

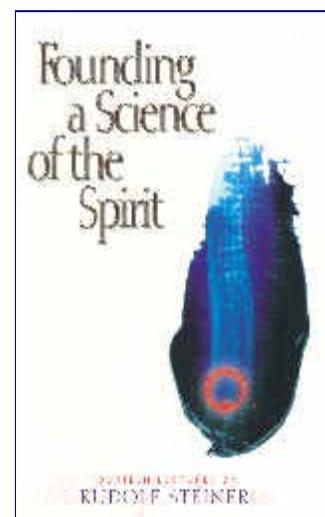
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## *A READER'S JOURNAL*

### Founding a Science of the Spirit by Rudolf Steiner

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Revised by Matthew Barton  
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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2008



By my latest count I have read and reviewed 157 books by Rudolf Steiner. What would possess me to

read a general survey such as this one? Before I answer this question, read what Brien Masters writes in the Introduction to this book.

**[page ix] Many may reach the end of the book with the question: If the wide-ranging panorama that Steiner presents is a 'general survey', what would a *detailed* account of the worlds he is introducing be like? An answer is to be gleaned, or course, by looking at the whole oeuvre of Steiner's work.**

In studying something new, it's always best, I've found, to know all about before you start. But one must always start even the journey of a thousand miles with one step, or in the case of Steiner, with one book, one lecture, one page, one sentence at a time. After reading and studying a large portion of Steiner's oeuvre, I thought it would be useful to read a general survey against which I might calibrate my own assimilated knowledge of Steiner's work. The very length and depth of this review compared to my earlier review of the book under this title, [At the Gates of Spiritual Science](#), is an indication of my own increased understanding of his work.

In this review, I will share with you, dear Reader, those portions of this book that I find interesting so that you will decide to pick up this book and read it. There are few general surveys of Steiner's works. This one came in a series of lectures in Stuttgart in 1906 "intended to give a general survey of the whole field of theosophical thought" as Steiner says in the first sentence of Lecture 1 on page 1 of this book. When Steiner years later abandoned the Theosophical Society, he continued doing exactly the same things and teaching in the same ways he had been all along, but he called it "anthroposophical thought". The only difference from Steiner's later works that one will notice in this book is his usage of recondite theosophical names which he later supplanted with more descriptive and easier to understand anthroposophical names.

What is the purpose of a "science of the spirit" as the title indicates? Steiner says it is to "unravel the riddle of man." For many millennia, this science was hidden from the public and thus its historical name of "occult science", but it is clearly Steiner's self-assigned task to make the hidden visible in a practical way.

**[page 3] The purpose of occult science has always been to unravel the riddle of man.**

**Everything said in these lectures will be from the standpoint of *practical* occultism; they will contain nothing that is mere theory and cannot be put into practice.**

Man has a physical, etheric, and astral body. One of the practical exercises(1) Steiner explains in greater detail in other places, he indicates here by the phrase "suggest away." One suggests away the physical body and one will see a "reddish-blue light like a phantom, whose radiance is a little darker than peach blossom." (Page 5) That is the etheric body, which one never sees if one does this exercise on a mineral such as a crystal.

**[page 5] We never see an etheric body if we 'suggest away' a crystal; but in the case of a plant or animal we do, for it is the etheric body that is responsible for nutrition, growth and reproduction.**

Plants cannot feel please pleasure or pain while animals and humans can which indicates that plants lack the additional principle, an astral body which contains desire, passion, etc.

**[page 5] If we 'suggest away' the physical body and also the etheric body, what we shall see will be a delicate cloud of light, inwardly full of movement. Within this cloud or aura the initiate sees every desire, every impulse, as color and form in the astral body. For example, he sees intense passion flashing like rays of lightning out of the astral body.**

The fourth body of Man comes to our awareness when we use the name "I" to refer to ourselves. It is a name which came into appearance in human languages only in recent millennia at the same time this member of our being became more developed and important. In the Bible it appeared to Moses in a burning bush and when Moses asked who he should say sent him, it answered, "Tell them the 'I Am' sent you." It is the voice of God speaking within our soul which allows us to say, "I am".

**[page 6, 7] This again presents itself to the seer in a peculiar form. When he studies the astral body, everything appears in perpetual movement except for one small space, shaped like a somewhat elongated bluish oval, situated at the base of the nose, behind the brow. This is to be seen in human beings only — more clearly in less educated or cultured people, most clearly of all in tribes remote from civilization. Actually there is nothing there but an empty space. Just as the empty center of a flame appears blue when see through the light around it, so this empty space appears blue because of the auric light streaming around it. This is the outer form of expression of the 'I'.**

Our "I" works upon the three lower bodies and refines them into three higher bodies, the *manas*, the *buddhi*, and the *atma*(2), which Steiner later renamed as the Spirit Self, Life Spirit and Spirit Human. In this first lecture, "The Being of Man", Steiner rounds out the full sevenfold human being with a brief description of these upper three members.

**[page 7, *manas*] Every human being has these four members; but there is a difference between a wild tribesman and a civilized European, and also between the latter and a Francis of Assisi, or a Schiller. A refinement of the moral nature produces finer colors in the aura; an increase in the power of discrimination between good and evil also shows itself in a refinement of the aura. In the process of becoming civilized the 'I' has worked upon the astral body and ennobled the desires. The higher a person's moral and intellectual development, the more will his 'I' have worked upon the astral body. The seer can distinguish between a developed and an undeveloped human being.**

**Whatever part of the astral body has been thus transformed by the 'I' is called *Manas*. *Manas* is the fifth member of man's nature. We have just so much of *Manas* as we have created by our own efforts; part of our astral body is therefore always *Manas*.**

**[page 7, *buddhi*] But we are not able to exercise an immediate influence upon the etheric**

**body, although in the same way that we can raise ourselves to a higher moral level we can also learn to work upon the etheric body. A person who does this will be called a Chela, a pupil. He can thus attain mastery over the etheric body, and what he has transformed in this body by his own efforts is called *Buddhi*. This is the sixth member of man's nature, the transformed etheric body.**

**Such a Chela can be recognized by a certain sign. An ordinary person shows no resemblance either in temperament or form to his previous incarnation, but the Chela retains the same habits, the same temperament. This similarity remains because he has worked consciously on the etheric body, the bearer of the forces of growth and reproduction.**

**[page 7, 8, *atma*] The highest achievement open to man on this earth is to work right down into his physical body. That is the most difficult task of all. In order to have an effect upon the physical body itself, a man must learn to control the breath and the circulation, to follow consciously the activity of the nerves, and to regulate the processes of thought. In theosophical language, a man who has reached this stage is called an Adept; he will then have developed in himself what we call *Atma*. *Atma* is the seventh member of man's being.**

In us during our present stage of development, our first four bodies are present and operational, with the physical body the oldest and our "I" or Ego the youngest. Our newly formed Ego works on the lower three bodies of physical, etheric, and astral, to refine them into *atma*, *buddhi*, and *manas*, beginning with the astral body and moving backward to the oldest body, the physical.

