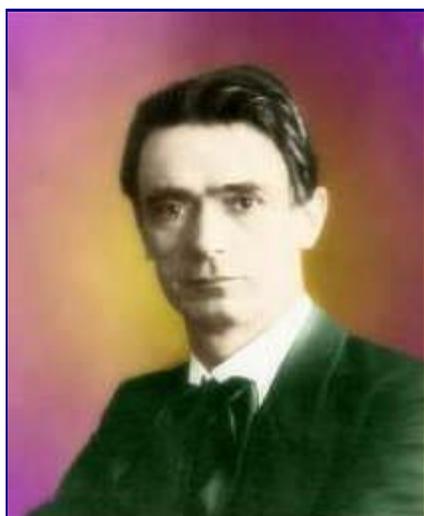


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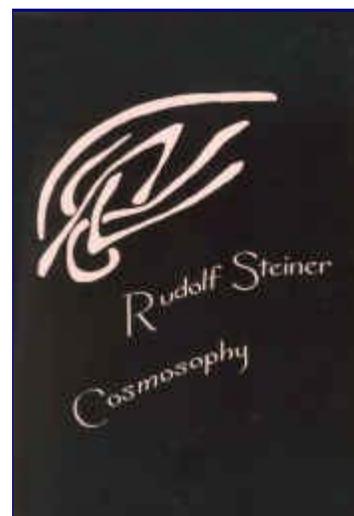
*A READER'S JOURNAL*

Cosmosophy, Volume 1, GA# 207,  
by  
Rudolf Steiner

**Cosmic Influences on the Human Being  
11 Lectures in Dornach, Sept 23-Oct 16,  
1921**

Foreword by Alan Howard  
**Translated by Alice Wulsin and Michael  
Klein**

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2004

The theme of this book is best given in Steiner's own words spoken at the beginning of Lecture 10. This book can be considered a graduate course for students of his spiritual science. It requires some understanding all his other writings to grasp fully what he presented in these eleven lectures back in 1921. I include the passage from Alan Howard so that undergrads may be forewarned before attempting this material. By all means buy this book if you have an interest in Steiner — someday you'll feel ready to read it and make sense of it.

**[page 145] We have tried to get some picture of how the human life of spirit, the human soul life, and the human life of the body are to be comprehended.**

Alan Howard writes a caveat in the Foreword that I have read in many places before, but his statement of it is the best I've found. I had read about ten books filled with Steiner's lectures which were given to audiences familiar with his basic books and was still wondering why I kept reading them as I could decipher only a little of the material. Once I was led to read his basic books, I began to see and understand the genius of Steiner and the material began to become clearer and clearer to me with each new book. Howard's writing style is as dense and complex as Steiner's translated German, so Howard's very style itself can be a caveat to potential English readers of the 21st Century. I have endeavored in my reviews of Steiner's books to translate Steiner's complex style into more readable English style for readers of today. Few of whom, e.g., would enjoy working their way through the last sentence of this next passage.

**[page xi] It is essential to make this clear to readers, and even to impress upon them the need to have some familiarity with the basic books before attempting the courses. The reasons should be obvious. First, it would be unfair to the readers themselves to be led into buying a book which they might find mystifying and confusing, if not wholly incomprehensible, later; and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it would be unfair to the cause of spiritual science if the unadvised reader should be led to forming a premature judgment about what is admittedly recondite, if not at times arcane, through insufficient knowledge of its basic principles.**

This next observation does not require an Oriental sage, one can merely look at any news program of the day since the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001 in which two of the tallest buildings in the world were destroyed within twenty minutes of each other by a band of terrorists, killing over three thousand people. Fear and hatred seems to be coin of the realm since then — politicians can use them to buy just about anything they want in the name of safety from terrorism.

**[page 1] If an Oriental sage of ancient times — we must return to very ancient times of Oriental culture if we are to consider what I wish to say here — one who had been initiated into the mysteries of the ancient East, were to turn his gaze on modern Western civilization, he might say to its representatives, "You are really living entirely in fear; your whole mood of soul is governed by fear. Everything you do, but also everything you feel, is saturated with fear and its reverberations in the most important moments of life. Since fear is closely related to hatred, hatred plays a great role in your entire civilization."**

How might an ancient sage from the East explain how his civilization lived? He would say his civilization lived in joy — joy that could be enhanced to the point of a complete giving of oneself to the world, that then could be enhanced to love." (Page 1) "Love was the fundamental force of the ancient Oriental civilization." (Page 2) What happened to change things for Western civilization was one of the sayings over the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, "Know Thyself!" Suddenly humankind focused for the first time on looking into its own being. This was a stark contrast from the ancient Oriental approach which was, "Turn your gaze outward toward the world and try to let that approach you which is hidden in the depths of cosmic phenomena!" (Page 3) In other words, there's no fear or hatred in cosmic phenomena. What happened to change some of the Eastern sages was one of the Western migrations that Steiner speaks of in his [Psychology of Body, Mind, and Spirit](#) — the mystery students from the East came to the West and encountered experiences they had never had in their home area. They became able to conceptualize for the first time. They learned mysteries they were forbidden to reveal to non-initiates:

**[page 4] "No one who is not initiated in the sacred mysteries should discover the secrets of man's inner being; to utter these secrets in the presence of a non-initiate is forbidden; the mouth uttering these secrets lays the burden of sin upon itself, and the ear burdens itself with sin when it hearkens to those secrets."**

As humans sought to look into their inner being, they encountered first an inner mirror, the mirror of the senses, one that Steiner says must be broken if one is to see one's inner being, and he tells what we will see if we break the mirror. Like Neo in the movie, "The Matrix", we will see the reality that undergirds what we had assumed was reality before. We will see the processes of thinking working their way into the etheric body from the physical body.

**[page 8] What, then, does one behold within the human being? There, one sees how something of the power of perceiving and thinking, which is developed in front of the memory-mirror, penetrates below this memory-mirror. Thoughts penetrate below this memory-mirror and work into the human etheric body, into that part of the etheric body that forms the basis of growth but is also the origin of the forces of will. In looking out into the sunlit space and surveying all that we receive through our sense impressions, there radiates into our inner being something that on the one hand becomes memory images but that also trickles through the memory-mirror, permeating it just as the processes of growth, nutrition, and so on permeate us.**

Those who migrated from the East to Ireland were warned that to develop thinking you must permeate your etheric body with thought-forces, but doing so will throw matter back into chaos and destroy it. (Page 9) This leads us to a very important task for those who study their inner being:

**[page 9] For this reason, whoever has had to learn of the presence of this source of**

**destruction in the inner being of man must take an interest in the evolution of the spirit. With all intensity he must be able to say to himself: spirit must exist and, for the sake of the continuance of the spirit, matter should be extinguished.**

Unless we become aware of this process of destruction which each of us holds inside of us -- a living presence which, like a tempered sword pulled from its sheath, can be used for good or for destruction — Western civilization will decline. Only by becoming conscious of the process can it be shaped into a force of ascent.

