



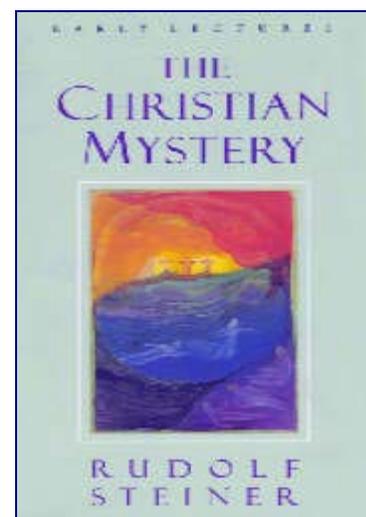
A READER'S JOURNAL

**The Christian Mystery, GA# 97,
by
Rudolf Steiner**

29 Lectures on Christianity, 1906-1908
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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2003

Fundamentalist preachers and television evangelists talk with fiery intonations of God and Jesus as if they were projecting their own ego or "I" into the divine beings. In Steiner's essay "Individualism in Philosophy" he says [taken from Chris Bamford's

fine Introduction to "The Christian Mystery"]:



[page 11] Every religion appoints the human I to be the regent of the world. But the essence of religion consists precisely in the fact that it is unconscious of this. It looks upon what it itself reveals as if this were a revelation from without.

Human beings wish to occupy the top, the first place in the world. But they do not dare to place themselves at the peak of creation. Therefore, they devise gods in their own image and let the world be ruled by them. If we think thus we think religiously. . . .

Steiner took a relationship to Christianity more as a scientist than a preacher. It should not be surprising if preachers and theologians, not comprehending Steiner's approach, would project their own processes upon Steiner's works, but nothing could be further from the truth. In this next passage from his autobiography Steiner speaks directly to this point and makes clear what his research was and what it was not.

[page 14] My relationship to Christianity should make it clear that my science of the spirit is not attained by research of the kind attributed to me by many people. They intimate that I have put together a theory of spirit on the basis of ancient traditions. I am supposed to have elaborated Gnosticism and other teachings. The spiritual insight gained in *Christianity as Mystical Fact* is brought directly out of the world of spirit. It was only because I wished to demonstrate to the audience at the lectures and to the readers of the book the harmony between what can be perceived in spirit and the records of history that I examined the latter and incorporate them in the content. But I took nothing from these documents unless I had experienced it first in the spirit.

Around the turn of the 20th Century, Bamford tells us, Steiner had a "life-transforming experience" when he stood "in the spiritual presence of the Mystery of Golgotha in a most profound and solemn festival of knowledge." In Bamford's words:

[page 15] Following this experience, the outer course of his life changed: he became an esotericist and began the life work of transforming Theosophy into Anthroposophy: a future-oriented, Christ-centered, cognitive, fully conscious way of knowing that raised

up all of the ancient mystery wisdoms and all the occult/esoteric traditions (alchemy, astrology, magic, and so forth) into a new spiritual-scientific synthesis: the new mysteries.

[page 16] To do so, he would have to wean his colleagues from the primarily "Eastern" approach to which they had grown accustomed and teach them that faculties of higher knowing lay dormant within each human being, while at the same time introducing them gradually to the new revelation of Christ as this was being revealed to him by his continuous and profound spiritual researches.

The lecture on "The Mystical Meaning of the Mass" was an answer to Mathilde Scholl of Cologne who asked if he would speak on the subject. Steiner traced the origin of the Catholic Mass ("he was brought up Roman Catholic" Bamford avers on page 15) to the Mystery centers where religious currents from Persia and Egypt were taught. It was at these centers that people acquired knowledge of higher worlds. They were taught about the evolution of the cosmos until they were able to see the human as "confluence of everything else that exists in the cosmos."

[page 18] Paracelsus once said that all beings of the world are letters and the human being is the word in which all of them are found. The human being is the microcosm in the macrocosm.

The four phases they were taught as part of their initiation into the Mysteries correspond to the four principal parts of the Mass, namely: The Gospel, the Offertory, The Transubstantiation, and the Communion. [Quotes below from pages 18, 19.]

Gospel — "the message of the cosmic spirit's dispersal in Nature; this is the rational insight into how the world came about."

Offering or Oblation — "catharsis — being purified of drives, desires, and passions."

Transubstantiation — "the transformation of the human being into the astral forms."

Communion — "Human beings today say 'I' to their own bodies, but those who had been initiated knew that they were not the same as their bodies. They carried their bodies on their backs. Such individuals are crucified in their bodies, crucified in matter. When they step forth, everything they formerly did unconsciously is now done consciously. This union with the body is called Communion."

Steiner points out that when Christ appeared on Earth, what had formerly been played out in the Mysteries now took place in physical space for all to see. It was as if Christ were demonstrating to the entirety of humanity by the events in his life what he did in a personal way with Thomas when he asked him to place his hand into his wounds so that he might believe. People no longer had to look into the Mysteries to achieve inner insight, it was enough for them to look into the life of Christ on Earth.

In this next passage Steiner reveals how the knowledge of reincarnation was to be withheld from human beings for two thousand years in order that we might learn to make the best use of our personal lifetimes on Earth by believing the personal lifetime to be the *only* lifetime. The key to understanding this process is understanding the esoteric meaning of water and wine, and from that, what Christ Jesus was showing us when he changed the water into wine at the marriage in Cana.

