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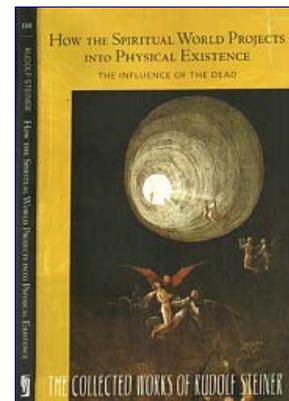


A READER'S JOURNAL

**How the Spiritual World Projects
into Physical Existence, GA#150
~ The Influence of the Dead ~
10 Lectures in Europe, Jan to Dec, 1913**

by
Rudolf Steiner

ARJ2 Chapter: Spiritual Science
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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2015



Steiner gave these lectures in various cities which had recently formed a local branch of the anthroposophical society. Margaret Jonas in September, 2014, writing in her Introduction, makes several important points.

[page x, Jonas] The Bochum members [Note: Lecture 8 was given in this German city near the Rhine River.] are further praised for founding a branch in a modern industrial city and not in some rural idyll where people try to "go back to nature". Rudolf Steiner wanted anthroposophy to reach out into the modern world as widely as possible, as a force for change, and not to be the preserve of a favored elite.

Her second point is one that I, as a father who raised four children and helped raise six step-children, find most appropriate. Too often in recent movies children take over the unassigned job of carping about their parents, whether it's about their parenting methods, their choice in music, clothes, or books, etc. This most recently happened in a movie "Black or White" (2014). The trend is so universal that it is a common theme in TV commercials for a pre-teen to upstage the parent by trying to prove them wrong in 30 seconds or less. No kid ever complains about the parents who lets them get away with their carping, and why would they? The parent is the one who should know better and act to correct the kids by assuming their parental authority. Yes, I meant "assume"! No one says to a new parent, "You must *assume* you have authority over your children." But the best parents act exactly under this assumption and raise children who will assume authority when they become parents.

[page x, Jonas] Further to the activities of the adversaries Lucifer and Ahriman, he warns his listeners about another harmful effect — that on young children; especially, for instance, if they are encouraged to criticize adults too early in their development (a habit that has greatly increased since his time), they display an undesirable precociousness.

Has anyone not noticed the increasing popularity of vampire books, movies, TV dramas in recent years? Steiner warns that this is an effect of people who cannot recognize Lucifer after death; it tends to *vampirize* these people.

[page x, Jonas] We may wonder if the current enthusiasm for 'vampire' material is some sort of reflection of this experience.

On the other hand, getting to recognize Ahriman before death is a good thing. If we notice our self aging or if we lose our natural teeth, contrary to popular opinion, we should not perceive that as a loss, but rather a successful overcoming of Ahriman.

[page x, Jonas] In contrast, we should not see ageing and losing our teeth as something disagreeable or preventable. The longer someone can stay alive is a victory over Ahriman's activity.

"Nonetheless, these two powers (Lucifer and Ahriman) also play a necessary role in earth evolution," Jonas sums up.

Writing on what Steiner said about an incarnation lasting only a couple of days, Jonas illuminated the life of my older sister, Marie, who was born about a year before I was, but died a day or so after her birth.

[page xi, Jonas] On the whole, women find it easier to absorb spiritual truths than men; and an incarnation lasting for perhaps only a few days, though a tragedy for the parents, may bear great importance for the soul concerned — in other words learning not to judge everything by earthly standards.

The last thing we would wish in our kids, rightly understood, is for them to "be really clever in the human and earthly sense as early as possible." (Page 3) Rather we would feel in every impulse of our young children that they are acting on far higher impulses than those we ourselves are able to penetrate with our intellect, in other words, we would feel that our children have a spiritual entity speaking to and directing them. We would not perceive them as being clever, but rather as being deeply spiritual in a way we would not be able to explain rationally to some adult who is primarily intellectual and clever. Instead of pride in our children's cleverness, we would feel a mysterious wonder as their childhood unfolds before us. This is the awe with which good parents and Waldorf teachers experience in the presence of

their charges as they help them through the seven-year stages of their growth. Steiner explains the difference between such children and the precociously clever kids of today. (Note that he was talking over one hundred years ago about conditions that are much worse today.)

[page 3, 4] If people only had children whose development was guided in seven-year periods by forward-moving divine and spiritual powers and if these people met a child who today delights people around him because he is saying and doing such clever things, whereas they would be used to those other conditions, those people would say: "Oh, how soon has this child become godforsaken!" Things that delight people today would then be felt to be a punishment. And they would consider a young person of 15 who was as clever as he would be expected today to be utterly godforsaken. For the forward-moving divine and spiritual powers really only ask that human beings bring out their I nature completely between the 21st and 28th years. Before that anything they did would rather appear to be such that higher spiritual, supersensible impulses were acting through them.

