. At the top is 'Universal'. Below it, 'Atmic vision' is connected to 'Deductive reasoning' by a downward-pointing triangle. Below 'Deductive reasoning' is 'Buddhic view'. Below 'Buddhic view' is 'Manasic view'. To the right, 'particulars' is connected to 'Inductive reasoning' by an upward-pointing triangle. At the top right is another 'Universal'. The text 'Deductive reasoning' and 'Inductive reasoning' are written along the paths of their respective triangles.

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Then we come to look at the cause-and-effect situations of the problem. Here we enter the Manasic point of view. While the focus is now almost entirely on the details, the challenge is to keep it manasic. Sometimes people say that is a rather cold and distant attitude. They think you can't help people if you don't go along with their problem and generate the same type of emotion. But from the theosophical point of view, as far as I understand, it is much better always to keep the manasic approach. Try to help by analysing the problem, not by becoming part of one's problem as well.

So, when we have completed this analysis of the problem, we have to see in what direction it should be solved. From the particulars, we are heading back to the Universal. We keep the overview in mind, we have mapped the details, and now we can work out a real solution.

sheet: Inductive reasoning: (start from below)

In this process, keep in mind that our senses quite often present something that is far from true. Our senses are coloured by our own development and characteristic. When I see a

Inductive reasoning: (start from below)

- makes broad generalizations from specific observations.
- In Theosophy see how details fit in the fundamental principles

The diagram illustrates the process of inductive reasoning. It shows a path starting from 'particulars' at the bottom, moving upwards through 'Inductive reasoning' to 'Universal' at the top. The path is labeled 'Inductive reasoning' and 'particulars'. The path is also labeled 'Manasic view' at the bottom, 'Buddhic view' in the middle, and 'Atmic vision' at the top. The path is also labeled 'Universal' at the top. The diagram is a blue background with yellow text and a yellow triangle pointing upwards.

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beautiful Ferrari, I can be very enthusiastic, but my wife will say: that car is too small for shopping. It's a completely different valuation of that Ferrari. So, let's not be guided by our emotions,

let's look beyond our senses. We need to see through the illusion.

As we understand the meaning of the three fundamental principles – and of course our understanding can grow – we now can make a clear picture of the situation. Take the simple example of people migrating from continent to continent, from country to country, for very different reasons. You can say: they should not do so. But cyclicity is one of our main fundamental principles. It is normal. So migrating over the earth is part of Nature. And one important reason for people to move over the world is that they like to learn more.

Without this motivation, Columbus would never have sailed westbound for Asia – and discovered a part of the Americas. So you see what you have to do if you want to take a step further. You have to overcome your own limitations. And this is something that we have to do in the coming days as well.

So this is what I tried to describe: broaden generalisations from specific observations, work them out, place them in the totality and see how far they are able to help us.

During morning and evening sessions, each group in our study-circles is supposed to write ideas in usable language. In the evening, we will meet plenary, collect these snippets and bring them together live in a mind-map. So we will see the mind-map grow. This offers the optimal opportunity for interaction. As a result, we will harvest an overview of ideas how to approach depression, end-of-life issues and religious intolerance. Ideas that we can work out and use on our personal level and also on organisational level. We will not generate a solution at the end of the day, but this exercise offers a picture that includes the theological principles. It is up to everybody, in his own situation, to choose his way. But now we have our roadmap to see what the consequences are — and of course it is everybody's own free choice how to read it.

I think this is quite a challenge for us in the coming days. It requires a good mix of our traditions from ULT, Adyar and Point Loma. We like to see the maximum of cross-pollination. And to make that work, we have made three ticket-boxes. Draw a number from the box of your own tradition, and we make sure

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that in every study-circle each tradition is well represented. So that we can really work together.

THEOSOPHY AND A LIFE WORTH LIVING

Elton Hall

It is time that Theosophy should enter the arena.

--The Great Master

What is a life worth living? This is the great challenge for each human being today and is directly relevant to our three hot topics: religious intolerance, end of life issues, and depression. Religious intolerance, manifest on a spectrum from shunning and denigrating those whose religious convictions and actions vary from one's own to outright violence, suppression of others and even their destruction, is all too present in our complex and chaotic world. Those of a secular bent who reject all religions can still easily fall on this spectrum. Sigmund Freud's belief that religion is an illusion, a neurotic condition to be banished in a mature, healthy individual, is simply wrong. "There is no religion higher than truth," does not attack religions but points beyond them to their Source, which is theosophia. Truth is not attained by one approach, such as the so-called scientific method, or by one discrete form of meditation, or by one approach to the sacred and divine. Truth is spiritual and has many reflections, all of which are partial, and none of which is a perfect mirror. Hence the distinction between absolute and relative truth, and for an evolving human being, absolute truth, paramarthsatya, is a goal, not an accomplishment to be set on a shelf with other awards. The view that one has the truth in its ultimate form is the foundation of religious intolerance.

End of life issues are fundamental issues, for karma and

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reincarnation teach us that there is a very real sense in which life is a preparation for death, as Socrates says in Plato's *Phaedo*. Although a life worth living should prepare us for death, it should also give meaning to every moment in life, even though we may find it difficult to grasp the meaning of every day, much less every moment. Depression arises out of the inability to discern meaning in events, for many the events in their own lives and for some events in the world at large. There is much in the world that invites depression and despair, so individuals ultimately must rely on inner strength when encountering the world.

But the question "What is a life worth living?" is hardly new. It has been the great challenge for individuals from the dawn of thinking. So we find this question in Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato, in the Hellenistic Stoics and Epicureans, but even earlier in the Upanishads, Hindu schools and Buddhist texts. And we find it in the earliest Taoist teachings, in Confucian thought, and in Jewish and Christian history. One can readily recall Boethius, Nicholas of Cusa, Meister Eckhart and Jacob Boehme, among many, many others. It is present in the Persian Sufi mysticism of Suhrawardi and the Andalucian philosopher Muhyiddin ibn al'Arabi, and in the Qur'an itself. Clearly the question of a life worth living has been a deep human concern for as long as we can trace human thought. But conditions change, and in human evolution the question is ever new. The challenges of life today in a world that is both increasingly fractured and increasingly globalized only add intensity to the question: What is a life worth living?

It will help us approach our crucial hot topics from a perspective that starts with universals and moves to particulars. Last year, the International Theosophical Conferences met in Philadelphia. It was concerned with practical ways to nurture a nucleus of universal brotherhood, the first object of all Theosophical organizations. Among the many valuable and useful ideas and suggestions that emerged from presentations and working groups, two are especially relevant to this conference. The first centred on how to make Theosophy practical and readily sharable with people, especially those without a background in

the Teachings. The second wrestled with the fundamental meanings of the One Life. Both of these concerns are relevant to the three “hot topics” of this conference.

The One Life is the foundation for the creation of a nucleus of universal brotherhood, but it underpins the whole of evolving humanity, no matter how few recognize or acknowledge it. These facts have two direct and immediate implications. First, the nucleus exists not just for itself but to reach out to all humanity. It is integral to the Bodhisattva Ideal, and so to the Masters’ work in the world. The nucleus of universal brotherhood, in so far as it really exists, reflects that ideal and that work. Secondly, this nucleus involves deep, profound and ongoing individual transformation. For those of us who have the great good fortune of encountering Theosophy, the challenges we invariably face are karmic opportunities to realize that nucleus and to make Theosophy practical. In this conference, we will focus on our three “hot topics”—religious intolerance, end of life issues, and depression—because the world cries out for practical solutions. As the Great Master said, “The true religion and philosophy offer the solution of every problem.” It is our task to nurture those solutions in those whom we encounter in this world rife with distraction, chaos, confusion and suffering. All problems are ultimately rooted in what the Great Master named as “the great dual principles, right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism,” and our “hot topics” involve them all.

At a superficial level, these three topics have easily discernable causes. Religious intolerance occurs when individuals believe that they know and others are simply wrong, and being stubbornly wrong, and are deserving of condemnation, even eradication. But why does an individual come to this conviction? The reasons vary, from fear to delusion, and we have to have a sense of the mental and spiritual environment surrounding that individual to know how to address intolerance.

Depression arises from a sense and even a conviction that life—especially one’s own life—is utterly meaningless and without purpose. Even the world can be seen as meaningless and

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without purpose. Physicist Steven Weinberg once famously said, “The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless,” a view that hardly draws science closer to theosophia. Fortunately, many other physicists disagree. Again, we have to discern the basis for the depression, which might be intellectual but often comes out of a belief that one is a victim of a heartless world, or that no one understands, or that no one cares, or all of these and more.

End of life issues arise from various combinations of fear of death, fear of dying, the belief that death is somehow the complete end of oneself and experience, and denial of death as a crucial part of life. We live in a world, especially the medically sophisticated and technologically modern world, in which there is a tendency to find a medication for every kind of suffering, including psychological suffering. It is not surprising then that the prospect of ageing with its degradation of faculties and possible pain might as well be avoided by hastening death through some artificial action. A view of the finality of death may lead to attempts to prolong life no matter what, which is the flip side of inducing it—medical practice can do either in many cases. One detects the atavistic pull of Atlantis here.

But as already suggested, these explanations of our “hot topics” only skim the surface of the soul dynamics behind them. Human souls have complex histories which weave a karmic fabric that requires great insight even to begin to understand.

H.P. Blavatsky willingly served, despite illness and calumny, under direction of those Wise Beings who tirelessly labor to benefit humanity. She was the channel that brought Theosophy in its modern form into the world for the sake of humanity. These mysterious beings do not interfere in the karma of individuals or of collective bodies such as nations and cultures; rather they nurture the evolution of human beings and indeed all of nature in myriad ways. But Theosophy as they offered it through H.P.B. in the last quarter of the nineteenth century does not aim to produce occultists who gain new psychic powers—though such powers are quite real—but to provide the basis for the transformation of humanity, including self-transformation. We all have vast powers

already, powers of speech, thought, will, intention and action. And as we know only too well, these immense powers can be used for evil as well as good. Theosophical teachings, rooted in the doctrine of the One Life and the twin doctrines of karma and reincarnation, aim to help human beings in the transformation that includes harnessing these powers for the good of all. And we know from experience that the ego rapaciously attempts to expropriate every spiritual thought and intention for its own self-aggrandisement. Getting past that ego to a sense of one's true Self is not easy or without much continuous effort.

The Voice of the Silence shows clearly the Theosophist comes to a point where he or she must choose a path, a fork in the road of life: one branch leads to benefits only for oneself; the other for endless service to humanity, which includes oneself. The Great Master says that the first path is "after all only an exalted and glorious selfishness." The second path is, he says, "the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause to benefit by it as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can..." and it is this path "which constitutes the true Theosophist." The work of this conference aligns with the path of service.

The true Theosophist chooses this path which is marked by the seven virtues enumerated in The Voice. Only to the degree that we tread that path, which is ourselves, can we transform ourselves in increasingly fundamental ways. Each of us is that path, and fortunately, we do not have to be masters of the path before we can be of genuine help. The Masters insist on direction, not perfection.

