

A READER'S JOURNAL

From Mammoths To Mediums, GA# 350

by

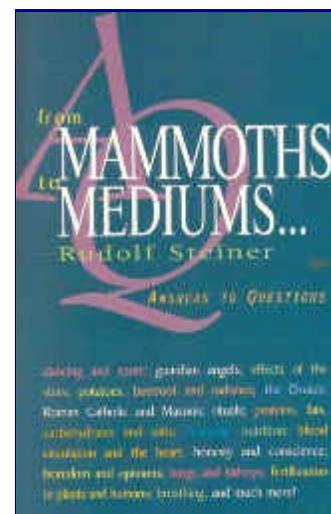
Rudolf Steiner

Answers to Questions, 16 Sessions in Dornach, May to September, 1923

Translated by Anna Meuss

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2003



Steiner's answers to questions are sometimes esoteric and other times simply commonsense. Take his

commonsense answer to the question of how does one explain reincarnation if there are many more people on Earth now than formerly. He points out that statistics of rising population centers are cited as evidence of a larger population, but in much earlier times, portions of the Earth currently sparsely inhabited were densely populated. Statistics showing a historical peak of population on our planet can be trusted as much as those for acid rain, global warming, or holes in the ozone layer — they're all based on data from the past hundred years or less extrapolated backwards thousands of years. Extrapolation backwards is like walking backwards from a subject to get a better photograph: if walking back ten steps helps, walking back a hundred steps will help even more — that is a practical example of what scientists call "backward extrapolation" — but such a process comes to a screeching halt if fifty steps backwards one falls backwards over a cliff. This is a crude example, but it highlights the catastrophic mistakes that are possible when one does backward extrapolation — one must do it *without evidence* by definition, but unlike the errant photographer, errant scientists don't fall off of cliffs, but get invited to speak in front of National Press luncheons, etc.

Another aspect is that the frequency of reincarnation varies with individuals. With a shorter time between incarnations, the same number of souls can result in a much larger population on Earth. With our increasingly materialistic population on Earth, the time between incarnations has grown shorter and shorter for many people and thus the population has increased in recent times. Simply put, the population of the Earth varies in direct proportion to the number of materialists on it. Similarly, the knowledge of this relationship varies inversely as the number of materialists, so this knowledge is at an all-time low. No materialistic scientist would accept this explanation — saying that it's not scientific — "After all, if there are souls, they are created upon birth and upon death go to heaven." Yet, this very idea, Steiner tells us, was one that scientists acquired from decisions made by a Council of the Church in the 9th Century, an idea that is commonly accepted by church and science today without question, up until now. Let's read what he tells us about the reincarnation frequency of materialists in general.

[page 5] You see, we have to understand clearly that some time must pass before a human being comes down to earth again. And so you may ask: 'Yes, but when does he come down?' Investigating the matter right through to the end one finds that one of them gave much thought to the world of the spirit when on earth, and he'd grow into that world more easily after his death. Having given much thought to the world of the spirit, he'd need a relatively long time between death and rebirth. He could stay in the world of the spirit for a long time because he had already learnt a great deal about it here. People like that, who've given much thought to the world of the spirit, are able to develop better there, stay longer and return to earth later. Someone who has only given thought to the material world will come back relatively soon. So this is another way in

which things shift and change.

'Why do we not remember our earlier incarnations?' Steiner asks. Before you read his answer ask yourself the same question. What answer do you give? Now ask this question: 'Are you a materialist?' The remembering of earlier incarnations has decreased with increasing materialism — it is a consequence of the evolution of humankind into freedom that we have spent the last millennium falling deeper into materialism. We have progressed enormously in technology, but have regressed just as much in spiritual matters, such as remembering our past lives. In the nascent millennium we have the task of learning how the influences of our individual past lifetimes bubble to the surface for the most materialistically-minded of us. Here is Steiner's answer to the lead-off question of this paragraph:

[page 5] Well you see, gentlemen, it's like this. If someone says human beings are able to do sums, that is beyond doubt. They can do sums. But then someone will come and say: 'I'll prove to you that man cannot do sums.' 'Oh, how'll you do that?' And he'll bring along a young child who cannot do sums. 'He's a human being, too,' he'll say. That is how it is with earlier lives on earth. Human beings can learn this, and they will learn to remember their earlier lives on earth as they continue to evolve on this earth.

Remember what happened to you yesterday? Sure, we all do. Remember what happened to you last night while you were asleep? 'Oh, I remember a couple of dreams.' That would be a typical response. But dreams happen in a brief moment before waking, no matter how long the dream seems to last subjectively. What about the rest of the eight hours you were asleep? Remember any of that? It is possible to learn to do that and find out that you experience a lot more during sleep than in the waking state. Yet there will come a time when you will recall in detail what happened during every sleeping hour of your life. Immediately after death, you will recall your waking life, all the events that happened to you during waking life, and you will spend about two or three days doing this. Afterwards, you will spend hour for hour recalling everything you experienced while you were sleeping. That is why this period takes about one-third of one's lifetime to pass through — it takes the amount of time that one spent sleeping. This period called, *kamaloca*, is described in more detail in [The Principle of Spiritual Economy](#). One of the things we know from spiritual science is that during non-dreaming sleep we recall our past lifetimes on Earth. Being conscious during this recall of past lifetimes is a human ability that we have lost and are about to regain, and then we will be able to remember our previous incarnations consciously, not just through pangs of conscience. As we shall see, conscience is typically the only way memory of past lifetimes bubble to the surface in most of us, up until now.

[page 7] In earlier times people knew that they lived on earth several times over, but as the millennia passed they did not think of this at all as something that was of the spirit. This is why they cannot remember it in their present life on earth. But a time will come when they will remember, just as a time will come for the 4-year-old child when he will be able to do sums.

Why do we dance? Why do kids like to run around in circles? Why does a running dog always return to the same place? Why do we walk in circles when we are lost in a forest? What is the shortest distance between two points? All these questions are related as we shall see. First, a little physics: the Earth rotates on its axis one complete turn in 24 hours. Its circumference is 25 thousand miles. If you are stationary on the Earth, you are traveling over 1,000 mph toward the East where you stand. The reason rockets launch in an easterly direction is to take advantage of that extra thousand mile an hour boost. Our physical body does not notice this because our etheric body likes to move with the rotation of the Earth.

[page 9] This ether body always wants to move around the earth; *this* is how it wants to be; *this* is the movement it always makes.

If there is a mist about you or you're lost in the woods, your etheric body, which always wants to move in circles, directs you into a circular path, even when you otherwise are aiming to walk straight. This is a

common experience of those lost in the woods. You make a mark on a tree and find the mark later. You know you're lost. Lost people always travel in circles, *not* in random directions which one would expect statistically speaking, which one would expect if there were *no* circling influence from their etheric bodies.

[page 10] You don't know which way to turn — where should I go? For you normally aim towards a particular point when you walk with your physical body. You may not always be aware of it, but the path directs towards a particular point. But if there's a mist you don't see anything, and then your physical body does not know its way about. Along comes your ether body; it only wants to follow its own movement, which is circular. It will follow its own circular motion and take the physical body along with it! When you are merely dreaming or feeling dizzy, the astral body makes the movement. But once you've got going, the ether body brings the physical movement into the physical body and you go along with that.