What is going on? Would any parent today prefer their kids to be clever as young as possible and entertain their adults friends at parties and family gatherings? Yes. Would any parent today prefer to have a child who seemed to be dreamy on the outside? No. Children who have "higher spiritual, supersensible impulses acting through them" will seem to be useless dreamers in our modern society. And yet such dreamy kids would be a boon to any parents who could perceive, who could feel the spiritual impulses flowing in their young offspring. I was such a dreamy kid myself, preferring to read a good book rather than participate in school athletics, and I was born to a father who loved manual work, hunting, fishing, and farming. He never seemed to respect my work, until one day a few years before he died when he asked me, "Is writing hard?" Acknowledging I was a writer I took as a sign of respect for my work that I had never quite gotten from him before. I thought a moment and answered him, "No, Dad. Writing is not hard; it's having something important to write about that is hard."

[page 4] Those children would, however, have a life that would appear dreamy on the outside; but people would feel that this dreamy life was God's or the spirits' blessing, and they would not in the least desire to bring up their children in some way to be precocious in the modern sense.

One hundred years have passed since Steiner gave these lectures. During that time, thanks to his initiating the impulse for Waldorf School education, many more of these special, dreamy kids are being raised for the benefit of humankind. Waldorf Schools do not create kids who are know-it-alls, but kids who respect authority, the authority of their parents and their Waldorf teachers.

[page 8] We do something that is good when we raise children who do not want to know everything themselves in their ninth or tenth year, but who if asked why one thing or another is right and good will say: because my father, or my mother has said that it is good, or because my teacher says so. If we raise the children so that the adults around them are the accepted authorities, we do something that is good for them, whatever the circumstances.

No child, raised in such a way would criticize their parent for being out-of-touch with the world today, as so happens with the preteen carpers we mentioned earlier. If we postpone any teaching of rote memory until after the child develops its second set of teeth, we do best for the child. Before then memory develops on its own naturally and then after age seven, Ahriman's counterbalance is ready to offset Lucifer and rote memory processes may be taught. Younger kids seem to sense this spiritual truth and complain loudly about learning times tables and memorizing historical dates, etal, before then. (Page 8, 9)

On page 10, Steiner explains in detail the power we acquire when we lose our teeth and when we grow old as Jonas hinted in her Introduction summary. Sometimes life works out in ways that are beneficial to us, but we are unconscious of the benefits. Losing our teeth is one of these paradoxical benefits.

[page 10] We sometimes even manage to be quite dissatisfied with the way we unconsciously act against Ahriman. We do prepare ourselves in the course of life to have certain powers once we have gone through death, so that Ahriman will not be able to do too much to us between death and rebirth. But sometimes we allow our selves to be quite clearly aware that the fight against Ahriman is not actually welcome, for instance when we regret the loss of every one of our teeth. Yet every time we lose a tooth we gain a power for which we have good use. Of course, I am not saying anything against fillings, or the re-implantation of teeth, for this does not add anything ahrimanic — at most the gold itself, but that does not matter. So we cannot say that it is something bad. The fact that we gradually lose our ahrimanic teeth is due to the fact that in the course of evolution we do also gain certain impulses and these overcome Ahriman. Irrespective of whether we have a tooth re-implanted or not, we have gained an impulse that helps us with the powers we need to develop at the very lowest level between death and rebirth. It is a very little thing at first, but it can show us how essentially we must truly get in the habit, as we approach reality and look beyond unreality and the great illusion that is usually around us, of seeing things in life in a very different way from the way in which they are usually seen.

Another paradoxical benefit is the so-called weakness of old age. Old people often complain about being old, treating each new birthday or wrinkle as a curse. On the other hand, kids today treat their parents as jokes, as old fogies who cannot keep up with them physically or culturally, a trait that is especially obvious in modern comic strips such *Zits*, *Baby Blues*, *Curtis*, and the like. The benefit of old age is that the older we become, the more able we are to fight Ahriman when we enter the spiritual world. Look at people who have reached 100 years of age, and you can sense the imminent victory they feel, can see it in their demeanor, and hear it in their voice. One famous jazz musician who had reached 103 was asked by Johnny Carson, "Do you have any regrets in life?" and he answered, "Yes. If I'd known I would have lived so long, I would have taken better care of myself."

[page 10] The weakness of old age, for example, is also a power that comes to us directly when we are sentient of it, so that once again we have something to fight Ahriman when we have gone through the gate of death. Here, between birth and death, we may indeed be annoyed if we age too soon, but with regard to our intentions after death when we want to cope with Ahriman we must be glad that we do age.

We have learned elsewhere in Steiner's works that our human physical and etheric bodies wear out during the day time when we are awake and that we must go to sleep to recover our physical and etheric forces for the next day. Isn't that like what Nature must do during the Autumn and Winter months, namely, wither and die away, awaiting Spring and Summer to be refreshed and new? Elementals beings are like scavengers who are sent by Ahriman in Autumn and Winter to gather up the fading physical and etheric bodies of the plant world which covers the Earth.