**[page 10] Within Western civilization man is the sheath for a source of destruction, and actually the forces of decline can be transformed into forces of ascent only if man becomes conscious of this, that he is the sheath for a source of destruction.**

Our world is today plagued with hordes of terrorists who have harnessed their inner being into a "fury of destruction" without any apparent ability to discern the source of their fury, up until now. In 1921 Steiner saw the forces of destruction undulating over Eastern Europe, particularly in post-revolutionary Russia, no doubt. No one need decry these forces in humankind, but they are essential to the evolution of our thinking ability, especially if we are ever able as a human race to penetrate the memory-mirror inside each of us.

**[page 10] It is a fury of destruction thrust out of the inner being of man into the outer world, and in the future man will be able to find his bearings regarding what actually flows into his instincts only when a true knowledge of the human being once again prevails, when we become aware once more of the human source of destruction within, which *must* be there, however, for the sake of the evolution of human thinking. This strength of thinking that man must have in order that he may have a world conception in keeping with our time, this strength of thinking which *must* be there in front of the memory-mirror, brings about the continuation of thinking into the etheric body, and the etheric body thus permeated by thinking works destructively upon the physical body. This source of destruction within modern Western man is a fact, and knowledge merely draws attention to it. If the source of destruction is there without man being able to bring it into consciousness, it is much worse than if man takes full cognizance of this source of destruction and from this standpoint enters into the evolution of modern civilization.**

In other words, it is time for humankind to accept an idea whose time has come: stop supporting, stop participating in, stop fighting against coercive organizations. This idea was first shared with me in a course, [V50T](#), I took from a contractor of the Liberal Institute of Natural Sciences, also known as "An Introduction to Volitional Science". If you follow the course material, you soon come to understand that *freedom cannot be fought for, it can only be built, and once built, it can never be destroyed*. Freedom, rightly understood, means freedom from coercion: freedom from others coercing you, and most importantly, freedom from the illusion that you must coerce others. Modern civilization requires this new understanding of freedom in order to continue the evolution of our human thinking without destroying ourselves and all of civilization in the process. We must begin to build a civilization in which the only acceptable government to all people will be a *government of the free, for the free, and by the free* [\(1\)](#).

Steiner gives us an image of the human sheath as the body of an amoeba surrounding the evil or source of destruction within as the body of the amoeba surrounds its nucleus.

**[page 14] Here is the source of destruction, here the human sheath. If what is inside were to spread out over the whole world, what would then live in the world through man? Evil! Evil is nothing but the chaos thrust outside, the chaos that is necessary in man's inner being. In this chaos, which must be within man, this necessary source of evil in man, the human I, the human egoity, must be forged. This human egoity cannot live**

**beyond the sphere of the human senses in the outer world. That is why the I-consciousness disappears in sleep, and when it figures in dreams it often appears as though estranged or weakened.**

We live in a habitual world of sense phenomena in our I, a world that the ancient Oriental sage would have called *Vana*. Seeking to avoid evil at all costs, the sage would have sought to surrender their I, their egoity, so that they could transcend the weaving world of the habitual, *Vana*, and enter the world of Not-vana or *Nirvana*.

**[page 15] This interpretation of Nirvana, of the sublimest surrender of the I, as it exists in sleep, as it existed in fully conscious cognition for the pupils of the ancient Oriental civilization — it is this Nirvana that would be alluded to by an ancient Oriental such as the one I introduced to you hypothetically. He would say, "With you, since you had to cultivate the egoity, everything is founded on fear. With us, who had to suppress the ego, everything was founded on love. With you, there speaks the I that desires to assert itself. With us, Nirvana spoke, while the I flowed out lovingly into the entire world."**

I recall back during the 60s and 70s of the last century when young people were seeking Nirvana by basking in the love glowing from their Eastern guru. It was a fad which flared up and disappeared, apparently because the crude intellectual concepts of our time were unable to support closer scrutiny and the experience of Nirvana. Steiner points out that a disposition exists in the blood of Orientals and Westerners which leads the former to Nirvana and the latter to egoity. This disposition in the blood will not be proven by placing the blood of each side under a microscope. The Westerner blood will not show an inner source of evil or Vana, nor will the Oriental blood show a longing for Nirvana. For humanity these inner sources live as "sensations, as feelings, fluctuating and permeating human existence." Human life cannot be put under a microscope slide, only death.

In talking about the economic problems of the world in 1921, Steiner says that "all economic activities and relations presuppose the trust of one human being in another." That trust cannot be built in an atmosphere of coercion — which leads inevitably to a "hardening of the I" and "evil in the life and actions of human being" (Page 19) — but only in an atmosphere of freedom. And an atmosphere of freedom can only be built one human being at a time.

Steiner has shown us how "we remain within ordinary consciousness" as "we retain memories only of the impressions of the world." Now he describes how these impressions can arise later in what we would call today, "cognitive memories" or simply memories.

**[page 18] We gain experience of the world, and we have our experiences through the senses, through the intellect, through the effects generally upon our life of soul. Later we are able to call up again our memory of the afterimage of what we have experienced. We carry as our inner life these afterimages of sense experiences.**

Is there hope for humanity, which can be seen collectively as the macro-sheath surrounding a mass of evil? In my essay "[Art is the Process of Destruction](#)" I discuss how the destruction of sameness is necessary to liberate exciting new possibilities for good into the world. In a more general sense, Steiner shows us how good can arise from the destruction which is the both the bane and boon of the inherent evil embedded in the sheath of humankind.

**[page 19] In this source of destruction about which I spoke yesterday matter is truly annihilated. Matter is thrown back into its nothingness, and then we can allow, within this nothingness, the good to arise. The good can arise if, instead of our instincts and impulses, which are bound to work toward the cultivation of egoity, we pour into this source of destruction, by means of a moral inclination of soul, all moral and ethical ideals. Then something new arises. Then in this very source of destruction the seeds of future worlds arise. Then we, as human beings, take part in the coming into being of**

**worlds.**

But modern materialism since the middle of the fifteenth century has taught itself that matter is never truly annihilated, but only passes from one form into another. Even when one adds Einstein's insight that energy is simply another form of matter, one ends up with a dreary vision such as Steiner unfolds in the passage below for us:

**[page 29] How is it then, finally, for a person who has entered so much into the spirit of what from childhood has been crammed into him as the modern natural scientific way of thinking? He learns that out there in the world are outer phenomena that arise and pass away but that matter persists, matter is the indestructible thing, and that if the earth comes to an end matter will never be destroyed. Certainly, he is told, a time will come when the earth will be one vast cemetery, but this cemetery will be composed of the very same atoms and molecules, or at least the same atoms, as are already there today. One thus applies all one's attention to what is perishing, and even when studying what is unfolding, one really studies only how what is perishing plays into what is unfolding.**

In the Gospels of Luke, Matthew, and Mark the following phrase appears, [Mark 13:31] "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." Our modern education teaches us a science that only concerns itself with dead matter, that it is the imperishable thing, but there is a deeper truth we are called to envision if we are to be truly human.