**[page 8] In every human being four members are fully formed, the fifth only partly, the sixth and seventh in rudiment only. Physical body, etheric body, astral body, 'I' or ego, Manas, Buddhi, Atma — these are the seven members of man's nature; through them he can participate in three worlds.**

What are these three worlds? The world of the physical, the world of soul, and the world of spirit. (Page 10) These worlds are not separated, but interweave each other, even though, with our seeing and hearing, we can only perceive the physical world. The other two worlds require spiritual organs of seeing and hearing to be developed. He compares our state now vis-a-vis the other two worlds as Helen Keller's state of being unable to see the two worlds of sight and sound. We differ from her in that she could not develop a way to see and hear, but we are capable of developing organs of sight and hearing to perceive the worlds of soul and spirit. Steiner says on Page 10, "The spiritual eyes and ears of each and everyone can be opened, if we bring enough patience and perseverance to the task."

Many things are reversed in the astral or soul world to what they are in the physical world. Numbers are reversed, colors are reversed, and time sequences are reversed such that the effect will precede the cause. Many of these reversal effects appear in fairy tales, such as when the frog turns into a handsome prince or the ugly old witch turns into the beautiful princess. "All myths, legends, religions and folk-poetry help towards the solution of the riddles of the world, and are founded on the inspiration of initiates." (Page 12)

"Every lie is a murder in the astral world." Steiner says, adding that, "No proverb is more untrue than the one which says: 'Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me.'"

**[page 13] Every thought and every feeling is a reality, and if I let myself think that someone is bad or that I don't like him, then for anyone who can see into the astral world this thought is like an arrow or thunderbolt hurled against the other's astral body and injuring it as a gunshot would. . . . When we make this truth known we are not preaching morality but laying a solid foundation for it.**

**If we speak the truth about our neighbor, we are creating a thought which the seer can recognize by its color and form, and it will be a thought which gives strength to our**

**neighbor. Any thought containing truth finds its way to the being whom it concerns and lends him strength and vigor. If I speak lies about him, I pour out a hostile force which destroys and may even kill him. In this way every lie is an act of murder. Every spoken truth creates a life-promoting element; every lie, an element hostile to life. Anyone who knows this will take much greater care to speak the truth and avoid lies than if he is merely preached at and told he must be nice and truthful.**

The devachanic plane is a higher spiritual plane and entering it is similar to Helen Keller's gaining her hearing — we gain a spiritual organ of hearing. We continue to see the astral or soul world and hear the devachanic or spiritual world.

**[page 15] . . . we hear the devachanic, and we see the astral, but under a changed aspect, offering us a remarkable spectacle. We see everything in the negative, as though on a photographic plate. Where a physical object exists, there is nothing; what is light in the physical world appears dark, and vice versa. We see things, too, in their complementary colors: yellow instead of blue, green instead of red.**

Devachan comprises these four regions: continental land masses, oceans, atmosphere, and original thoughts. After those regions we arrive at the Akasha Chronicle. The archetypes of the physical world we know provide the "land-masses" of the region. "A person standing before an initiate appears dark in the physical space he occupies, but round him is a radiant halo." (Page 16) Minerals cannot be seen because they lack life, but living things flow through Devachan like currents and this region is called the ocean. Feeling, emotions, pleasure and pain that are active in the physical world fill the atmosphere of the region.

**[page 16] Thus to an initiate a battle appears like a great thunderstorm, fiery flashes of lightning, powerful claps of thunder. He sees, not the physical actions that occur in the battle, but the passions of the opposing armies, and these appear to him like the heavy clouds and lightning-flashes of a thunderstorm.**

The fourth region exists because of human beings, the world of thought, original thoughts, specifically. It comprises the thought-forms of the artist, the innovator, the discoverer, anyone who conceives an original idea, no matter how humble the person.

**[page 16, 17] After these four regions we come to the boundary of the spiritual world. Just as the sky at night looks like a hollow globe encircled by stars, so it is with this boundary of Devachan. But it is a highly significant boundary; it forms what we call the Akasha Chronicle. Whatever a person has done and accomplished is recorded in that imperishable book of history even if there is no mention of it in our history books. We can experience there everything that has ever been done on earth by conscious beings. Suppose the seer wants to know something about Caesar. He will take some little incident from history as a starting-point on which to concentrate spiritually. And then around him appear pictures of all that Caesar did and of all that happened round him — how he led his legions, fought his battles, won his victories.**

Steiner warns that one must distinguish the Akasha image of Caesar from the individuality of Caesar which is still present and may have reincarnated again. Seances that raise images of the dead may raise the Akasha image of the person, receive answers the person might have given. "The Akasha pictures are real, living pictures." (Page 18)

We have four bodies active in us while we are awake, physical, etheric, astral, and Ego. When we fall asleep the astral and Ego leave the physical body and etheric body. Without an etheric body, the physical body becomes a corpse; with it, it remains asleep. Sometimes the etheric body leaves the physical body while we are awake, such as when our leg "falls asleep". A seer will notice a second leg (the etheric leg) alongside the sleeping leg. When we are faced with a near-death experience, it is well-known that our "life flashes before our eyes." Those memories of our life are stored in the etheric body, and if it is suddenly

dislodged from our physical body while our astral body is present (thus giving us consciousness of the event), then we will see this diorama of our life arise in our consciousness. Steiner explains in more detail how this happens.

**[page 21] While the etheric body is firmly rooted in the physical body, as normally it is, its vibrations cannot act on the brain sufficiently to become conscious, because the physical body with its coarser rhythms conceals them. But in moments of deadly danger the etheric body is loosened, and with its memories it detaches itself from the brain so that a person's whole life flashes before his soul. At such moments everything that has inscribed on the etheric body reappears; hence also the recollection of the whole past life immediately after death. This lasts for some time, until the etheric body separates from the astral body and the ego.**

The next region the newly dead encounter is called Kamaloka, the place of desires. Our body has appetites, our soul has desires. When we eat we satisfy our appetite and our desire to eat at the same time. In Kamaloka we have no appetite as we have no body, but in our soul the desire for food can remain, and these can be especially strong for someone who greatly enjoyed food while alive. This is one example of a desire which cannot be satisfied; there are others:

**[page 22] He may want to look at some beautiful arrangements of colors, but he lacks eyes; or to listen to some harmonious music, but he lacks ears.**

The soul is filled with burning desires and has no way to satisfy them, like a lost person in a desert with no water to slake their thirst. But the difference is that the desert is not on the outside, but on the inside of the soul who has not weaned itself from these desires for things of the physical world. Thus it can be seen that a materialist will suffer greatly during Kamaloka. Every soul must purify and cleanse itself of desires before leaving Kamaloka. This process of cleansing takes the amount of time that one spent asleep during one's life, about one-third of the normal lifetime. We pass through Kamaloka by living through our entire lifetime backwards. Each night in dreamless sleep we do a mini-kamaloka process and go over the day's activities in reverse order. Each of the daylong pieces of retro-living is strung together during Kamaloka and thus its duration is equal to the total amount of time we spent asleep. As we go through this process wean ourselves from our earthly life.