What do humans like to do when we take a break after a long day of linear thinking and hard working? We like to go dancing. And what do we do when we dance? We move in circles. We glide above the floor as if we are flying when we do it like Fred Astaire. Our physical body has been worn down and yet we feel energized when we dance! Spiritual science gives us an explanation for this overlooked paradox of our human existence. What happens to us to explain this?

[page 10, 11] Between birth and death man is a creature of the earth. He has to work. But, as you know, you can't work all the time. The physical body would be worn down, and so on. The person then wants to move his physical body, but not the way it has adapted to the earth; he wants to follow the ether body. The ether body wants to make circular movements, however, and so the person dances. Dancing is usually a matter of someone not wanting to follow his physical body but his ether body. The desire to dance actually exists so that a person may forget his physical body and can feel himself to be a spirit that belongs to the cosmos.

Does it now seem quite understandable to say when we're dancing, "This feels heavenly."? Does it make sense to you now that you do have an etheric body in addition to a physical body and that when you go dancing you are actually enjoying the pleasures of your etheric body? When you do only physical exercises you tie yourselves more to the Earth, but when you do the popular dance-exercises, you retain a connection to your etheric bodies by making circular motions during the routines. As I write this, I am reminded of the games we played as children in grade school, "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" and "Ring Around the Rosie", in particular, as they both involved running or moving in a circle. Ice-skating performed to music has become a popular spectator sport undoubtedly because everyone watching can feel the freedom in one's etheric body as one watches the gliding, flying, and circular motions of the performers.

[page 18] But when people are dancing or going round and round in Vienna's Prater, the ether body is going round. It takes the physical body along with it; it is the more innocent way. We may say that when someone is dancing the ether body is going round, and when someone is drunk it is the astral body which is going round.

A friend of mine told me about a man who was imprisoned for many years in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in a small wire-cage, unable to even sit up. When he was released from the camp, he returned to duty in the service and became a physical education instructor and a trampoline expert. He dazzled everyone, including my friend, with his ability to execute intricate routines. During those years in a wire-cage with his physical body unable to move, he must have been practicing those moves in his imagination with his etheric body.

What is *ergonomics*? According to the [Ergonomics Society](#) this is the official definition of the science of *ergonomics*:

Ergonomics is a relatively new branch of science which celebrated its 50 anniversary in 1999, but relies on research carried out in many other older, established scientific areas, such as engineering, physiology and psychology. It originated in World War 2, when scientists designed advanced new and potentially improved systems without fully considering the people who would be using them. It gradually became clear that systems and products would have to be designed to take account of many human and environmental factors if they are to be used safely and effectively. This awareness of people's requirements resulted in the discipline of ergonomics.

Steiner predicted the emergence of this field of endeavor some twenty years before World War II when he spoke in 1923 thusly:

[page 55] A time will come when work will be adapted to the human being. Today work is determined by the machines. Today one has to move the way the people who discovered the machine think appropriate. Later people will find that what matters is not what comes from the machines but that what matters is the human being. Because of this all machines must be made for human beings.

Before engineers can make machines for human beings, they must stop making machines designed as if the human being were simply the mechanical analogues that they make it out to be. Nowhere is this fallacy more pronounced than in the mechanical pumps they design to replace the heart — they operate from the mistaken belief that the heart is a pump. The circulation of blood in the body comes before the heart is fully developed in the fetus — we have seen videos of such action — so the circulation must be primary and the heart secondary. The heart, according to Steiner, is a hydraulic ram designed to produce the turbulence in its chambers necessary to mix the oxygen into the venous blood prior to its exiting to the arterial passages.

[page 55, 56] But in a science which has so much taken the easy way that the heart is described as if the human being had just a pump there in his blood circulation, in such a science people will feel no compunction to make machines where the human being has to take his orientation from the machine. All the problems in our social situation are due to this wrong view that is taken in science. And so one really has to understand that a proper way of thinking must first of all come upon people, for only then will it be possible to begin a proper social life. For as long as people think the heart is a pump, they will also not be able to relate to outer life in the right way. It is only when people know that the invisible human being is greater than his heart, that it is he who moves the heart, that they will also design their machines to be in accord with human nature. One first has to begin to see this.

October 22, 2013 Update: I received a link to this [enlightening article](#) which says, among other things,

In 1932, Bremer of Harvard filmed the blood in the very early embryo circulating in self-propelled mode in spiralling streams before the heart was functioning. Amazingly, he was so impressed with the spiralling nature of the blood flow pattern that he failed to realize that the phenomena before him had demolished the pressure propulsion principle. Earlier in 1920, Steiner, of the Goetheanum in Switzerland had pointed out in lectures to medical doctors that the heart was not a pump forcing inert blood to move with pressure but that the blood was propelled with its own biological momentum, as can be seen in the embryo, and boosts itself with "induced" momenta from the heart. He also stated that the pressure does not cause the blood to circulate but is caused by interrupting the circulation. Experimental corroboration of Steiner's concepts in the embryo and adult is herein presented.

But it is not just the heart that is misunderstood by materialistic science, it is all the other organs as well,

such as the stomach, the lung, and the liver. It is through these organs that spiritual entities speak to us. If you've heard a voice in your head tell you urgently to do something such as, 'Move!' and then discover you were saved from injury by moving, what you heard was a spiritual entity communicating through your lower internal organs, not through your head.

[page 77] Spirits hardly ever speak through any of the organs in the head. The whole world speaks there; the stars in their motions and so on; they speak through the organs in the head. But spiritual entities do indeed also speak to us, and they do so through the other organs, such as the liver. The stomach speaks to the liver, but so do spirits, and also to the lung. Spiritual entities speak to all the organs which we do not use for our ordinary life in the conscious mind.

When someone gets really scared, what is it he says? "I was so scared I nearly soiled my pants." As commonly known as this connection of fear and diarrhoea is, medical science pays no attention to it and holds that there is no connection whatsoever. Steiner tells us there is a connection.

[page 78] An influence is there from the outside world, but the influence may also be from the realm of mind and spirit. And it does come from that world in such a way that those organs do indeed perceive things, but things that are quite different from those that exist in the outside world.

Steiner gives an example of a woman whose hearing had grown quite acute from lying in bed all day that she could predict the doctor's arrival by detecting his footsteps at the gate outside, three floors below her, something no one else could do and they thought her clairvoyant. Then he gives an example of a man who heard the word, "Move!" and as soon as he moved, a shot was fired by accident by his servant who thought the gun was empty. The man's liver heard the warning from the man's guardian spirit and had to pass it along to his head.

[page 80] And on the way from the liver to the head the matter is translated into the language which the person speaks. This is the remarkable thing, something truly mysterious. And it is only here that you can really say what a remarkable creature man is. Not only is he able to have premonitions but, and this is much more to be marvelled at, he unconsciously translates something that comes to him in the language of the spirit into his own language.

Children are known to have imaginary playmates with which they converse. These are spiritual beings which the child is able to see, speak to, and hear. It is something we lose as we grow up, but is common in childhood.