That path has practical implications for each of us every day. Indeed, every hour and minute. So we know that the life worth living is a life of challenge and opportunity. The situations we find ourselves in vary from individual to individual, rather like fingerprints. The people we encounter, the work we do, the relationships karma provides and takes away, our own dispositions, are all dynamic and change from moment to moment. Yet the challenge of a life worth living remains constant. It is our destiny to be challenged—and to be afforded

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ever new opportunities to serve humanity. In terms of our hot topics—religious intolerance, end of life issues and depression—we have the great good fortune of Theosophical guidance and models we can look to today.

The present Dalai Lama has made several radical moves in respect to religious intolerance. While remaining firmly in the Gelugpa traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, he has opened that spiritual path of meditation and study to active engagement in and with the modern world. It is as if the tragic karma of Tibet is resulting in a painful birth, as all births are painful, resulting in the spread of Tibet's spiritual insights throughout the world. He teaches that his religious tradition is not the exclusive holder of truth and not the best path for everyone.

[YouTube: H.H. Dalai Lama—is there only one true religion? (4 minutes)]

The first step in eliminating religious intolerance is this recognition: all sincere seekers have insights; and none short of total Enlightenment has the whole truth. The challenge to us as Theosophists is to draw on the truths of all religions to discern their pristine origins in the Wisdom-Religion. We can use that understanding to engage others, not in debate, but in dialogue that looks deeper into each one's own religion and to look beyond distorting reflections to more fundamental truths. Notice the criterion the Dalai Lama gives to religion—it must lead the devotee to increasingly compassionate action. With individuals we encounter, like doctors, we must know something of their convictions and concerns to compound effective Theosophical medicine to offer them. The medicine will be Theosophy, but what is compounded must vary with the patient.

The travel and cultural author Pico Iyer once asked the Dalai Lama how one can change the hearts and minds of dedicated Chinese Communists who are oppressing Tibet. The Dalai Lama answered: "Through one Chinese Communist at a time." What we do in each encounter with another matters at the moment and also for the future of humanity.

Personal suffering is not the necessary and sufficient condition for depression. This has been shown repeatedly by the

survivors of tragedies who flourish even after passing through horrors most of us have not known. Depression is rooted in the twin conviction that one's life is somehow meaningless, pointless, without purpose, and that life in general and even the universe are equally meaningless and pointless. Here the Theosophical teacher Raghavan Iyer offers a model for overcoming depression in oneself and in others who despair. He gently but firmly urges one to take stock of oneself as dispassionately as one can, meditating on the fact that we are reality-assigning beings, which means both discerning value in karma and whatever it brings and recognizing that we give value to or withhold value from things, events and actions. Understanding our motives and the consequences of our thought and action enables us to correct what can be improved. It also leads naturally to sympathy and compassion for the struggles of others and for replacing judgmentalism with non-interfering assistance. To the degree we rectify in ourselves our orientation toward theosophia, we rectify our orientation in respect to others.

Raghavan Iyer drew attention to Dr. Viktor Frankl as an example of someone who recognizes the centrality of the moral and psychological environment in which people live and struggle today. Frankl, in his metaphor of air flight, cuts to the heart of how we can be of assistance to others.

[YouTube: Viktor Frankl on Youth in Search of Meaning. (4.5 minutes)]

As Theosophists we should be in the position of acknowledging, in the words of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, the divine in every human being. In speaking to the Krishna within, we appeal to the best in another being. Given the inscrutable mathematics of karma, we likely will not know the results of such encounters, but we may have opened a vista on meaning and purpose that may manifest sometime in the future of that being, perhaps even in a future life. Just as we should not overestimate what we can do for another human being, we should not underestimate it. In Frankl's terms, this is idealism that is realism, as his example of airplane flight shows.

Socrates and Plato provide a broad perspective for end of life

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issues. Socrates held, like Theosophy, that all life is a preparation for death, and Plato showed in the Myth of Er not only why this is so but also why such preparation is at the same time a preparation for the next life. The story Er tells at the end of Plato's Republic is a myth, and Plato warns that we should not take it literally. Yet a close reading of the Myth of Er is quite illuminating. Those who lived life without a focus on the soul—what we would call the Higher Self—are confused after death and wander about lost and aimless. Those who had such a focus move directly into the processes that lead to the next life. The good are rewarded with a pleasant afterlife of a long time—we might think of Devachan. Those who were evil suffer in proportion to their deeds—we might think of the disintegration of the kama rupa. What is most important is that after this period, individual souls choose the next life.

There are three significant points worth considering in the myth. First, the myth says that those who were so pure in their last lives that they would not benefit from another life on earth are taken away to some unspecified place of endless peace and bliss. Secondly, some very few have been so evil that no amount of suffering for their deeds and no range of opportunities in another life would afford them any chance at redemption. These few are called out and disappear from the rebirth process forever. Plato draws extended attention to this tragic group as if we were issuing a dire warning. He seems to be referring that rare and horrifying annihilation that H.P.B. speaks of only with great care. But he speaks of those pure souls who transcend the cycle of rebirths in a single phrase in the original Greek, as if reticent in the presence of such deep spiritual mysteries. Some translations of the myth have missed it entirely, so subtle is the reference.

The third point is that, in the myth, when souls have the chance to choose their next lives, Plato observes that they do so in reaction to their past life and its consequences. Those who lived good lives often choose lives of power and drama, not noticing the dire results of such lives, though they are plainly pictured. Those who suffered the consequences of bad lives choose quiet, retiring lives that hide from the world. Only a few wise individuals who

have clarity regarding the nature and purpose of life can dispassionately choose lives that really matter, lives that will further their spiritual growth and be of help to others. Upon choosing, all souls are compelled to cross the dry, dusty plain of Lethe—forgetfulness—and then drink from the waters of the stream Amelete—oblivion—before being whisked into new births. Again, the less wise drink heavily, being very thirsty, and will remember none of this or of their past lives. The very wise will only take a sip or two, and in the next life will be open to remembering a great deal.

Plato has clearly set out the great doctrine of karma, told as a story which is not to be taken literally as fact but yet is full of Theosophical wisdom. One might recall another story of lives like pearls being threaded on a golden thread in this regard.

So a life worth living includes understanding death as a part of life. Knowing that karma is precise and entails reincarnation is crucial, but it is not the whole story. At present, we find ourselves in a world where nations cannot agree even on what the moment of death is. Some link it to the stopping of the heart, others to ceasing of brain activity as measured in one or another way. And yet, even with the cessation of brain activity, sometimes the body can be artificially sustained for weeks, even months and years. Even the issue of cessation of brain activity is debated—is it when the frontal cortex ceases to give off electrochemical signals, or when the brain stem stops functioning? When is it appropriate to let go? And the flip side of this is the choice for euthanasia, exiting before the body ceases to function, often to avoid excruciating pain but increasingly because one has given up on life and meaning and purpose. One thinks of ancient Rome, where suicide was at times considered an appropriate exit in the face of dishonour. One might also think of the return of Atlantis, with the technology to prolong life indefinitely or cut it short medically.

Thinking of life in light of death, Dr. Atul Gawande of Harvard University and a surgeon at a prominent hospital in Boston puts end of life issues in what may be a fresh perspective for many people.

WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

[YouTube: Dr. Atul Gawande on what we should be asking at the end of life. (4.5 minutes)]

Dr. Gawande does not raise those deeper spiritual questions that we are likely to ask, at least for ourselves, but he shows where the end of life can make more sense for everyone than it does now. He notes that it is quality, not quantity, of life that matters, and this is true at every level. So he puts the question, “What are you continuing life for?” Here Theosophy can give answers, both in the most universal perspective and for any particular individual. In this conference, we need to consider relevant answers that can be meaningful and helpful to diverse peoples in various situations.

So our topics are hot indeed, both as current issues generating intense discussions around the world, and as challenges which apply to ourselves and to all human beings. We are reminded of the tripod in the inner sanctum at Delphi, where the oracle sat and delivered Apollo’s mysterious and ambiguous oracles. For Theosophists, the tripod is tapas, whose three legs are study of Theosophy, meditation and self-study. One leg alone will not suffice, and any two will not let us mount the seat of the oracle, the center from which true insight comes. All three are necessary.

How we engage in this triple work depends upon our karma, what is necessary for each individual, and what opportunities for the present each has generated in the past. Deep study of Theosophy requires the reflective questioning that the Buddha taught: accept nothing as the truth, not even Buddha’s words, without testing them in one’s own life. Some fortunate seekers have found Theosophy, but that is hardly the end of the quest. Rather, it is the beginning, for once a seeker has found, the real seeking begins, for one now dives into the ocean of Theosophy at ever greater depths, never reaching bottom because this ocean is bottomless. Study is not just to master complex and subtle doctrines, but to affect consciousness, breaking up the mind-set of the age, purging cultural assumptions and unreflective beliefs and biases, so that we see ourselves and others more clearly within a large view consonant with the whole of manifestation.

Pythagoras taught that before we sleep we should review the day just lived to see what we did well, what erroneously or

inadequately, and what might have been done better. Doing so takes courage, because the ego—always taking everything for itself if allowed to do so—sees this activity as beating oneself up. That can be disheartening, even depressing. But the point is not to denigrate oneself, not even the ego, which, after all, is an instrument for living in the world. The point is to engage in this self-study dispassionately, in order to learn and for the sake of one's bodhisattvic growth. As we understand ourselves at ever more profound levels, we will understand others at those levels, and this strengthens our ability to be of genuine help to all. If we can glimpse the Krishna within, we can begin to glimpse the Krishna in one another, as the Gita advocates.

So we need to meditate, if Theosophical teachings are to become practical. Yet Theosophy does not teach a system of meditation. Why? The theosophical teacher Raghavan Iyer explained that the meditator “will conclude that, by definition, there could not be any fixed technique of meditation upon the transcendent. Techniques is...a mechanistic term. A technic or skill has rules and can be reproduced. On the other hand, that which is transcendental cannot be reproduced. It does not manifest, and it is beyond everything that exists, so there can be no technique for meditating on it.” Each human being is ultimately this transcendent reality, and so what we come to know within cannot be said, yet it affects everything we do in relationship to others.

The wisdom of the Master becomes clear. Theosophy was presented to the world in its most unveiled form, though veil upon veil remains, to nurture those who would serve others, not merely so that individuals might learn complex doctrines and terminology and feel like elites “above the fray.” We might say that to be true Theosophists, we have to take ourselves less seriously and more seriously than our present culture suggests.

To the degree that we practice these teachings in thought, word and deed, we will be able to do what Plato demonstrated in the Socratic dialogues, engaging with one another as spiritual beings, learning and teaching together in dialogue. This conference affords us the chance to do just this. And we can do

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this with anyone we encounter who has a minimally open and questioning mind, beginning with where they are spiritually, mentally and morally. We most likely will not know the results of these encounters, but under karma, we can hope that at some time in the future our encounters may bear fruit. As Krishna advises, we act and let go the fruits of action.

Being able to work at transforming ourselves for the sake of helping others, and to see all beings as souls with a destiny as vast as cosmic evolution, is the underlying challenge. In taking up that challenge in life, including the hot topics before us, as opportunities for bodhisattvic service, we begin to live a life that indeed is a life worth living. Our light may be small or large, but it will shine in the darkness of samsara and cast its illumination on all.