**[page 23] What is the point of this? The point is that we have to pause at every event and learn how to wean ourselves from everything we enjoyed in our earthly life, but in such a way that we have to do without all this; it offers us no satisfaction. And so we gradually learn to disengage ourselves from physical.**

In the science of doyletics, the use of the [speed trace](#) allows us to trace away our doylic memories of unpleasant events which left bad feelings in our body to be re-triggered while we live and caused us to suffer. To do a speed trace, we return below the tender childhood age of five years old and become as little children again, often right up to and well before the day of our birth. While holding the bodily state or doyle, if we trace back before the age of the original event, a cognitive memory is made of the bodily state, and the bodily state will not arise again.

When one goes through Kamaloka, it is as if one traces away all of one's sources of pleasure (and pain) from one's previous lifetime, so as to wash away the desires for those pleasures (and the effects of the pain).

**[page 23] And when we have lived through our life right back to the day of our birth, we can, in the words of the Bible, enter into the 'kingdom of heaven'. As Christ says, 'Unless ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom heaven.'**

The one who suffers the most in Kamaloka from death is the suicide. A natural death, even if it arises unexpectedly "has in fact been prepared for well in advance" (page 24), so the separation of the three

bodies is easy. But suicide is sudden, often violent, and the body is usually healthy. All this causes the suicide intense pain and suffering. The deep despair and painful fate of the suicide is vividly portrayed in the recent movie, "What Dreams May Come."

**[page 24] This is a ghastly fate: the suicide feels as though he had been plucked out of himself, and he begins a fearful search for the physical body of which he was so suddenly deprived. Nothing else bears comparison with this. You may retort that the suicide who is weary of life no longer has any interest in it; otherwise he would not have killed himself. But that is a delusion, for it is precisely the suicide who wants too much from life. Because it has ceased to satisfy his desire for pleasure, or perhaps because some change of circumstances has involved him in a loss, he takes refuge in death. And that is why his feeling of deprivation when he finds himself without a body is unspeakably severe.**

One who had already weaned oneself from onerous desires will have an easier time in Kamaloka, but will still have to deal with one's interactions during life with other living beings. If you have caused pain to another living being on occasion, you will have to live through that pain in Kamaloka as if it had been inflicted upon you. It is best to practice empathy while in the flesh so as to be ready for it to be thrust upon you in Kamaloka.

**[page 24, 25] All such occasions he will encounter again as he lives through the Kamaloka period; he returns to the place and moment when he was the cause of the pain to another being. At that time he made someone else feel pain; now he has to suffer the same pain in his own soul. All the torment I ever caused to other beings I now have to live through in my own soul. I enter into the person or animal and come to know what the other being was made to suffer through me; now I have to suffer all these pains and torments myself. There is no way of avoiding it. All this is part of the process of freeing oneself — not from the working of karma, but from earthly things. A vivisectionist has a particularly terrible life in Kamaloka.**

The astral corpse dissolves completely before a person returns to a new incarnation, unless the person returns quickly, and then a problem occurs.

**[page 27] He has difficulties to face if, when he is about to reincarnate, he finds his own astral corpse still in existence, containing everything that remained imperfect in his former life.**

What is life in Devachan like? Are we asleep? Alone? Not at all. Our spiritual friendships continue, and our enjoyment of Nature provides nourishment for our soul. (These aspects are portrayed admirably well in the movie, "What Dreams May Come.")

**[page 35] All this is what nourishes human beings in Devachan. Friendships are as it were the environment with which we surround ourselves there. Physical conditions all too often cut across these relationships on earth. In Devachan the way in which two friends are together depends only on the intensity of their friendship. To form such relationships on earth provides experiences for life in Devachan.**

During the Earth stage of evolution, Man's Ego resides on the physical plane, but each earlier evolutionary stage of Man's being resides one level higher: the animal's Ego in the astral plane, the plant's Ego in the Lower Devachan, and the mineral's Ego in the Upper Devachan. The effect is that Man is able, with the help of higher spirits, to effect, in turn, the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom, and the mineral kingdom during his progression upward through the spiritual worlds.

**[page 38] Thus it is true to say, when we look at the continually changing plant and animal worlds, that this change is the work of the dead. The dead are active in the**

**transformation of flora and fauna, and even in changing the physical form of the solid earth. Even in the forces of nature we have to see the activity of discarnate human beings; and we know how powerfully these forces can work on the face of the earth.**

The more developed a Man is upon death, the longer he can spend working in the higher regions. Materialists today scoff at this idea, no doubt, insisting on their dogma that Man only changes the Earth during time between birth and death. But, once upon a time, as revealed in fairy tales and legends, Man knew that he was able between death and a new birth to transform the face of the Earth along with its plants and animals. Steiner offers us this long-forgotten or just plain ignored wisdom for our edification today. What is the implication of such knowledge for our lives? How can it be useful to us on a practical level, since it only affects what happens to us *after* we die? (This is like asking what's the use of studying in grade school.)

**[page 39] The structure and evolution of the earth are the work of human beings on higher planes, and the more highly man succeeds in developing himself, the more quickly and perfectly will the transformation of the physical earth, and of its flora and fauna, advance.**

Everyone has probably heard about a *Doppelgänger*, but most people have only a vague idea what one really is, thinking it something like a poltergeist, or mischievous imp or spirit which causes problems. Such a "double-going" spirit may cause problems, but primarily for the person who is beset by it. Steiner clarifies the origin and cause of the spirit-double, saying it results from an astral corpse which dissolves too slowly after one's death combined with a too fast reincarnation<sup>(3)</sup>.

**[page 39, 40] It can happen that . . . a person returns soon and finds his astral corpse still present. The corpse is then strongly drawn to him and slips into his new astral body. He does indeed create a new astral body, but the old one combines with it, and he has to drag both of them along throughout his life. And then in bad dreams or visions the old astral body comes before him as a second ego, playing tricks on him, harassing and tormenting him. This is the false, counterfeit Guardian of the Threshold. Such an old astral corpse finds it easy to release itself from a person and become manifest because it is not firmly united with the other members of his being; and then it appears as a double, a *Doppelgänger*.**

In the normal course of the time between death and a new birth, the soul prepares to reincarnate and it receives a glimpse of what the new life will be like. If that glimpse reveals some tragic circumstance, the soul may hold back from incarnation. Various aspects of birth defects can result from such an instance.

**[page 41] Not all the details are seen, but the circumstances of the coming life are made evident in broad outline. This is of the utmost importance. It may happen that a person who went through a great deal of suffering and hardship in his previous life receives a shock from the glimpse of the new circumstances and destiny now in prospect, and holds back the soul from complete incarnation. Only a part of the soul then enters the body, and this will result in the birth of an epileptic or a person deficient in mind.**

A lot of attention has in recent decades been brought to bear on the pre-natal development of newborns. Mothers are urged to avoid smoking and alcohol during pregnancy, for example. As usual with our materialistic medical science, the reasons are couched in chemical terms, such as "alcohol crosses the placenta" and thus enters the fetus. Steiner's view of the situation from over a hundred years ago was that the mother's etheric and astral bodies work upon the fetus, the etheric until the seventh week, and the astral until the seventh month, at which times the etheric and then the astral bodies of the fetus begin working along with those of the mother's. He adds:

**[page 42] It is very important for the child's education in the first few years to develop**

**these bodies further. Much more attention ought to be paid to this aspect of upbringing and education. We should observe the moment when the etheric and astral bodies of the child start coming into play and working together with those of the mother.**

From a doyletics viewpoint, the doyles (bodily states) experienced by the mother are stored as doyles within the fetus and will arise during its subsequent lifetime until traced and erased. Providing a safe, quiet atmosphere for the term of the pregnancy is equally important as providing that for the baby after it is born.

