

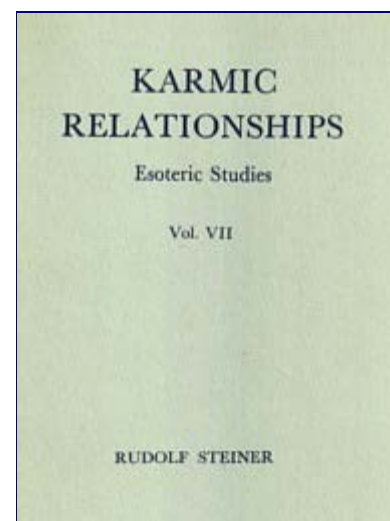
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**Karmic Relationships, Volume 7,
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by
Rudolf Steiner**

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We not only live in our body, we live in our karma. Rudolf Steiner

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Before I began reading Volume 7, I'd heard that there was repetition in the 8 volumes, but I can truthfully say that I found no exact repetitions and that the areas of content that Steiner went over a second or third time were most welcome to me. He always did it with a different angle of view so that his readers might come to see and comprehend the entire "tree" that he was describing, rather than just see one view of it. He was speaking not to convince his audiences of the reality of karma, but to help them to re-cognize its existence and to take note of how it plays out in their everyday lives.

[page 9] And so in these lectures I shall speak from many different angles of the anthroposophical basis of those ideas and conceptions which enable karma in human life to be more clearly recognized.

Steiner talks about how a corpse of a human being does not make any sense unless we understand it as matter that has been abandoned by something else. The corpse only makes sense because real living humans exist somewhere else. He says on page 12 that, "Abstract thinking is the corpse of what was once *living* thinking." This is similar to what the *Sufis* say about counterfeit gold, "It can only exist because *real* gold exists somewhere."

[page 12] The thoughts were once alive in the soul; the soul has died to the spiritual world. We bear within us not the living thoughts but the corpse of the thoughts.

Steiner says we speak more correctly than usual if we say, "The spiritual in man dies through birth, the physical part of man dies through death." This quote highlights the folly of the materialistic scientist who attempts to plumb the depths of humanity by analyzing only the material aspects of human existence. Such a scientist is examining but the corpse of the spiritual human by attempting to apply the laws of Nature to the human body. Laws of Nature have their cause and effect which are identifiable and understandable during the lifetime of the scientist. Karmic consequences are

not identifiable and understandable by studying a single lifetime, so the materialistic scientist is unable to address or relate a myriad of effects to causes that lie in previous lifetimes. Instead of an Anthropologist, such a study requires an Anthroposophist. Instead of a materialistic-only Anthropologist, an Anthroposophical scientist who understands the material *and* the spiritual world is required.

Scientists of the physical world may be clever, but without being capable of identifying and understanding the processes of karma, they are not truly wise. The wisdom to do this has been available since early times through the great Teachers that moved about the Earth in their etheric bodies and inspired early humans with their inspirations and truths. After the separation of the Moon from the Earth, these great Teachers took up residence on the Moon, where during our stay in the Moon Sphere, they assist us once more. During our life on Earth between birth and death, our days seem to be brilliant pearls held together by the prosaic string of nights that link our days. In the time between death and a new birth, however, our nights are like brilliant pearls linked together by the prosaic string of days. We gaze into these night-time pearls and see the reflections of our quotidian lives.

[page 17] This robust earthly life seems like a dream, for entry into the Moon sphere brings us into an existence where everything seems to be much more real, much more saturated with reality than can ever be the case on Earth.

Like the Moon reflects the Sun, our nights in sleep are reflections of our days in waking life. During sleep the reflection is in the form of pictures or images, but in the time we spend in the Moon sphere, the reflection is in a greater reality than the experiences of our daily life due to our being permeated by the beings of the great Teachers. During our time in the Moon sphere, what was formerly our inner moral life becomes our outer life. The effect is that what someone else experienced from my actions, I must now experience as the other did, only with a much greater force. If we caused harm to someone, we experience the same harm, only to a much greater extent. This understanding is absolutely essential if we are to understand how different are the karmic laws from those of the Nature.