In closing, one can do no better than recall the words of H.P.B.:

“Men cannot all be Occultists, but they can all be Theosophists. Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves, for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one’s self, are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of good-will; and the converse of this is true also—he who preaches the gospel of good-will teaches Theosophy.”

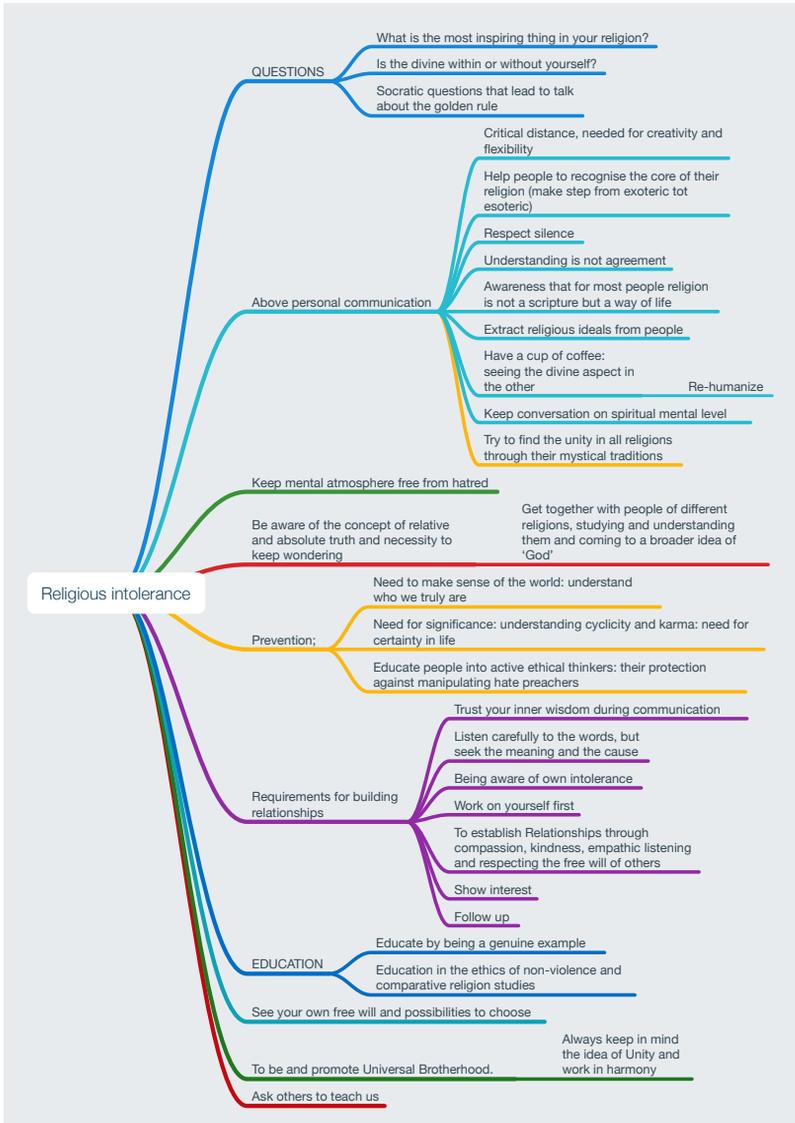
--H.P. Blavatsky

Five Messages, 1888

WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

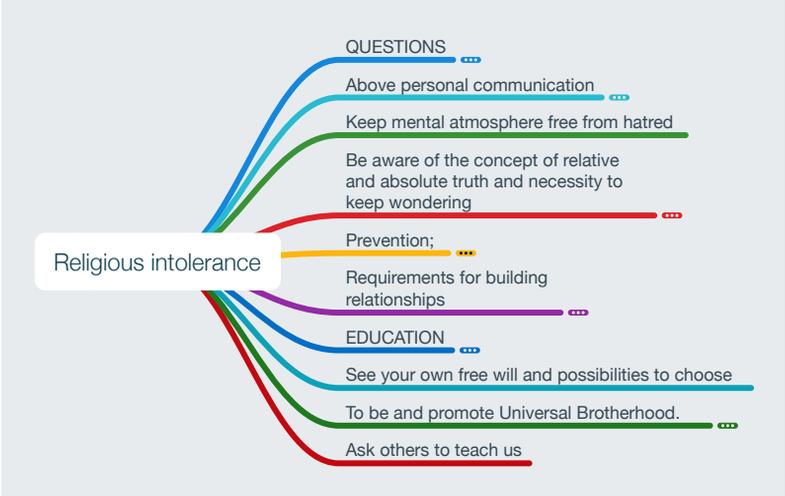
These mindmaps were the result of the plenary harvest of all the study groups. They combine the main ideas from all the groups and can be used as a preparation for a theosophical study, article or presentation on the subject.

Fully expanded: mind-map Religious Intolerance

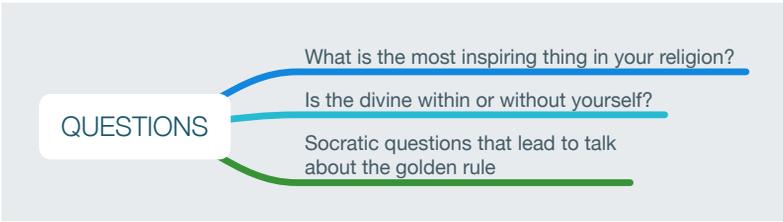


WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Top levels: Religious Intolerance



Sub levels: Questions, Above personal communication



Keep mental atmosphere
free from hatred

WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Sub levels: relative and absolute truth, Prevention, relationship

Be aware of the concept of relative and absolute truth and necessity to keep wondering

Get together with people of different religions, studying and understanding them and coming to a broader idea of 'God'

Prevention

- Need to make sense of the world: understand who we truly are
- Need for significance: understanding cyclicity and karma: need for certainty in life
- Educate people into active ethical thinkers: their protection against manipulating hate preachers

Requirements for building relationships

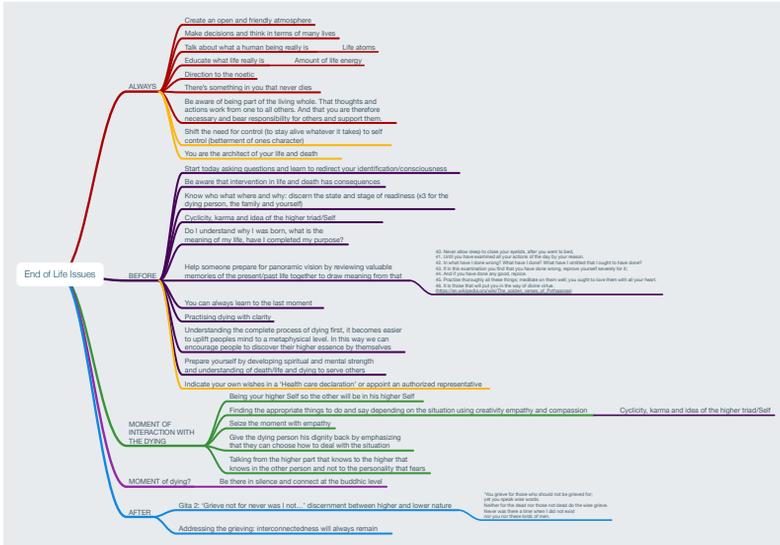
- Trust your inner wisdom during communication
- Listen carefully to the words, but seek the meaning and the cause
- Being aware of own intolerance
- Work on yourself first
- To establish Relationships through compassion, kindness, empathic listening and respecting the free will of others
- Show interest
- Follow up

EDUCATION

- Educate by being a genuine example
- Education in the ethics of non-violence and comparative religion studies

WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Fully expanded mind-map: End of Life Issues



End of Life Issues

Intro

Good morning, friends.

Today we have as a 'hot topic' a subject that nobody can deny that he has to deal with: end-of-life issues. Apart from birth, death and the dying process is the only certainty we have in life, and most likely we even have even to deal with the dying process more than once, not only in relation to ourselves but also our family, our parents, etc. So, it is a theme we all are involved in, in one way or another.

Some people, including me, are quite often invited to speak a few words at a funeral. That is one of the things we, as Theosophists, must do. The good thing is that we never step away from this responsibility, *just because* we as Theosophists study the process of life and death. We like to study and understand it. And from this study we learned much more about the process of dying and the processes between death and the next birth. That makes us better prepared, also better prepared to support others in this process and to answer their end-of-life questions.

I hope this second day of our Conference will give you a good opportunity to 'cross-pollinate', to exchange your deeper knowledge and your practical life-experience in four study groups, two in the morning and two in the afternoon.

Yesterday we focused on the subject 'Religious Intolerance', in the light of the theme of this Conference 'What is a Life Worth Living'. We looked at the question 'What is the quality of life?'

And for our subject today, this question is even more

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important. What is the quality of my life, the quality at the end of my life, even the quality during my dying process? Which decisions do I make at the end of my life? Questions that we can no longer avoid, because in our present time we must prepare ourselves. An example: when you enter a hospital in The Netherlands in a bad physical condition, you become part of the hospital 'machine'. They do everything according to procedures, and if you do not have exact wishes, you go through the whole procedure, and they also do what you never have wished them to do.

So, be prepared. Think seriously about what you want and don't want, and put it on paper. Give it to your friends and family, so that they know how to help you in such a situation.

Fortunately, at least in the Netherlands, we no longer have to protect ourselves against the policy of hospitals to prolong life '*at all costs*', using all necessary medical techniques to keep 90+ patients alive. For that age group the hospitals are already using the criterion 'quality of life'. But we heard that this is not yet the case in other countries. So, be active, be prepared.

What *do* we want at the end of our life?

Do we want to stretch it? Do we want to shorten it? And if we want to stretch it, how do we want to do that? What will be the karmic consequences of our decision? The same goes for shortening our life. What happens when we interfere with the natural process of dying, and what impact will that have on *our* future, and on the people around us?

We all believe in reincarnation. We all know, in some way or another, that reincarnation is a fact. In that light, we should aim for the *long-term* effects.

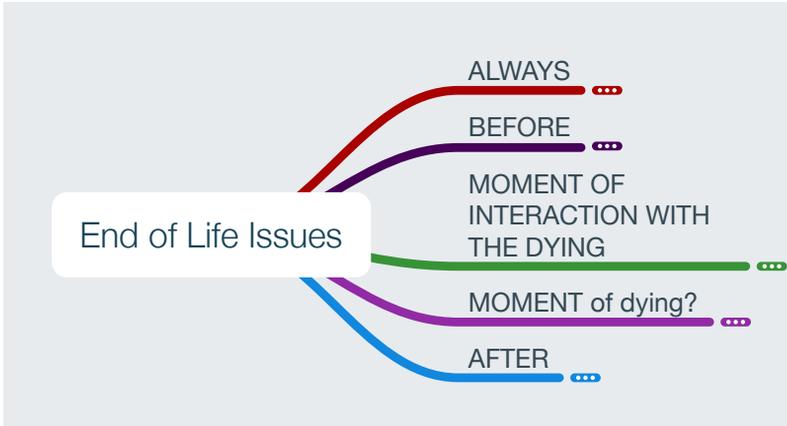
But keep in mind that throughout this whole process *emotions* play a part as well, sometimes even a major part. Especially when one of your friends or family members go through this process,

who are not familiar with reincarnation. So, it is important to find the right balance between wisdom and emotions, and to find the right motivation for your choices.