It should be clear that simply stopping smoking and drinking alcohol during the time of pregnancy will only stop the flow of chemicals, but will not remove the changes already in place in the mother's etheric and astral bodies which will nevertheless affect the baby. It should become clear that planning for having a baby should proceed years before the actual pregnancy begins(4).

At birth the physical body is released into the world, but the baby's etheric and astral bodies are devoted to constructing the physical body up until the seventh year. This is the time at which the baby teeth, which were formed in its mother's body, are finally replaced by teeth formed within the child's own body. This marks the completion of the first seven year period of the human being. Each seven year period or septad marks an important phase of growth, and the second septad, from 7 through 14, is a crucial one for the education of the child.

Rudolf Steiner knew so much about child development that after his lectures to the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, the manager and employees begged him to help them start a school for their own children that would be based on the principles he had elucidated to them. That was the very beginning of the Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf schools which are in every part of the world today and growing more popular with each year.

Consider Steiner's insight into how to rear children during the first period of seven years, before which time, the parents should have the primary responsibility for this early education. It is *not* a time for teaching reading or rote memory tasks or arithmetic or any abstract learning. A child during that period of time must have their attention brought to the use of their senses, their contact with the external world.

**[page 44] The most important thing during the first seven years is to nourish a child's sense-organs. He will see with his eyes how people round him are behaving. Aristotle was quite right in saying that man is the most imitative of all creatures; and this is particularly true during the first seven years. Hence during these years we must try to influence a child's senses, to draw them out so that they become active on their own account. That is why it is such a mistake to give a child one of those 'beautiful' dolls; they hinder him from setting his own inner powers to work. A normal child will reject the doll and be much happier with a piece of wood, or with anything which gives his imagination a chance to be active.**

Feelings and thoughts are the main source of education for the child, and what its caregivers feel and think flow directly into the child.

**[page 44, 45] It is very important that during these early years a child should be surrounded by noble-minded, generous-hearted and affectionate people with good thoughts, for these stamp themselves on the child's inner life. Example, therefore, in thought and in feeling is the best means of education at this stage. It is not what we say but what we *are* that influences a child during his first seven years. Because of the extreme sensitivity of the inner members of a child's being, his surroundings should be kept free from all impure, immoral thoughts and feelings.**

After the age of seven, the etheric body becomes open and available to the external world. Since the

etheric body is the organ of memory, memory tasks are appropriate to children during this next seven year stage of their growth. It is also the time for art and music skills to be encouraged. Also it is a great time for telling them stories and fairy tales. Allow them to develop their own comparisons with the external world, but avoid trying to develop their judgment during this time. Avoid abstract explanations when they ask, "Why?", but instead give them examples and images. If the child asks about life and death, the example of the butterfly and its chrysalis is useful. The most important tool of parents and teachers during this time is *authority*, but it must be a natural authority based on sound insights and educational principles.

With the next stage beginning at fourteen and puberty, the astral body is liberated to interact with the outside world, and judgment and criticism will come to the fore, as any parent of teenagers will testify.

**[page 46, 47] When the child enters the third period of seven years, the age of puberty, the astral body is liberated; on it depends the power of judgment and criticism and the capacity for entering into direct relationships with other human beings. A young person's feelings towards the world in general develop in company with his feelings towards other people, and now he is at last mature enough for real understanding. As the astral body is liberated, so is the personality, and so personal judgment has to be developed. Nowadays young people are expected to offer criticism much too early. Seventeen-year-old critics can be found in abundance, and many of the people who write and pass judgments are quite immature. You have to be 22 or 24 before you can offer a sound judgment of your own; before then it is quite impossible. From the fourteenth to the twenty-fourth year, when everything around him can teach a person something, is the best time for learning from the world. That is the way to grow up into full maturity.**

When our youngest son was a teenager, we hung a sign on the wall where he passed to go out everyday which said, "Hire a teenager, while they *still* know everything!" So the three stages or septads of growth focus on example (0-7), authority (7-14), and judgment (14-21).

So much erroneous information exists about reincarnation and karma, that finding a place to start is difficult. Can humans be reincarnated as animals? Not a chance. A human's destiny is individual while an animal's destiny is tied up with the group soul of its species (an Ego which exists only in the astral plane). Each human has its own Ego in the physical plane of Earth and therefore has its own unique destiny as any *entire species of animal* has. Therefore a human being can *never* reincarnate as an animal.

**[page 48] The higher we move in the scale of nature towards man, the more individual does destiny become. Animals have a group-soul, and the destiny of a group of animals is bound up with the group-soul. A human being has his own ego, and the individual ego undergoes its destiny just as the group-soul of animals does. A whole species of animal may change over the generations, but with man it is the individual ego that changes from one life to another. Cause and effect go on working from life to life: what I experience today has its cause in a previous life, and what I do today shapes my destiny in my next life. . . . In a previous life a person has prepared his present destiny.**

Another source of confusion is the thought that karma predestines us to do such and such an act. Surely if you had prepared a banquet table ahead of time, you would expect to eat certain delicacies from it, but at no point are you *forced* to eat those foods just because you did the planning. The choice is always individual, especially the preparations you make for this lifetime before entering it — it is like a banquet table you prepared for yourself.

**[page 49] If it depresses me to think that I have deserved my present destiny, it may equally cheer me to know that I can frame my future destiny myself. Anyone who really takes this law into his thinking and feeling will soon realize what a sense of power and of security he has gained.**

Steiner uses an accounting metaphor to explain karma. On side of the balance sheet is all the good I have done and on the other side all the bad I have done. If at any point, the balance sheet shows my personal karma. Some of these I will balance in this lifetime and others will be balanced in a future lifetime. How soon I balance them is a personal decision made out of free will, but in between each lifetime, I will be planning to bring together the people and events which give me ample opportunities to settle them in the succeeding lifetime.

The Christ event of the Mystery of Golgotha was precisely a balancing deed of karma, rightly understood. Steiner says on page 51 that "the testament of Christ is in fact the teaching of karma and reincarnation."<sup>(5)</sup> Elsewhere Steiner states that the knowledge of reincarnation was discouraged by Christ for the past two thousand years in order to encourage Man to learn to make the best of this one life, especially to learn about how the physical world works.