[page 11] When our plants grow from the ground, wither as autumn approaches and the leaves fall, the elemental spirits whom Ahriman sends to the earth's surface are in evidence everywhere. He then gathers in all that is dying; he has it gathered in by his elemental spirits. When you walk through the fields in autumn and see dying nature clairvoyantly, Ahriman is extending his powers everywhere, and has his elemental messengers everywhere who bring him everything that is withering physical and etheric by nature.

Thus, we are able to understand how we as human beings live during the day the way plants wither and die during Fall and Winter! And how during sleep, we exist as plants do in the Spring and Summer, growing, blooming, and fruiting.

[page 11] Truly, the soul's summer mood exists only when the soul is asleep. It truly is the case that the sleeping human body — physical body and ether body — ranks equal with a plant; and the I and the astral body, which are outside, cast their rays back on to the physical and etheric body, acting like sun and stars and letting the powers sprout forth which we have destroyed during the day. There the vegetative life grows, and daytime thinking really exists only to get rid again of what the night lets sprout forth. When we wake up, we dart across our vegetative life just as autumn does across the plants on earth. And in our daytime waking hours we do to our physical and etheric body what winter does to the earth's vegetation, to anything by way of sprouting, shooting life which they produced in the soul's summertime, that is, in sleep during the night.

"But we human beings are really also in a kind of autumn and winter mood all day long," Steiner tells us. If we are to be full human beings, we must truly mix the seasons in equal balance as the Earth does with Nature, a vibrant growing Summer, followed by a cleanup process of the withered and dead in the Autumn and Winter. People who do not mix some Summer unconsciousness into their Wintery consciousness become dry pedants, living in an arid desert of their precious consciousness and proud of it.

[page 11] When we are awake, it is winter, truly winter of the soul, and we must go to sleep if we want to have the soul's springtime. That is the way it is. And from this point of view it is really easy to see why people who do not mix at least something from the soul's summer into their daytime waking life do so easily dry out. Dry scholars, withered professor types, these are the people who do not like to accept anything unless it is in full consciousness, do not like to accept anything from the soul's summertime. They dry out, turning into out-and-out winter people. And for the seer, the whole development of human daily life is seen to be very similar to what I have just been telling you about the natural world.

Francis Bacon led Western Civilization into a wintery world in which only conscious thoughts involving the material world as it impinges on our sensory apparatus is accepted as legitimate. The movie, "A. I.", portrays clearly the long-term effects of such thinking if it is not modulated by large doses of summery unconsciousness.

[page 11, 12] For when human beings develop their ordinary thoughts relating to the outside world, when they are utterly materialistic in thinking only the things that happen outwardly, their thoughts affect the brain to such an extent that this brain excretes substances(1) which Ahriman can really do with, so that Ahriman is really accompanying waking daytime life all the time. And the more materialistic we are the more are we obsessed with Ahriman.

Steiner has spoken many times of the importance of having a balance of Lucifer and Ahriman in our lives during our time between birth and death, because they will both greatly influence us during our time between death and a new birth.

First, as for Lucifer, Steiner cautions we must learn what luciferic impulses are in our life on Earth. If not we will have our powers of soul sucked out of us by Lucifer, exactly as the fictional Count Dracula sucks blood out of his victims.

[page 12, 13] We may thus go through the region between death and rebirth having Lucifer at our side — there's not only something terrible about him but also something beautiful, glorious as far as his outer form goes — and realize that he is needed by the world. A time is coming more and more where people will only be able to go through life after death with Lucifer if they have already got to intuit and know the luciferic impulses in the human soul properly whilst here in life. People — and there will also be more and more of them as time goes on — who do not want to know about Lucifer, and they are probably in the majority, will know all the more of Lucifer after death. It is not only that he will be at their side, but being at their side he will be drawing on their powers of soul all the time; he will vampirize human beings. This is what people prepare for by not knowing, to be vampirized by Lucifer. With this one deprives oneself of powers for the next life, for one will be giving them over to Lucifer in a way.

As for Ahriman, we see that people who refuse to accept his reality will be overloaded with his gift of gravity resulting in those people being subject to premature deaths by accidents and illnesses. Curiously those people one hears today using these words, "innocent victim", will be the ones who will become such innocent victims of random violence in their next lifetime. Similarly for those who refer to the premature passing of a loved one due to illness as an "unfair act of God". Looking at this retrospectively, one can understand that those people who did not accept Ahriman in a previous lifetime are likely the ones to die premature deaths in this lifetime. If one comes to understand the reality of Ahriman, one can only let go of the concept of "innocent victim" — either from so-called random acts of violence, or from accidents, or from catastrophe illness.