[page 19, 20] Out of the experiences we undergo after death in the realm of the great primeval Teachers of humanity, the first seed of karma is formed. For there we resolve to make compensation for what we have done. Resolves, intentions, here take actual effect. On Earth the good does not always seem to be followed by good, or evil by evil. But the resolves taken in a world of far greater reality than the earthly world, the experience that we ourselves must make compensation for what we have done - these resolves will lead in the later life to actual adjustment.

In our movement from one earthly life to another we are guided by the Angeloi, our Angels, who operate from the Moon sphere. Expanding further we move into the realm of the Archangels as we enter the Mercury sphere. With the help of the Archangels we lay aside the physical infirmities of our previous lifetime.

[page 22] Surprising as it may seem, it is the case that in the life between death and a new birth, man lays aside his moral failings first and his physical infirmities only later, when he enters the Mercury sphere. In the Mercury sphere his soul is purged of the inner effects of those morbid processes which came to expression in illness during his life on Earth and in his soul he becomes completely healthy.

Ancient wise men re-cognized that the art of healing came from the Mercury sphere and called the Beings that came to their healing altars the God Mercury. No wonder that the period between seven and fourteen-years-old of a human, which period is ruled by Mercury, is the healthiest period in a human life. By casting off one's inequities in the Moon sphere and one's infirmities in the Mercury

sphere, a spiritual human shrinks to somewhat less than a whole being at the Venus sphere. In this sphere the Archai, the Primal Beginnings, the Spirits of Personality, with their element of Pure Love prevails. This Pure Love of Venus will now bear the truncated human spirit forward into the Sun sphere.

In the Sun sphere we spend three times as much time as in the other spheres. In companionship with the Exousiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes (Mights, Powers, and Dominions) and karmically connected human souls, we plot out the karma for our next life. Thus whenever we try as earthlings to figure out our life, we are trying to re-cognize the karmic plan we made earlier, before this life. Whether we can *pysche out* (an interesting manner of speaking) what our earlier plan or not, we know that it was in fact our plan that we are now living out. If it's not working out as we wish, to whom are we to complain? To ourselves? My only comment about that is: If learning this causes you to have nothing to complain about, don't complain to me.

[page 27, 28] During the second half of the Sun existence, in union with the Exousiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes, and with human souls karmically connected with us, we are concerned with the preparation of the moral side of karma, the moral qualities which will then be present in the next life. But this moral part and the spiritual part of karma - for example, specific talents in one direction or another - are then further elaborated in the Mars sphere, in the Jupiter sphere and in the Saturn sphere. And in passing through these spheres we come to know what the 'physical' stars are in reality.

I haven't seen any of these new bumper stickers around on the back of cars "Have You Got Your Hug from God Today?" -- but it illustrates what Steiner tells us we experience when we look out into the starfields of the Cosmos -- the experience is that of a caress that you feel in your soul.

[page 28] So it is when we look outwards into the spheres of the Ether. The Gods in their love caress the world. But the caress lasts long, because the life of the Gods spans immense reaches of time. . . . To gaze at the stars is to become aware of the love proceeding from the divine-spiritual Beings. What we must learn to realise is that the stars are only the signs and tokens of the presence of the Gods in the Universe.

How do we go about making such observations as Steiner just made? He tells us that using the techniques of *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment* we encounter a series of panoramas spread out before us. In the first panorama we inspect the period of seven years leading up to our second dentition. If we further let go of all the pictorial representations we can behold in Inspiration "the living, weaving activity of the Moon sphere." From there we go to observing our life between seven and fourteen together with the beings of the Mercury sphere. At the age of fourteen, love is born, and as we gather our experiences between fourteen and twenty-one, we operate in the Venus sphere.

[page 31] When the experiences occurring between the twenty-first and forty-second years of life are eliminated in the consciousness of Inspiration, we are led to the Sun sphere. . . . a period three times longer than that of the periods connected with the other planetary bodies.

In succeeding fashion we may examine the experiences from forty-two to forty-nine in the Mars sphere, the period from forty-nine to fifty-six in the Jupiter sphere, and the period from fifty-six to sixty-three in the Saturn sphere.

[page 32] It is not until the period between the fifty-sixth and sixty-third years can be included in this retrospective vision that we are able to survey the whole range of experiences and to speak out of our own inner knowledge. For then we can gaze into the profoundly significant secrets of the *Saturn* sphere.