[page 81] Why in childhood? Well, the astral body is much more active in childhood, working with much greater intensity. Later on it no longer works with the same intensity. When the liver is still soft in the child, the astral body is able to transmit the things it hears in the world of the spirit to the liver. Later, when the liver has grown harder, it can no longer transmit things.

In 1925, Steiner died, in mysterious circumstances, perhaps from a poisoning. That happened two years or so from the day he spoke these ominous words of the next passage. According to witnesses at a Christmas party, he said, in alarm, "I have been poisoned." He apparently received a warning and he survived for about a year afterward, but he was in weakened health until his death.

[page 81, 82] External circumstances may put me in danger of having an accident one day, so that I'd have to die, and the matter might turn out in such a way that if I were to die, let us say, I'd really die disproportionately early as far as my earlier life on earth is concerned. According to my earlier life it is not right that I should die so soon, because I still have something to do on this earth. Now I might indeed die. Don't think there is any

absolute certainty that I won't die. I might indeed die, the accident might happen. I might die, and this would change the whole of my destiny. The spiritual entity that guides the human being from earth life to earth life intervenes at this point. It is able to warn the person.

Steiner gives us an example of this kind of sloppy thinking when he tells us about the initial reaction academics had to George Stephenson's proposal for the first railroad. He proposed, "one could make carriages with iron wheels that would move on iron rails." He was ridiculed by the academics of his time who made calculations to show that a carriage would never move unless each rail had notches cut into it and the wheels had cogs that fit into them. The postmaster general was consulted and his reply was that "the mail coaches today never have anyone traveling on them, so why build a railroad?" We have a similar situation happening today with the initial appearance of the Segway personal transport. Laws are already being written to prohibit them from sidewalks, which is the very place they are designed to be used! Such an attitude will be laughable in a hundred years when such personal transports are the rule rather than the exception on sidewalks.

[page 86] Yes, that was the opinion then. But don't think people form different opinions today about things that really point the way ahead as they come into the world. We may laugh about what happened in 1835, but that is after the event, and people will also only be able to laugh later on about what is happening today, when it will be almost 100 years in the past.

The human being consists of four bodies called physical, etheric, astral and Ego or "I-body". For some reason the usual translations from the German leave out the word "body" when the Ego or "I" is involved. Some colleagues said I was wrong in using the phrase "I-body" — insisting that it was *never* used anywhere in Steiner's writing. I thought about their admonitions a long time and decided to continue using "Ego body" or "I-body" whenever I talked about the four bodies. This kept me from having to invent circumlocutions for what I considered to be a non-existent problem anyway. I explained to them, "Look, I know they're not actual bodies, but a way of talking about an organization of each of the four human components." For the first time, I have found a definitive answer to this concern in Steiner's words. There is no way to translate this next passage and avoid the usage of "I-body" or the word "body" to refer to each of the four bodies of the human being.

[page 99] You see, as you know, we have first of all our physical body, the etheric body, the astral body and the I-body. I call them all 'bodies'; they aren't, of course, bodies in any outer sense, but I call these four parts of the human being 'bodies'.

Steiner demonstrates how the astral body can nudge the physical body and how the etheric body is more clever when it comes to mathematics than the astral and ego body are. He tells us of a couple of students working hard on their homework problems. The mathematics student went to bed about midnight but the Latin student stayed up. About 3 am he noticed the math student get up from his bed and work on his math problem and then go to bed again. In the morning the math student had no recollection of getting up to finish his math problem. In the first passage below Steiner explains how the astral body can nudge the physical body, and in the second one, how learning proceeds from the etheric body rising up into the astral body.

First the nudging of the astral body. Have you ever felt a wisp of air and suddenly looked about you with a veil of gooseflesh all over your physical body? That is how a nudge from the astral body feels.

[page 99, 100] The astral body can nudge one, it can even nudge the skin a little. But this can only happen by means of the air, not physically, for the astral body is not the least bit physical. It can, however, set the air in motion. And this has an effect especially on the eyes, a bit on the ears, and especially on the nose and the mouth. Wherever you have sense organs, the nudging breath of the astral body has quite an effect.

How was the student able to do the math problem without his I-body or astral body present?

The reason is that without the presence of those two bodies, the etheric body was able to take care of the problem with dispatch. The astral body kept nudging the physical body until his physical and etheric bodies felt it necessary to get up, but the astral and I-body stayed outside as evinced by the student's inability to recall having solved the problem.

[page 100] So who was doing the sums? The physical body and the etheric body were doing them, and the ether body was able to do all the calculations which the student could not do when the astral body and the I were inside him.

You see from this, gentlemen, that you're all a great deal more intelligent in your ether body than you are in your astral body and your I. If you were able to do and know everything you can do and know in your ether body, wow, what clever fellows you'd be! For all learning really consists in bringing up into the astral body something which we already have in our ether body.

There is one more piece of the puzzle that should be helpful for college students today. The young mathematics student would have been able to solve the problem while conscious if he had not been spending so much time drinking in pubs at night. That ruined his astral body and thus made it impossible for him to solve the problem as long as his astral body remained inside him.

[page 100, 101] The ether body was not ruined so much. And the result was that the mathematics student could have solved his problem quite well if he had not gone to the pub so much; but because he had allowed his astral body to be greatly influenced he could not solve it when awake. He first had to get rid of his ruined astral body; then he could sit down at this desk, and his ether body, which was still quite clever, solved the problem.

That brings up the question, "Of what use is the astral body if the etheric body is so smart?" and Steiner tells us the division of labor between the two bodies.

[page 101] So the things the rational mind does we actually do with the ether body. We can't love someone with the ether body, that is something the astral body has to do, but everything the rational mind does is something the ether body is able to do, this is where the ether body has to do its job.

This shows what can happen if the astral and I-body do not enter the physical body fully, but nudge it from the outside instead. The person seems awake, is remarkably clever, and can perform all sorts of activities without conscious recall of them when their astral body and I-body return. A modern example of this phenomenon is portrayed in the recent movie, *Nurse Betty*. A waitress falls in love with a doctor on a hospital soap opera, and after witnessing a brutal murder of her abusive husband while watching the soap opera, she drives to Hollywood, she manages to get a job as a nurse with no credentials, she meets the star playing the doctor for the first time, she is convinced that he had earlier proposed marriage to her, and she lands a job on the soap opera as his nurse. When her astral body and I-body return, she has no idea of how she got on the set of the soap opera. Here is an exemplar of etheric body cleverness played out on the screen.

The next story Steiner tells sounds like one of Paul Harvey's "The Rest of the Story" bits. In the 19th Century, a man in Heilbronn, Germany, studied and qualified as a doctor. His talents unappreciated by the university or the people of the city, he finally took the only job available, a ship's doctor, and shipped out to the tropics of the Far East. During the rough journey with a ship full of sea-sick people, he was kept very busy bloodletting his patients to alleviate the sea-sickness, the treatment of choice in his time.

[page 107] People have two kinds of blood vessels. When one kind is opened, the blood

that splashes out is reddish in colour. Another kind of blood vessel runs right alongside the first kind. If this is opened, the blood is bluish; bluish blood will come out. Ordinarily, when you bleed someone, you do not let the red blood flow out. The body needs this blood. You let the bluish blood flow out. Physicians know this very well. They also know where the blue blood vessels are and do not open the red ones.