In this next passage, Steiner reveals an amazing answer to the question of why God would allow evil to exist. He says basically that evil is to Man as manure is to a garden. He adds that the "the power needed to overcome evil will yield a power that can reach the heights of holiness." (Page 66)

**[page 66] A field has to be treated with manure and the manure has to enter the soil and activate it; similarly, humanity needs the manure of evil in order to attain to the highest holiness. And herein lies the mission of evil. A person's muscles become strong through use; and equally, if good is to rise to the heights of holiness, it must first overcome the evil which opposes it. The task of evil is to promote the ascent of man. Things such as this give us a glimpse into the secret of life. Later on, when man has overcome evil, he can go on to redeem the creatures he has thrust down, and at whose cost he has ascended. That is the purpose of evolution.**

As unlikely as it might seem, Christ as the world's Redeemer came to Earth and died as a human being to pay us back for the deed of thrusting us down into materiality that had been earlier performed by a fellow high spirit, Lucifer. The deed from such a high level of spirituality could *not* be undone by the humans upon which it was performed — it required a deed from the same level from which the thrusting downward was performed. Christ gave us the ultimate example of how, out of the greatest evil — the slaying of the most innocent of Men, can come the greatest holiness.

When we understand the evolution of the macrocosm, we will understand the evolution of the microcosm, which is Man. Steiner uses the metaphor of a snail who secretes out of its own flesh the house which it carries around it. When the snail dies, the shell lives on. Similarly with us humans: the Earth upon which we stand and out of which we build our houses came originally from our own being, just like the snail's house. Everything that is under, over, and before us was once within us.

**[page 66] The earth's crust, in fact, had its origin in man, who in the far past crystallized it out from within himself. Just as the snail at one time had its house within itself, so man had all other beings and kingdoms, minerals, plants and animals within himself, and can say to them all: All substances were within me; I have crystallized out their constituent parts. Thus when we look at anything outside ourselves we can understand that everything before us is in fact part of us.**

Immanuel Kant made a big deal about the *ding an sich* or the "thing in itself" — how it is unknowable, but if every "thing in itself" was once itself inside of us, there should be no limit to what we can know about *any* thing. (Page 67)

All karmic compensation which involves another person must be balanced directly with that person and that requires that the persons involved must be born during overlapping lifetimes in a subsequent incarnation. Forces are developed in the time between death and a new birth which accomplish this.

**[page 69, 70] When I return to a new incarnation, these are the forces that draw together**

**all the people who have had experiences in common. During the Kamaloka period they lived within one another, and they incorporated these forces into themselves. Within one physical human being there may of course be Kamaloka experiences connected with several different people, in order that the situation involving them may be balanced out and resolved.**

He gives us a brief example of a karmic balancing between lifetimes.

**[page 70] A man was condemned to death by five judges. What was really happening here? In a previous lifetime the man had killed these other five men and karmic forces had brought all six together for a karmic balancing. This does not produce a never-ending karmic chain; other karmic relationships come in to change the further course of events.**

It would perhaps seem strange if the Earth which is the shell crystallized from the human being did not suffer through reincarnations on a cosmic scale similar to the microcosmic scale of human reincarnations. This, in fact, does happen. The Earth went through three different conditions or stages of evolution until it arrived in its current stage: Saturn, Sun, and Moon. As the Earth went from its incarnation as Saturn to its incarnation as Sun, it went through intermediate periods called 1) Pralaya when it was not visible and had no outward life and 2) Manvantara which was a period of incorporation. Then it entered the Sun stage of evolution. The two periods recurred between Sun and Moon, and again between Moon and the current Earth stage of evolution. Steiner on page 72 likens these two interim stages of evolution on a cosmic scale to the two periods of Kamaloka and Devachan on a human scale which act as interim stages between successive human incarnations.

And there are more similarities between humans and these cosmic stages of evolution. Remember the seven year stages of a human's life? Each of the seven planets will eventually pass through seven life-states (Rounds) which are each divided into seven 'form-states.' In the H.P. Blavatsky book, "The Secret Doctrine", only the presence of the secret was announced, "Learn the riddle of 777." Below Steiner reveals the solution to the riddle:

**[page 74] Now just as man passes through the various stages of his life, as a child, young man, old man so does a planet. Before Saturn manifested the flaky structures deposited with it, it was an Arupa-Devachan structure, then a Rupa-Devachan structure, and finally an astral structure. Then the flakes gradually disappear, and Saturn returns through the same stages into the darkness of Pralaya. A metamorphosis such as this, from the spiritual into the physical and then back again into the spiritual is in theosophy a Round, or a 'life-state.' Each Round can be divided into seven phases: Arupa, Rupa, Astral, Physical and back to Arupa. These phases, wrongly called 'Globes', are in fact 'form-states'. But we must not imagine seven successive planets; it is always the same planet which transforms itself, and its beings are transformed with it. Saturn passed through seven such Rounds or life-states. In each Round its structure was being perfected, so that only in the seventh Round was its final perfected form attained. Each Round is subdivided into seven transformations, or form-states, so that Saturn would have passed through seven times seven, or 49, metamorphoses. That is true of Saturn, and then of the Sun, Moon and Earth; and in the future there will be three more planets: Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan.**

After the seven planets go through 49 metamorphoses, the result will be  $7 \times 7 \times 7$  or 343 metamorphoses before our cosmos will have completed its evolution. That is the secret tantalizingly hinted at by Blavatsky in her famous book.

In Steiner's book on [Nutrition and Stimulants](#), one can discover in detail how the various parts of the plant affect the human body simply by imagining the human being inverted with its head below ground and its

feet in the air(6). Here Steiner gives us an overview of our human evolution which illustrates how we began as a plant structure during the Sun phase of evolution, rotated 90 degrees to the horizontal during our animal phase of the Moon phase, and became vertical upright by turning another 90 degrees during our Earth phase of evolution. No one who understands evolution rightly can ever expect any animal, not even the highest primate, to achieve the abilities of the human being during this Earth phase of evolution.

**[page 75, 76] Anyone who understands the deeper connections at work in life will regard the plant as an inverted human being. Below is its root; then come the stalk, leaves, stamens and pistils; the pistils contain the female reproductive organs, and the stamens the male. In all innocence the plant stretches out its reproductive organs to the sun, for it is the sun that kindles its reproductive power(7). The root is really the 'head' of the plants, which [on the other end of its body] stretches its productive organs out to the wide spaces of the world, while this head is attracted by the center of the earth. Man is the opposite of this — his head is at the top of his body, and below are the organs [pointing toward the earth] which the plant spreads out to the sun. The animal comes in between — its body is horizontal. If you revolve a plant through 90 degrees, you get the position of the animal; turn it another 90 degrees and you get the position of man.**

This double turning at a right angle led Plato to say that "The world-soul is crucified on the cross of the world-body." Once again Steiner sheds light which illuminates an ancient mystery.

In his discussion of the Moon phase of evolution, Steiner describes creatures which are plant-animals and animal-humans.