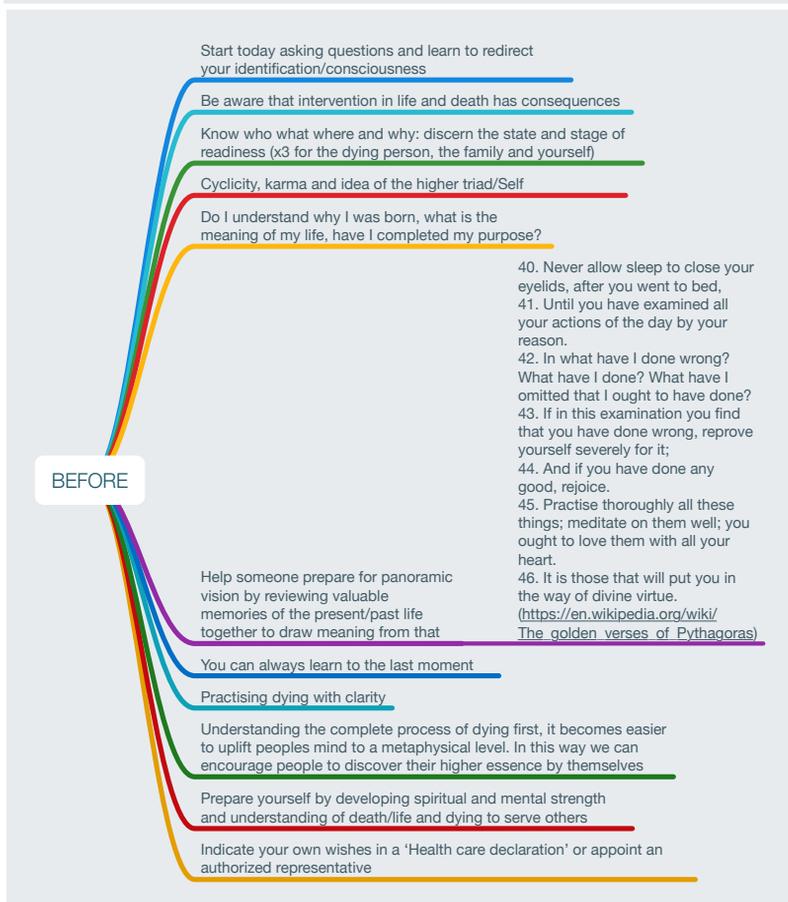
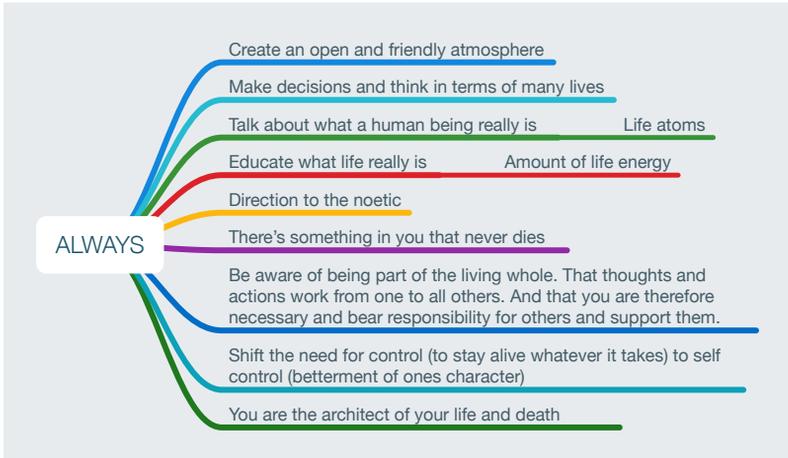
This is a good basis for our study groups today. Let us focus on the quality of life, on the *real* quality of the *real* life..

What is A LIFE worth living?

These mindmaps were the result of the plenary harvest of all the study groups. They combine the main ideas from all the groups and can be used as a preparation for a theosophical study, article or presentation on the subject.

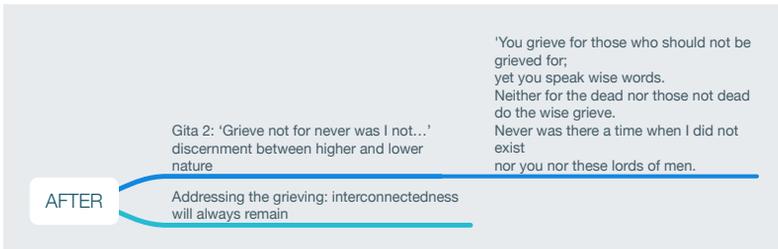


Sub levels End of Life : Always, Before



WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Sub levels End of Life: Moment of Interaction, Moment of dying?, After death



Depression

Intro

Good morning, friends,

You may not know, but we have a professional psychiatrist and well-known Theosophist in this room, and at this moment he is sitting on his hands because he would like to jump over here and tell you everything that he knows about it.

I have persuaded him, “don't do it, let people start from theosophical principles. Let them first try to understand what depression is and how it works from a theosophical perspective. Later, after the study groups, you are more than welcome to put a theosophical sauce over it, to share your professional and theosophical perspective.” Gene Jennings has to deal almost daily with many patients suffering from depression, so we will all benefit from his experience. And that is what will happen today.

Depression is an important subject. Look at the ranking of the most common illnesses worldwide. Depression currently ranks fourth, but predictions are that it will rank first within 20-30 years.

What are the causes of depressions, and how can they be solved? We have a big challenge here. If we can build a perfect idea about the causes of depression from a theosophical point of view, then we have made a big step forward in how to prevent it. When we use our insight in the composite nature of man and in the workings of the mind, we have an advantage over non-theosophical people – and not all psychiatrists are Theosophists.

WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Two main questions come to mind: ‘How can it be that young people, even children, suffer from depression’ and ‘What can we expect from medication’.

Firstly, we see young people who already have these symptoms. Where does this come from? It must have already started in a previous life, and most likely not all people will be cured during this life.

Secondly, what do we do with medication? Do we use it? Will it work? Or does it only suppress symptoms — which would mean that the personality, or the Higher Self behind the personality, is no longer able to express itself? What consequences will that have in the long term, in next lives?

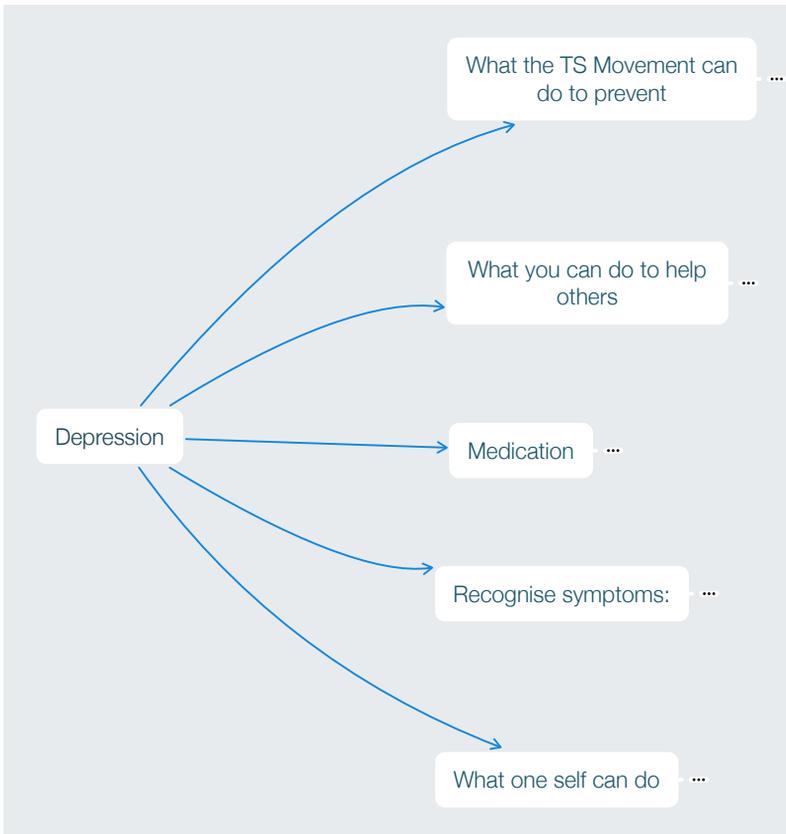
These are only two of the many questions we can address in the study groups today, and I hope there will be a rich harvest. Yesterday our time to study was a little short. Today we have more time for the study groups, and therefore more opportunity to work on this topic.

At the end of the day, we will invite our theosophical psychiatrist Gene Jennings to share with us some of his theosophical and psychiatric insights.

Harvest of the workshops Depression presented in a set of mind-maps

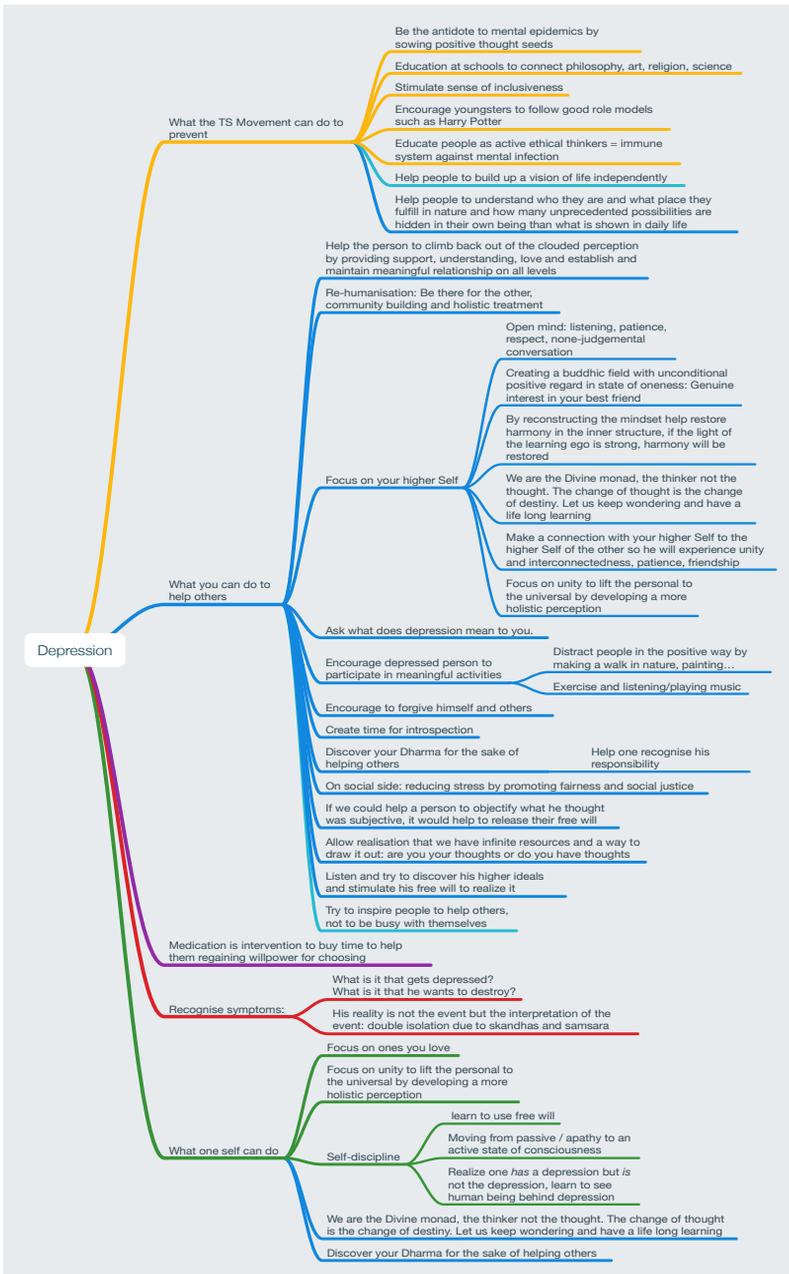
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Top level mind-map Depression