**[page 29, 30] If we wish to see the reality, the actuality, we must envision it in the following way. All that we see with our senses, all that we also see of other human beings with our senses, will no longer exist one day; whatever makes itself known to eye, ear, and so on, will at some time in the future cease to be. Heaven and earth will pass away, for what we see of the stars by means of our senses also belongs to the things that are transient. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the inner word that is formed in the inner chaos of the human being, in the source of destruction, will live on after heaven and earth are no longer there; it will live on just as the seed of this year's plant will live on in the plant of next year. In the inner being of man are the seeds of world-futures. And if into these seeds human beings receive the Christ, then heaven and earth may pass away, but the Logos, the Christ, cannot pass away. Man bears in his inner being what will one day exist when all he sees around him will have ceased to be.**

There is one crucial aspect remaining if one is to be truly human — one must not stop at the Father God, which reveals Himself to us in the material world of our senses, or one's evolution will stop and one will disappear with the physical body of the Earth when it fades away and disappears. Only through Christ the Son God can one ascend from physicality and become truly human.

**[page 30] He must be able to say to himself: I look up to the Father God. The Father God lies at the foundation of the world that I can see with my senses. The world of the senses is His revelation, but it is nonetheless a perishing world, and it will drag the human being down with it if he is completely absorbed in it, if he is able to develop a consciousness only of the Father God. Man would then return to the Father God; he would be unable to evolve any further. There is also a new world unfolding, however, and it takes its beginning from man himself. When man ennobles his ethical ideals through the Christ consciousness, through the Christ impulse, when he forms his ethical ideals as they should be formed through the fact that the Christ has come to earth, then something comes to life in the chaos within him, seed is sown for the future, which is now not a perishing but an unfolding world.**

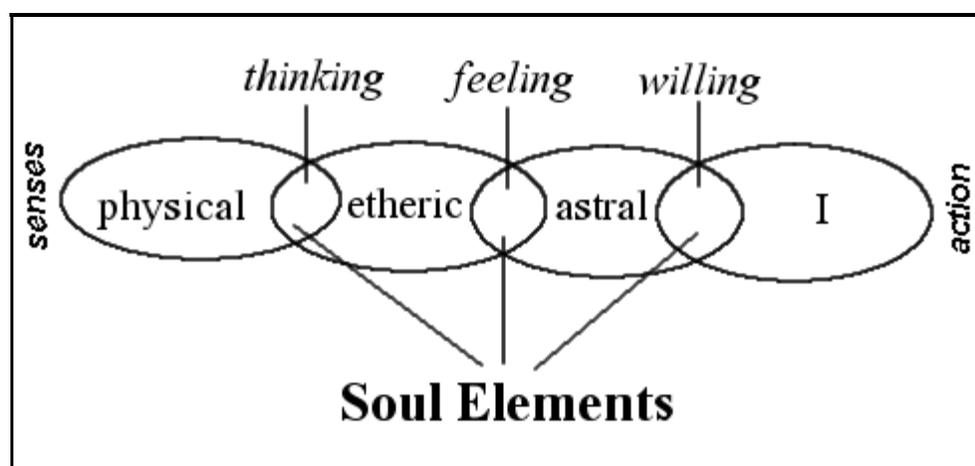
Steiner leads us to see on a grand scale that the Moon in the sky and our moon-nature in us embodies all that is splintering, being dispersed and destroyed, while the Sun rays its life-giving light into us and

renews us.

[page 35] Through both these experiences one comes to behold, in what is splintering and crumbling to dust, the world of the Father God, which had to be there until such time as the world changed into the world of God the Son, which basically has its physical source in what is sun-like in the world. What is of the moon nature and the sun nature relate to one another as Father God to Son God.

During the early Christian centuries these things were seen instinctively. Now they must be known again with full presence of mind if the human being wishes to be able to say of himself in all honesty: I am a Christian. This is what I wished to present to you today.

In his September 30, 1921 lecture, Steiner develops for us the soul elements of thinking, feeling, and willing and shows us how they come to play in the regions between the four bodies of the human. I have shown the relationship between the three soul elements and the four bodies in the Soul Elements Diagram below. The soul element of thinking, for example operates in the space between the physical and etheric body as shown by the intersection of the ellipses of the two bodies.



[page 47] We can therefore say that we divide the human being into physical body, etheric body or body of formative forces, astral body, and I. Between the physical body and the etheric body thinking takes place in the soul element. Between the etheric body and the astral body feeling takes place in the soul element, and between the astral body and the I, willing takes place in the soul element. When we come to the periphery of the physical body we have sense perception. Inasmuch as by way of our I we emerge out of ourselves, placing our whole organization into the outer world, willing becomes action, the other pole of sense perception.

The thinking soul element exists as an objective weaving of thoughts between the physical and etheric bodies, and it is possible for one to observe this objective weaving as one awakens in the morning and compare it to our subjective weaving of thoughts during the rest of our waking experience. In those twilight moments between sleeping and waking, Steiner tells us, we can learn to observe the objective weaving of thoughts.

[page 48] When we learn to understand it more exactly, when we have accustomed ourselves to its foreignness compared with our subjective thinking, then we recognize it. We recognize it as what we have brought with us through our birth from earlier experiences, from experiences lying before birth and conception. For us it becomes something of the spiritual, objectively present, that brings our whole organism together. Pre-existent thought gains objectivity, becomes objectively visible. We can say with an inner grasp that we are woven out of the world of spirit through thought. The subjective

**thoughts that we add stand in the sphere of our freedom. Those thoughts that we behold there form us, they build up our body from the weaving thought. They are our past karma. Before we arrive at sense perceptions, therefore, we perceive our past karma.**

We perceive our past karma as we waken into the day. At the end of the day, before going to sleep, there are some things we have left undone from the schedule of our past karma, and those things constitute what may be called our future karma. Those deeds which are not carried by our I into action remain in the I and become part of our schedule of future deeds, our future karma. It becomes clear how we are likely to choose for our parents humans who will leave undone or unfinished in their lives, the very things we will strive to complete through our lifetime — it is as though we choose our parents to remind us what we are here to do. Carl Jung got close to expressing this truth when he said, "There is nothing which so motivates a man in this lifetime as what his father almost, but never quite did in his lifetime."

**[page 49, 50] Willing is developed between the astral body and the I. Willing becomes deed when it goes far enough toward the outer world to come to the place to which otherwise the sense impressions come. In going to sleep, however, a large quantity goes out that would like to become deed but in fact does not become deed, remaining bound to the I and passing with it through death into the spiritual world. . . . Our future karma is experienced between willing and the deed.**

One of the concepts I first encountered in Steiner was that animals have a group soul for each species and they have a consciousness similar to our own dreaming experiences and our soul element of feeling.