[page 13] The two spirits [RJM: Lucifer and Ahriman] are always present between death and rebirth, but on the one

occasion one of them is more present and the other less; on the other occasion it is the other way round. We pass away into, and then return again from the life between death and rebirth. Lucifer is above all at our side in the passing away. Ahriman when we move towards being born again. For Ahriman takes us back to the earth again; he is important in the second half of coming back again. And he, too, is able to do dreadful things, as it were, to the people who do not want to believe in him in their life between birth and death. He will give them too much of his powers. He confers on them something he has always to spare, the powers connected with earthly gravity that mean sickness and premature death for people, bringing all kinds of accidents that seem random into earthly existence, and so on. All this has to do with these ahrimanic powers.

One must not judge all Ahriman deeds, namely violence, accidents, and sickness, as bad. Why, because some of these are essential for a person's spiritual growth such as completing a karmic balancing goal for this lifetime. I recall my extraordinary second case of red measles as a 34-year-old which led me to discovering Steiner and his works. Not all illnesses are bad, are they? You never know until you find out.

[page 14] No, it is good, because it may well be that a sickness turns out to be something that contributes a great deal to our ascending development.

What is the biggest illusion of materialistic thinker, the irridentist atheist who renounces all spiritual realities? They even proclaim loudly, "There is no Devil!" What they mean is there is no Ahriman. What possesses them to say such a thing? Ahriman possesses them!

[page 14] Where does the materialism in the physical world come from, that materialism where people say there is no Ahriman, there simply is no devil? Who is it who shouts loudest that there is no devil? Those who are most possessed by him. For the spirit whom we call Ahriman is enormously interested in having his existence denied by those who are most possessed by him.

People who have passed into the spiritual world wonder about the loved ones they left behind who are still living and sorely missing them. We can help these loved ones by holding them in our memory while we read spiritual science literature such as these lectures by Rudolf Steiner. This is a process he has taught called "reading to the dead." They cannot reach us to be consoled, but we can reach them and console them greatly by reading to them spiritual truths.

[page 28] Let me stress that we can read to the dead about supersensible worlds. When we have time we sit down and in our thoughts go through the subject matter of occult science, imagining in the liveliest possible way that the dead are with us. This removes the torment for them of thinking we're not there. We have got really good results with this in the anthroposophical movement by reading to the dead in our thoughts. They are then together with us, and this is what they need, what they long for.

An old woman living in a large estate had her maid bring her a glass of warm milk every night to help her get to sleep. The doctor told her son, "You know, your mother won't live much longer; if you slipped a little brandy in that milk each night, she would sleep better." The son, knowing his mother had always been a teetotaler and would not agree to the doctor's prescription, instructed the maid to add the brandy, but to never tell his mother about it. When his mother was on her deathbed, she called him to her bedside and whispered in his ear, "Whatever you do, don't sell that cow!" This is a droll story, somewhat typical of the half-truths told by alcoholic drinkers about the salubrious effect of alcohol: a drink before bed helps one go to sleep, a glass of red wine a day is good for one's heart, one drink never hurt anyone, and so forth. What effect does that drink before going to sleep, to mention just one example, have on people who have passed into the spiritual world?

[page 29] The other thing we have to consider, especially at the present time, is that when we enter into the supersensible world every day in our sleep we are in the same world as the dead. We just don't know about it any more after waking up. How do most people go to sleep? We may say that when they have crossed the threshold to sleep not much of what they have taken with them is spiritual. People who have taken alcoholic drinks to help them sleep will not bring much with them that is spiritual.

Not bringing much that is spiritual with them means starving in the spiritual world. No one could turn away a starving person from their door without offering them some food and nourishment to ease their suffering. Yet there are human souls, some of our own loved ones, who have passed into the spiritual world and are suffering intense pain. Only we the living can provide that nourishment and comfort for them by sharing our spiritual thoughts with them.

[page 29] The things we give to the dead, things they take into their conscious awareness, are exactly what they need for their life. And when we bring spiritual thoughts to them they have nourishment; if we don't they will be hungry, so that we may say: "By cultivating spiritual thoughts here on earth we can provide nourishment for the dead. We can let them go hungry if we do not bring spiritual thoughts to them." When fields lie fallow they produce no crops to feed humanity and people may die of starvation. The dead cannot die of starvation, of course, all they can do is suffer when spiritual life lies fallow on earth.

Yes, the dead are already in the spiritual world, so why would they need us to read to them to inform them about the supersensible world in which they reside?

[page 30] They cannot learn about things in the supersensible world unless we give them to them from our earth. The thoughts must stream up from the earth. Human Beings are on earth to get to know not just a vale of tears but also anthroposophy. People often think that one can also get to know anthroposophy after death, but that is quite wrong. Having gone through the gate of death human beings put away the things they have learned on earth.