[page 21] Christ went with Peter, James, and John up the mountain — that is, into the sanctum — where he led them into devachanic beholding. There they saw Moses and Elijah next to Jesus. El, or Elijah, signifies the way, while Moses signifies truth — moral truth - and Jesus is the life. Jesus said to his disciples, "Elijah has come again." John the Baptist was this Elijah. ⁽¹⁾ Then he also said to them, "But do not tell this to anyone till I

have come again." They were not to speak of reincarnation until reappeared in a new cosmic cycle. For two thousand years, the world was to learn the value of the personal element. What moves from one incarnation to the next is a finer human matter — "water," or spirit. This is what is referred to when it is said that the spirit of God "moved upon the face of the waters" (human beings).

[page 21] The nonpersonal human being is symbolized by water. Wine represents the personal human being. Christ changes water into wine and transforms nonpersonal religion, establishing a religion of personality. The nonpersonal nature of the human being is to the personal as water is to wine. Those capable of understanding the doctrine of reincarnation and wishing to transcend the personality must abstain from wine. Those who indulge in wine will never arrive at their own insights of what is nonpersonal in the human being.

In other lecture series, Steiner makes explicit what he hints at above, namely, that Christ has "returned in Glory" to Earth in the last decades of the 20th Century; the reference to "Glory" indicates that his return has been in his etheric body, which is not readily visible to those unable to "transcend the personality." With return of Christ, we can expect to find more humans interested in the processes of reincarnation and karma in the West, and that is exactly what has happened since the 1960s. We can also expect to find many instances of Christ appearing to individuals who call to him in times of need, and so far as I know that has happened more frequently in recent decades.

In several lectures outside those in this book, Steiner makes the point that the heart muscles have striations like one would expect of voluntary muscles. Involuntary muscles are invariably smooth, without such striations. This can lead us to think of the future of our heart as a voluntary organ such as our eyes are currently — they move and look wherever we will them to. If we consider our heart as a chalice into which the Love of Christ was poured, we can further grasp where evolution is leading us. We see hints of this in many places, such as in the Eighth Beatitude:

[page 269] We come to verse eight: "Blessed are those who are pure in heart, for they will see God through themselves." This sentence is an instruction in mysticism. We should purify and make our hearts pure. *The eye here intended for the vision of God is the heart. [italics added]*

With this preface we are now ready to discuss what happens in the Oblation or Offertory of the Mass. In the quote below you can see a reference to the heart's partially completed evolution from an involuntary to a voluntary muscle. One other point has to do with the tenor of the Old Testament in which strict observance of laws was required — one was to follow God out of fear — versus the tenor of the New Testament in which voluntary observance of laws was suggested — one was to follow God out of love. (Page 262,263)

[page 22] The priest offers up what represents the higher human being, just as individuals once offered up themselves. The chalice is the outer symbol of the human heart. What we have in our hearts belongs to the future; it is now incompletely developed, but it contains the spiritual element. When human beings no longer think in matter but in the spirit, the heart will be the organ of thinking. Today the heart is still personal. The wine in the chalice represents the personal element. The wafer signifies the brain. Bread and wine are transformed into our higher nature, into Christ himself.

When the priest breaks the bread wafer, the host, he breaks it into nine pieces. The exact reasons for this have been lost, but Steiner had a book in his library by Nikolaus Gehr which elaborated the reasons. The nine parts can be seen to align with the nine parts of the full human being. I have assembled the parts in a table above to illustrate this connection. [from page 23, text and footnotes]



1. Physical	Corporatio "The Christian Mystery"	Embodiment
2. Ether or life body	Nativitas	Birth
3. Astral	Circumcisio	Circumcision
4. I — sentient soul	Apparitio	Appearance
5. I — intellectual soul	Passio	Suffering
6. I — consciousness soul	Mors	Death
7. Manas — spirit self	Resurrectio	Resurrection
8. Buddhi — life spirit	Gloria	Glory
9. Atman — spirit body	Regnum	Kingdom

[page 23] These nine little pieces represent the transformed human being participating in something higher. They are the nine parts of the human being. We experience the first seven members within our personality; the eighth and ninth transcend the personality, which is why they are placed to the side.

When Galileo and Copernicus and others led us to look from the spiritual world to the physical world, equivalent changes entered into some Christian churches such that the understanding of the Sacrifice of the Mass was lost on them and laid aside.

[page 24] If we fully comprehend what we see and hear as the Mass is being celebrated, we glimpse a last reflection of the consecration that was carried out in the ancient Egyptian pyramids.

Physical human beings emerged from Osiris, the Sun human, and are to return to the Sun human once again. Unconsciously, they descended from the heights of the Sun; they are to re-ascend consciously. Sun heroes are those who follow their soul paths as certainly as the Sun follows its orbit.

The color reddish violet or purple has always been a prominent part of my life for some reason I found inexplicable, up until now. My high school colors were purple and gold. My university colors were purple and gold. The first bedroom set I bought after getting married was a reddish violet with gold colored knobs. I was amazed when I discovered other people thought that was a horrid color, and at times in the past questioned my own tastes in the matter. As I sit here typing these notes, I am wearing a gold ring with a reddish-violet amethyst stone on each hand, and discovering that color is the color of the Sun at midnight.

[page 28] Those whose spiritual eyes were opened experienced all matter as transparent; they saw through the Earth. They actually saw the Sun at midnight; they were victorious over matter. The Sun at midnight appeared to them cosmically in its complementary colors, reddish violet. For Christians, what appeared cosmically in this grand world symbol is Jesus Christ's appearance on Earth, translated into human terms. We will all see the Sun at midnight. This does not in any way contradict what is found in the New Testament.

There are seven steps to initiation and this table lists those steps with some of the alternate names used to designate the steps. The first column is the steps listed by Steiner on page 29, 30 of this book. Read each step in the table and then what Steiner has to say about a person who reaches each step of the process of initiation.

1. Raven	Person who mediates between external world and world of the spirit.
2.	Person who is admitted to inner sanctuary.