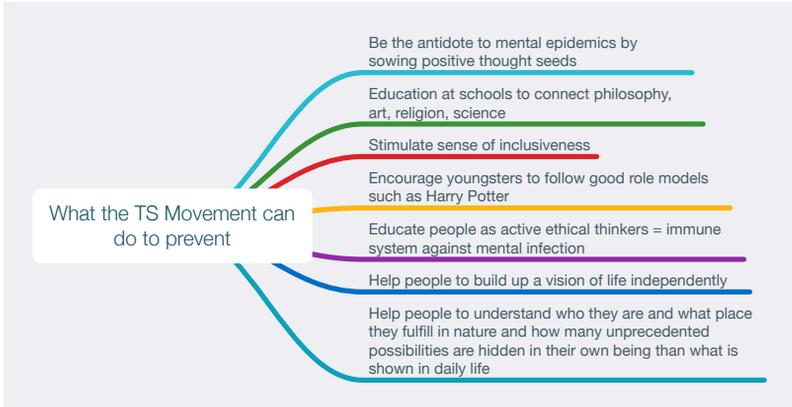


WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Fully expanded mind-map of Depression

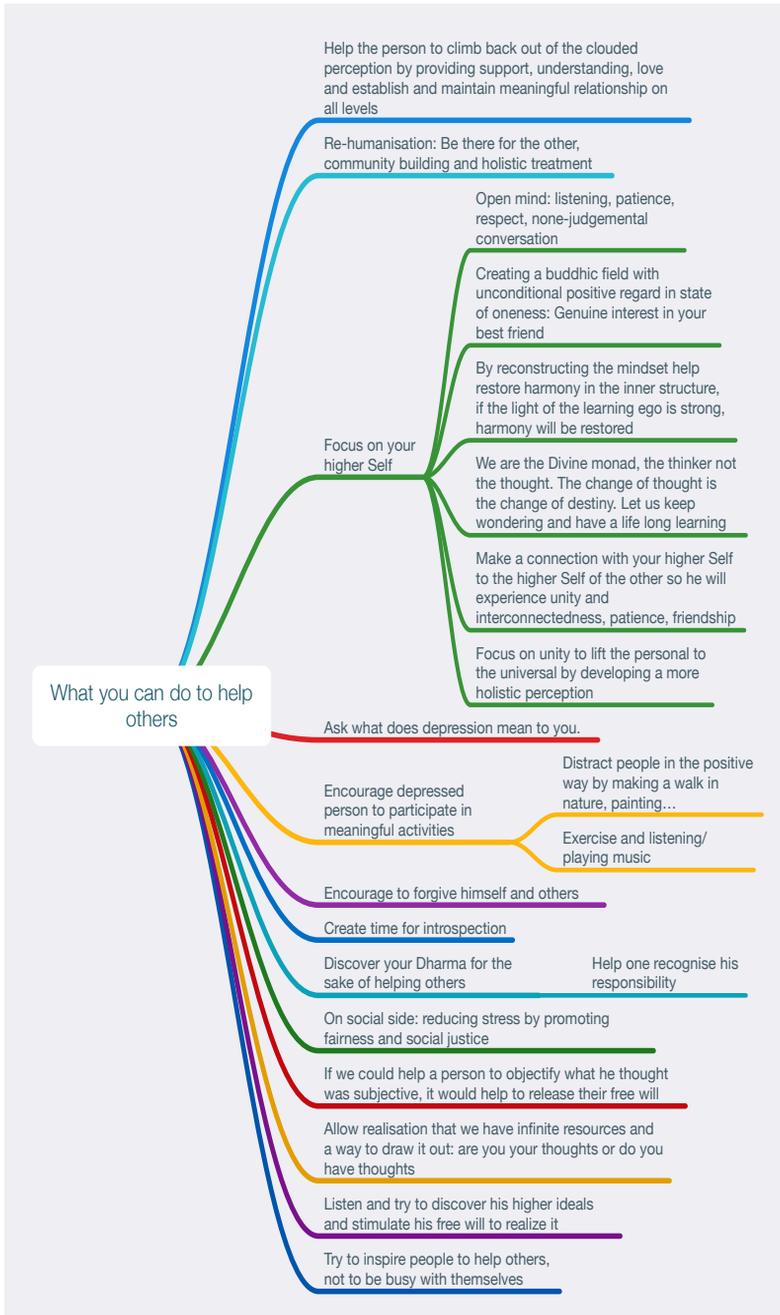


Sub levels 1 What the TS Movement can do to prevent

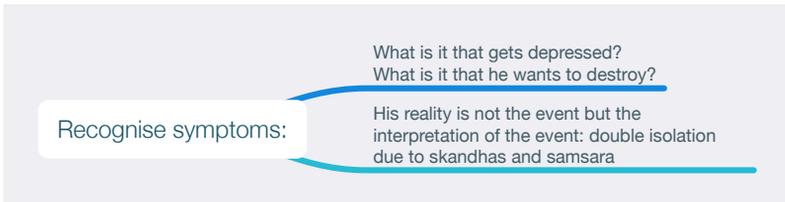
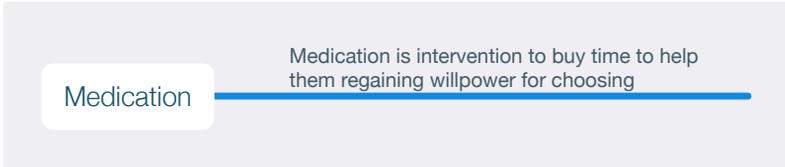


WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Sub levels 2 What you can do to help others



Sub levels 3 Medication, 4 Recognise symptoms, 5 What one self can do



WHAT IS A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

STAGES
LEVELS
Develop
Awakening

③	KM	EXISTENCE COGNITIVE Thoughts - Beliefs IDEAS CONVICTIONS	Archetypal
④	Inner Energy	EMOTIONAL Feelings	CREATIVE
⑤	ASTROLOGICAL MORPHOGENESIS	Instincts Basic EMOT TONE/COLOR	Formative
⑥	Play DNA Brain - Body	BIO CHEM NET Physical S.R.U, events, accidents etc	Physical

Pool RESERVOIR of Collective SAMSKARAS

Step 1 RAY + M LIGHT
Step 2 RAY + I LIGHT + SAMSKARA

④ T - C
KARMIC DANCE
CARE'S AWAKENING OF SOUL

⑤ R T
Transform
Exp +
understanding
increase "light power"

TX Approach
→ Need

UNDECFINED

1
2
3

What is it that wants to die? ^{happy} _{unhappy}
 What does Dep. mean to you?
 What is event - ^{trigger} _{trigger} - ^{trigger} _{trigger}
 What is current ^{exp} _{exp} Dup
 Interpretation / meaning
 Depressed - overwhelmed - Oppressed
 Paralyzed - Neg Darkness - Neg Thought
 * Central light learning Ray
 observing Skandic - Bio Neuro
 Covert - impact on "light"
 Light = eye Awareness - Personal
 OR Confused Identity

RAY + SAMSKARA/SKANDAS = DNA BODY family = Interp of Exp = Build Impact
(Inner work)

⑦ TYPE - spiritual crisis / Existential / Cog / Emot / feeling / Play
 psychic / Redefine / Instinct / Event
 interpretation

⑧ WORK TX Transformation ⑤ R T

A Student's Theosophical approach to DEPRESSION

Gene Jennings

During this lecture I often refer to parts of this diagram. The numbers in the text between [] correspond to the numbers in the diagram.

What you are about to see is a piece of my mind, that is a result of theosophical thinking over the years. I have been working in psychiatry for more than thirty plus years with individuals from age 3-4 up to 80-90 years old. For me the approach to treatment and care has changed and has evolved and has been more influenced by Theosophy than by the typical teachings of psychiatry. What you will see here is a picture of what I carry around with me all the time: the framework, or filter through which I look at people.

The numbers you see here on the chart are not there to indicate a linear progression of treatment, because this picture is a reflection of a dynamic process that is always going on, that is always shifting, that is always changing, that is always transforming depending upon who is in front of me. Depending upon what they want, what they need and where they are for that particular moment.

Much of the way that I conceptualize things in terms of treatment has been reflected in some of the snippets you have already seen earlier today during time spent in the workshops. And because as a group you have been able to put them together and you have seen them as well on the mind-map.

Building a therapist – client relationship

One of the things that you have probably recognized is that I ask a lot of questions. Some folks would probably say: that is the Socratic method. One of the first questions that I ask anyone when they come into the office or when they are interacting with me in the hallway is: ‘who are you?’ When they try to answer that question I tell them: ‘we are already playing a game of chess, be careful with your answer.’ Why do I do that? Because we are shifting ground. I like to play with the mind. If it is fun then it is not work, then it is not effort to change. If we can laugh, if we can share, and sometimes cry together — that is a good thing. They don’t want you to do that therapeutically, because the boundaries may get blurred. But if you are working from the theosophical process, you know your boundaries and so you are not so much worried about that.

When they finally find out they can’t answer the question who they are – because whatever they tell me I am demonstrating to them that is not what I want to know and the answer that they gave me is insufficient – my next question then is: ‘what is coming to therapy?’ Then they want to tell me who is coming to therapy. And when they devolved to the idea of ‘who’, that is another chess-game that we play, because right away we are working with the idea of identity — and it is the identity that is attached to the issues. So if we can modify the sense of identity even without them knowing, the attachment to the issues are gradually becoming modified as well.

If for instance we have a situation where we are talking about depression and suicide my question is: ‘if you cannot tell me who you are, if you cannot share with me what you are, how can you share with me the idea that you want to kill what you don’t know, what you cannot find?’ Because then my questions are also ‘where are you?’ and ‘where is your mind,’ and further, ‘is there a difference between these two things?’.

Perhaps then they are getting frustrated and they are getting mad, but because we can play and we can share, we can diffuse

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the anger. And then I can ask them to share with me or ask me questions. I tell them they can ask me anything in the world, anything they want to know about me. It's okay. Because then I am sharing and as we are sharing we are eventually entering into T-C — a therapist-client relationship [8]. That relationship I think of as a chemical bond. It is like a molecule. We are sharing now energy between us. That sharing without blurring boundaries becomes important, because in the sharing there is an empathy, there is a resonance and there is a taking on of what they are and what 'music they play.'

So, when I can establish the who and the what – that don't exist – and we can generate flexibility and a little bit of play, regarding where mind is, and what's in front of me, which is way at the top of the diagram [1].