But our good doctor on the ship couldn't find a blue blood vessel on any member of the passenger or crew. Every vessel he opened, sure as he was this was a blue blood vessel (a vein), came out a pale red instead of bluish. He finally figured out that in the tropics blue blood must turn red. He had discovered that humans need less food to heat their bodies in the tropics than they did in Germany and the excess heat from their food went into keeping their otherwise blue blood a pale red. Scientists of his time knew that we get our energy to perform work from our food, but Mayer showed them that our body heat also comes from our food, something that was hitherto unknown. This man, who was thought to be "not very gifted" by his university and town, had made a momentous discovery. [Julius Robert von Mayer](#) did some experiments and wrote a paper which led to the Law of Conservation of Energy which every scientist memorizes and learns to use to this day.

But there is more to this story that you will not find in the Encyclopedia Britannica or by a Google search, up until now.

[page 108, 109] In the twelfth century, people would have said: 'The blood is redder there because the astral body does not go in so deeply.' In the nineteenth century, people no longer knew anything of all this spiritual side and simply said: 'There the human being is like a machine, and the situation is that heat generates more work and because of this more heat is converted in the human organism.' . . . Yes, we have made tremendous progress today, but our humanity has not progressed; it has grown less. We only speak of the human physical organism as if it were only a machine today. Even the greatest scientists now speak of it only as a machine, as Julius Robert Mayer did.

There's more. Steiner speaks about what will come as a result of this one-sided worship of the mechanical side of our humanity ignoring the spiritual side. He even hints at the rise of the Nazis ([1](#)) with nationality replacing common sense and the horrors that will bring. No wonder the Nazis hated him and his spiritual science.

[page 109] People already no longer know what they should really do. They therefore go at things with might and main, saying: 'Yes, common sense no longer keeps us together, so nationality must keep us together.' National states only arise because people no longer know how to keep together.

And a bit more yet. Do people deserve this misery that the lack of spiritual knowledge has brought upon them? Is it because of something that they did in a previous lifetime on Earth, some karmic balancing going on? Steiner tells us definitely 'No!' because "this is not the destiny of an individual person, it is the common destiny shared by each and every one."

[page 110] But every single individual knows it now in this life. Just think how much misery people know in this present life. That does not come from their previous life. But in the next life they will know the consequences of the present misery. The consequence will be that they'll be wiser, and the world of the spirit will enter into them more easily. The wretched state they are in today is educating them for the future.

Corporal punishment was outmoded even during Steiner's time for misbehaving schoolboys. In the 1940s when I was in grade school, the most a teacher might administer a miscreant one was a stinging slap on the hands with a ruler. If one of us four brothers did some immoral act at home, one or both of our parents rendered us a memorable beating. To show how times have changed: recently a woman who beat her own child in her own car was caught on videotape and prosecuted for her behavior. In this next passage Steiner

is speaking several years after the end of World War I which began in 1914; he calls WWI an example of humankind receiving a "beating." Twenty years later it would receive another and bigger beating in WWII.

[page 110] Humanity has not been wanting to learn anything of the spirit until 1914. They have now had a beating for this from world destiny, their common destiny. We shall see now if it has done any good.

And now, you know, as Paul Harvey would say, "the rest of the story."

In the page 108 quote above Steiner talked about how the perceptions of 12th Century European people would have been different from Mayer's about the red versus blue blood effect that he noticed on the sea voyage. They would have seen the spiritual aspects of the effect — that the astral body did not enter the physical body as deeply when the body is hot. If you think about the usual effects of fever, you'll understand that the difficulty of thinking or the delusions that result from high fevers are explainable by the lack of penetration of the astral body which body is essential for thinking. In this next passage he explains that Europeans of that early time would have understood the American Indians better and would have lived in cooperation with them instead of fighting to eliminate them as a hazard. First he gives us the Native American reaction to something the European-Americans carried with them everywhere.

[page 119] Now you see, even in the nineteenth century the American Indians would still say that the Europeans always brought along such a strange thing, something white with tiny spirits on it. But those, they said, were very harmful spirits, terribly harmful spirits, and the Europeans would use them to cast spells on the Americans.

If you haven't guessed what the Europeans carried with them that was deemed so harmful by the Native Americans, it goes to show how far we've come since the twelfth century. What were the dreadful things that the Europeans carried with them that scared the Native Americans?

[page 120] Those were books — pages of white paper with letters on them. The American Indians saw them, believed them to be magic, and said, 'These people use them to cast spells on us.'

And, what if the Europeans of five or six hundred years earlier had come to America and encountered the natives there? "Their views would have been much like those of the American Indians."

[page 120] For in 1323 people in Europe still knew about the influence of the stars. They would have had much more in common. But the people who actually went there later on no longer had anything at all in common with the American Indians, and all they could do was eradicate them.

"How can one gain insight into the secrets of the world?" was asked of Steiner and he began by saying the question really means, "How does one get to the real science of the spirit?" This he says, in effect, is not something one can read about in Reader's Digest and assimilate within a week, just as one could not do it with ordinary science. One needs to learn how to observe and how to use the proper instruments and the proper processes. For spiritual science the instruments are simply the human being — the human being, which is the most delicate instrument of all instruments because it can detect the spiritual world, whereas, as any materialistic scientist will proudly proclaim, "Our instruments cannot detect the presence of a spiritual world." And yet, the human being is such an instrument that can detect the spiritual world. Since each of you, dear Readers, possess the necessary instrument to gain insight into the secrets of the world, you may lack only the processes. In summary, here are the four processes that Steiner says you need to apply to your instrument for perceiving the spiritual world (Summarized from page 181):

1. Independent thinking — of the kind he demonstrates in [Philosophy of Freedom](#).

2. Backwards Thinking — the Rückschau process of reviewing the day's events in reverse order; the process of artificially creating boredom for oneself.

3. Opposite Thinking — Learn to put yourself in a world which is the opposite of the material world, e.g., where a straight line is *not* the shortest distance between two points.

4. Dialectical Thinking — it leads to honesty, an inner honesty which is the ability to distinguish what is in one's self from what is in the outside world.

As we learned about fever above, one cannot think properly when something is amiss in the body and one may act as if one has a "mental illness", as it is called, unfortunately. But it is the *body* that is sick, *not* the mind or the spirit. A keen awareness of this reality is sorely needed for humanity at the current time, but will not come so long as the mind is generally considered to be an epiphenomenon of brain function and the spirit is considered to be non-existent.

[page 134] When someone is said to be mentally ill, it is always something in the body that is sick, and if the brain is sick you cannot think properly, of course. Nor can you feel things properly if your liver is sick.

Because of this, 'mentally ill' is really the worst term you can choose, for 'mentally ill' means that the body is so sick that it cannot use the mind and spirit, which in itself is always healthy. Above all else you need to understand that the mind and spirit is always sound. Only the body can get sick, and then unable to use the mind properly.