**[page 55] If we seek for the consciousness that we ourselves have as human beings here on earth, we cannot look for it within the animal; we must seek it in beings who do not come to immediate physical existence. These we call the animal species-souls, souls that as such have no physical, bodily nature but that live themselves out through the animals. We can say that all lions together have such a species-soul, which has a spiritual existence. It has a consciousness such as we human beings have, not like that of the single animal.**

Plants on the other hand have a consciousness similar to our dreamless sleep and to our soul element of willing. The group soul of the entire plant kingdom is the Earth itself. Until one comes to grasp the significance of this fact, one will not be able to understand how the Earth sleeps in summer time and awakens in winter, which is the opposite of what a materially-oriented thinker might expect.

**[page 55, 56] If we now descend to the plant world we find there not the same sort of consciousness as an animal's but a consciousness similar to the one we have between sleeping and awaking. The plant is a sleeping being. We also, however, develop this consciousness between the astral body and the I in willing. What is active in the plant world is of essentially the same nature as what lives in our willing. In our willing we actually sleep even when we are awake. The same activity that prevails in our willing actually prevails over the whole plant world. The consciousness that we develop as sleep consciousness is something that actually continues as an unconscious element inserted into our conscious element, forming gaps in our memory, as I described yesterday. Our consciousness is dull during sleep, however, indeed altogether extinguished for most people, just as is the case in plant consciousness.**

**If we then look in plant life for what corresponds to animal life, we cannot seek it in the individual plant but must seek it in the whole earth-soul. The whole earth-soul has a dreaming consciousness and sleeps itself into the plant consciousness. Only insofar as the earth takes part in cosmic becoming does it flicker up in such a way that it can develop a full consciousness such as we human beings have in the waking state between birth and death. This is chiefly the case, however, in the time of winter, when there is a kind of waking of the earth, whereas the dull dream consciousness exists during the warm time,**

**in summer.**

As we enter and proceed through the first half of our life between death and a new birth, we find that our thoughts are longing to become world and our will is longing to become man. At the midpoint or Midnight Hour, a reversal occurs and our thoughts long to become man again and our will longs to become world. This rhythmic process between lives can be likened to a breathing in, inspiration, and an expiration, or breathing out.

**[page 65] The life of the soul is very complex, and here in the Midnight Hour of Existence it passes over the abyss. It is inspired, breathed in, out of our own past, that past at first lying between our last death and the Midnight Hour of Existence. We pass this Midnight Hour of Existence through an activity that resembles, experienced inwardly, an inspiring, and that outwardly is an "expiration," proceeding from the former existence.**

Steiner has shown us the first two realms of the spiritual world: Imagination and Inspiration. There is a third: Intuition. As humans we share experiences of the three realms of nature below us: the mineral, plant, and animal, and in addition we share experiences with the three realms of the spiritual world above us which live in Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition.

**[page 67] Our human life thus reaches downward into the three realms of nature and reaches upward into the three realms of the divine, soul-spiritual existence. This shows us that in our view of the human being here we have only man's outer side. The moment we look at his inner being he continues toward the higher worlds, he betrays to us, reveals to us his relationship to the higher worlds. We live into these worlds through Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition.**

If we wish to know about our soul being we must look into the weaving that occurs in the spaces between our four bodies as a human being. If we wish to know about our spiritual being we must look into what we experience with the beings of the hierarchies who reveal themselves to us through Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition. These beings of the hierarchies pour themselves out, some as Imagination into the dreaming consciousness of the animals in our environment, others as Inspiration into the sleeping consciousness of the plants around us, and the highest ones as Intuition into the deep sleep of the mineral kingdom upon which and in which we reside. Thus we humans live intimately among three kingdoms on Earth — which kingdoms are imbued with the three divine kingdoms which exist above us in the spiritual world.

If one has ever lost a close loved one unexpectedly, and one has taken the time to go back in time days, weeks, or months before their seemingly precipitous death, one may find that there was a mood of soul which you experienced around them during the time leading up to their death. In the two people I'm thinking of, my mother and younger brother, I experienced such a mood of soul in them. When I was around them what kept coming up for me was the lack of hope in their situation in life. Apparently healthy, each experienced difficulty continuing the activities that they loved most dearly. When each one died, I was deeply saddened by the loss, but I knew in my heart that it was the right time for both of them. I had been prepared for their deaths by a time wave from the future which previously filled my feeling states. As Steiner puts it leading up to the next passage, "when one brings into the present the preceding and following part of life — then the wonderful fact emerges that every momentary mood in man represents a cooperation between what has gone before, what he knows and already has consciously encountered in life, and what is yet to come and is not yet given to his conscious experience." (Page 75, 76)

**[page 76] What is still unknown to him lives already, however, in the general mood of feeling. One thus can arrive biographically, I would like to say, at this secret of the mood of soul at any moment. Here one touches the borders of those realms of human**

**observation that are gladly neglected by people who spend their lives without much thought. What the future brings to the human being, he still does not know — or so he imagines. In his life of feeling, however, he knows it.**

**One can go further and make more investigations, investigating for instance, the mood of soul of some person whom one has known very well and who died, let us say, a few years after one had grasped this mood of soul. Then one can see clearly how the approaching death and all connected with it had already thrown its light back on the mood of soul. If one goes into these things, therefore, one can really see the person's past from the life between birth and death and his future up to death playing into what lives in his soul by way of feeling. Hence man's life of soul [*Gemutsleben*] is so inexplicable to himself; it appears as something elemental since as feeling it is already colored by what is still to be experienced.**

We mean by "explain" that we are "to illuminate something in terms of what is already known," do we not? If so, how can we explain something that is *yet* to be experienced? You never know until you find out. So, an unexplainable mood in us is a good sign that you are receiving a time wave from the future. You can learn to understand your life of soul only if you are willing to hold some inexplicable mood as an unanswered question you are asking about the future. It will be answered in due time.

But Steiner raises another issue: if you are taking actions based on those inexplicable moods or feelings, these are not really free actions or deeds! This was an issue he had dealt with in 1898 when he wrote his "Philosophy of Freedom" as he explains below:

**[page 76, 77] All this had to be taken into consideration at the time when I wrote my *Philosophy of Freedom*. Why did I have to stress that the free deed can proceed only from pure thought? Simply because if the deed is based on the feeling, the future is already playing into it, and therefore a really free deed could never arise out of feeling. It can arise only from an impulse truly based on pure thought. If you remember what I have presented in the last two days, you will be able to see the matter still more clearly. I have said that what actually takes place in us, what goes on in our human nature, is reflected up into our consciousness in feeling. If I make a sketch, I can say that in feeling there streams upward into our consciousness just what the experience of the feeling is, but downward there streams what can be experienced by Imaginative consciousness as dream pictures (see drawing), that is, what comes into play entirely in Imaginations. For the entire human being, therefore, the life of feeling runs its course in such a way that what we are conscious of as feeling streams upward (blue), and downward there streams into the organization what is actually picture, what is really seen when it is seen through Imaginative consciousness as picture (red, inside). For the ordinary consciousness this streams down into the whole human being as something quite unknown. Not indeed in the individual events, for they must first come about — I beg you to realize this — but in the general mood of life there lives in man as a sort of basic tone the outcome of his future experiences.**