Esoteric	
3. Fighter	Person who is allowed to intervene in external world on behalf of spiritual truth.
4. Lion	Person whose consciousness had expanded to entire tribe.
5. Persian	Israelite; Person whose consciousness extended to entire folk.
6. Sun-hero	Person in whom love of all beings flow with a rhythm as dependable as the Sun.
7. Father	Person who has reached the highest degree of initiation.

[page 30] What had so often occurred individually within the Mystery schools, far from external events, took place openly within Jesus Christ in outer world history.

The image of the "burning bush," a bush that burns without perishing is an apt metaphor for the human being's immortal soul as it is purified in successive births and deaths without perishing, and a wonderful book has been written by on that subject by Edward Reaugh Smith called "[The Burning Bush](#)."

Steiner tells us that the Christmas tree is important for us as an image of the Tree of Paradise, where "Paradise" is "an image of the higher nature of the human being with nothing evil attached to it." (Page 31)

[page 31] A legend explains how this fact was regarded by those who know. When Seth wanted to return to Paradise, a cherub with the fiery sword allowed him in. He discovered there that the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge had become intertwined. Following the instructions of the cherub, he was allowed to take three seeds from this combined tree. That tree represents what the human being would one day become, and what the initiate had already achieved. When Adam died, Seth placed the three seeds into Adam's mouth. From the seeds a flaming bush grew, within which stood the words *Ejeh Asher ejeh* ("I am, who is, was, and will be"). The legend explains further that Moses made his miraculous staff from the wood of that tree. Later, the door of Solomon's temple was made from the same wood. And, finally, the cross of Christ was fashioned from the same wood. It is a picture of the life that passes away in death, yet has within it the power to bring forth new life.

Steiner then quotes the famous German poet Goethe on page 32 and later on page 150 explains the relationship of this stanza and the "Rosy Cross" of the Rosicrucians:

[page 32]
And as long as you do not know
This: Die and Become!
You are nothing more than a dull guest
On this dark Earth.

[page 150] The symbol for this "dying" is the cross, and the symbol for "becoming" is the roses.

We can only understand what Christmas brings to us when we understand the Gospel of John in reverse, as Steiner tells us (page 32): "The light shines in the darkness, and gradually the darkness has comprehended the light."



There are many differences between us and earlier humans as a consequence of the evolution of human beings. In Atlantean times people saw colors floating above objects, not painting the surface of objects as we see them today. When the huge mist that filled the air during that time fell to Earth in the Great Flood, it became possible for people to see colors on the surface of objects for the first time. The rainbow Noah saw, the first rainbow ever seen, marked that change in humanity. In Lemuria, pre-dating Atlantis, people could place their hands over plants and by force of will cause the plant to grow. When humans subsequently became enclosed within their skin, this ability waned because their human forces had become separated from the forces of nature by their skin. (Page 34)

But we humans today possess an ability that would seem strange to these earlier humans. We can utter this sentence meaningfully: "I comprehend a thought of something external." We look at the result of accumulated human thoughts, such as a clock, and say, "I see a clock." On the other hand, they saw the thoughts creating the things.

[page 35] Today we see a clock and create for ourselves the thought of it. But we could never construct the "clock" as thought unless someone had created this thought before clocks existed and then, following the thought, had constructed a clock. This holds true for the thoughts of all things

After the Flood, it was not possible to bring a wisdom that communicated to all people; the teachings in various parts of the world had to be custom tailored. Before the Flood, "enlightenment meant imparting life, not teaching."

[page 38] The seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer were also once [pre-Flood] given in the form of a scale of seven tones, together with seven specific colors and fragrances. In this way, disciples in Atlantis experienced the sevenfold essence of the human being.

After the Flood, feelings had to be first awakened by thoughts. It took Christ to first put into words for us the Lord's Prayer, this "thought mantra," which still has a powerful effect on us today whether we understand its deeper meaning or not. Steiner revisits the Our Father (Lord's Prayer) several times in the latter third of this book, each time shedding further light on the meaning of this amazing prayer. Here is an early mention of the prayer:

[page 38] Everyone who prays the Lord's Prayer is affected by it. It is not really a mantra, though it may have mantric powers. It is a "thought mantra." Of course, its greatest power was in the original human language, but because it is precisely a thought mantra, it will not lose its power even when translated into a thousand languages. We can digest food without knowing the laws of digestion; similarly, we have the fruit of the Lord's Prayer without knowledge. One who has the higher knowledge, however, will receive an entirely different fruit from it.

In Chapter 2, "The Christian Mystery," Steiner lays out the four virtues one must acquire before one even attempts to become a Christian mystic. These are spelled out on pages 45 and 46 and listed here as 1.) Simplicity, 2.) Keep silence, 3.) Give credit to God, 4.) Resignation and devotion. Once one has acquired these virtues, one is ready to begin the seven stages of the Christian mystical path. These seven steps are summarized in the quotation below:

[page 47] We can pass through these seven steps by repeatedly allowing John's Gospel, from the thirteenth chapter on, to come alive within us. First, the washing of the feet, the path of wanting to serve, the bowing down in humility; second, the scourging; third, the crowning with thorns; fourth, the crucifixion; fifth, the mystical death on the cross; sixth, burial in the Earth; seventh, the resurrection. These are the seven inner steps of the Christian Mystery, which were displayed externally on the field of world history. Throughout their entire lives, Christian monks constantly permeated themselves with the contents of John's Gospel from chapter thirteen onward. That is the source of their

power.