[page 34, 35] When someone who has remained behind on earth very rarely fills his soul with spiritual thoughts, the dead soul has no access to such a soul. I am speaking of the way in which a living individual may be able to connect with someone who has died.

To paraphrase Steiner's words above, "When a widowed husband on earth rarely fills his soul with spiritual thoughts, the living soul of his departed wife has no access to his soul." Thus the study of spiritual science is important to the human both before and after death. Before death for one to help loved ones who have passed; after death, because once they have passed, they have lost the ability to learn of spiritual realities.

In my study of how the spiritual world projects into our physical existence, I encountered an answer to an unanswered question that I had held since the early 1980s when I spent a lot of time studying Carl Jung's works. The question was this: How is it possible that what one's father almost but never quite did could influence his son?

My father went to the seminary to become a priest in the 1920s and in the 1970s I became a minister and ever since I have devoted my life to studying spiritual science. My father studied Latin his first year at St. Joseph's Seminary, but when they started with Greek, he dropped out of the seminary and finished high school in Terrebonne Parish where he later met and married my mother. But for the "weird alphabet" of Greek which turned my father off, I might not have been born to this set of parents. Jung quoted often from the Greek and I figured out how to transliterate his Greek passages into English and am now able to identify most Greek words which have an English cognate. Pharmacy is a good example, easy to do if you recognize the *Ph*-sound as the letter *Phi* in Greek.

I have met many other men whose occupation related to what their father almost but didn't quite do in his own life. But not until Steiner did I receive a good answer to how this happens. Steiner tells us it is through spiritual forces that "The father sends powers to the son which encourages him to become what the father almost but never quite became." These powers, as in the example Steiner gives below of the famous Italian painter Raphael and his father, need not come from his father before his death. In the case of Raphael, he was only ten when his father, a wannabe painter died.

Steiner in his spiritual research received information that John the Baptist and Raphael the Painter were the same soul in different incarnations. Both were deeply spiritual humans with deep revelations to share with us, one by his words and deeds, the other by his paintings.

[page 35] For someone who has realized the truth of a fact like the one we are considering, that John and Raphael were identical, it is important to keep a feeling of wonder alive. I can assure those who are not able to investigate such facts for themselves that things do not come up when you are looking for them: they come unsought. To think a lot about such things does not help much at all. What helps most is to be able to wait calmly until the inspiration comes. And then it is good if one is able to be amazed, in a way, at what is given.

Remember the unanswered question(2) I held for several decades about Jung's saying? Before the answer came I had to wait calmly and patiently for a couple of decades, and when it came, I was amazed exactly as Steiner predicted that I would be. Take the person who responds to something you say with blatant assertion, "I know that!" only seconds after you have said something. It could be something which, rightly understood, could change her entire life for the better, but she dispatches it immediately, thinking she already knew what it was I was talking about. Sure, I could have pressed on to explain what she was missing, but pouring hot tea into her already full tea cup would likely have brought me a scowl, instead of a thank you. I remember the story of the stalled farmer on a bridge who whacked his mule twice on the head with a 2X4. The minister seeing this, admonished the farmer, "Don't you think if you had asked him politely, the mule would have begun pulling the wagon again?" "Sure," replied the farmer, "but first I needed to get his attention." People who can't hold an unanswered question can be as stubborn as that balky mule, and the more intelligent the person, the more stubborn they can be about learning spiritual realities. Only the curiosity which arises from a person who knows how to hold unanswered questions prepares them for learning spiritual science. It is likely this reason which Rudolf Steiner cautioned people in the anthroposophical movement from proselytizing new adherents. The only ones worth having are those who, out of their own curiosity and sense of wonder, arrive asking their unanswered questions.

[page 35] The straight way of the intellect is not suitable for occult research. A sense of wonder means that one will gradually come to see that something we wonder at proves understandable.

It was Steiner's unanswered question about Raphael which led him to discover the forces the great painter received from his father.

[page 35, 36] Thus I realized one day that something different lived as an after-effect in Raphael's soul. His work was amazing, and I was able to see that this after-effect had actually come from his father. He had died when Raphael was just ten years old. Now the father might have lived a little longer — I am speaking hypothetically. He could have had the strength to live longer. But he took that strength with him into the spiritual world, and there are occasions when such strengths can be extremely powerful. The father had not been a great painter, but inwardly he was a painter, he lived in ideas of paintings that he could not bring to realization whilst still in a physical body. He sent those powers from the spiritual world to his son, and this is why young Raphael could turn into such a great painter. He gained his artistic abilities from the powers his father sent to him from the spiritual world. This does not, of course, make Raphael a lesser man; it has merely served to show how powers act down from the spiritual into the physical world.

In other words, you hold an unanswered question and spirits work to bring an answer to you in a form you can recognize and understand. These spiritual beings know the answer you seek immediately as you form the unanswered question in yourself, but some amount of time is required, like the setting of gelatin, aspic, or concrete, for the answer to congeal inside of you. It would be nice if everyone knew this aspect of how the spiritual world works, would it not? Steiner thinks so.