I can remember when I first encountered this understanding — it came when I was reading [Goliath - The Life of Robert Schuller](#) — Dr. Schuller as a young college student had written to Arvella, his wife-to-be, a poem-like passage (*italics* added):

**The gathered memories  
Like chimes  
Flood my soul with melody  
It is a tune of thrills deeper than any symphony  
Yet like a hymn it stills all worry, all foolish fears  
Because it *hums in future years*.**

It occurs to me that the phrase *hums in future years* is exactly the kind of *tone* that Steiner referred to above when he said, *in the general mood of life there lives in man as a sort of basic tone the outcome of his future experiences*. This is the process I have come to refer to as [Remember the future, it hums in the present](#), and what it hums in the present is the tone, the general mood of your life in future years. I believe that is what Steiner is trying to communicate below as he talks about the pictures of Imaginative consciousness of the ordinary human being (non-clairvoyant). One does not receive pictures, but rather the feelings which pervade the pictures.

**[page 77] It is not as if the pictures of what takes place lived there; the impressions of it live in the pictures.**

**You must not imagine these pictures that stream downward to be like a movie reeling off the future; you must rather picture them as the result of the impressions. Only in the case of certain people who have an atavistic clairvoyance can pictures arise that may be interpreted as pictures of definite facts, and then there can be a certain vision into the immediate future. Today, however, we shall mainly interest ourselves in the fact that what constitutes man's world of feeling descends into him in a pictorial way.**

**Now, as we pass over from feeling to willing, what enters man here, as I presented to you, presses outward and becomes his karma that is becoming, his future karma. What arises in man through his feelings, therefore, has to do with his karma up to his death, while what arises out of the willing is concerned with his karma beyond death.**

If this seems all abstract nonsense to you, dear Reader, realize that while Steiner is describing things that may not make sense to you, he is describing concrete realities which are accessible to you with appropriate training. Calculus seemed to be abstract nonsense to me when I first encountered it. It is still abstract, but makes excellent sense and is useful for describing and predicting concrete realities.

**[page 77] It is therefore fully possible to follow these things and study them in detail. As the development of anthroposophical spiritual science progresses, one never talks in an abstract way of mere concepts; one speaks rather of the concrete reality that lives in man, which, when he brings it to consciousness, can give him an explanation for the first time of what he actually is. You must receive a strong feeling, however, of how the will, depending as it does on the life of feeling, actually works into the future beyond death, how the will is the creator of future karma.**

We as humans will never create a machine that senses the future, but we ourselves live inside such a machine, rightly understood. And with a little study and introspection, one can come to catch glimpses of the future. If I had not perceived the process I called "Remember the Future", my oldest daughter would never have gotten her husband to give her exactly the engagement ring she wanted some 18 years *after* they were married. If you're interested in how this happened, check my [Lord of the Ring](#) story. That feeling that Maureen had when she put on that ring was a message from her future, a future that would not have existed except for the feeling she received. That feeling took her, her husband, and her father on an interesting journey, the results of which are still being played out today.

**[page 81] In feelings, in the most essential sense, past and future meet each other in the human being. The human being is thus born, as it were, out of thoughts. He lives through feeling and weaves in his will what goes with him through the portal of death.**

So how does thinking, feeling, and willing combine in our lives? Steiner includes a great diagram on page 82, but one would need all the text of the book to make sense of it. Here is a brief summary:

**[page 83] With deeds we actually experience everything in the conceptual life; we dream of it in the life of feeling, but we sleep over it in the actual life of will.**

**It is thoughts, however, that we direct into this life of will. Yes, but when? Only**

**when we do not surrender ourselves to our instincts, our desires, to the so-called lower human nature — for this is indeed down below — which urges us then to willing and to deeds. We receive our will, however, into that which constitutes our subjective experience when we control it with our pure thoughts, which are directed toward willing, that is to say, when we control it with our intuitively grasped moral ideals.**

Thus, Steiner spells out for us how our pure thoughts enable us to control our will and shape it with our moral ideals as a spiritual activity which is received directly from the spiritual world, and not, as is commonly believed, as received from rules, commandments, directives, and laws laid down in the past and written in the present for us to follow. This is the essence of his book "Philosophy of Freedom" which is also called "Philosophy of Spiritual Activity" — for freedom is necessarily a spiritual activity, rightly understood. And few people in this nascent 21st Century understand freedom rightly, up until now. In the 19th Century, Ralph Waldo Emerson understood freedom rightly and wrote about it elegantly in his famous essay, [Self-Reliance](#), and Rudolf Steiner wrote about in his book [Philosophy of Freedom](#). In the 20th Century, Andrew Joseph Galambos understood freedom rightly and gave lectures on it in his course, [Volitional Science](#). He clearly established the primacy of pure thought as a basis for freedom when he defined it as the primary basis of all that follows in a person's life. He said that freedom on a societal basis is when each person's *primary birthright* is each person's thoughts and ideas and that freedom on a societal basis can only be built upon a mutual, unfettered respect for that *birthright*. The understanding of the deepest meaning of the thoughts and ideas of these three giants of the last two centuries awaits the future which is humming right now in the present moment of many thousands of lives as I type these words today, 5:27 PM CST, August 18, 2004.

One misses Emerson's point completely if one thinks he is talking about plowing any field but the *field of pure thoughts* in this passage from the above-mentioned essay:

**There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.**

How can we trust the new that is in nature, the new that is in one human being? That question must have arisen in your mind, good Reader, or you would not be reading this review at this moment. The answers to that excellent question will require a psychology that goes deep into the mood of soul of human beings, a soul that unfortunately few psychologists today believe exist. Until then, we can catch a glimpse of an answer in Steiner's words below, spoken back in 1921, but which ring true yet today.