This is what you guys already have been spoken about in terms of identifying the higher power in or working through the personal element. Where I am focused is here [1]. Where the Ātma-Buddhic part of them is pretty much present, but dormant to the awareness of the personality. If it were active they would have the Light within them and they would be able to transform the experience they had already. But they have not been able to do that.

The next piece for me that becomes very important to try to share with them, without using words and without labelling things that they can argue with, is this 'ray' [2, step 1]. This ray is the incarnating Light, 'the learning ego'. It is the Light that is in connection with the Spiritual Ego — the Spiritual Ego during that therapeutic process I am looking at as the reservoir of the collective being, 'the accumulations of actions' life after life after life. As Madame Blavatsky says: 'It sends out a ray and that ray becomes involved in matter.'

So, what is the matter? That is part of the question for me inside, and also 'what is the matter that dresses the ray on the outside?' [2, step 2] This is essentially the diagram on page 200 of *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, where she gives the four lower planes and the three higher planes. That is a model that is present in every interaction that we have — whether it is in therapy,

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whether it is person to person, whether it is going to the store. For myself, this is just setting the groundwork. This is what is in my head, even before we are engaging in the therapeutic process.

My questions to myself about this ‘Light’ that is in front of me — not the person that is in front of me because I have already confused that being in front of me, to some degree, to question themselves in terms of personality. ‘What is it that they are?’ versus ‘who they think they are?’ Because who we think we are is not what we are.

And I have to recognize that that ray becomes and has been obscured. What is it that it becomes obscured with? As Madame Blavatsky says, there are two things: (a) the samskaras [lower circle in 1], which are the imprints in the reincarnating egoic spiritual being, holding collectively the results of every life that we have lived, and (b) the portion of that pool that this ray takes on at the time of incarnation for an individual life [2, step 2]. So out of this entire pool they may only be dressing up in 2% of their entire karmic inheritance. The karmic inheritance is simply the accumulation of what they have done, life after life after life, what they have laid down, and what they have in store for themselves as rewards or punishments, when they become incarnated. I want to know that, I want to understand that. They can’t explain that to me. But when we dance therapeutically, we can share that without them even knowing it because it’s beyond words. But that requires me, as shrink, psychiatrist, to be in tune with them — which is why we dance, why we share empathy, why we share stories.

So, if they are talking about the burden of depression, I am sharing the experience of annihilation of the ego that I have been through in terms of depression or whatever else it is. The knowledge of a living death, the knowledge of suffering and pain. Why? Because it is part of life, it is normal, it is okay, it is what we learn from. It is the meal that we have just eaten — and this is what I use to describe to them what life is: life is breakfast, lunch and dinner. You eat your breakfast. Do you get indigestion? Do you hate the food that you are eating? It doesn’t matter because hopefully – if it is not a candy bar – there is

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nutrition there. The same thing with the lunch, the same thing with the dinner. The lunch may be a traumatic experience. You want to throw it up, you develop anorexia and you are throwing up and throwing up. But if you are not getting rid of the indigestion that you have embraced and embodied, you can never be free of the trauma.

So, I explain to them: life (in metaphoric fashion) is a dinner. You eat it. You may not like it. Don't resist it, there is health there, there is nutrition there, there are positive things that are going to help you grow. And I share with them: 'if I do what I am supposed to do correctly, you will thank me for having gone through the trauma. Because now you understand, the trauma is not the trauma. Why? Because we have already begun to redefine life experience and its understanding.'

As it was mentioned in some of the snippets: we do not experience reality. We live mainly in our head. We generate concepts, we think things are happening. We create the future before we have experienced the present. We are not living here and now. When we are talking to each other, our minds are somewhere else, influencing what we say so that we cannot embrace what is happening here and now.

I need to help individuals redirect their attention to the here and now. For if we are purposefully and fully here and now, we are not remembering the past, we are not anticipating with fear the future. And if I can help them be here and extend the sense of awareness of now and help them understand that if they meet each moment as it unfolds to them, they can deal with it. If we are constantly worried about what is coming, we cannot deal with what is here. We get indigestion from everything that we have been through and we go round and round and round.

So in thinking of samskaras, and recognizing that they dictate skandhas, and that the skandhas then dictate the astral form – or the morphological field, whatever expression you want to use – and the tanhic elementals themselves hold the energy, the force and the power that drives those skandhas, and those skandhas then modify the DNA of your being [2 - 6]. Then it's not your parents that are giving you a set of DNA. It is the egoic Light [2]

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that has clothed itself and descended to the point of the DNA. And its magnetic field of samskaras and skandhas then organizes the DNA within the womb to express the form that is necessary based on prior choices and actions.

For me the question is: why did the ego modify the DNA in such a way that this form and consciousness is here? And then we have to recognize the system [circle in 8] into which the baby is born. It is born into a family. The family is within the community, the community may be a positive one, may be a negative one. The community is within a state. The state has its laws. All of this is connected. The ego is now imbedded in a nest, or what I share with the clients: 'you are in a garden.' And I have to ask them: 'what is the nature of your garden? Is the soil rich? Do you get water? Is the sun bright?' All metaphorically because they can understand and feel the poetry of that language.

Forget about 'let's talk about the trauma' — that comes later. We have to prepare the field, we have to regenerate the trust, we have to establish the rapport and they have to know that I feel what they cannot express. I will share with them: 'this is what I'm thinking.' And then I get the aha-moment: the recognition, the 'yes, but that's what we were talking about before (we came in).' And I say: 'I guess we had a connection, huh?' And they like that because now they don't feel alone or misunderstood.

So just in these few minutes — as I explained I have about twenty minutes to work with clients for medication reviews. The first time I meet them I have got an hour and twenty minutes to gather all of their life-history, to establish rapport, to tell jokes and to connect and to convince them that there is a possibility that they can change. And that's okay, because Theosophy, year after year after year with its particular kind of thinking, does that, makes such a thing possible. That's why I'm saying this diagram is not followed by number.

Once we get to the point that we are here [circle in 8], we now talk about what has happened to you since you have been born. We look at the experiences that they share. We look at the parents that they have had. Were the parents domestically involved in violence? Were they subjected to unfortunate sexual

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abuse that they don't want to talk about? And then I tell them: 'it's okay, we don't have to talk about it. If you acknowledge with a head-shake I can fill in the details. But it's okay.' Always reassuring: 'even when we walk in dark places, we walk together, and the darkness, the more we stay in it becomes light.'

So again, all of these metaphors are being used, laid down and the seeds are being planted for the mindset that we have to work with in order to change.

If we are looking at the model* that we were given to work with, we have now looked at the ego coming into incarnation, being born, having a series of experiences and now walking into the office for help. We have gone from the universal to the individual, and particular because, as they are doing this in sharing, I am doing this [from 1 to 8], processing in my mind steps 1 through.

When I am feeling, I am asking, and they have to confirm that what I am feeling is what they had experienced. So we are establishing a dialogue and that dialogue is becoming intimate. There is a danger there, but the danger is okay if you're okay. Because then again in this therapist-client dance [8] we are sharing energy, we are sharing consciousness, we are sharing awareness. It is nothing that as a doctor I am intending to do. I just want to be present, and I want them to feel the fact that I am present. I want them to understand that I am not afraid of anything that they are going to share with me. I want them to know that I am okay walking through hell with them. It's okay, I have got my own hell, I understand it, I accept it, and I am going to help you accept yours. Because when you accept it, you can transform it.

So, at the same time that we are doing this [1-6], we are realizing that there is a person with a cognitive set of thoughts, ideas, biases, believes [3], that obscure the Light [2, step 1].

* Here is meant the model used during the ITC Conference, how to understand and solve problems. First, using the deductive method, going from universal to particulars (from higher to lower), and then using the inductive method, going from particulars to universal (from lower to higher). In the diagram it is the triangle in the left upper corner.

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We have now had experiences that impact how we feel: our emotions, our desires [4], which ones are up, which ones are down, what makes us hate, what makes us love, what makes us not trust. So we are touching emotionally.

I am looking at how the cognition and the emotion are constantly feeding the astral [5]. As HPB tells us, when we are born the astral is the model for the body [6], but as we experience life the body begins to modify the astral. I want to be aware of those changes and those modifications that are incurring emotionally [4], cognitively [3], and existentially [3].

The existential part is ‘my life has no meaning.’ So part of the way of addressing that, especially when the kids come in that want to commit suicide, that are ten years old — because I get some children in, they are geniuses, nine years old, eight years old. They already know what depression is, they know what hell

is. They don’t want to do therapy, because they are too smart. They are smarter than the therapist. When I am talking to them they will tell me: ‘the therapist is dumb, they cannot do anything for me. They (the therapist) talk to me about how I feel. How do they know about how I feel?’ And so now we can play. Because what I do is – without labelling – I ask them theosophical questions. They cannot answer those. Once in a while I will get a ten-year old that will tell me: ‘my brain made me do it, but my soul is in charge.’ And I didn’t even ask. Then I tell them, ‘we can have a real conversation.’

Their parents are standing there and I say: ‘it’s an old soul, don’t worry about it, we will figure it out.’ Because they are lost.

Yet we’re playing the game. And I will test them, because they are very, very smart. But I have to test them in order to show that they don’t know the answers, because that further disarms them. And if it further disarms them they have to say: ‘well, you asked me these questions. Do you have the answer?’ I say: ‘yes I have the answers, but I want to help you figure them out.’ So, now again we are tighter. We can play. It is now a game to come into the doctor’s office, as opposed to a hated act.

Moving upward: from tamas and rajas to sattva

From that point we can now begin to move upward. Now, as we are beginning to move upward, there are three or four grids that I use, that are also constantly in my mind. You all are familiar with the 49 fires: seven principles (horizontal), seven principles (vertical).

The ātmic of the ātmic, the ātmic of the buddhic, and so on. The buddhic of the manasic, the buddhic of the kāma-manasic, and so on. So we have 49 squares where a person can be.

We also have sattva, rajas and tamas [*circle S/R/T]. And we know that every life-atom, as HPB tells us in 'Psychic and Noetic Action,' can resonate in one of those fields. It has the capacity for all of those. If we really want to break it down and fit it on the grid, then sattva is ātma-buddhi, rajas is higher manas, lower manas, general manas, and tamas is the four lower qualities.

Now we can really focus in on what nature of the being is present: what is up on the horizon, if we think of it astrologically, what is in opposition to that, what is being eclipsed, what has been submerged? And now we can begin to play.

We play with the words or, unfortunately, we play with the emotions. By using the word play we must realize this is not with the typical abandonment usually implied. Play here means to enjoy a process, to examine, explore, change, imagine,

	Ātman	Buddhi	Manas	Kāma	Prāna	Physical Body	Physical Body
Ātman							
Buddhi							
Manas							
Kāma							
Prāna							
Astral Body							
Physical Body							

create what if scenario's, and what if it does not mean that scenario's. Play means laughter and respect, but above all, play is work! Playing with the emotions is more risky than playing with the words, because the emotions go deeper into the feelings, into the astral, which then is involving the energy-levels. If you are thinking about energy-healing, or chakra-healing, or the psychic

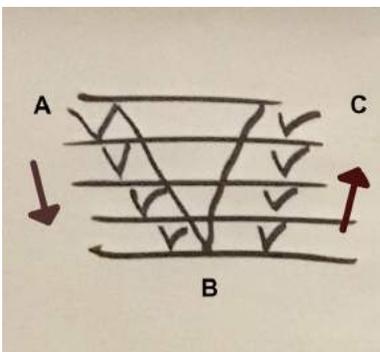
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aspect of the being, those are different tools and formats whereby you structure your interactions with the being, depending on where they are. The different levels of healing should not be mixed up or confused.