**[page 77] The old Moon had as yet no solid mineral kingdom. It was a globe which, instead of a solid earth crust, had something like a living and inwardly growing peaty mass not dissimilar to cooked spinach(8). This living foundation was permeated with woody structures out of which grew the plant kingdom, as it then was. These plants, however, were really a sort of 'plant-animal' — they were able to feel, and under pressure would have experienced pain. And man in the animal kingdom of the time was not like any animal of today; he was half-way between animal and man. He was of a higher order than our present animals and could carry out his impulses in a much more systematic way. but he was lower than modern man, for he was not able to say 'I' to himself. He did not yet possess an ego-body.**

What we humans have today in the warmth of our bodies, humans during the Moon phase had in the warmth of their breath. That aspect of humanity of the Moon time together with the horizontal orientation of human bodies led to the images of dragons who breathed fire which have come down to us. We live in a time when the realities of the old Moon phase of evolution remain embedded in ancient myths which we have treated as illusory fantasies in our current materialistic phase of *dense* thinking, up until now.

Those myths are so deeply embedded that we blithely use the days of the week without realizing how that arrangement of names reveal the entire succession of the planetary evolutionary stages of our cosmic and human evolution! One point must be noted is that the Earth evolutionary stage is divided into Mars and Mercury. Another is that we must become aware of the names in various languages to recognize the planets in every day of the week: Saturday (Saturn), Sunday (Sun), Monday (Moon), Tuesday (Mardi, french for Mars-day), Wednesday (Mercredi, french for Mercury-day), Thursday (Jeudi, french for Jupiter-day), and Friday (Vendredi, french for Venus-day). Vulcan is the octave of Saturn and is not included in the days of the week.

**[page 78] Thus do the names of the days of the week reflect the occult doctrine of the passage of the earth through these various stages — a remarkable chronicle which makes it possible for these truths to be kept ever and again in mind.**

In Lecture Ten, Steiner gives a quick reprise of the "Evolution of Mankind Up To Atlantean Times". Especially important is his elaboration of how the luciferic spirits evolved only part-way during the Moon phase and became important to the evolution of human beings. Remember how the fire breathed during the Moon phase moved into our blood during the Earth phase? The luciferic spirits used that fire to fire up our blood for independence. One cannot understand Lucifer (whose very name means "light-bringer") rightly unless one comes to understand the quantum leap humankind received from the gift of light that Lucifer and his legions gave to humankind.

**[page 89] They tempted man in so far as they lived in his blood and gave him independence. Without these luciferic beings, everything would have come to man a gift from the gods. Man would have been wise, but not independent; enlightened, but not free. Because these beings anchored themselves in his blood, man not only became wise, but could be fired with enthusiasm for wisdom and ideals.**

The race of Atlanteans suffered a great catastrophe, sinking beneath the Atlantic Ocean without leaving any archaeological traces, but the people of the great continent who managed to escape before the sinking populated the land we know as Ireland today, and the people we know as Celts became the carrier of civilization across into Europe and as far east as the farthest reaches of Asia, leaving behind along the way, the various Toltecs, Semites, Akkadians, Mongols, and others.

In this next passage Steiner refers to the airships of the Atlanteans being propelled by the forces of organic plants. This calls to mind an image offered by the prophetic Russian seeress, [Anastasia](#), who described how flying machines will be built whose lift and propulsion will be powered by the action of microbes.

**[page 90] [The Atlanteans ] pressed the powers of nature into their service; their dwellings were partly natural structures and partly hewn out of rocks. They constructed airships which were not propelled by inorganic forces, such as coal, but by the use of the organic, germinating power of plants.**

To the Atlantean, touching Nature was like shaking hands with God. One cannot read Thoreau [Journals](#) very far without perceiving a feeling for Nature in him which was very like that of an ancient Atlantean.

**[page 93] The Atlantean did not raise himself to his God through concepts and ideas. He discerned something holy in nature as a keynote of the Divine; it was as though he breathed in and breathed out his God. If he wished to express what he heard in this way, he would embody it in a sound similar to the Chinese T-A-O. [pronounced *DOW* ] For the Atlantean this was the sound which pervaded the whole of nature. When he touched a leaf, or saw a flash of lightning, he was aware that part of the Godhead was displayed before him; it was as if he were touching the garment of the Divine. Just as we make contact with some element in a person's soul when we shake hands with him, so the Atlantean, when he took hold of a form in nature, felt that he was touching the body of the Godhead.**

This ability passed as humans entered the Post-Atlantean cultural ages of India, Persia, Egypto-Chaldean, Greco-Roman, and our current age. Here's how the old India human viewed touching Nature:

**[page 94] Whereas the Atlantean could still discern the Godhead in every leaf, the Indian said: 'The Godhead is no longer apparent in the outer world. I must sink into my inner being and seek for Him in my heart; I must follow after Him towards a higher spiritual condition.'**

The ancient Persian in the next cultural age, saw the external world not as something that must be *moved away from* in internal musings, but rather as something that *must be worked with and shaped* into creations by human beings. The rays of the Sun were understood to be the outer vestments of the Great Sun spirit,

Ahura Mazdao.

**[page 95] The Persian wished to transform nature by work; he became a husbandman, a tiller of the soil. He moved out of the quiet realm of world-renouncing thoughts and learnt from the resistance he encountered that the outer world was not wholly maya. Side by side with the world of spirit he found a real world in which work had to be done.**

The third cultural age can be understood in the Egyptian people who had moved so far from the spiritual reality of the world that they strove to preserve their own bodies in mummy form as a way of achieving immortality. Together with Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Babylonians, they began to study the stars and create the science of astrology to explain how the Nile flooded, for example.

**[page 96] It became clear to them that there was a great wisdom governing all natural processes; that everything happened in accordance with great laws, and these they tried to fathom. The ancient Chaldean priests, above all, were the custodians of profound wisdom, but for them these laws of nature were not merely abstract, nor were the stars merely physical globes. They looked on each planet as ensouled by a being whose body it was. They had a quite concrete conception that behind every constellation was a divine being which gave it life. Thus the Egyptians and Chaldeans discerned that they were spirits living among spirits in a world of spirits. They saw matter as filled with wisdom.**

The fourth age brought us the Greco-Roman culture with its deep decline into materialism. The gods of the Greek were separated from matter and lived wisdom-filled in a distant world called Olympus.

**[page 96, 97] The Greek went further than the Egyptian: instead of taking the finished forms of nature, he took unformed matter, in the shape of marble, and impressed on it his own stamp. He formed his own gods, Zeus and the rest. The third sub-race (Egypt) had sought the spirit in the external world, the fourth (Greco-Roman) impressed the spirit itself on the world. Art, the charming of spirit into matter, was the task reserved for the Greco-Roman race.**

In our own age, we carry the shaping of the material world into new heights with laws of gravity, aeroplanes, televisions, computers, and the world-wide Internet. And we will be succeeded by another age which will lead us to transcend the material world on a return trip to the spiritual world. In summary, humans through the ages have spurned, churned, learned, formed, tamed the material world, and will soon rise above it.