Rudolf Steiner was born February 27, 1861, so when he spoke these words on the 8th of June, 1924, he had just turned sixty-three years old. With his new-found wisdom from the Saturn sphere, Steiner penned the following words to remind us forever that "Human self-knowledge is world-knowledge."

[page 35]

**If thou would'st know thy Self,
Look out into the Cosmic Spaces.
If thou would'st fathom the Cosmic Spaces,
Look inwards, into thine own Self.**

Steiner tells us that while number has meaning in the physical world, in the spiritual it has none. The entire cosmos is inside of one. One is a Universe. How can we each contain the Universe inside of us and not know that to be the case? To paraphrase a song from *South Pacific*, we "have to be carefully taught." Some human beings possess an ability to resist teaching and are thereby able to perceive the world in ways the rest of us cannot. We call these people artists and philosophers.

[page 57] **The fact that when I was fifteen years old I was still unable to spell accurately has certainly been a shock to others, but never to me personally. . . . and I owe much to this fact. For it meant that I was protected from many things against which there is no protection if by the age of fifteen one's spelling is orthographically perfect. Many things that are the outcome of the materialistic education of our day sever the human being from the spiritual life.**

For example, a person who paid attention in class and absorbed the academic theories of geology and evolution would be unable to consider the relatively short time-span of the Earth's existence. They observe the physical construction of the strata on the surface of the Earth and predict an existence billions of years old. They do this by testing the physical structure of the layers of minerals in the strata of the Earth. If a Martian, not trained in Earthling ways, were to come to the Earth and apply those exact same principles to a strata consisting of a large concrete slab poured by humans mere decades before, the Martian's tests would give a life-time for the formation of the concrete slab of millions of years. On the other hand anyone who watched the slab being poured could date it correctly without any training. Being able to correctly spell at the age of fifteen, the average geologist on Earth will date the ages of Earth's strata exactly as they were taught and they will be accurate but not correct. The geologists make measurements using certain assumptions and their measurements confirm their assumptions. They use fossils to date the age of strata and turn around and use strata to date the age of fossils. This house of cards is built on the *only* outside evidence, uranium decay which is based on many assumptions of uniformity over aeons of time for which the only evidence is the scientific hope that the assumption is correct that the rate of radiation of radioactive carbon does not vary significantly over time. This is an unproven but widely accepted assumption. It assumes that uranium arrived in the Earth fresh and undecayed.

In a similar way historians use events before a fact to explain events after a fact as though there were some magical connection other than mere succession. Only a historian who is trained in anthroposophy would consider viewing history as a succession of cosmic waves of human souls arriving together on the Earth to carry out their plans of destiny.

[page 69] **We come into earthly existence just when we do, because together with other souls who are karmically connected with us we have prepared our karma for the time when we are to descend to physical existence on Earth.**

In life there is seldom anything more distressing than to have the energy that one spends later turn out to have been a complete waste of time. What if, to our regret, we discover that all the time we spent regretting was a waste of time? My reminder to myself of this possibility is [EAT-O-TWIST](#),

an acronym that stands for Everything Always Turns Out The Way It's Supposed To. When I say EAT-O-TWIST! with elan after some event, I remind myself that regret is the illusion that things could have worked out differently and yet I could still be the same person I currently am. I remember that regret is both an illusion and a waste of time and energy. How much better spent my time would be if I stopped fussing and fuming over the cards I'm dealt in this life and instead used my time endeavoring to understand how best to play the cards I dealt myself before arriving in this life.

[page 99] Though much of what life has brought us may be deplored, yet in many respects the regret is the expression of a complete error. For if what is regretted had not taken place we should not be what we actually are.

How are we to understand such events in our lives? We can only become like the empty teacup and wait for our guardian spirits to pour the answer into us. Otherwise our speculations will come to naught - only our being empty and ready to be filled will prepare us for the revelation from the spiritual world.

[page 104] One must never speculate about the spiritual world in research, never invent anything, but only make the preparations for enabling something to reveal itself from the spiritual world. Anyone who believes he can force the spiritual world to reveal this or that to him will be very greatly mistaken; nothing but errors will come of it. Preparation must be made for what one may hope to receive out of the spiritual world more or less by grace.