In the course of evolution one's I-being works on one's astral, etheric, and physical bodies to purify them. As these three bodies are purified, the purified part is called in Manas (life spirit), Buddhi (spirit self), and Atman (spirit body) or in esoteric Christianity, Holy Spirit, Son, and Father. Buddhi is also called in various places the Logos, the Word, or the Christ. (Page 70) The purification of astral body can be likened to a second hand on a clock, of the etheric body, the minute hand and of the physical body the hour hand. The astral body is quickly affected by things you take in consciously from your external world. The etheric body is affected more slowly by things that occurred in your surroundings that you do not give conscious attention to and yet which over time affect your temperament and character. The physical body is transformed over much longer periods of time through the process of "rhythmizing the breathing process."

[page 73] We have to distinguish then in Christian esotericism, first, the Holy Spirit (Christians have as much of the Holy Spirit in them as they have ennobled their astral bodies); second, the Son, the Logos, the Word (Christians have as much of the Son, the Logos, the Word within them as they have transformed their etheric bodies); and third, the Father (Christians have as much of the Father in them as their physical bodies have been transformed and made immortal). Only initiates can have the Father consciously within them.

The differences in human beings long ago from today remain a mystery to most people today whose opinions about ancient humans are formed by the sciences of archaeology and anthropology. Unfortunately for the true scientist, those sciences can only deal with what Velikovsky called "the bones and the stones" in the Preface to his book, *Earth in Upheaval*; they have no tools with which to deal with humans who lived during periods of time preceding the formation of bone structures, i.e., Lemurian and Atlantean times. Steiner points out in several places that "Adam" the name of the first man means "hard" and is the root of our words "adamant" and "diamond" — a strong indication that Adam was the prototypical first human with a bony structure. The appearance of Adam on Earth followed the Great Flood which is our record of the end of the Atlantean epoch. Before the time of Atlantis, a great continent between India and Australia called Lemuria held a civilization of human beings. These short passages in the next quotation will give you a hint as to what life was like for those humans and how there could obviously be no records in the "bones or stones" of these civilizations. What initially flowed into individual human beings that allowed each to say "I" is called the Holy Spirit in Christian esotericism. But the spirit who embodies all the warmth is the single being we the Logos, Christ himself, "the unifying spirit of the human race on Earth." (Page 93)

[page 91] We have in the warmth of the blood, which lived outside the human being during pre-Lemurian times, the means through which the spirit of the Earth penetrates the human being.

You have to imagine that, as the beings on earth began to become human during the Lemurian age, the spirit that belongs to the air descended; conversely, the higher spirit also began to descend — the spirit contained in the warmth of the blood, or the real spirit of the Earth. These two spirits are related in such a way that one could say the spirit whose body is in the air is the same one who makes it possible for the human being to have language; for the parts of the human organism that now make breathing possible also make speech possible. Speech was developed during the Atlantean epoch, and the highest expression of language was that Human beings had come to say "I" by the end of the Atlantean age.

The ancient mystery schools, long before Christ appeared on the Earth, were devoted to the Mysteries of the Spirit. With the advent of Christ on Earth, they moved to the Mysteries of the Son. In coming millennia we will find a cultivation of the Mystery of the Father as presaged by John in the Apocalypse. Steiner tells us in this next passage how this will progress: the events that happened around Golgotha in microcosm will happen around the Earth in macrocosm.

[page 100] The next age is represented by Judas Iscariot. The representative of base sensuality is related to the representative of the noblest morality. Judas Iscariot is the one who betrays Christianity immediately afterward. Yes, a time will come when it will appear that everything that happened on Golgotha is also happening all over the Earth! It will appear as though egoism is bringing death to Christ, Buddhi. This will be the time of the Antichrist. This is the law that everything that took place around the cross will also have to happen on the physical plane. What happened on Golgotha also has a deep symbolic significance. Judas's betrayal signifies the baser instincts gaining the upper hand. All that is connected with the sense must be spiritualized.

As Steiner closed out this lecture it was Easter time and he reminded us of the importance of what we do during the great festivals of the year.

[page 103] The great festivals of the year are like milestones calling us to pause in our everyday activities and to consider the great events of human evolution, not just over hundreds of years but thousands. We should go through our human condition with fully conscious vision. If we allow this great future goal to work on our souls as taught by the great leaders of humanity, if we open to this goal that is so far away yet can be so close, if it becomes a force in our heart, only then can we attain it. May we never allow such festivals to pass by us without inscribing into our souls such majestic future perspectives of humanity! When the festival bells peal, may we remember that we are not merely children of time, but as spirits, we are also children of eternity!

From the earliest years I can remember I wanted to know something about everything. It was this that led me in college to study physics — to me it was the science of sciences, the science of knowing how everything worked in all the other sciences. I couldn't believe there were people who didn't have the same desire as I did to know how things worked and I must have bored many people in my life telling them about my latest discovery, about my new clarity about how something worked. It might have saved me a lot of time if I had read this next passage by Steiner first:

[page 112] It could be said that there are two kinds of people on Earth. Two mighty spiritual streams can be recognized in humanity. One stream strives more to see everything in the light of knowledge, and the other in a certain sense would like to be led. Precisely the way that the spiritual scientific worldview is received shows that striving for bright, clear light is not very widespread. Most people are not yet advanced to the point where they want to know something about everything. Many find comfort in a certain confusion; they are a little embarrassed when they happen to become entirely clear about anything.

The most common example of clarity that I hear from others is when they quote some authority such as a Talk Show host on a subject. What they don't realize is that they are sharing their map of someone else's clarity when they do that, and that is not a bright, clear light, but rather a darkening. They are mistaking the map of clarity for clarity, a dead, flattened map for the bright, three-dimensional reality of life. Steiner was clear on this point.