**[page 83-85] And what is living there? [RJM: in our future beyond death] Something lives there that we sense as something objective, because it emerges out of the regions where consciousness no longer participates. It is also something objective, because it has to do with the laws by which we bear ourselves as moral beings through death. What is reflected there is the conscience. Grasped psychologically, this is the actual source of conscience. If psychology really wished to approach these things, it would have to investigate the details of the soul life along these lines, and everywhere it would find confirmation of the guiding principles given by anthroposophical spiritual science, right into the most minute details of the life of soul.**

**We see, therefore, that our feelings stream toward our thoughts. They stream first toward our subjective thoughts and give them life, but they also strike against the objective web of thoughts, and in this we experience ourselves as given, as beings who have come into earthly existence through birth. On the other hand, we can experience ourselves as beings who go through death. One need only study the inner being of man and one finds proclaimed in that inner being something that points beyond man, that is,**

**beyond birth and death; it points therefore into that world which is not encompassed within the sensory, for this world that is not encompassed within the sensory indeed gives us what actually exists in our inner being. It would be of especially great importance if there were research in a real psychology (what is considered psychology today — is nothing but a sum of formalisms) into the mood of soul of the human being in a moment where past and future flow into one another. Much that is enigmatic in human life would be discovered in this way, and people would be convinced that a protest very easily made has, in fact, no basis.**

This protest is not one that I would make. I have no illusions that my daughter's feeling when she put that ring on her finger enabled her to predict the subsequent events as if a movie flashed before her eyes. In fact, all she experienced was a feeling. It was one of those "remember the future" feelings I told her when she called. "What's that?" she asked and said, "Remind me." I said, "It's a feeling you get when you see something for the first time that will become a significant part of your everyday experience for the rest of your life. It's the basis for what's commonly called 'Love at first sight.'" All she had was a feeling. And when I said that, she knew better than to judge her feeling by the life of ordinary consciousness — which likely would have caused her to discount her feeling and forget about the unattainable ring. She would have the rest of her life to regret not having gotten that ring. Her feeling when she first put that ring on her finger was opportunity knocking and she opened the door. She allowed her consciousness to ascend to "higher regions" as in the passage below.

Let's read as Steiner tells us about the protest that could be made:

**[page 85] The protest that is often made is this: well, what would a man become if he were continually examining himself and gazing into his inner being in order to see from his subjective mood of soul what perhaps lay in his future? This protest is easily made, but it is only fanciful. It is imagined that the way in which the future appears is just the same as it is when actually beheld and experienced. The future is not reflected, however, as it is later experienced! It is experienced in intercourse with the outer world, in encounter with things in the outer world. What goes on inwardly in man manifests itself as a raying out and is something that can never mislead him on his life's path, however precisely he knows the human being. Generally, the protests against a knowledge of the human being arise out of fear based utterly on illusions, which one creates because one judges simply by the life of ordinary consciousness, because people will not rise to the view that as soon as consciousness ascends into higher regions it experiences something entirely new.**

Earlier we saw a reversal take place at the Midnight Hour (halfway point between death and a new birth) when our thoughts long to become human again and our will longs to become world. Thoughts are cold, abstract things, so how can our thoughts become filled with warmth after they arrive in us as human beings? How do we avoid becoming cold thought-automatons?

**[page 85, 86] The will element surrounds us, as it were, in what we receive from our ancestors, seen outwardly in the inherited characteristics and inherited substances. The thought element is that which is incorporated into us, and during life we again unite this thought life with all that we draw up from the depths of the life of feeling and will. This thought life at first is incorporated into us not as something warm and living like our inner life generally. Were we to remain with the thought life as it was when we were born, we would become thought automatons, as it were, full of inner coldness. At the moment of birth, however, the individual inner being begins to stir out of the will and out of the feeling and to permeate with warmth and life that which had first become cold on the way from death to birth. Hence as human beings we have the possibility of permeating with individual warmth that which must constitute cold in us out of the wide universe.**

If you did not learn about any of these things in school or in college or in any other source of education you were exposed to, you might be wondering why. It goes back to what the ancient Oriental sage would have said permeates our Western culture: Fear.

**[page 87] Education, however, has employed up to now great quantities of fear, great quantities of antipathy, to prevent the vindication of what is so necessary to humanity if it does not wish to sink into decline but to come to a new ascent.**

Those great quantities of fear are what we have been exposed to under the guise of education. Said fear has prevented us from discerning the truth and validity of the spiritual roots in the structure of the human being, up until now. Armed with this new knowledge and understanding we can reverse humanity's decline and begin its rise from now on.

What are the functions of the hierarchy of beings that live immediately above us in the spiritual world? The first being we encounter is one of the *angeloi* who have a one-to-one relationship with each human being. This is embodied in our concept of guardian angel, an angel is assigned to accompany each human being through the various periods of life between birth and death and a new birth. The next level is the *archangeloi* or archangels who have among their functions that of folk spirit, a one-to-many relationship with a group of humans related by propinquity and ancestry. At the next higher level are the Spirits of Primal Beginnings or *archai* who function as time spirits without differentiation among various groups of people. (Page 89) Steiner points out that these are summaries of the functions of the Third Hierarchy of spiritual beings, not a comprehensive list but rather a convenient way to begin our understanding of the spiritual hierarchies.

**[page 89] These are certainly not the only functions, let us say, of these beings, but to begin with we receive certain conceptions if we keep to these particular functions that they perform.**

Does a man ever lose his guardian angel? Steiner tells us that there is a possibility due to the level of materialistic indoctrination we receive. We must learn to find the spiritual realities even in the mineral world in order to avoid the danger of losing our guardian angel. And that angel is our entry into a relationship with archangels and archai which is essential to us during the time between death and a new birth. Only by a deepening of the soul elements Steiner discusses in this book and diagramed above the page 47 quote, can we avoid this danger for all of humanity.

**[page 92, 93] If the mineral consciousness were completely separated from moral coloring, then at what I call the Midnight Hour of Existence man would face the danger of entirely losing the necessary connection with his angel being. I say he would face the danger. Today only a small number of people face this danger, but if a spiritual deepening of the whole evolution of humanity on earth does not come about, a deepening of human thinking, human feeling, and human willing, then what lives as a danger may be realized. Then there would be countless human beings who, on approaching the Midnight Hour of Existence between death and a new birth, would have to sever the relationship to their angel beings. It is true that the angel being would always keep the relationship on his part, but it would remain one-sided, from his side to the human being. The human being between death and a new birth would not be able to reciprocate adequately. We must be perfectly clear that in our modern civilization, hastening as it is toward materialism, the human being injures his relationship to his angel being, so that this relationship becomes ever looser.**

**Just when the human being is approaching the Midnight Hour of Existence, however, he must enter into relationship to the archangelic beings through the angel being. Should this relationship be of such a nature --- as it may well be when man is living in the spiritual world --- that it not only comes from the side of the angel being to humanity but can be reciprocated by the human being, then man must absorb a spiritual**

**content, which means that he must color his moral impulses religiously.**

**If the present trend of evolution persists, the human being of today faces the danger of his connection with the angel being becoming so slight that he cannot form any inner relationship to the archangelic being. The archangel, however, participates in bringing man back into physical life. This archangelic being is particularly involved in building up the forces that bring man back into the community of a certain people.**

By a proper relationship with our archangelic being, we will develop a right relationship with our people, our country, and not indulge in overblown patriotic fervor which leads to abuses. One cannot read the following passage which Steiner wrote in 1921 without thinking of the current situation which followed the terrorist attacks on the USA in Sept, 2001. Shortly following those attacks, American flags began appearing everywhere, house fronts, coat lapels, bumper stickers, and, most notably, attached to side windows of automobiles everywhere. How are we to understand that phenomenon? By such acts people call attention to themselves as someone with a loose attachment to their guardian angel and a consequently poor relationship to their folk spirit archangel.