[page 36] Life will be taken a great deal further if we are able to gain insight into the way the spiritual world influences the physical world.

It occurs to me that if Raphael's father was able to influence his son's life after his own death, there must have been a connection between Raphael and his father. Raphael must have been convinced that his father was still alive in the spiritual world and that provided their connection. Too often I have seen people crying so hard over the death of a loved one at a funeral that they are unconsolable. To be unconsolable can only mean that one is not aware that their *departed loved one yet lives in the spiritual world*, and indeed, that very loved one is very upset because those crying so loud *seem unaware of that fact*. At funeral masses, the best priests are those who console the bereaved by reminding them their loved one is only dead to the physical world and remains alive in the spiritual world. If they accept this thought it will be a great comfort to the loved one in the spiritual world who would otherwise be unable to know what those left behind are doing. Steiner's insights into this matter are vital for us today.

[page 36] It has to be remembered, however, that the dead are unable to know what those who remained on earth are doing, as I also said this morning. When someone has gone through the gate of death and knows that his impulses influence the physical world, it can be painful for him that he is unable to perceive those he has left behind. The dead can feel inner discomfort when they are unable to know what is going on down there. This feeling can be removed by sending nourishment to the dead. Being in life, it is up to us to create the opportunity for the dead to perceive us. Remember that it needs a thought to ignite spiritual life, as it were, in our soul. It really is an important positive thought to know that the dead individual is there, within our reach, once they have gone through the gate of death, for that is a thought that can never come by concerning ourselves with the physical world perceived through the senses. We should be firmly convinced in our hearts that the person who has died is living.

We must understand Steiner's words, "Things developed on the basis of intellectual thought will not reach the dead. The living individual must be available to the dead individual."

[page 39, 40] I hope we understand one another in this. It is indeed evident that the individual who comes to you as one of the dead experiences something like a longing within him. He does not know, however, what this longing is aiming for. You meet with him, and if you are guided by entering into a relationship with him that is how you can work with the dead whatever the circumstances. If you have spiritual wisdom, it will be filled with light, and the dead perceive the light. But if the soul does not take in spiritual wisdom, it will stay dark and the dead cannot perceive it. The possibility for the dead to live with us depends on what we have to offer them.

My fondest hope is that people, who read my light-filled thoughts after my death, will bring light to me in the spiritual world.

[page 42] The way people are present in the world perceived through senses is that powers of the whole universe are concentrated in them, like the powers of the whole plant in the seed.

In the Gospel of Mark 17:30-32 Christ Jesus asked us to imagine a tiny mustard and the large tree which that seed will grow into and fill with its power. Steiner asks each of us to imagine our tiny being on the third planet of an minor star in a remote part of our galaxy⁽³⁾ as a seed containing the power to fill the entire Universe whenever we enter the spiritual world, whether by the simple act of going to sleep or by dying to physical world as the mustard seed must do to become the mighty tree.

[page 42] Are these powers in the human being also spread out in some way in the macrocosm as the powers in the seed spread over the whole plant? The answer can only come from esoteric science, for in his life on earth the human being only gets to know himself as microcosm. Yet he does not only live in a microcosm, but has a life also in the universe.

We live not only in the microcosm of our human body, but also in the macrocosm of the Universe! How sad so few people know that they have powers in them to fill the Universe with their spirit. How sad all the mewling and puling of maudlin humans at funerals who are unaware of these powers which reside in them and their departed loved ones. How sad that it took Steiner to come among us stubborn mules with a large 2X4 to smack us across the head to get our attention, to arouse our curiosity, to rouse us to begin moving, even if only to attempt to disprove his teachings, as many have and in the process they discovered the truths that he gives actually live in them and in each of us as full human beings. Understanding this is the seed of anthroposophy, the knowledge of the full human being in body, soul, and spirit.

[page 42] Where is this element of spirit and soul when the human being is asleep, corresponding to the air he has exhaled? Occult science shows that this element is enveloped by the spirit-world's atmosphere, just as we are enveloped by the airy atmosphere, the difference being that the latter extends for a few miles whilst the former fills the universe.

The above passage inspired this short poem:

ASLEEP IN THE UNIVERSE

When plants sleep,
the Earth breathes out
elemental spirits.

When the elemental spirits sleep,
the Earth breathes them in,
and plants arise from the Earth

When humans breathe out,
our exhaled air fills
the atmosphere of Earth.

When we sleep, our head sleeps
and our other organs remain awake,
like sentinels and repair crews.

When humans sleep,
we exhale our spirit which
expands to fill the Universe.