[page 112] Faith in authorities also leads to a darkening of consciousness. We should allow ourselves only to be stimulated by authority; we should not build upon it.

"Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" was once a powerful idea about how evolution works, but has fallen into discredit or disuse in recent times, which is a shame. When we apply the concept to human evolution, it allows us to see in the growing human being from infancy to adulthood qualities that were typical of adult humans of ancient times. During those times, it was common for blood relatives to marry which caused the etheric bodies of their descendants to be firmly attached to the physical body. As a result they were naturally clairvoyant.

[page 114] They were illuminated from within. They thought more with their solar plexus, but they had no judgment. This capacity grows with marriage between unrelated people and appears to the extent that ancient blood relative marriages recede. The old somnambulistic clairvoyance then disappeared, and a new kind of seeing appeared — the power of judgment.

Children today under the age of 14 are like the adults of ancient time before the power of judgment appeared — they still have their etheric bodies firmly attached to their physical body and have aspects of clairvoyance which occasionally is noticeable in the form of imaginary companions and other aspects of a full fantasy life and imagination. They should not be taught to judge things until after the age of puberty when the etheric body is loosened and the astral body becomes active.

Steiner reveals to us on page 117 that the history of philosophy in the sense of abstract intellect or thinking first began between 800 and 600 B. C. The astronomical knowledge of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Oriental peoples that predate that time was based not on abstract thinking and calculation, but rather on a natural clairvoyance.

[page 118] The intellect arose only half a millennium before Christ. This is related to a complete change in blood relationships and forms of marriage. These forms were entirely different from those of today. . . . There is an unusual connection between the transition to the new form of marriage and the formation of the intellect. It is an esoteric truth that the marriage of people unrelated by blood has a deadening effect on a part of the etheric body; the forebrain is enlivened, while the old form of clairvoyance that grows through familial marriage is destroyed. The ability to comprehend something with thoughts is awakened. The new form of marriage is appropriate for humanity today, as was familial marriage in earlier times. Today familial marriage has a damaging effect on the mental activity of children, particularly on the sense organ connected to the development of the intellect, the eye. That is why there is so much blindness in familial marriages. The brain is improved only by marriage between people who are unrelated by blood.

A wave of interest in Eastern religious practices such as Yoga and Transcendental Meditation swept over the Western World in last half of the 20th Century. Suddenly pop singers had gurus and Yale graduates were taking on strange sounding names like Ram Dass, Ananda, etc. The tsunami has subsided with the turn of the new century, and yet some in Europe and American are still looking for enlightenment in these ancient religious practices. The promises of the Hindu guru seems not to have been fulfilled in their Western charges: what worked for them does not seem to work for Westerners as well. Steiner explains why their Eastern practices are not suited for the Western temperaments.

[page 125, 126] We will first consider the Eastern path of Yoga. It is possible for the human soul to develop itself so far that it becomes like an eye that see directly the spiritual, eternal, nontemporal. The path of development taken by an individual of the East is different from that taken by a European. Hindus are not only different from Europeans externally, even their brains and souls have different structures. Therefore it is clear that a Hindu must take a different path than a European to really reach the intended goal. Indeed, the differences are so great that Europeans would ruin themselves morally and physically if they wanted to take the Eastern path of development. The loneliness and withdrawal of the soul from civilization by the Yoga path is almost impossible in our European culture. We would have to step entirely out of our ordinary lives, indeed, out of our entire culture in order to devote ourselves to our own inner development.

Paradoxically, after saying this, Steiner goes on to describe the six prerequisites for taking the Yoga path of initiation, taking care to advise in several places that the guidance of a guru is essential in the Yoga

path. These six prerequisites for the Yoga path are the same six steps that Florin Lowndes describes in his book, *Enlivening the Chakra of the Heart* as "The Fundamental Spiritual Exercises of Rudolf Steiner." In fact, Lowndes devotes the entire book to describing how to apply those exercises in one's life. Lowndes divides the six exercises into Control of: 1.) Thinking, 2.) Will, 3.) Feeling, and Fulfilment of: 4.) Thinking in Feeling, 5.) Thinking in the Will, 6.) Thinking in Thinking. These six steps are described in detail on page 126 and again on page 175 of *The Christian Mystery* in the Chapter "Paths of Initiation." Below is the concise summary from page 175.

[page 175] First of all, pupils must acquire the ability to strictly control thoughts. They must practice holding a thought for a long time in the midpoint of the soul life, the more intensely the better. This exercise must be undertaken daily for at least five minutes. The longer, the better, but we should not overexert ourselves.

Second, it is necessary to train one's initiative in action. This consists in pupils' taking an initiative daily, entirely out of their own free will. It is sufficient that it be a very small, insignificant action, for example, watering flowers. After some time, another action is undertaken.

Third, we must become masters of pleasure and pain. Great swings of emotion from sky-high manic rejoicing to deathly depression must cease. We thereby become more sensitive and receptive, but *we* must be in charge, not the sensations.

Fourth, positivity is required. What I mean by this is evidenced in a Persian legend of Jesus Christ. Christ was walking with some of his disciples along a path. Alongside the road there was the decaying corpse of a dog. This his disciples turned away from and said, "That animal is so ugly!" But Christ stood still and said, "Look at how beautiful the teeth are!" Even in what is ugly there is beautiful, in what is most evil there is still some good, in the small there is something to be found that is great. Positive characteristics must be sought everywhere.

Fifth, absolute openness and freedom from bias in the face of all new impressions must be acquired, the highest degree of impartiality. People tend to say, "I have never heard of that, never seen it. I don't believe it!" We must absolutely cease ever speaking of impossibilities. We must have a little chamber in our hearts in which, for example, the possibility is left open that the church tower is leaning to one side if someone says the tower is leaning to one side. We must at least consider as possible what we hear.