**[page 94] One does not arrive at an understanding of our present age, which may be characterized by the one-sided way in which the peoples are cultivated, until one knows that this actually may be attributed to the souls who have recently come down to earthly existence having a loose relationship to their angel beings and by reason of this having no inner relationship to the archangelic being — thus growing into their people only from without. The people thus remains in them as an impulse from outside, and it is only through outer impulses that human beings take their place within a people, through all sorts of impulses inclining toward chauvinism. He who stands within his people with soul — and this is the case with very few people today — will be unable to develop in the direction of chauvinism, of one-sided nationalism; he takes up the fruitful forces within the people and develops these, makes these individual. He will not boast of his people in a one-sided way. He will let his people flow into his being as color, as it were, flow into his human manifestations, but will not parade this outwardly, and particularly not in an outwardly hostile attitude toward others.**

To complete the survey of the Third Hierarchy, let us look at what Steiner tells us about the function provided by the Archai during our time between death and a new birth.

**[page 96] When a human being between death and a new birth undergoes his further evolution, which after the Midnight Hour of Existence leads him once more into physical, earthly life, he enters especially the realm of the archai, of the primal spirits. These archai, these primal spirits, in the present cosmic evolution have to do with leading the human being back into the earthly limits of his being.**

In addition these archai help us during that return trip to Earth by incorporating into us our animal nature, which means the organs inside of us are formed. The details of how our relationship to animals, the stars, and the planets are orchestrated during our return trip are laid by Steiner on pages 101- 103.

*Anomie* means the breakdown or absence of moral standards in an individual or society -- a condition that in an individual leads to feelings of disorientation, anxiety, and isolation. It is the personal equivalent of a ship losing its rudder and being unable to steer, moving wherever the tides and winds take it — feeling as if one is homeless, without some valuable place where one belongs, be it a house, a family, a job, a church, or the like. Those who are deeply affected by the plight of the homeless owe it to themselves to seek out and extirpate the anomie within themselves. The conditions which lead to anomie have their roots in our not having established a right relationship with our guardian angel, and thence with our archangels and archai during our return trip to Earth to begin this lifetime. The homeless are deeply immersed in anomie, but those who find resonance with the homeless can take that as a signal to begin their inner relationship with their Guardian Angel in this lifetime, starting right now. It would seem that those

attracted to helping homeless persons are seeking to relate to them as the homeless's Guardian Angels — to provide a human equivalent of what the homeless were unable to achieve with their own spiritual Guardian Angels, up until now.

**[page 103, 104] Today a human being is pressed into his environment in such a way that he basically has little inner relationship to the place in which he finds himself, to which his karma takes him in an entirely outer way, so that he feels his whole placement into physical existence as something external to him.**

**When man's being is formed through education and life in such a way that he is filled with soul, filled with spirit, and comes to a spiritual conception of the world, he will then carry this through life between death and a new birth so that he does not lose the inner connection with his angel, so that through his archangel his soul is carried into his particular people, and so that he is not placed in a merely outer way into his immediate existence by the world of the archai.**

No plants live once and then die — they always create the seeds of the next plant. So it is with human beings, but the seed of the human being is sown in the spiritual world and arises again in the next lifetime on Earth. There is a rhythm for each human being which consists of physical, spiritual, physical, spiritual, etc., but one cannot understand the rhythm until one sees that during the physical phase, the world is outside the human and during the spiritual phase, the world is inside the human being.

**[page 106] For the human being here on earth the world is what is outside. For the human being between death and a new birth the world is what is within. Hence it is a question only of alternating through the times for man to be able to say that, in the most real sense, knowledge of man is knowledge of the world; knowledge of the world is knowledge of man.**

We saw earlier that shortly before rebirth the human being does things such as develop one's organs which involves a relationship with the animal kingdom. If we consider that happens in the final third of the period between death and new birth, Steiner next explains we involve ourselves inwardly with the mineral kingdom during the first third, and the plant kingdom during the middle third.

**[page 111] If we look at minerals, they reveal to us in a kind of outer picture what human beings do in an inwardly conscious way in the period immediately following death. When we look at the plant world, we see revealed what man does inwardly in the middle period of his evolution between death and a new birth.**

And Steiner ends the lecture with a burst of poetic exuberance followed by exhortation to each of us:

**O Man, thou art the condensed image of the world!  
O World, thou art the being of Man poured out into infinite space!**

**[page 121] Man should acquire a consciousness that really unites his being with the cosmos, so that his future evolution may proceed in an upward, not a downward, direction.**

As we continue in an upward direction, our moral qualities will become visible in our faces and bodies. This is not something that is considered politically correct to notice today, but in the Jupiter Epoch, the one following our current Earth Epoch, it will difficult to ignore or discount because moral qualities will shape the external configuration of everyone's body.

**[page 127,128] If I therefore wish to characterize what will develop during the future existence of the earth, or the Jupiter existence, I must speak in this way: the human being is lifted to a higher sphere; the human being in his outer manifestation, in his bodily manifestation, has developed in such a way that what today lives deep within him,**

**only in his soul, then manifests outwardly. It might be said that just as today in a mysterious way man's inner nature is revealed by his coloring, by the color of his skin, so in the future his inner nature — whether he is good or bad — will be revealed in his outer configuration. Today we can gather only through suggestions of the human form whether a person is pedantic, irritable, cruel, or gluttonous. Certain moral qualities are expressed slightly in the physiognomy today, in a person's walk or in some outer form, but always in such a way that they can be denied, that one can plead that it is not one's fault if one has been given lips or jaws suggesting gluttony. Arguing away this outer appearance of the soul element, however, will be absolutely impossible in the future.**

One man applied his fierce intellect to our culture and came up with the concepts of the "Superman" and the "Eternal Return". That man, of course, was Nietzsche. Steiner gives us some insights into the one-sided nature of Nietzsche's genius.

**[page 131] It is perfectly comprehensible that Nietzsche, who suffered so tragically from our purely intellectual culture, should have distilled this intellectual concept of the superman, which actually has no content, out of what can be offered in the intellectual culture. Nietzsche never came to a real comprehension of the Christ, and this brought him to this peculiar situation --- that out of the urge of the I-seed, and also out of the necessity to remain within the intellectual culture, he became not a worshiper of Christ but a worshiper of the Antichrist, a reverer, a glorifier of Antichrist. In Nietzsche, in a form amounting to a genius, Antichristianity appeared. This Antichristianity, however, if it were to remain what it is today, would never be able to arouse in the human being anything but dreams of an abstract superman, implanting in man at the same time the certainty that this superman dies along with earthly existence. Nietzsche wanted to cling desperately to the idea of evolution, but even this desperate clinging was no help to him. Out of the abstractions of intellectualism, he arrived merely at the "recurrence of the same," so that no higher stages could later be evolved, nothing but this repetition of the same, which, however, is only there in order to cling desperately, as I said, to the idea of evolution.**

If you are a gardener, you know that you save seeds from one harvest to sow for next year's crop. You also know that seeds deteriorate, so if you are a good gardener, you take steps to prevent the seeds from going bad so that they remain alive till their planting time comes. Who is the gardener who protects and nourishes the seeds of us human beings as we progress from lifetime to lifetime?