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me," was written by a slave trader to whom grace had come from the spiritual world and saved him. We can best prepare for the receipt of this grace in ourselves by thanking our Guardian Angel in advance. In the parlance of the times, one simply thanks God in advance for the blessing we desire.

Is being an anthroposophist today an easy matter? Certainly many have the cleverness and intelligence to grasp Anthroposophy.

[page 107] What hinders them in our time from coming to Anthroposophy is that in their souls they take life superficially, letting life flow past in its depths, its superficialities, its banalities.

On the other hand, one who comes to a serious study of Anthroposophy opens oneself to the charge of studying warmed-over Gnostic Christianity. What do we know about Gnostic Christianity? Only what remains of the writing of those who were opposed to it! Imagine if all that remained of Steiner's lectures and writings was what his opponents wrote about him! Could we come to an understanding of his works at all? I think the answer is clearly no. And yet it seems clear that the current folks who are the least apt to study anthroposophy, those who spend their time watching sitcoms, for example, spent a previous lifetime in a world in which Gnosis had been carefully rooted out as if it were but unwanted weeds. What can they do when they watch someone stumble through life, but laugh?

[page 109] In that previous incarnation, when they were already clever and intelligent the culture of the age prevented them from knowing anything about the Earth's connection with the spiritual life in the Cosmos. It was because they stumbled, as it were, through life, thinking of the Earth as enclosed in itself with nothing but physical stars to be seen outside that in the next incarnation they can only turn to meet the impacts of real life with stumbling steps.

How will the people of Earth survive and thrive if the masses continue to stumble forward in the dark shadow of Gnosis eclipsed by the intellect of clever humans? Steiner leaves us with that

question:

[page 109] How will it be in the future, if to the inability to grasp the Spirit in the Cosmos is added the inability to grasp earthly life, if men's attitude to the trivialities of life is no different from their attitude to the deep realities of life? Then indeed the study of karma becomes a serious matter. It can thrive among us only if pursued with the greatest earnestness.

Steiner tells us on page 126, that "The bad can be fortunate, the good unfortunate." These two statements summarize what makes our earthly life seen only between birth and death incomprehensible and yet that same life when viewed from the perspective of several lifetimes with a karmic telescope suddenly becomes comprehensible and makes the best sense possible. First one must be willing to look into the Steiner's telescope of karmic relationships. One can look into Steiner's karmic telescope and not be afraid of being burned on the stake as Giordano Bruno was when Criminino refused to look into Bruno's astronomical telescope a brief four hundred years ago. We are prepped for a trick question when Steiner asks us:

[page 127, 128] For what should be if in earthly life we could bring to direct fulfilment the moral content of our soul? We should not be typical men of terrestrial life! . . . [but] magicians . . . he is a magician when, together with the Beings of the Hierarchies, he is active between death and a new birth and is able to continue these activities when he again descends into life on Earth.

In the life between death and a new birth we are all magicians, and our current life is the result of the magic we ourselves wrought during that time. Steiner says on page 130 that "All clairvoyance in the best sense of the word actually means going back into earlier earthly lives." Since we were clairvoyant during our previous earthly lives, we recover that clairvoyance in the process of inspecting our previous earthly lives. We merely need a bootstrap to make it possible. We merely need to re-cognize that the bootstrap already exists inside of us, that it never really went away. This is difficult to do for we have not used the capability for so long because we have been convinced of its non-existence in us, up until now. What usually happens instead?

[page 134] Now just consider for a moment: are people to-day always what they would like to be? They do not often think about this; they deceive themselves about the disharmony between what they are and what they would like to be.

EAT-O-TWIST can be a bootstrap into an evolving harmony between where we are and where we would like to be. As someone once said, "Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get." These eight volumes of Steiner's Karmic Relationships lectures can become the seed of a bootstrap in which you, dear reader, develop such a harmony between what you perceive yourself to be and what you would like to be. I had the thought long ago about doing "Want Development" seminars in which I help people to develop more appropriate wants in their lives. Wants that were much closer to things they already had, but things they never knew how to appreciate properly, up until now. They never once considered that the life they are complaining about so loudly is a life that they had clearly planned out karmically for themselves. As the quote at the top says, "We not only live in our bodies, we live in our karma."

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