**[page 97] The Indian turned away from the physical. The Persian saw it as a substance which resisted his efforts. The Chaldeans, Babylonians and Egyptians recognized the wisdom in nature. The Greeks and Romans went further in enforcing their inner nature upon the physical plane. Only our own culture has gone so far as to operate with the laws of nature on the physical plane. From now onwards mankind will become more spiritual again.**

Our age bought Copernicus's heliocentric view of our cosmos and used it to replace Ptolemy's earlier geocentric one, but as Steiner rightly points out on page 98, "Copernicus and Ptolemy were *both* right." Seen from the physical aspect Copernicus was right, and from the spiritual aspect, Ptolemy was right.

**[page 98, 99] It depends on the standpoint from which you are looking at sun and earth. If you study our solar system from the astral and not from the physical plane, Ptolemy's system is right — the earth is at the center and the situation is as the ancients described it. . . . In future times yet another, quite different picture of the world will prevail. Generally we hear that Copernicus taught only two things: that the earth revolves on its own axis and that the earth moves around the sun. It is seldom noticed that he taught also a third form of movement — that the whole solar system moves onwards in a spiral.**

In addition, there is evidence emerging now that shows while moving in a spiral, our Sun is also revolving around another star, most likely Sirius. This makes us part of a [binary star system](#) and the ancients view of a Golden Age of humankind can be pinpointed as the time when our two stars are within each other's orbit.

Steiner urges a spiritual science in which no religion is attacked, but all are understood — "that people should learn to live together and understand one another." If I may hazard a paraphrase, "Let fellowship lead to fellowship and let all followers bloom together.(9)"

Dreams occur when the astral body returns upon awakening and merges with the etheric body. During this brief period of time, barely a fraction of a second, our conscious astral body has access to the storehouse of memories within our etheric body. From that fount of worldly event, the astral body, using the knowledge it has newly gleaned from its trip into the spiritual world, shapes the phenomenon in us known as a dream. These dream sequences can be quite long, but the length of a dream is an illusion that is due to the dramatic course of events played out over time in the dream. Thus the time we spend living a dream happens in a split-second, but the dream seems to last hours or more. As a result, the dream seems to have begun a long time before we awoke, but ended shortly before we awoke. In reality the dream began and ended in a split-second before we awoke and the long time period of the dream was only a back-fit required by our logic of how events flow forward in time.

An example of how this works will help you to understand it and make it possible for you to observe the phenomenon in your dream experiences. A book falls from your bedside table and hits the floor. The noise causes a long dream which ends with the slam of a door which was the real-time sound of the book hitting the floor. Careful observation of your dreams will confirm for you that this is so.

**[page 102] The actual cause of the dream I have quoted was the last event in point of time. The reason is that such a dream flashes through the soul in a moment and has its own inner time.**

The phenomenon of chakras, the lotus petal objects which appear to the spiritual eye, were always a mystery to me until I read Steiner's works. Now I understand that these are visible in initiates or pupils who enter Devachan consciously. At that time, one can observe the lotus petals revolve in the various places of the physical body. Steiner considered the eye as a passive sense organ while the chakras are active sense organs.

**[page 105] These are the sense organs of the astral body, but their mode of perception is an active one. The eye, for example, is at rest; it allows the light to enter and only then perceives it. The lotus-flowers, on the other hand, perceive only when they are in motion and take hold of an object. The vibrations caused by the revolving lotus-flowers bring them into contact with the astral substance, and that is how perception on the astral plane occurs.**

Where do the forces to revolve these lotus-flowers come from? They come from the same source which renews our energy over-night when we sleep. If we spend too much time animating our lotus-flowered chakras, we will make ourselves sick. (Page 106) How do we restore our energy? Steiner gives us a general rule: "Rhythm restores power." In addition, he gives us a set of exercises which bring rhythm and harmony into our otherwise chaotic life: 1. Thought Control, 2. Initiative in Action, 3. Tranquility, 4. Freedom from Prejudice, 5. Faith, and 6. Inner Balance. He also points out that if anyone acquires higher powers through some artificial means without attending to all this, he will be in a bad way. Here is my brief summary of what he means by each of these exercises: [Excerpts from pages 107 to 109]

**1. *Thought control.* — This means preventing, at least for a short time every day, all sorts of thoughts from drifting through the mind, and bringing a certain ordered tranquility**

**into the course of thinking.**

**2. Initiative in action.** — You must compel yourself to some action, however trivial which owes its origin to your own initiative, to some task you have laid on yourself.

**3. Tranquility.** — Here the pupil learns to regulate his emotions so that he is not one moment over the moon and the next down in the dumps.

**4. Freedom from prejudice.** — One day Christ Jesus saw a dead dog lying by the wayside; he stopped to look at the animal while those around him turned in disgust. Then Jesus said: 'What beautiful teeth the dog has!' If you acquire this mood, you will look everywhere for the good and the positive, and you will find it everywhere. This has a powerful effect on the physical and etheric bodies.

**5. Faith.** — Under certain circumstances you must exclude all that you have experienced hitherto, so that you can meet every new experience with new faith. [RJM: pay attention to the territory — it will always differ in some regard from your map of it.]

**6. Inner Balance.** — This is a gradual, natural outcome of the other five qualities. It comes by itself when they are consistently practiced.

Steiner ends the Lecture on Occult Development by outlining three ways: The Eastern way (yoga), The Christian way, and the Rosicrucian way. In the Eastern way, one surrenders one's self to one's guru. In the Christian way, one surrenders one's self to Christ Jesus. In the Rosicrucian way, the guru is an adviser and this offers one the greatest possible independence of development.

**[page 111] Among Europeans, the Christian way is best suited to those who live more strongly in their feelings. Those who have more or less broken away from the Church and rely rather on science, but have been led by science into a doubting frame of mind, will do best with the Rosicrucian way.**

Several years ago, my friend Kristina Kaine informed me about the importance of the first 14 verses of the Gospel of John, which prompted me to post those verses [on-line here](#). Reciting the first 14 verses of the John Gospel each morning is a practical way of filling our soul daily with sacred thoughts. This practice goes back to the days of the Essenes. Assiduous recitation of these verses while alive in the flesh will help one to remain linked through love to those souls of loved ones living on Earth when one is alive in the spirit in the world.

Here is a passage in which Steiner discusses the Gospel of John, especially the first verses, as an essential part of the Christian way.

**[page 121] In Christian training you must meditate on this Gospel, not simply read and reread it. The Gospel begins: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God . . .' The opening verses of this Gospel, rightly understood, are sentences for meditation and must be inwardly absorbed in the condition of *Dyananam*, as described above [\(10\)](#).**

As one progresses on the Christian way, one meditates one's way through John's Gospel until one comes to the thirteenth chapter during which one will experience the separate stages of Christian initiation, namely, Washing of the Feet, Scourging, Crowning with Thorns, Crucifixion, Mystical Death, Burial, and Resurrection.