Consider this metaphor that Steiner offers. You have a hammer that breaks every time you hit something with it. If someone accuses you of being sick or lazy because you won't hammer a nail with your hammer, what will you tell him? I'm perfectly willing to hammer that nail, but my hammer doesn't work properly. Similarly, "it is nonsense to say someone is 'mentally ill.' The mind is perfectly sound, but it does not have the body it needs to be effective." (Page 134)

To understand the first process above, "independent thinking", we need a hammer that works, but unfortunately the hammer we were given to use for thinking doesn't work except for Latin-thinking, which is *dependent* thinking, not *independent* thinking. Steiner made it clear in his book, [The Philosophy of Freedom](#), that it would be extremely difficult for Greek and Roman-based thinkers to understand what he was talking about — that one needed to acquire *independent* thinking to comprehend the philosophy he expounded within its pages. In this next passage, which is a prologue to his talking about independent thinking to the workers at the Goetheanum (where all these From ... To ... Q&A Sessions took place), he speaks very bluntly to a group of blue collar workers about how people have a mind, but also need a tool, the brain, to think properly:

[page 135] And it is important to know this, for only then will one realize that at the present time — I am now going to say something that'll surprise you — people cannot think at all. They think they can, but actually they cannot think at all. Let me show you why people are unable to think.

From this he goes on to describe how people's thinking is Latin-based, how university theses had to be written in Latin just a few decades before his time. Latin and thinking had become so bound together by the nineteenth century that you literally could not have one without the other.

[page 136] The Latin language has a particular characteristic, however. It evolved in ancient Rome and did so in such a way that the language itself is actually thinking. It is interesting to see how Latin is taught at grammar school. One learns Latin, and then learns to think — to think properly by studying the Latin sentence. All thinking then becomes dependent on something which is not done by the person himself but by the Latin language. You have to realize, gentlemen, that this is tremendously important.

Anyone who has learned anything today, therefore, does not think for himself, and the Latin language does the thinking even in people who have never learned Latin. And so the strange thing is that independent thinking is today really only found in some people who have not got much education.

Even if you, dear Reader, didn't learn Latin as a youngster, if you received an education, you have an immense handicap: you are occupationally handicapped and unable to do *independent* thinking. That is what Steiner tells us above. One can easily see all the workers's heads nodding in agreement with Steiner's harsh words for the academic elite. One can also easily see that independent thinking is a rare phenomenon within the halls of academia today, that Latin-thinking yet abounds there in both the professors and their students. Where has Latin-thinking most broken down recently? In the field of quantum mechanics where the physics constructions thought up with a Latin brain have been systematically falling apart at the seams with every new discovery — the confirmation of the Bell Theorem is only one salient example. Steiner in 1923 was already seeing this decadence in physics due to Latin-thinking roots. How did this come about? From non-Latin-thinkers, from self-trained engineers, in the days before there was any engineering curriculum in the universities and all engineers were self-taught.

[page 138] Because of this [RJM: all the great inventions people grew up with as if they had always been there], more and more people studied science who had not been drilled in Latin. This is a remarkable thing. For if you consider the scientific life of recent decades you'll find that growing numbers of engineers came into the world of science. They did not bother much with Latin and so their thinking did not become so automatic. This non-automated thinking was then taken up by the others. And the result is that today many of the concepts, ideas, used in physics today are falling apart.

Steiner understood by 1893 that the prevalence of Latin-thinking required an anodyne, something to allow even erudite, university-trained academics to discover independent thinking again. He wrote his book, [The Philosophy of Freedom](#), in which "the things it says are something one wanted to tell the world at the time." But that was not the most important point of the book.

[page 139] The important thing about the book is that for the first time all of it is completely independent thinking. No one who is only able to think in a dependent way [RJM: i.e., a Latin-thinking way] will be able to understand it. From the beginning he has to get used, page by page, to go back to his ether body so that he'll actually be able to have the thoughts which are in this book. The book is therefore an educational tool — it is a most important educational tool — and it should be taken as such.

In this next passage Steiner helps me uncover the key to my early confusion about his writings, undoubtedly much of my confusion was due to the Latin-thinking that was poured into me in the university. I could not accept the reality of anything that had no physical or material aspect, regardless of how attenuated or diluted. I thought of the etheric body as an attenuated or diffuse physical body, the astral body even more so. And the I-body, I was most confused about: I imagined it to be an abstract concept. One strong thing I did have going for me: I had come to accept the "reality of the psyche" through my dozen years of studying the works of Carl Jung. If the psyche could have a reality, perhaps, in spite of what my Latin-thinking tried to tell me to the contrary, the I-body, my Immortal Ego, could also have a reality. Note how he indicates that in the Theosophical Society, the confusion remains. I noted that same confusion he discusses below, as I recall, from my early contacts with other theosophical writings.

[page 142] There's the Theosophical Society, for instance. They also wanted to enter into the world of the spirit. In this Society people also say that man has a physical body, an ether body, and so on. But it is a materialistic view, for they merely think: 'The physical body is dense; the ether body a little less dense, and the astral body even less so.' But that's always bodies, it will never be spirit, for to enter into the spirit one has to develop

ideas that are always changing.

He draws for his audience of workers a human head with waves wrapping around the head in circles. This, he says, is "only a momentary picture. It will be different the next moment." The etheric body is in constant motion.

[page 143] The most important thing for you to consider, therefore, is that your ideas have to grow mobile, flexible. This is something people will first have to get used to. And it is necessary for people today to become completely independent in their thinking.

"What's in it for me?" some of you may be thinking with your Latin-thinking way of insisting on getting something from everything you spend time doing. How about a defense from senility? Would that be worth your trouble? Would that be enough for you to investigate independent thinking a bit further?

Do you know anyone personally who was a brilliant thinker, but who got senile in old age? I met Andrew Joseph Galambos when he was in his early 80s. He was an innovative and brilliant thinker who masterfully furthered the work that Steiner began. Galambos built a [bridge to freedom](#), a freedom of which Steiner had built a philosophy about seventy years earlier. But Galambos was a Latin-thinker *par excellence* and a few years after I met him, still otherwise healthy, he developed advanced Alzheimer's Disease, the latest Latin-thinking name for senility, and died years later.

[page 145, 146] Now the situation is that there are people whose mental powers deteriorate quite dreadfully. But it is not the mind that deteriorates, but again only the body. It is interesting to note that it is often particularly intelligent people who show a terrible degree of deterioration in old age. You'll have heard, for example, that people consider Kant to have been one of the greatest minds. Kant grew senile in his old age. His body deteriorated so much, therefore, that he was no longer able to use his wise mind. And that is how it is for many people. It is especially the intelligent people who have often grown really senile in old age. . . . Coming from the 40s into the 50s, one needs to use the chest more again, and in old age one needs to use the head more again. But at that time, in old age, one should not use the physical head but the more subtle ether head. This, however, is something people do not learn to do with their Latin education. And it was above all people who in recent decades had a materialistic Latin education who were most exposed to this senility.