The sixth step consists in the harmonization of the five preceding steps.

People who tend to say, "I have never heard of that, never seen it. I don't believe it!" are violating the observation of Alan Watts who said, "The wake does not drive the boat." They are letting the way things have always been determine the way things will always be for them. People like that have not learned how to apply the [limitation eraser](#), up until now.

The second path of initiation Steiner describes is the Christian Gnostic path and does not require a personal guru. "This requirement is removed because of the existence of a great personality — Jesus Christ -- who should be the goal and guide on the path. The steps are those listed in the Page 47 quote above which follow the events of the text of John's Gospel from Chapter 13 onward. The details are given on pages 130, 131.

The third path was originated in the 14th Century to accommodate the cultural conditions of that time for Europeans and for centuries to come. It is the Rosicrucian system which is a combination of the above two paths and is the one that Steiner calls the "most suitable path for a modern human being." He first published that path in the magazine



Lucifer-Gnosis and later expanded that article into a book called, *How to Know Higher Worlds: A Modern Path of Initiation* (GA 10). The paradox is resolved for us when we realize that the prerequisites for the Yoga path of initiation were incorporated into the modern path of initiation described by Rudolf Steiner in this book.

Note the similarity of the spiral in the diagram to the zodiacal sign of Cancer, which resembles the number 6 interwoven and above the number 9. Steiner explains the origin of this symbol as several things, all of which have the essence of the beginning of a new stage of growth, whether it be an embryo, or a new start in human history.

[page 142] There are many things in the world constructed according to the shape of a vortex. This spiral [see diagram] we find in the Orion nebula as well as in the form of living beings. Human and animal embryos have a spiral form in the early stages of their development. One part is a picture of the physical; the other part, which spirals around in the first, is the astral. The start of a new stage in human history is also symbolized by the sign of two spirals joined together — this is the zodiacal sign of Cancer. When the ancient Indian subrace originated after the submergence of ancient Atlantis, the Sun rose on the first day of spring in the zodiacal sign of Cancer.

Steiner says in several other lecture series that the sexual organs of the plant kingdom point to the sky, those of animals point parallel to the Earth's surface, and those of humans point down toward the Earth. In this next passage he shares with us the meaning of this inversion that happens between the plants and humans and what it augurs for our future human nature.

[page 148] Something else was brought to the pupils' consciousness by all these techniques of schooling. They were told to behold the blossom with its reproductive organs turned modestly to the Sun. The Sun's rays kiss the inside of the blossom. The plant stretches its reproductive organs innocently into space. Think of this image transformed on a higher level. Consider animals and human beings and behold how human beings cloak what the plant holds up to the Sun. Then say to yourself, Human beings will one day attain a level where all that is lowly is gone from their organs. On a higher level they will bring to the Sun what plants today bring as a blossom. Then all instinctual desire will be purified; human nature, the human individual will have overcome natural desire. The transformation was called the Grail, the holy vessel, in Rosicrucian wisdom.

Speaking over fifty years before the structure of DNA was discovered to be two intertwining spirals, Steiner correctly predicted such a structure in this lecture in Basel on September 19, 1906 as he discussed how the structure of the esoteric script is written into the world:

[page 149] An example would be the spiral, which we can see in the cosmos in the form of two intertwined vortexes in the Orion nebula. Microcosmically the first development of the human embryo takes place in a corresponding form.

In the double spiral we have the essential process of the old spiraling out and the new spiraling in. This process is at work whether it is a dying plant releasing a new fruit, a decadent culture (Atlantis) being replaced a new culture (India), or decaying world being replaced by a new world as in the Orion spiral nebula.

Another step on the path of Rosicrucian initiation is the finding of the



philosopher's stone.

[page 158, 159] A Rosicrucian says, "Today your body is made of flesh, but one day you will be able to build it up for yourself through your breathing. The essence of 'plantness' will appear in you, but you will not sleep as plants do; you will be clairvoyant at the same time."

We are advancing toward this goal, the goal of constructing our bodies from carbon — ordinary carbon or coal as the philosopher's stone. It will not be black coal but transparent-as-water carbon when the human body has become starlike.

When I chose the name "Good Mountain Press" for my publishing company, I was not aware of many of the subtle meanings hidden in that name. In this next passage, Steiner likens the climbing of a mountain to the process of inner development. Like the readers of my reviews might say, "the more we read, the more we know, but a great deal remains concealed by the mountain of books they represent."

[page 161] When we reach the pinnacle of knowledge, when we stand on the peak of a mountain, then we have an unhindered view in all directions. As long as we are merely on the way, until we attain the peak, we do not have an unhindered view. The more we climb, the more we know, but a great deal remains concealed by the mountain.

Before reading the next passage, it may be useful to view the [Sevens Table](#) in the Steiner Study Guide and get familiar with the concept of root race and sub-race. We live now in the 5th Post-Atlantean Cultural Epoch or Sub-race which is the 5th of 7 sub-races that comprise the 5th Great Epoch or Root Race known as the Post-Atlantean Epoch. Steiner tells us that "every root race has its task in the evolution of humanity."

[page 178] The goal of ours — the fifth main, or root, race — is called *Manas*, that is, to awaken human understanding through concepts and ideas. Every race has its task; the task of the Atlantean was the formation of the I. Ours, the fifth root race, the post-Atlantean epoch, has the formation of *Manas*, the spirit self as its task.

Our task is not going to be easy. We have developed a culture of reason, but at the same time we are bringing forth a culture of extreme egoism. We have a paradoxical combination of powerful understanding with a dearth of ability to perceive the spiritual world.