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On page 44, Steiner comes up with an empty cup and a half-full cup of water. We would not be surprised if the empty cup moves towards getting full if we poured water into it from the half-full cup, but we would be very surprised if, in the act of pouring, the half-full cup were also to move towards getting fuller! What is happening here? What in our life can we get more of by giving some of what we have away? To some of you the answer to this puzzle will be obvious; to others, if it gets you curious, hold it as a beautiful unanswered question. Perhaps we should withhold the answer until later, in the penultimate paragraph, perhaps?

On page 63, Steiner gives us another full and empty bottle metaphor. This time it arises from the natural science of Bacon in which the living human being cannot be found; it is a science which only deals with corpses, of dead bones and tissues, things with substance, i.e., which clearly eliminates things with spiritual components, something humans clearly have. This was the second demand of Bacon for his so-called natural, but very unnatural science, rightly understood. It treats the full milk bottle of the human being by pouring the milk down the drain and examining the bottle with its scientific tools.

[page 63] This second demand, to consider the human being according to the material situation in the natural world, changed things completely, for the human being had been taken out of the natural world. It was perfectly clear then that the human being simply could not be found in a natural science of that kind. This evolved in the course of the nineteenth century. Everything belonging to the human soul had been distilled out of natural science and this was much the same as saying: "I have here a bottle with water in it. But I want to have an empty bottle and therefore pour the water away." And one is then surprised that there is no more water in the bottle. Everyone then notices immediately that the bottle is empty. With natural science, people did not realize how foolish it is to want to understand the human being by means of a nature from which the human being had been removed. I am convinced that a gathering of materialists would merely laugh about this simple way of looking at it, for people are not aware of this major error. It was the idea of freedom, of immortality and the like which had to suffer most due to this misconception. For anyone who looks at it the way I have just described would find it perfectly natural and one cannot gain enlightenment concerning these terms from natural science.

As a kid, I enjoyed reading Superman comic books. Here was a good Super-hero that I could admire. As Super-villains turned up in the Superman episodes, I became less interested in reading the comic books. I wondered why I lost interest, held that as an unanswered question, up until now. Basically Steiner says we as humans are not ready for these so-called super powers. The normal powers we have enough problems with already. As a fifteen year old I knew that intuitively by my feeling of aversion to comic strips and movies with Super-heroes and -villains in them since the mid-1950s.

[page 68] For the spiritual scientist's insight shows that it is a very good thing for human beings not to have the electrical and magnetic organs, for in this way they will not be able to damage others with them. Their lower instincts and desires thus also cannot run free initially, causing disaster to them and to others. Human beings have a world around them which teaches them slowly and gradually to conquer these lower powers and only then progress to higher powers.

In Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve, Lucifer, whose name means "light-bearer," appears to them and offers them a bite from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. This is a metaphor for the freedom which Lucifer brought to humankind, a kind of superpower which offered great promise and also the possibility of evil. But for this gift humans would have received inspiration from the gods, but so powerfully, they would not be able to resist doing what the gods showed them to do. With Lucifer's gift, humans could receive ideas and inspirations from outside, but humans could also work on ideas which came up from their own soul.

[page 70] This luciferic influence has brought it about that there has to be purification in our nature, proceeding from the unconscious to the conscious mind, and we must work to develop conscious ethical ideas and motivation as we struggle against ourselves, and then follow those ethical concepts of our own free will. It is Lucifer, therefore, who makes it possible for us to follow ethical ideas once we have developed them ourselves.

People follow principles so much in these days, that it seems they are compelled to follow them. As an example, someone suggests to someone that microwave ovens are bad and that person feels compelled to avoid microwave ovens, acting as if these ovens were giving off radioactive radiation and changing the genetic structure of food instead of merely heating up the molecules a bit. Freedom, real freedom, the type Steiner discusses and demonstrates in detail in his Philosophy of Freedom, means the absence of coercion at any level, no compulsion to do anything, no matter how it reaches you. He shows us how ethical principles arrive within us, are brought to conscious awareness.

[page 75, italics added] What is the nature of these ethical principles? They do not compel us; we follow them of our own free will. A principle is never ethical if it compels. Principles we follow under compulsion come to us from the outside world. . . . When human beings perceive him in the spirit, the Christ will have in common with ethical principles that one

can also deny him, that he does not force anyone to recognize him.

This absence of compulsion is at great variance with the "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" of the Ten Commandments of Moses in the Old Testament. When asked, Christ Jesus clearly said he was bringing Love to replace the compulsions of the earlier Biblical teachings.

Speaking in Bochum, an industrial region in Germany near the Rhine River, Steiner explains that material life which is emphasized in this region must spread over the earth in times to come.

[page 78] When we find ourselves in the midst of a field of most modern material activity, this not something we should criticize or denigrate, for it is indeed a region which shows us how things must come to be more and more in external life on earth as time goes on. We would be lacking in sense if we were to say, "let the old times return when people had woods and meadows around them, as it were, and the original life of nature rather than the chimneys we see in our day."