When I studied with Dr. Galambos in the early 1980s I was taken aback when he railed against the injustice done to the world that Isaac Newton should have ended his life working for the London Mint and have been writing metaphysical claptrap instead of doing his real work of contributing to physics. What did Newton write in his old age that so upset Galambos? He wrote things that came from his etheric head. In his *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, Newton wrote in his old age such things as could only come from his etheric head. He remained lucid to the very end of his life, unlike Galambos. Here is a passage that illustrates this:

God gave the prophecies, not to gratify men's curiosity by enabling them to fore know things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event, and His own providence, not the interpreters, be thereby manifested to the world. Sir Isaac Newton (1642 — 1727)

Newton, in his old age, was romping about like a child in his mind in a field new to him. As a result he grew old gracefully and productively, though not in a way that would satisfy a Latin-thinking physicist. Steiner tells us that this romping by children is due to their etheric body which loves to be romping about.

[page 146] It definitely is not the physical body that is romping about there. Then you grow old and return to the childhood level. You have gradually got out of the romping habit and now use the ether body which you used romping about as a child for

something better in your old age. It may be a good thing, therefore, that we go back again in this way.

The second process we need to develop is *backwards thinking*. Going back again into the life we lived whilst we were children can help us develop this form of thinking. One of the exercises Steiner describes for someone wanting to enter the spiritual world is, 'Now discover how things were when you were a boy of 12. What did you do then?' He tells us we must do this in great detail. Remembering how some event looked, maybe as simple as a pile of clamshells on the side of the road that we climbed a child. How the shells sounded as we slide down the large pile on a piece of cardboard. How the shells felt on our bottom as we slid over them. How it felt once when the cardboard slipped away and we tumbled down the rest of the way, sustaining scrapes on our knees and elbows. How the wet shells smelled as we uncovered the lower damp layers. How the dry dust tasted in our mouths.

[page 147, 148] To see again what one did many years ago, this will help us to enter into a condition where we do not just live in the present. Thinking the way people have learned to think today, you are thinking with your present physical body. But when you try to discover what you were at the age of 12, you cannot think with the physical body you then had, for it no longer exists. I told you that the physical body is a new one every seven years. You then have to think with your etheric body. You therefore call up your ether body when you think back to something in the past, when you were 12 or 14 years old. This will get you into the inner activity you need.

Does this seem easy? Does it seem worthwhile? Most things that are worthwhile take a lot of effort and so does this process. Consider for a moment what we have covered so far in this review. It's useful to think back to our early childhood with our etheric body; if we romp like a child with our etheric body in our age, we will avoid senility of Kant and Galambos, we will think as Newton did; the Theosophical society thought the etheric body to be a thinned-out physical body; physics constructs were deconstructed by non-Latin thinking engineers; Steiner wrote a book on independent thinking; 'mental illness' is an inaccurate metaphor, the mind is always healthy, only the body can get ill; four types of processes of thinking for learning to see the spiritual world: independent, backwards, opposite, and dialectical; earlier Europeans were like modern Native Americans; WWI was like a beating for humanity; how Mayer discovered Conservation of Energy from bloodletting; the cleverness of the etheric body; how the first railway came to be; how our liver and other internal organs act as spiritual receptors; how the heart is not a pump; how Steiner described the necessity for a science of ergonomics before it was built; why dancing feels heavenly; how humanity fell into materialism; and lastly, the hazards of backwards extrapolation.

That last paragraph was not easy for me, but going through a lecture or a book or one's entire day backwards is the essential key to developing the second process of "Backwards Thinking." Why?

[page 149] I have to grow inwardly mobile to think backwards. Just as someone must learn to use a telescope if he wants to look through it, so someone who wants to see into the world of spirit must often think backwards, again and again think backwards. And one day he'll reach the point where he knows, 'Ah, this is where I enter the world of the spirit.'

Once again you can see from this, gentlemen, that all your life you've got your physical body into the habit of thinking forwards. If you now start to think backwards, the physical body won't do it and something peculiar happens.

That something peculiar that happens is this: you enter the spiritual world. But you have thought all your life with your physical body and thought forward. What do you suppose happens when you begin trying to think backwards using your physical body? Well, it's an impossibility, so you go to sleep. Steiner says, "Your ether body goes on 'general strike'." I take that to mean that your etheric body finds the activity of trying to think backwards with your physical body too difficult so it disengages completely or goes on strike, as work crews can become disgruntled if pushed too hard by a foreman and go on strike with a

work stoppage.

[page 149] It therefore needs tremendous good will [RJM: *strong will*] and all one's energy not to go to sleep. You need patience to do this. It often takes years, actually. But you have to have patience.

You see, if someone were to tell you the things you experience unconsciously when you've gone to sleep after thinking backwards, you'd see that it is something terribly intelligent.

The point is: if you manage by sheer force of will to stay awake, you will experience these intelligent thoughts yourself, in full consciousness. Some of you will remember from the last century that the International Business Machine Co., IBM, had this slogan posted everywhere: THINK. For the new millennium, perhaps the slogan for etheric thinkers everywhere to rally around should be: KNIHT.

Process 3 is Opposite Thinking. This is my name for the following process which I will take some time to develop for you. Consider these statements and whether you agree with them completely without exception (Page 155). Now endeavor to think of exceptions to each one.

The whole is greater than its parts.

All bodies have dimensions.

Opinions are colorless.

A straight line is the shortest route connecting two points.

Can't think of any using your Latin-thinking? Neither can I. Let's loosen the constraints of our thinking a bit using our beginner's etheric mind. What does the etheric do? It moves all the time. Remember the diagram I told you about earlier that Steiner drew showing the physical human head with the circling waves of the etheric body in constant motion around it? Remember how Steiner said that because of their etheric body, children love to move in circles in their play? Now, think of a dance hall. People are dancing, and country-style, all the dancers are moving in a counter-clockwise motion around the dance floor which is packed with dancers. You wish to go to the bandstand to see someone who's playing in the band and you are directly on the opposite end of the dance hall from the band. What's the shortest route for you to get to that person? If you attempt to walk in a straight line, you will encounter resistance after resistance from the swirling dancers and you may not make it at all, or only after a long time has elapsed. What if you grab a partner and dance around the periphery of the floor? In no time at all, you will have achieved your objective of talking to the person in the band. The shortest route between the two points turned out to be an arc of a circle, *not* a straight line! Did you follow me or did your Latin-thinking brain get derailed along the way, wanting to bulldoze its way through the crowd of dancers? Latin-thinkers have that propensity, so don't be hard on yourself. By the way, if you're tired of being hard on yourself, then you will find etheric thinking a welcome relief, I guarantee!

We only did one exercise of Opposite Thinking on the four items in the list above, but Steiner devotes a lot of time to help the reader through the other three as well. With practice you can tear yourself away from your physical body and its Latin-thinking ways and soon you'll be able to say with equanimity:

The part is greater than the whole.

No body has dimensions.

Opinions are colored.

A straight line is the longest route connecting two points.

[page 163] If you go through all this, you will be able to use your ether body instead of your physical body. You can then begin to think with the ether body, and the ether body must think everything the opposite way round from the way it is in the physical world. For with the ether body you gradually enter into the world of the spirit. But there things will come to a halt after all, and you'll have to develop yet another habit.

This habit involves "feeling inner pain when something is *not* true, and that one's soul will rejoice when

something *is* true." Steiner is careful to point out this pain or suffering is *not* the body but rather the soul that suffers when it encounters a lie — "just as the body suffers if it has a terrible illness."