**[page 124] The seventh stage, that of the Resurrection, cannot be described in words. Hence occultism teaches that the seventh stage can be conceived only by a man whose**

**soul has been entirely freed from the brain, and only to such a man could it be described. Hence we cannot do more than mention it here. The Christian occult teacher indicates the way to this experience.**

In Lecture 14 on Rosicrucian Schooling, the initiate is led through the six exercises mentioned above in Excerpts from pages 107 to 109. As part of learning to control one's thought, the initiate or pupil is taught that no book is too difficult — that one must learn to absorb as much as one can. The concept of the unanswered question helps me with this in my reading. When I encounter a book, as I frequently do, which generates more questions than it answers, I have learned to hold those questions in my mind unanswered, and allow my mind to work over these ideas over time, until soon or later, out of my mind will form answers to the questions. Where ideas that seem to be original to me come from is one unanswered question that I have held for a long time. I have received many answers to this unanswered question as sooner or later I come across someone else who had already written about my idea in a different way. In Steiner's passage below I find expressed, in a different form, my idea of holding the unanswered question(11).

**[page 129] If, for instance, we are reading a difficult book, the most important thing is not to comprehend its whole content, but to enter into the author's line of thought and learn to think with him. Hence the pupil should find no book too difficult; if he does, it means only that he is too easy-going to think.**

Recently the area of the world in which I live, New Orleans, was hit by a devastating hurricane. The hurricane knocked down trees and power lines, but the major devastation came from several levee breaks which allowed flood waters of heights from one foot to 15 feet to fill about half the city. It had been about 40 years since the last disastrous hurricane in 1967. I rode out Hurricane Betsy in an apartment with my wife and two daughters, and after the storm, I helped an aunt to clean up her house from the flood waters. For years after Betsy, I wondered about what caused hurricanes, and why the major storms never seemed to come back except after several decades. Then I read this Jane Roberts' book, [The Individual and the Nature of Mass Events](#), and my unanswered question began to get answered. The human psyche as it exists in the people of an area act as the steering currents for hurricanes. By extension, one can understand that this holds also for other natural catastrophes such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.(12)

Steiner reveals how spiritual science can explain what is really happening when a person is greatly affected by some natural disaster such as a hurricane, earthquake, or volcanic eruption. On pages 134 and 135, he describes the spiritual layers of the Earth: the topmost layer, the 'fluid' earth layer, the 'air' earth layer, the 'water' earth layer, the 'fruit' earth layer, the 'fire' earth layer, the earth 'mirror' layer, and the 'splintering' layer. All these layers, human beings are spiritually related to and affect.

**[page 136] You will see therefore, that man is related to all the layers, for they are continually radiating out their forces. Humanity lives under the influence of these layers and has to overcome their powers. When human beings have learnt to radiate life on earth, and have trained their breathing so that it promotes life, they will overcome the 'fire earth'. When spiritually they overcome pain through serenity, they overcome the 'air earth'. When concord reigns, the 'splintering' layer is conquered. When white magic triumphs, no evil remains on earth. Human evolution thus implies a transformation of the earth's interior. In the beginning the nature of the earth's body was such as to hold subsequent developments in check. In the end, when human powers have transformed the earth, it will be a spiritualized earth. In this way man imparts his own being to the earth.**

In addition, Steiner gives us an example of how the effects of an earthly disaster affects the future incarnation lives of those who die during the disaster.

[page 137] How man's destiny and will are related to happenings in the earth can be seen from two examples which have been occultly investigated. It has been found that many people killed in an earthquake appear in their next incarnation as human beings of high spiritual quality and faith. They had progressed far enough for that final blow to convince them of the transitoriness of earthly things. The effect of this in Devachan was that they learnt a lesson for their next lives: that matter is perishable but spirit prevails. They did not all come to realize that, but many of them are living as people who belong to some spiritual-theosophical movement.

In the other example, the births which occurred during a time of frequent earthquakes were investigated. It was found that all those born at about the time of an earthquake, though not exactly in its area, were surprisingly enough, people of a very materialistic frame of mind. The earthquakes were not the cause of this; rather it was these strongly materialistic souls, ripe for birth, who worked their way down into the physical world by means of their astral will and let loose the forces of the fire earth layer, which proceeded to shake the earth at the time of their birth.

This completes my review of the "general survey" of Rudolf Steiner's "Science of the Spirit" as he saw it in 1906 during the early years of his public lecturing. Over the next twenty years, he gave another five thousand plus lectures, most of them dealing with some aspect of his spiritual science, and the rest dealing with some discipline which branched off from his spiritual science, such as bio-dynamic farming, architecture, eurythmy, drama, and education, among other things. His fields of interests had as many facets as a fine diamond, and wherever one moves one's view, there is brilliant light radiating forth to join the dazzling array of rainbow colors.

----- *Footnotes* -----

**Footnote 1.** People who perform these exercises are called initiates or seers, because they are able to perceive spiritual realities which are not visible to our normal perception of the material world. The exercises allow these initiates to develop an organ of spiritual sight.

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**Footnote 2.** Also called *atman* or Atman in various other places in Steiner's works, such as in this book, [The Christian Mystery](#).

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**Footnote 3.** What might cause a too-fast reincarnation? Steiner says, "The Sun does not admit evil into its realm." That means that in one's passage through the spiritual worlds in the time between death and a new birth, one must necessarily leave behind any parts of one's being that are evil. This requires that an evil person will pass "into the Sun-existence as a kind of spiritual cripple." A really evil person is in dire straits because he must leave all of himself behind. Steiner explains, "The consequence is that if he does not disappear from the world altogether he must at once prepare to reincarnate, to enter again into an earthly life." See [Karmic Relationships, Volume 2, GA# 236](#), by Rudolf Steiner, for more details.

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**Footnote 4.** The planning should begin as soon as the couple meet, even before they are married, as described in the story of Radomir and his bride in Book 6 of the Ringing Cedars Series of Anastasia books, [The Book of Kin](#).

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**Footnote 5.** For more details, see Edward Reaugh Smith's book, [The Soul's Long Journey](#), which explains "How the "Bible Reveals Reincarnation."

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**Footnote 6.** See these diagrams: [\(1\)](#), [\(2\)](#), and [\(3\)](#) for more details on this. You will never again eat fruit preserves on your morning toast without thinking of these diagrams.

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**Footnote 7.** This point about the Sun being responsible for plant reproduction cannot be emphasized too much. Read the passage from page 119, 120 in this review of [Harmony of the Creative Word](#), which states clearly that fertilization does *not* occur in the flower.

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**Footnote 8.** Note the similarity of "cooked spinach" to the old saying that the Moon was made of "green cheese". Again, a saying of the ancients becomes meaningful when we understand the evolution of our cosmos and ourselves rightly.

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**Footnote 9.** From a saying by Mao Tse-Tung, "Let all flowers bloom together."

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**Footnote 10.** Steiner refers to his description of Dyananam earlier in this lecture. See pages 119, 120. Here is an excerpt from page 120: "*Dyananam* is therefore meditation on concepts that have no sense-perceptible counterpart."

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**Footnote 11.** See [Matherne's Rule #25](#): What is the power of an unanswered question?

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**Footnote 12.** In 1971, I lived through a 6.5 earthquake in Southern California, and never noticed the dramatic effect it had on my life until many years later. Kierkegard said, "Life must be lived forward, but can only be understand by looking backward." Looking backward I was able to understand how "shook up" my world was to be soon after the earthquake experience. New job, new location, and new family among other things.

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