[page 179] When a priest in Atlantean times wrote by making a sign in the air, the primary effect was an inner soul experience of the pupil.

Nothing like that ability exists today to any extent — what we have instead is the personal element, the ego, an element that has evolved over recent millennia, coming to the fore in the fourth or the Greco-Roman epoch beginning 800 B.C. In Greece, the personal element appeared in art. Later, in Rome, the personal element entered into the ruling of the state. And today the personal element or egoism has evolved in us so much that we possess an "arid intellect" as Steiner calls it. An intellect that can only manipulate abstract concepts in most people. With this arid intellect one can not do what novice pupils in Atlantis could do: experience understanding in their soul directly the sign a priest or teacher might make in the air. Today, a complete exposition of the meaning of the sign would have to be provided in abstract terms by the teacher before the pupil could experience understanding in their soul.

The 3rd Great Epoch of Lemuria was destroyed by firestorms and the 4th Great Epoch of Atlantis was destroyed by a mighty flood of water. What awaits us at the end of our 5th Great Epoch may be likened to a feeding frenzy of sharks in which ego will be pitted against ego in an all out War of All against All. Following that "a small group of people will be formed who develop the power of *Buddhi*, the life spirit, through the force of thought, in order to then carry it over into the new culture." (Page 179)

[page 181] When the Mysteries of the Father are one day fulfilled, that is, when the development of *Buddhi* has been completed in every individual human being, then all human beings will find their deepest being, *Atman*, spirit body, within themselves.

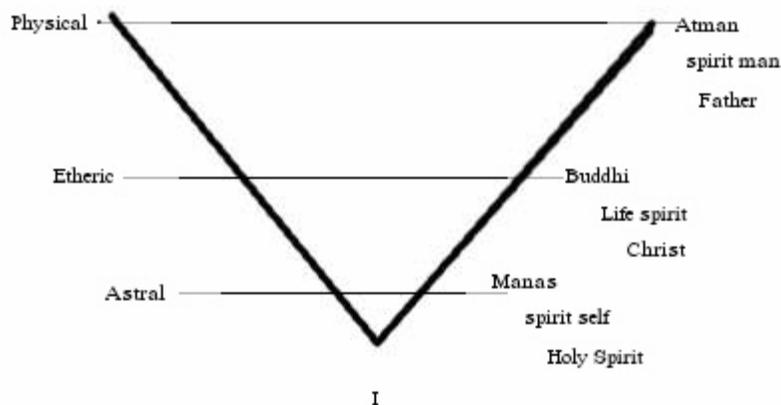
Where is all this leading? To a day when human beings will become the teachers in the Mysteries of the Father. Why is this significant?

[page 182] On special occasions in the Mysteries of the Son, Christ himself appeared in person as a teacher, as did a teacher who not a human being but a god. Those who become teachers in the Mysteries of the Father will be the first to be teachers *and* human beings. Such human beings, who have developed faster than the rest of humanity, will then be the true masters of wisdom and harmony. They are called the Fathers. With the Mysteries of the Father, the leadership of humanity will be transferred from beings who have descended from other worlds into the hands of human beings themselves. That is what is significant.

This may still be a bit abstract for you, dear Reader, as I admit it is for me, but hang in there as we witness Steiner wave his hand in the air and pull all the pieces together for us.

[page 186] Human beings develop themselves through manifold incarnations to greater and greater perfection because the I works on the other three members of the human being.

Look at the large V in the diagram at the right with the three steps going down on the left side: Physical, Ether, Astral, the "I" at the very bottom of the V, and three steps going up the right side: *Manas* [Spirit Self, Holy Spirit], *Buddhi* [Life Spirit, Christ], and *Atman* [Spirit Body, Father]. Using such a diagram, you can see that first the I works on the astral body to build up more and more *Manas* or spirit self. Once that process has been completed, the I works on the ether body to build up the *Buddhi* or life spirit. In the final phase the I works on the physical body to build up the *Atman*, or life body. The spirit component on the right side of the V stems from the purification of the lower body at the same relative position on the left side of the V. This diagram represents the entire scope of human evolution, rightly understood, both individually for each of us and cosmically for all of creation.



[page 186, 187] The seventh member of the human being is *Atman* — in Christian esotericism, the *Father*. First we come to the *Holy Spirit*, the transformed astral body; through the *Holy Spirit* to *Christ*, the consciousness of the etheric body; and through *Christ* to the *Father*, the consciousness of the physical body.

Having gone through all these stages, we are now ready to listen as Steiner paints for us a panorama of how we will, each and all, move through repeated incarnations and progress through to the Father stage.

[page 187] When we die, we leave behind the physical body, but that part of the physical body we have already transformed is lifted out. This part consists of forces, not substances. What we take with us at this moment is actually very little. Nevertheless, it is what serves in our next incarnation to form a new physical body. Materialism calls this part the "permanent atom."

First this part of the transformed physical body emerges, then the etheric body, then the body of consciousness, and finally the I-being. After some time that part of the astral body that the I has not yet worked on is also detached from the astral body. Then comes a time when only the portion of the three lower bodies remains attached that has been transformed by the I. This then passes through the region of the spirit. It is the eternal essence, the spiritual kernel of the human being. It is always becoming larger the more the I has worked. The Holy Spirit is the eternal spirit in the human being. The Christ is the eternal part of the body of life, the Father the eternal part of the physical body. These three accompany us through all time as our eternal core.

We are accustomed to thinking the following way about two scientists who have different opinions about some scientific issue: either both are wrong or one of them is wrong. There is, after all, only one truth. But we seem to feel that in matters of the spiritual world everyone can have their own opinion. Steiner takes care to explain that is not the case.