[page 165] It is not that the soul should be sick, but the soul must be capable of feeling pain and pleasure, just as the body does when it is sick or wholly at ease, or when one knows pain or pleasure in the ordinary way in this world.

It means we must come to feel truth the way we feel joy and happiness and pleasure in physical life; and we must come to feel untruth to be pain, grow sick inwardly in our soul when we meet untruthfulness, as we otherwise only get sick if there are disorders in the body.

We have an expression, "a poison pen letter" and while I would not endeavor to render a meaning for the expression, once more Google jumped to the rescue with this definition:

poison-pen letter — A usually anonymous letter or note containing abusive or malicious statements or accusations about the recipient or a third party.

When we receive such a letter we should be able to feel in our soul as if we had been fed a poison such as the juice of the deadly nightshade berry. Similarly when we read articles in the newspaper or material in a book. The ink may be the same, but in the case of lies, it is experienced as a poison, in the case of truth, as a nectar of liquid sunshine.

The Germans have a saying when something rubs them the wrong way that "a louse has run over my liver." Growing up in the 1940s, we were inspected for lice in our hair from time to time. Only the poorest and worst dressed children were ever found with lice in their hair, we never were. But I can imagine the reaction my mother would have had if any of us had been sent home with lice in our hair. "Yuck!" she might have said. She would have felt sick to the stomach — just as if a louse had run over her own liver!

The astral body, in order to work properly inside the human body must be compressed within its boundaries, just as it is during our waking time when we are completely conscious. At night the astral body normally expands into the cosmos and its presence in the physical body is diluted like a drop of raspberry juice in a vat would be.

[page 174] The astral body then spreads, just as the raspberry juice spreads in the 400 buckets of water. And you then no longer have conscious awareness in this astral body, for conscious awareness develops when the astral body contracts.

Steiner talks about table tipping in the next passage, but his words can apply equally to many forms of evidence people even today put forward as evidence of the spiritual world, such as Kirlian photographs. Materialistic evidence, or any evidence based on sensory data, can only derive from the material world, not the spiritual world. We cannot experience the spiritual world with our sensory sight, but only with supersensible sight. Back in the latter part of the 19th Century, when table tipping was popular, those who investigated the "spiritual world" using such techniques were called "spiritualists" or "spiritists". Paradoxically, their techniques, which purported to prove the existence of the spiritual world, proved only the existence of the material world. While humankind has become more canny in their investigations of the spiritual world so as to avoid the mistakes of the "spiritualists" there are many avenues of research yet today in the 21st Century which make the same mistake, but in a new form with new words for describing what is happening.

[page 176] They then become spiritualists. You see, the physical body can move a table. People say: 'If I can move a table I exist. If a spirit is supposed to exist, it must also be able to move a table.' Well, so they then start table tipping, and they take the table tipping as proof for the spiritual world. This is because their thinking is crooked, bent. Their thinking is materialistic, wanting the spirit, too, to be physical. Spiritualism is the

most materialistic thing there is.

The four processes we summarized [above](#) from page 181 help us to maintain consciousness as we experience the world of spirit. With practice on the four thinking processes, one will be able to hold the astral body together in one's body instead of allowing it to diffuse into cosmic space. Steiner says on page 180 "If you want to get to know the astral body you must have the inner strength to hold it together." On page 181 he says, "You have to develop the strength that makes it possible to keep the astral body small." He cites and explains the four processes of thinking: independent thinking, backwards thinking, opposite thinking, and dialectical thinking.

In the normal process of living, if you have a pain in your big toe, there is astral body there which carries notice of the pain to the brain. If a part of your brain is sick, it cannot make use of the information about the pain in the big toe, but the etheric body is still in that part of the brain, and lacking support from the physical body, it begins to make the toe "into a mountain." Steiner has outlined for us the source of delusions, especially the ones which make mountains out of molehills. These are the things for which he advises you to train carefully to recognize, so that you may avoid mistaking them for things of the spiritual world. You want to ensure that you will "no longer confuse the genuine spirit that appears to you with something that merely comes from your physical body."

[page 183] So you see: here's your big toe; you've put it out into space because you have a sick brain. And now you swear there's a huge mountain in front of you. But all of it is really your big toe. It is a delusion.

The fourth way of thinking leads us to honesty: *dialectical thinking*. The art of dialectics was taught in earlier times, back when thinking was not taken for granted as a human capability. (Unfortunately, many people today assume we acquire thinking automatically.) Back then it was understood that one should be taught to think, to think "forward and back" and "to establish concepts in the right way." (Page 184) But instead of speaking today, people seem to "always be colliding with their own physical body." If we do not breathe properly when we are speaking, the whole world will seem physical to us because we are always colliding with it with our breath. (Page 185) Colliding with our breath is another way of saying we have stage fright or butterflies in our stomach. Now we are ready to hear where all this materialism around us today comes from — and where all the stress in people comes from.

[page 185] Where does this materialism really come from? Materialism develops because people are not able to think properly, to breathe out properly, bumping into the physical world. They then believe the whole world to be all pressure and push. Pressure and push [RJM: stress] is what they have inside them because they did not prepare themselves beforehand by thinking the right way. And so we might say that when someone is a materialist today this is because he cannot get out of himself, keeps bumping into himself everywhere inside.

This next passage tickles me a bit because I've learned this over the years myself. I even included it as one of my Matherne's Rules: [AMAT](#) or All Meanings Are True, which means that all meanings are true to the person who holds them. It applies to folks like newspaper writers who tell us all about themselves in the articles they write. Whatever the articles are about, the meanings held by the writers shine out from the pages, once you learn this truth about human existence.

[page 186] If you read what gets printed, you find out what they imagine things to be. If you read the paper today you have to say to yourself: 'You'll learn little about what is happening in the world from the paper, but you will find out what the gentlemen who sit in the editorial office would like to happen in the world.'

This process of projecting meanings one would like to be true in the world came home to me recently when I encountered two separate articles written by so-called anthroposophic writers who were against the war in Iraq [2003] and used Steiner's words in [The Karma of Untruthfulness](#) to justify their position. I had

already read and studied in detail what Steiner actually said in those lectures and found nothing whatsoever to justify those writers' claims.

[page 186] So you see that honesty, inner honesty, is the fourth quality we need to enter into the world of the spirit. Looking at the world, you'll see that there is not much honesty there. No wonder that there is also not much honesty in science. We have been considering four qualities needed in our thinking — clear, independent thinking; thinking in a way that is independent of the outside world; thinking in a way that is completely different from the physical world, and also to be honest in our thinking.

This next section deals with fear, and because the common expressions which illuminate the underlying truths about the human body usually involve a four-letter word for human excrement, I will substitute the word *stuff* for that word so as to retain its power of expression. "Get your *stuff* together" means to stop being afraid and go into action. "He *stuffed* in his pants." means he developed a sudden attack of diarrhea due to intense fear. What is it then that holds our *stuff* together? It's fear, Steiner tells us. Fear that is everywhere in our body below our diaphragm and holds our bowels, our bones, our entire organism together. We don't experience this fear because it is only in our physical body. When it moves up into our astral body, our soul, due to some external event which frightens us, we can lose control of our bowels because the fear has temporarily left them. Later when we feel better, having recovered from the fearful event, we say, "I'm okay, now. I got my *stuff* together." In other words, our fear has vacated our soul and moved back into our bowels. Our legs, which had been weakened, are once again held together by fear and feel strong.