When I understand sattva, raja, tamas, when I understand where they are — if they are stuck in tamas: deep dark depression. They are in the lowest field of the principles, in the darkest space, physical–physical. They are in hell. How do I move them from physical-physical to ātmic-ātmic? Metaphorically that movement may simply be in terms of this diagram:

This diagram represents the sevenfold involution and evolution, the forty-nine developments that occur on every plane, concerning the awakening of all the principles, races and qualities, per each round. When I think of these therapeutically, they represent the development or incarnation of the being

into a family, environment or situation, the developing problems, at each level or plane of their being, affecting their sheaths, whether it pertains to the physical, physiological, vital energy aspects, emotional, cognitive thoughts and



distortions, existential life issues, or spiritual dilemmas. They all have a beginning, get complicated as they incarnate into the domain of a persons life experience and interpersonal relations, and become concrete and crystallize, locked in, at the lowest point. The rising line represents the solving of the problem, the evolution of the being, the disincarnating or rising above the problem as in its mastery. This is the same path followed evolutionarily.

(a) The recognition that I have a problem and its ramifications,

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(b) how we are dealing with the problem,

(c) how we have solved, transformed and risen above the problem.

Using this formula of types, I try to remember, my client's mind is the ray, the real being that is incarnating [2], this ray as mind has become obstructed by its own karmic impressions. It is wearing, as it says in the Pistis Sophia, the karmic cloak of destiny made by itself, which is its entire being and environment. If these skandhas and energies [3-5] are very strong and very tight, there is no Light [2] that comes through. If there is no Light that comes through, they live in darkness.

If they are living in darkness and the rajasic element is spinning around, my other grid used is the grid of Jacob Böhme. Jacob Böhme talks about the seven properties of nature, and HPB validates those seven properties as aspects of the seven principles. He talks about the first one which is analogous to gravity. It pulls things in, makes them hard, cold and obstructive — very, very physical.

He talks about the second one that he labels bitterness, which is a pulsation, an attraction and a repulsion. The way I visualize that is using the bar magnet with its positive and negative poles. The positives and the negatives when applied to themselves push away or repel each other. The positive and negative attract. The pulsations of the same or repulsing ends as forces, are dynamic aspects of the breath of life. Because they cannot escape from the circle of their influences, they begin to turn in a circle. If the gravity or attractive force is strong, the circle becomes so intense that the back-and-forth movements create friction, heat and fire. The fire is the karmic fiery principle of our nature that either destroys us because it is burning so fiercely or warms us as the gentle heat of life. So when you have got someone on that grid in the darkness of the darkness, with the rajasic principle creating the fire — that is suicide. They cannot handle that. They are not going to live. There are clients that walk into the office that will tell you: 'I am going to kill myself.' So before they tell me that, I ask them: 'if I have a gun, if it is loaded, and five bullets are in it, would you take this gun, put it to your head and kill yourself

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right now if I gave it to you?’ And they look at me like I am crazy. I can say: ‘work with me.’ Because I am not waiting for them to tell me about suicide I am pushing the envelope. But I am comfortable pushing the envelope, because now they have to really think: are they willing to kill themselves? There are some that simply say ‘yes,’ and I might say: ‘well then, what plans do you have for next month, when your mother is having her birthday?’ If they have got no plans, it is a done deal: they’ve got to go to the hospital. If they have got plans, then I know they want me to feel for them, they want me to understand they are in pain — but they don’t want to die, not yet.

And my second question is: ‘what would make you kill yourself? I’d like to know, I need to know.’ And then my third question is: ‘if you are telling me you won’t kill yourself, why not? What do you have to live for? Who are you that you should be alive?’ And this really surprises and disorients their thinking. But when it disorients their thinking the element of surprise opens up their darkness and it changes the mind-set, and a little point of light comes through. And we can grab that light. And I tell them in the moment of surprise: ‘oh, you hesitated. So if you are hesitating, then you are really, really not sure. So how can I help you take that uncertainty and make it certain that you are not going to do this? Let’s play – not work – let’s play. I’ve got you, I’m with you, please understand that.’

And then, as we begin to go back up [from 6 to 1], I can hopefully begin to transform that rajasic burning fire into sattvic light, a gentle mild burning sun. In Jacob Böhme’s term that is the sound that becomes harmonious, which gives rise to a light that is peaceful. We talk about this as the Buddhic Light.

Now we can have moments of that: up and down, up and down [from 1 to 6; from 6 to 1] concerning all the aspects, each of the problems individually and together. While we are having moments of that surprise and disorientation, we are already changing thoughts [3], we are changing reflexions [3], we are changing feelings [4], we are confronting and transforming emotions, and perceived problems [4]. Yet feelings are really really deep. Sometimes there are no words for what people feel, so then

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we use other means of entry. Whether it's: 'do you like to dance,' 'what dance do you like,' 'what expresses the way you feel best,' 'do you like poetry,' 'what kind of music do you listen to, is it dark, is it classical or whatever' — all of that is information.

It is information about where the principles are. It is information about how much light is coming through, how much light is not coming through, and what we have to do in order to remove the obscurations in order to let the light come through. Because the light then becomes the metaphor for the sun, that nourishes the seeds that allow the plant to grow to bear the fruit. These are the metaphors that we are using to help in the awakening of the inner spiritual being find its way through life. We should add, that there are many different therapeutic modalities available in modern practice to clarify the obstructions of mind. When they are used theosophically, with the principles of both science and theosophy, in the light of Karma, wonderful transformations may occur.

Medicines

Now there are times that we have to talk about medicines, because sometimes the Karmic nature and environment is so dark and so tight that the words, mantric sayings, or other approaches may not be effective. At such a time medication may have to be considered. When used properly and carefully, medications may open up the material and psycho-vital elements of the body to the point that we can engage the mind of the being. If we are talking about someone for instance – worst case scenario – with schizophrenia: they cannot have a coherent conversation at all times, often they have no ability to exercise correct insights or make proper judgment. Then we have to do something to slow down the rajasic whirling and the darkness in their mind, the chaos that is affecting cognition [3] as well as emotion [4] and the way their bodies feel [6].

So we have to take an inventory of that, of the physical, chemical, hormonal, and interpersonal being, and then begin to systematically address each one, finally integrating the entire system back into a functional unit: looking at the medications, looking at the family-supportsystem, looking at the environment

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that they are in, looking at the skills that they have, looking at the psychological defences that they are using and also looking at the level of development that they are at. I cannot talk to a 4-year old the same way that I talk to a 21-year old. Their cognitive awareness, their emotional state of development, their needs are all different.

So when I am working with individuals I am working minute by minute, moment by moment, assessing: 'where are we? what are we talking about? how are we dancing? what do we need?' That is just in the therapeutic one to one. The medications can then do something else, because this is all twenty minutes. I have got twenty minutes to reach this level or stage [2] in order to make a difference and awaken a degree of hope while we await the impact of the medication over time. And whether we are talking about anger, whether we are talking about hatred, whether we are talking about depression, whether we are talking about anxiety — all of this fits in here [1-6]. All of this is understandable. All of this is about managing time as we wait for the medication to set in, working all the while with the tools we have to make any degree of difference at any stage we are at, along the way to change. Thus we are working, changing their view, changing their situation and hopefully changing their Being.

Then I can help them understand that and help them understand that the way they think about things is not the way things are. One of the simplest analogies I use is the event of 9/11. I just ask them: 'was 9/11 a good day or a bad day?' Obviously most say it was a bad day. Then my question is: 'for whom?' Because for Osama bin Laden it was a great day. For the people in Iran – they hated the Americans – it was a great day. For the people that had been abused every day by someone that worked in that building, who died that day, they were now free and it was a good day. For the people that lost someone they loved in that building, that day was a bad day.

The important point to convince them of is that the event has no good or bad designation. We bring to the event the judgment of good and bad, what it means to them, at that time. What we should be doing is understanding the event. Two planes hit two

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buildings, 3000 people died — do we want that to happen again? No. What do we have to do? You have the power to do, that is, freeing up the will, the volition and the Light that has been obscured to do that which is the best, the best for the most. In our therapeutic setting it is mobilizing the energies of the depressive person that does not want to get out of his bed.

I constantly ask, ‘what do we have to do to help you change the situation?’ Not what do you have to do — what do we have to do. For me, I am taking responsibility for them and I thank them for allowing me to dance with their soul — and they really don’t always understand that, because they are trusting me with something very sacred. And I need them to understand that, because although they look at me like I’m crazy, in time it becomes a topic of discussion that I could value something in them so much.

Theosophy

So, often the talks lead to become Theosophy in therapeutic form, without the theosophic terminology, which then further transforms, perhaps inwardly. And the little beads for instance that I wear around my hands – they always ask ‘what are they, what is it for?’ This opens the door for sharing theosophical and spiritual ideas. I present a theosophical symbolic interpretation or spiritual interpretation that I share with them, which then opens up another window in them, that ‘this crazy or perhaps unconventional person behind the desk that I like talking to, sees things from a different point of view.’ After such conversations then they can begin to believe that there is another window on reality. And if they are young they sometimes ask for books to read which opens up the window even more.

While their parents are there, when the kids walk out the office they say: ‘they might ask where did you get this?’ I say ‘well, you can pick up this, this, and that in such a place or online, concerning the beads or books.’ Because now we are then changing mentality and being.

Talking about parents, usually I don’t want kids in my office without their parents. I want the parents to know everything I am doing, how confused they get, how pissed off they get, so that

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they can understand what that process is, and they can also understand what responsibility they have. Because I also hold them responsible for the way that they have been training their child. Not in a bad way, because some of them just don't know, they don't understand. But when you can help them share pieces of this diagram, then they have also a different worldview, perhaps a different understanding of both themselves and their child. Then they share with you, with me: 'well you know, I believe in karma.' And I say: 'yes, but what is karma?' And then we have another discussion that we can then clarify ideas even further. And then I can help them understand that the dance that they have got with their kids is karmic. Now they have got a responsibility: to dance karmically and correctly instead perhaps of yelling, screaming, slapping, hitting and putting their nearly grown child on the street. So one thing leads to another and we are looking at a system change. And that is a beautiful thing. And again I thank them for helping me understand Theosophy in a thousand different ways, using a thousand different applications.

So, that is just a snippet of what I do on a day-to-day basis with perhaps 30 people during the day of work.

Are there are any questions?

Q: I am kind of surprised to hear that you have the parents in on most or all of these colloquies with young people.