[Page 191] Two spiritual researchers will never have different opinions concerning a single thing. If they are different, then one or both of the opinions is false. Wisdom is something unified, incapable of discrepancy. The more individualized human beings become, the more they must be given wisdom, which will draw them together. We are in a transition stage today. The idea that everyone is entitled to their own points of view and that every opinion is equally close to the truth will cease with the increasing development of wisdom.

In the several lectures and excerpts from lectures by Steiner on the Lord's Prayer that comprise the last third of this book, we find the following prayer repeated. It is called by Steiner the "fundamental Christian prayer" and it goes simply, "Father, not my will but your will be done." (Page 201) A variation of the prayer from the New Testament is this one, in which "Jesus Christ himself indicated as clearly possible the mood needed by Christians while praying":

[page 204] Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.

Having just considered the seven-fold human being comprised of these seven components: physical, etheric, astral, I, manas, buddhi, and atman, it should come as no surprise to find that the most comprehensive Christian prayer, the Our Father or Lord's Prayer⁽²⁾, contains seven petitions which address the needs of each part of the sevenfold human being. The first three petitions have to do with the spiritualized bodies of the human being, the manas (name), buddhi (kingdom), and atman (will).

[page 218] Inasmuch as our name is in God, it is Manas, the name. Our Buddhi is the kingdom. Divine will lives in our Atman. These three are the divine members of God's being in us. The human being received these divine members of God's being, and out in the world they are found as name, kingdom, and will.

In the first three petitions of the Our Father, we pray, acknowledging the divine members of God's being in us thusly:

**Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be Thy name, (*Manas*)
Thy kingdom come, (*Buddhi*)
Thy will be done (*Atman*)
On Earth as it is in Heaven.**

The remaining four petitions are allocated to the four bodies of the human being that we each have: *physical body* (the phantom that acts as a placeholder for the minerals that comprise our material body), the *etheric body* (the life body, which we have in common with other humans, which, when it is removed from us, we become dead matter, a corpse), the *astral body* (the body of passions that are personal to us that drive us to yield to temptation), and finally the *I or ego body* (the source of our freedom, independence and egoism; each of which makes us susceptible to evil.) In the remainder of the Our Father, we pray for these four parts, for what each one needs the most if we are to evolve as divine beings.

(Physical) Give us this day our daily bread, (food, mineral substances to replenish and sustain our physical body's material substance)

(Etheric) And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (The debt here is the disturbance we cause in others' bodies if we do not live in harmony with them. We owe something to our neighbors if we place a disturbance in their etheric bodies. If we refrain from perturbing others' etheric bodies, we allow our own etheric body to return to harmony.) [See The Gospel of St. Matthew, [Beatitude 3](#) for how being gentle in spirit can help us here.]

(Astral) And lead us not into temptation (All the wrongs an individual does comprise a yielding to temptation by the astral body.)

(I) And deliver us from Evil. (The "i" in "evil" is the "I" — without this source of individuality, freedom, and independence, there would be no evil.)

The closing refrain refers to the kingdom of the spirit. Steiner says that when we live as required by the Lord's Prayer, we can live through the Dominions, Powers, and Might (2nd Hierarchy) up to the Cherubim, Seraphim, (1st Hierarchy) and on up to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Page 221)

For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen⁽³⁾.

~~~~~ footnotes ~~~~~

1. John's mother was named Elizabeth. "Beth" is the Hebrew word for "home" and "Eliza" is a slight variation of "Elijah." The etymology of the name of John's mother gives us a hint of John's true nature, the reincarnation of Elijah, in the home or womb of Elizabeth.  
[Return to Text above footnote reference.](#)

2. Below is the Lord's Prayer in the manner of Rudolf Steiner prayed it daily in his life:

**Father,**

**You who were, are, and will be in our inmost being,  
May your name be glorified and praised in us.  
May your kingdom grow in our deeds and inmost lives.  
May we perform your will as you, Father, lay it down in our inmost being.**

**You give us spiritual nourishment, the bread of life, superabundantly in all the changing conditions of our lives.**

**Let our mercy toward others make up for the sins done to our being.  
You do not allow the tempter to work in us beyond the capacity of our strength.  
— for no temptation can live in your being, Father, and the tempter is only appearance  
and delusion, from which you lead us, Father, through the light of knowledge.  
May your power and glory work in us through all periods and ages of time.**

**Amen.**

[Return to Text above footnote reference.](#)

3. This is what Rev Mario Schoenmaker said about the word "Amen" in his lecture series called [The Ultimate Vision](#) on the Book of Revelation.

"The word 'Amen' comes from the word Aum. This word comes from the original Sanskrit language. When the mysteries found their way into Egypt, the third millennia before Christ, a ruler arose called Amen Hotep. After many, many eons of idolatry in his country he brought back the concept of the one and only God. It is from this ruler that we have the word 'Amen' today.

By saying 'Amen' we acknowledge our own existence and the existence of the one and only God. Original Christianity was such a beautiful concept in that it told us that we had direct access to God, as did Amen Hotep. It also acknowledged the existence of Angels, Archangels, and the whole Hierarchy. However, it did say that we do not have to pray to them, we must not worship the Hierarchy. 'Amen' indicates that we only worship the one God. This is illustrated at the end of the Book of Revelation where St. John is faced with an angel in Chapter 22:8:

"I John am he who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me; but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.'"

So it is very plain that in our prayers we can call upon these beings to worship with us, but we don't worship them. Amen also means 'So shall it be.' The word Amen is a very sacred and powerful word if used in the proper way.

[RJM: Thanks to Kristina Anite Kaine for permission to publish this excerpt here.]

[Return to Text above footnote reference.](#)

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