When I find traces of Luddite-thinking and -processes in members of the anthroposophical society, who take pride in not having a TV in their homes, e. g., it distresses me, especially so that students of Steiner could turn away in aversion to the advancements of science in our day, when he so clearly admonished us not to do so.

[page 79, 80] Our anthroposophical view of life gradually teaches us to see things as they are and not to be unjustifiably critical of life as it is. Undoubtedly we have to admit to ourselves that the earth is going through an evolution. And if we, equipped with our anthroposophical knowledge or even just sensibly using the knowledge that exists outside anthroposophy, look back on earlier times in Earth evolution, then, compared to an earth furrowed by railways, with telegraph wires everywhere, with electrical currents passing through it everywhere, earlier times seem to us to be times of spring and summer, whilst the times ahead of us seem like autumn and winter of our earth. But it is not for us to complain about this. No, it is something we must call a necessity. It is not for us to complain, just as it is not right for people to complain when summer comes to an end and autumn and winter lie ahead.

Steiner refers to a painting from the Camposanto Cemetery in Pisa, Italy, now in public domain, called The Triumph of Death.⁽⁴⁾ The photo below replaces the grainy black and white image on page 95 of this book.



In the lower left corner (See below) we can see coffins with the three bodies of the human being portrayed: the physical body at the bottom (partially obscured), the etheric body in the middle, and the astral body at the top.

I have summarized below Steiner's words from pages 95 to 99.

The physical body is shown as a skeleton with only the left leg and skull visible due to the degradation of the fresco, but possibly the whole image was present when Steiner saw it in first decade of 20th Century. It represents the human's physical body remaining as a skeleton long after death.

The etheric body is decomposing and being eaten by worms, some weeks after death.

The astral body has recently left some days after death and the body is bloated.

In the above right section of the original, shown below in a



closeup view, one can see Angels lifting small children to heaven and Demons grabbing grown humans to take them to Hell.

Clearly the artist and the people of his time understood the three bodies of the living being, the physical, etheric, and astral bodies and their properties as Steiner revealed to the modern world in his anthroposophy. Plus, the artist clearly understood Christ Jesus's words in the Bible when he said that unless you remain as a child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

"The Christ could be born a thousand times in Bethlehem — but all in vain lest he is born in me." — Angelus Silesius on page 103

[page 103] It is the body's destiny on earth to grow old. It is man's higher destiny to maintain a young mind in an ageing body in connection with the Mystery on Golgotha and so feel ever increasing hope that, however much winter's gales may rage in the soul and temptations may live in the soul, the living trust shall never end that the element that entered into the earth's aura through the Mystery on Golgotha shall rise from the depths of the soul.



There, we have been given our charge, if we choose to accept it: "Bodies grow old; Souls may stay young"

Now the promised answer to the puzzle of the two cups. Love, dear Readers, is the one thing which, when you pour it into the cup of another, adds to your own cup of love.

These ten lectures given to sections of the newly formed anthroposophical society fill us with awe yet today of Rudolf Steiner's wisdom, a wisdom which can form the basis for us to age gracefully in the midst of what might otherwise seem a chaotic profusion of ahrimanic technology which besets us on all sides. We need not sink into the miasmatic swamp of Ahriman nor need we fly off the handle like Icarus on flights of fancy with the freedom bestowed on us by Lucifer. With Christ as our helmsman we can steer our own path between the Scylla and Charybdis of Ahriman and Lucifer into the calm seas of our future.

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

Footnote 1.

Brain sand comprises "small grains of calcareous matter in the brain's pineal gland" created by thinking. This is likely the "substance" Steiner is referring to here. One excellent way to dissolve the brain sand built up from heavy thinking is drinking coffee, the favorite beverage of most writers.

[Return to prose directly before Footnote 1.](#)

Footnote 2.

[What is the power of an unanswered question?](#) is a basic rule of mine which I discovered several decades ago. It is a rule which illustrates itself in the process of one's reading of it. The power only comes when as Steiner says, "one waits until the inspiration comes, and then one

is amazed." People who do not hold unanswered questions live life knowing all the answers, but the deeper mysteries of life remain well out of their grasp until they learn the process of the unanswered question.

[Return to prose directly before Footnote 2.](#)

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**Footnote 3.**

Materialist scientists love this way of talking about human beings to make us feel puny and insignificant. I couldn't disagree more with this way of talking about our Sun and our Earth and our power as a human being whose spirit fills the entire universe each time we fall asleep! What human being who understands this reality would wish to hurtle through space inside a physical rocket ship?

[Return to prose directly before Footnote 3.](#)

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Footnote 4.

Image credit to: Bonamico di Martino da Firenze known as Buffalmacco, source is Wikimedia Commons.

[Return to prose directly before Footnote 4.](#)

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