A: I don't believe in the laws of confidentiality when it comes to minds of a child that have not developed in a mature manner. These are minds that I am seeing because they have problems overwhelming them, how can they make their own choices? I tell the parents I don't believe in HIPAA. HIPAA is a law that says: children over 14 have the right to be in therapy and their parents have no right to know anything that they are talking about. I usually tell the children: 'if you don't sign a Consent of Release that I can talk to your parent, you cannot be here.' A 14-years old has no sense. I don't mean that disrespectfully, but the brain from the research point of view has not even matured at 14, does not mature regarding its decision making abilities, its executive function, till mid-twenties. How can I give a 14-year old responsibility for mature life decisions if their minds have not

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developed? I cannot do that.

Q: But is the child at all concerned to open up in front of his parents?

A: Yes, yes, they are. But I tell them point blank:

'look, if something happens to you and you go to the hospital, who are you going to call? — your parents.

If something happens to you and somebody sticks a knife in you, who are they going to call? — your parents.

Are your parents going to then know of what you were doing? — yeah. Are they going to like it? No, of course not, you were sneaking, but, who is going to save your behind? — your parents. When you want money, who do you ask? — your parents.

And if you are using the money for the drugs, who finds out? — your parents.

Because when the cops arrest you for buying the drugs, who are they calling? — your parents.'

Then I tell them: 'if your parents are going to know anyway and if they are ultimately responsible for all the stupid mistakes you make — and I use those words, because kids understand words like poop, pee, greed, stupidity. I have got to talk their language, and I love the poop-jokes because they get it and it opens them up and they laugh and it's a good time. Talking like that, in their language helps, they finally realize it's not that I want the parents to be in their business, but the parents are responsible for them. And if — and I share with them this — if they do something really wrong and they get arrested because they have hurt someone else, like the shooters, they are going to ask the parents 'how come you did not know?' That is not acceptable. The parents have to know. And I tell the kids: 'the parents should be up your bottom, in your business — that's the way I talk to them — because at the end of the day they are responsible for you. So, if you don't want to sign the Consent you can go.'

Further, I need the parents there. Sometimes they (the child) will look at me and ask: 'can mama go?' I said: 'yes, but you have to understand, when she comes back in we are going to talk about

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what you share. I will explain it, but if it's that important she has got to know.'

So I need the parents there, especially sometimes for the young ladies. I don't want anyone saying anything. That's my protection: you were there, you were the witness, we had therapeutic fun but we were also able to do meaningful work, at many different levels. So it (the parents presence) serves multiple levels of purpose — and that's the way for me it should be.

Q: You told us that sometimes when they are into it, you talk about Theosophy?

A: Yes. I don't always use the terms, unless they ask, but we talk the ideas. And they are amazed, and that is good.

Q: Were some of them even going further in that?

A: Some are interested and will, and I will bring them a book and say: 'here, read this.' The Ocean or something like that, something light. Or I give it to the parents and say: 'look it over, and if you have any questions feel free to ask, I love to talk.' And they do too.

Teaching Ideas to Others, i.e. medical students and interns: Sometimes we get the medical students during the rotation of the interns, and when they see what I do, they want to know how I do what I do. Then I tell them what I do is Theosophy. And I share with them some of the understanding of these ideas and elements of cognitive distortions, et cetera [3-6], to get to the real underlying element that is carrying the responsibility for a lifetime [2]. A lot of them say: 'I was looking for meaning,' and even though they want to be a surgeon or a doctor, they like the ideas. So, it is planting a seed. Sometimes when I am in the office between clients, we are talking about this and they love it.

So, the whole environment for the most part is crazy, fun and theosophic, without talking Theosophy as a title unless it is asked — and that is a wonderful day.

Q: A question about point seven, in the second column [7]. You have different types. Could you explain the different types?

A: The types are more consistent with the principles that are

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active, that are rising, that are submerging. Again, they are the existential concerns: 'why am I here, what is my purpose, who am I, I don't have any meaning.' So there is nothing typically wrong, but concern and questioning which will not go away, along with its feeling tone, that is causing a depression because they are searching. I am not going to talk to them about emotional disturbance. I am going to talk to them about 'what is your idea of meaning, what is your idea of purpose, how do you define those things, so that we can better clarify what it is you are really looking for?'

If they are caught up in a lot of negative ideation and they are feeling depressed as an example, number one I want to show them that you can think negative 24-7, but you don't have to be depressed. But also: if you are thinking negative and it is obstructing what you want to do, then the negativity has no value. You have to live a life of value. If what you do has no value, it is like spending a million dollars for a piece of bubblegum. Would you do that? Obviously they tell me no. So then I tell them: 'you cannot afford negative thoughts that have no value. How can we work with that?'

Because now they have got the idea, they can see the negativity, and it's a matter of: how do we change that? How do we change the tamasic element of the negativity into a positive sattvic element of clear awareness that negative things happen, but I don't have to identify with them. I can be aware of them and in the awareness of them I can modify the environment such that they don't have the impact on me they would. Or, I can modify my internal environment so that when I meet them, I can modify them through a different response to them.

And I explain to people and I tell them: 'this is going to sound crazy but stay with me: there is no reality. You determine what is valuable. You determine what is good or bad. You determine what is meaningful for you. Human beings mean food to the tiger. Human beings mean a murder-object to the person that is a serial killer. To a priest human beings mean something else. To a Theosophist human beings mean something else.'

So, understanding the meaning, understanding the purpose,

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looking at the cognitions of the negative thoughts so that we can modify them, reinterpret them in another way, again, bring out their sattvic value. And once the sattvic value is there, it's easy to transition to the next level of thinking, which is about clear thinking.

One of the examples that I always share with them comes from Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, and meditation. It is simply the conjunction of the idea with the word, with the object. These are three different things: the word is not the sound, the sound is not the object, the object in its physical reality is not the image being presented to the mind, nor understood by the mind. The sound means something different, the object is something different and the image and ideation about object and sound are something different. When we are meditating distinctly, we understand the nature of the sound and that's why when we talk with each other we feel where each other is coming from — at least (when applied) in the office. When we understand the imaging power, we can then understand how the vibration creates an image that they then believe is a reality, but that is not a reality.

So when we can separate the event or the object — such as 9/11, two planes hitting the building — from the cognition and the emotion and the ideation, we can then work with it objectively, more appropriately. We can mourn for those that were hurt. We can say: I'm experiencing anger towards those that have done this, but since I understand that this [1 and 2] is the victim because of this [3-6], I don't want to kill them, I want to help them. I want to help them become less obscured — and yes, it is going to take time, but it is an easy process. Emotionally it is the same thing. Physiologically, when we have pain it impacts our mind and so we get depressed. That's where then we are working, we are working from the physical or other appropriate level or perspective.

So, those types are simply the doorways of approach for where they are (where a person is psychologically) and what they need at a particular time, and sometimes it is a combination of all of them. As a soul looking in, you must be clear about what you are seeing, about what you are working with. As the Alchemists say:

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‘in the beginning is the chaos.’ We must settle the chaos and separate out the elements. When we can do that, we can see clearly where they are: emotionally, existentially, instinctually, biochemically, regarding neurotransmitter status in the brain or whatever, and we know where we have to go, we know what work we have to do.

Still throughout this entire process we must be flexible, we have to be open and perhaps ready to change our position and approach at any moment. Which is why I say this (the steps, processes, and approaches in the diagram) is not static. Because once we trigger something, it triggers something else. We have to be flexible to see that, to float with it, to change, to make a joke out of it, to challenge it and to allow the Light [2] to shine a little bit brighter on this upward stage and path [from 6 to 1]. This upward stage is the evolutionary journey. It is the way we wake up in the morning, it is how we return from our night journey, it is how we become freed from matter, or problems, or spiritual awoken on our path. It is what we are doing when we are growing and developing, it is a lot of things. So, for me, I am looking at the many things, stages, processes, transformations, life and death cycles and more that this diagram poorly represents. My main question is, how can I help the Light [2] (the spiritual aspect of all being) return to its source [1]?

In that process, although we talk about personality, it really means, how do we gently disconnect the focus of energy identifying itself as particular person, helping it to see what it is, in a more general, and perhaps universal way? Just the same way that a mother loves all of her children and will do anything at anytime for all of her children, before she does it for herself so we are trying to make the personality porous to the idea of its truer self, so that it will realize its responsibility to all of the spiritual lives making up its being, as well as relates to a wider circle of humanity, and as well as itself. Because when we can get there [1 and 2] to that spiritual understanding and feeling, they are no longer preoccupied with self. And then, as you guys said in some of the interventions, you can redirect them towards service, you can redirect towards helping others, and they are not focused on

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their self, it's not about them. It's not about self-care; it's about other-care. And usually, in the service of others, forgetting about self, feeling the others pain, ours disappears.

Again, that process is very flexible, always ongoing and a lot of work, but a wonderful thing.

Q: Gene, I wonder if you can give us a little insight in what parameter, so to speak, you use when you feel you need to turn to medicines with your patients.

A: I look into the toolbox all the time. My toolbox is medicines, meditation, simple relaxation, stress reduction, it is ECT sometimes, it is magnetic stimulation, it is change of environment. Depending upon how deeply embedded they are in the biochemical, physiological, body believe-system [6], cognitions [3] and feelings [4]. Because even though each of these [2-6] are on their own plane – the physical, the astral, the prānic-emotional, the kāma-manasic, going up into the incarnating ray – they can all be condensed into one plane [6], acting together in one manner. All of these [2-5], even though they exist as entities, can be activating different aspects of this psycho-physical complex called a being [6]. So, if I see that with the jokes, with the laughter, with the challenges, there is no movement, and if I see that the darkness is increasing, we talk meds.

I set the pace in the beginning because I usually suggest to them that we don't want to jump out the wagon with medications. You are in therapy. Let's give it eight weeks, unless you feel like you are really overwhelmed, then come back any time. But let's give it eight weeks, and if within eight weeks you are no better, then you are going to ask me for meds. When you ask me for meds then I know you are committed. Right now I don't know you are committed, and if I don't know you are committed, I am not giving you something that you are not going to use, because I cannot force you to take it.

Depending on where they are in this matrix, that is going to determine what I am going to recommend at a particular time. Then I also let them know that six months, seven months down the line we can try to reduce that (i.e. the medications). If the symptoms come back after the meds have been reduced, it is not

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working, so you have got to have it back. In other words, the symptoms are not karmically modifiable simply by the mind at this time, it needs help, so meds are the best thing to assist with such a change and we must start them back. So, at least then we are all in the same boat, we are all in the same plane, we agree about the same treatment and we are all doing the same work, together.

Q: Gene, not that you are doing this work for this reason, but do any of your clients ever — do you ever get a sense of gratitude from them? Not that that's what it is for, but ...

A: Their laughter is the gratitude. So when we can laugh when they are walking out the door, make a joke about coming back the next time, I am good.

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The aim of the 2018 Conference was to explore the active connection between Theosophical teachings and our direct social responsibility towards “What is a Life worth living.”

Guided by the principles and metaphysical perspectives given in The Secret Doctrine and the ITC purposes. Conference participants discussed how fundamental ethical questions reflected in current social conditions might be answered.

How might students of Theosophy understand and practice social responsibility? What thoughts and deeds might help us reduce suffering and improve the quality of life for all that lives? Do the teachings of Theosophy, particularly the messages of H.P. Blavatsky, indicate a duty to help others?

The program and location of the Conference were at Freie Universität in Berlin, German, provided an inspiring opportunity for informal cross-pollination between theosophists from over the world in a community of Theosophical learning.