**[page 133] Our bond with the Mystery of Golgotha gives us the forces that make Christ the Gardener within us. He will not allow the seeds to deteriorate but will guide them over into a future world. When the mineral realm of the earth melts away, when the plant realm of the earth withers, when the realm of the various animal species dies away, when the present form of the human being is no longer possible, because it is an emanation of the earth, belonging therefore to the earth — when everything thus disintegrates as if into nothingness, then the seeds are still there that the Gardener is guiding over into a future formation of the earthly world, called in my *Occult Science*, the Jupiter world [RJM: aka Jupiter Epoch].**

In fact, Steiner tells us in the next lecture (page 136) that "our physical body which we lay aside here on the Earth becomes the seed for what the Earth becomes after it has disappeared as Earth." In a brilliant metaphor, he says the I is so powerful that the force of gravity against it is like the "breath of a snowflake." And he quotes the German poet, Gottfried Benn, as saying that modern philosophers take "Darwin for a midwife and the ape for an artist." And Steiner adds:

**[page 139] Could you expect that such a philosopher would see in the bodily sheathes of the human beings, which he considered a fantasy, seeds for future worlds?**

It should be clear that I love reading, studying and writing about Steiner's spiritual science. Some of you reading this may wonder how that's possible. This is very dense material to digest, written in German and translated into a convoluted English at times. It must be uncomfortable to read this stuff. It must take strong will power to even attempt one of these books. Can't they make a movie about it? How can someone enjoy reading it, much less enjoy studying it, and enjoy writing about it? Simple answer is this: one must live within the words one reads. Soon a cool breeze will come. . .

**[page 140, 141] With anthroposophical spiritual science, one must participate inwardly, for otherwise one naturally hears only the words, which can be regarded arbitrarily as fantasy. This inner participation, however, one must learn to love. One must resolve to do this. It is uncomfortable, but it becomes noticeable, if one resolves to do it, that this activity refreshes, that it makes the human being fresher in soul and body. I know that many people raise objections concerning this becoming refreshed, but they would very much like to attain through merely passive thinking what should be attained through an active participation of the astral body in a difficult wrestling for comprehension, just as that theologian would have been most content to have the entire *Outline of Occult Science* played out for him in a movie. This is just how he uses his concepts in the essay where he speaks of a "special illustrated edition of the Akashic Chronicle."**

Steiner tells us that we will take through death with us as much as our I has made its own. (Page 152) These are the distilled essences of the astral body, the etheric body, and the physical body that the I has worked on during the time between birth and death. One can think of the astral body as a grain mash and the spirit self as the distilled liquor or "spirit" which steams up from the mash and is condensed into spirit self or *manas*. A similar process happens with the etheric body and physical body. No doubt our word for alcohol, *spirits*, goes back to ancient folk who understood these spiritual truths by direct experience and applied the name *spirits* to alcohol as a direct metaphor, where alcohol was the unknown to be described by the known, the spirit. In other words, the use of the word *spirits* for alcohol stemmed from the earliest times when the name was chosen because the process of distilling the alcohol was known to be equivalent to the purification of the spirit from the astral and other bodies as done by the I. What I am doing by this analysis is essentially applying their original metaphor backwards to describe what is currently unknown, the refining of the *spirit self*, in terms of the distilling of alcohol, which is known.

Edward Reaugh Smith in his book, [The Burning Bush](#), posits that the usage of alcoholic spirits disabled our ability to have direct knowledge of our previous lives and kept reincarnation and karma a mystery to most humans for some 2000 years. This was necessary so that humans could make the most of the one lifetime and learn all they could about the material world of the Earth upon which we live. The paradox of alcohol is thus revealed: the *spirits* kept the *spirit* bottled up in the body, up until now.

## Summary of the Septenary Human Development from Birth to Age 49

From these lectures we can develop a comprehensive view of the work of the I during the seven year periods of a person's life from 21 when the I first becomes active to age 49 when seven cycles of seven have been complete. There are my preliminary thoughts on these things, a short essay within a review, if you'll pardon the digression, which I intend to be an expansion of the penultimate paragraph above this one.

We learned about the will existing between the I and the astral body, so by an exercise of will our fully developed I at 28 can begin working on purifying our astral body — think of the astral body as a grain mash and the *spirit self* which the I refines from the astral body as the distilled liquor or *spirit* which steams up from the mash and to be condensed into *spirit self* or *manas*. This is what it means for our I at age 28 to begin to work on refining our astral body, the one closest to and immediately below or preceding the I in its maturation.

Our I cannot begin its refining or distilling operation on the lower three bodies until 28 for reasons of its own evolution. Our I is present at birth, but the I must wait until the physical body finishes its seven year evolution [0-7]. After that the etheric begins its maturation period of seven years and thinking develops between the etheric and physical body[7-14]. Next the astral body begins its seven years of maturation and shares feeling with the etheric body [14-21]. In the fourth stage we focus seven years developing our I-body or I. When we finally arrive at age 28, then and only then is our I ready and able to apply its willing function for the next seven years. It begins the process of refining the body that it is closest to, the astral body, the grain mash, if you will, that was fully present since age 21. Out of the refining process that the I exerts on the astral body the *spirit self* begins to form into what can be called our individual “Holy Spirit” stage of spiritual growth.

Next period is the 35-42 stage when the I, while continuing to purify the astral body into *spirit self*, turns to refine, for the first time, the etheric body. By the activity over the past seven years of purifying the astral body, the I has learned to deal with the feeling activity that goes on between the astral and etheric body, and this learning is essential to the I developing the ability to begin purifying the etheric body into the *life spirit* or *buddhi* during the next 7 years which represents our first "Son" stage of spiritual growth.

Next period is the 42-49 year span. The I continues refining the astral into *spirit self* and the etheric into *life spirit*, but through the past seven year period of self-education by its work with the etheric body, the I has learned to deal with the thinking activity which exists in the space between the etheric and the physical body. This has made it possible for the I to begin at age 35 its initial work on purification of the physical body into *spirit human* or *atman*. This represents the “Father” stage of our spiritual growth.

Note the similarity of our individual work during each of these seven year periods to the work done by the Hierarchies during each Great Epoch: Old Saturn on physical body, Old Sun on the etheric body, Old Moon on astral body, and the Earth Epoch on the I. In the microcosm of our lives, we develop the physical, etheric and astral bodies during the first 3 seven year periods, the I body during the middle period, and then our I begins working on the purification of our three spiritual bodies: *spirit self*, *life spirit*, and *spirit human*. The microcosm in the macrocosm — as below, so above — at all levels.

~~~~~ footnote ~~~~~

1. With thanks to Abraham Lincoln for the famous line, "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people" from his Gettysburg Address.  
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