

THE TANDEM PROJECT

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Separation of Religion or Belief and State

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE ULTIMATE MEANING OF LIFE AND HOW TO LIVE ACCORDINGLY

This is a Word Document File that can be used to answer the questions below. Please type in the answers then e-mail back to: mroan@tandemproject.com.

Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief protect all **Theistic, Non-theistic and Atheistic beliefs as well as the right not to profess any Religion or Belief.**

The terms belief and religion are to be broadly construed. Article 18 is not limited in its application to traditional religions or to religions and beliefs with institutional characteristics or practices analogous to those of traditional religions. Therefore the U.N. Human Rights Committee views with concern any tendency to discriminate against any religion or belief for any reasons, including the fact that they are newly established, or represent religious minorities that may be the subject of hostilities by a predominant religious community. *General Comment 22 on Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1993, United Nations Human Rights Committee.*

Check the U.N. category which generally describes your religion or belief

1. Theist_____

This is a person who believes in a traditional description of God as a supernatural deity or deities; or who believes in some form of Deism, unstructured supernatural spirituality.

2. Non-theist_____

This is a person who believes in Universal Mind, striving for spiritual self actualization, Reincarnation, Pantheism (everything as God), spirituality without a supernatural deity, or Buddhism, described by some as a Godless religion without a supernatural deity.

3. Atheist_____

This is a person who believes in Materialism, naturalism, a person who does not believe in any form of supernatural reality, otherworldly or traditional descriptions of God.

4. Profess No Religion or Belief_____

This is a person who is Agnostic, a person who suspends belief in theism, non-theism and atheism but remains open to conviction.

5. Not sure, don't know_____ This is not a U.N. category.

6. To preserve confidentiality give only your first name. List the community you live in and describe your vocation or work in a few words.

Name:

Community:

Describe your vocation or work in a few words:

I. THE ULTIMATE MEANING OF LIFE

The ultimate meaning life is usually framed as a religious, spiritual or non-religious question; in philosophy it is called the core concern or first principle of your life.

1. In a few sentences describe the ultimate meaning of your life according to the teachings or understandings of your religion or belief. If you have not thought about the question explain what you think it may be.

2. How did you come to know your ultimate meaning of life according to your religion or belief? What role do the doctrines or sayings of your religion or belief play in knowing the truth of this meaning? What role does faith play in this knowledge?

3. What might be the ultimate meaning of life if a person does not follow a religion or belief, or does not have a religion or belief?

4. Are there other religions or beliefs that hold your understanding of the ultimate meaning of life in common with your beliefs? What are they?

II. HOW TO LIVE ACCORDINGLY

Individuals and/or communities of individuals, have a code of values called morality or ethics (discerning right from wrong behavior) which teach them how to live according to their understanding of the ultimate meaning of life. How to Live Accordingly may be applied (1) as an ethical system for an individual or community of individuals, (2) as an application of this code of values to the public at-large, (3) as conscious or unconscious expressions through beauty and the arts.

1. Briefly describe how your understanding of the ultimate meaning of life is applied through a code of ethics or morality. How or does your religion or belief ask you to live according to their understanding of the ultimate meaning of life? What is the basis (sources of rules, norms and traditions) for this?

2. If you do not understand or do not have an ultimate meaning of life, what is your code of values, morality or personal ethics based on?

3. How are your values or ethics and those of your community of religion or belief expressed through politics to the public at-large? Do representatives of your religion or belief guide or instruct their members on how to apply ethics and morality to politics? Explain.

4. How do you or the members of your community of religion or belief give expression to the ultimate meaning of life through beauty and the arts? In a few sentences describe ways in which you give expression to your ultimate meaning of life through sacred or secular music, art, dance, or other culture. If you have no ultimate meaning of life how do you express this through the arts and culture?

III. INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION

Religion or belief brings hope, consolation and healing, as well as tension, intolerance and conflict. This creates a need for human rights on freedom of religion or belief. Human rights are legal protection from intolerance and discrimination on grounds of religion or belief by States, Institutions, Groups of Persons and Persons.

1. The United Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC) has said the concept of morals derives from many social, philosophical and religious traditions. What happens to a society when sources of morality conflict with each other?

2. Can you name aspects of your religion or belief that could create conflicts with other religions or beliefs that have a different view the ultimate meaning of life?

3. Intolerance and discrimination based on extremist views of religion or belief has been a source of conflict throughout the ages. Why?