[page 189] We humans also have fear in us. In our big toe, in the legs, in the belly — there's fear everywhere. It does not dare go above the diaphragm, however, except when we have nightmares. But the fear is there in us. The fear has its purpose, however. It holds our organism together. And we have more fear in our bones than anywhere else. The bones are so solid because there is a terrible fear in them. It is fear which keeps the bones together. . . . It is possible to cure children with rickets by influencing the soul, by finding a way of driving out their fear.

Currently Del and I are listening together to the fifth Harry Potter book, "The Order of the Phoenix." By listening to an audiobook as we drive together, we get to be in exactly the same place in a book at every point. These stories by J. K. Rowling are full of spiritual insights which will make them valuable learning tools for our children of the new century. In the middle of this latest story, Hermione Granger asks Harry to teach them defense against the dark arts, saying something like this, "We need to learn to defend ourselves from Lord Valdemorte." Ron Weasley gasped. Why? Because, up until that moment, Hermione had never said the name of the dark Lord aloud before, always using the euphemism, "He who shall not be named." Harry, on the other hand, had been saying "Lord Valdemorte" aloud from the beginning. Suddenly it dawned on me that Hermione's request for Harry to teach her defense against the dark arts, defense against the dark lord, Valdemorte, had already been accomplished. She had learned from him to boldly say, "Lord Valdemorte" aloud. When she said his name aloud, she, like Harry, was no longer holding her fear of the dark lord in her soul, but by saying aloud the name, had expelled her fear with the breath she used to say, "Lord Valdemorte." When you name a fear, especially if you say it aloud, you expel the fear with your breath. In thinking about how to get Harry to teach her defense against the dark arts, Hermione had incorporated one of Harry's primary defenses — naming the thing that you fear. This is only one of the many useful lessons that our children and grandchildren will be learning from these marvelous stories.

In this next passage I was reminded of Richard Bach in his story *Illusions* in which the two main characters went for a swim in the solid ground.

[page 192] The moment one begins to perceive things of the spirit in the air, using all the

means I have told you about, at that moment you yourself slip out of your body far enough so that you'll no longer feel the stones to be an obstacle but enter into the solid ground the way a swimmer does into water.

Some people will ask why is it so difficult to know the world of the spirit. We are human beings, beings of spirit and Earth imbued with freedom. If we did not have to work to enter the spiritual world, everyone would enter it immediately, they would become spiritual robots, and our legacy of freedom as humans would be lost.

[page 197, 198] Yes, but just think what kind of human beings we'd be if we did not have to make any effort to enter into the world of the spirit, if we were always in it. We'd be absolute spiritual automatons. We only gain the right relationship to the spirits because we have to make an effort. And it does take the greatest inner effort to be able to do research in the world of the spirit.

In [Education and Modern Spiritual Life](#) I note that Steiner recommends parents give their children unfinished toys so that they join in an inner effort with the toys. It is especially important that young girls be given very simple dolls: a stuffed sock with a hand-drawn face, for example. In this next passage Steiner explains why he drew on the board as the session proceeded rather than using finished drawings. This gets at the essence of having a [live lecturer](#) present so that you may follow every nuance of thought as the lecture proceeds.

[page 198] And as you see, I haven't shown you a film. There isn't time for it, of course, but even if we had the time I would not attempt to show the matter to you in a film. Instead I made drawings that developed as we went on, and you were able to see what I intended with every line I drew and were able to think along with me. And this is also what we need in teaching children today — as few finished drawings as possible, and as much as possible to arise out of the moment, with the child seeing every line as it is drawn. The child then joins in the effort inwardly, and this encourages inner activity.

Next Steiner goes into material that he had covered in [Nutrition and Stimulants](#) about the inverse relationship of plants to humans (See diagram in [review](#)). The oils of flowers in the uppermost of a plant work best on the lower portion of the human body, the stomach and intestines — thus someone with a stomach ailment would do best to drink tea made of flowers. Wheat and beans are actually fruits that grow from flowers, and we can all attest from personal experience that beans are digested in the intestines. At least, I can attest it from *reports* I have heard from bean eaters. A problem in the head region, on the other hand, would best be treated by a potion made of boiled roots. The big problem he deals with here is that of eating potatoes. When one eats potatoes, one is eating a thickened stem, not a root. As such, the position of the potato on the plant is below the head of the human being, about level to the mouth and the throat. That is why potatoes are so popular: they stimulate the tongue and gullet. They are the ubiquitous side dish in America currently, whether cut in strips and fried or baked or mashed. Or sliced and crisply fried into potato chips which seem to accompany watching every sort of sport on television. Beer and potato chips is the main nourishment of those we call "couch potatoes". Interesting, isn't it, that we imagine a couch potato to be a person whose senses are so dulled by eating potato chips that they resemble a big dumb potato sitting on a couch? Steiner says that "with their potato eating the people of Europe neglected their head, their brain" and that "people's heads have grown less capable since the potato has to be eaten more and more."

[page 202] When we eat potatoes, we really get a longing to eat something again quite soon. The potato will soon make us hungry again because it does not go all the way to the head. . . . Someone who eats a lot of potatoes does not get powerful thoughts; but he'll get dreams that make him heavy. And someone who has to eat potatoes all the time will get really tired all the time and always want to sleep and dream.

I grew up in South Louisiana where we had rice with every meal and rarely had potatoes. I didn't like liver as a child, so my mom used to feed me beets, which I really liked. Her theory was that since beets were the color of blood, I'd get the iron to bolster my blood that I missed by not eating liver. Now I find that eating beets all these years has helped me to think. Also radishes which I love. Note that both of these plants are genuine roots and thus stimulate the brain.

[page 202] When we eat beetroot [RJM: beets], gentlemen, we get a terrible longing to think a lot. We do this quite unconsciously. . . . Beetroot is a powerful stimulus to think, and someone who does not want to think does not like beetroot.

What is difficult for us to understand after a lifetime of being told "Eat this food; it provides necessary nutrition, vitamins, etc." is that the essential function of the food we eat is to provide a stimulus to help our body grow by virtue of the forces that come to it from the ether. Beets and radishes stimulate the brain, potatoes stimulate the tongue and gullet, flowers stimulate the digestion, and when we drive out these foods from our body, the etheric body building up principle flows to us from the ether, *not* from the solid matter comprising the foods we ate.

[page 204] We actually do not at all build up our bodies with earthly matter. We only eat the things we eat to get a stimulus. The whole idea people have of food coming in here and going out there, remaining inside for a while in between times, is quite wrong, therefore. We just get a stimulus. . . . if we take too much food the food stays inside us for too long. We then collect unjustifiable food in us, grow corpulent, fat, and so on. If we take in too little we do not get enough stimulus and do not take enough of what we need from the world of the spirit, from the etheric world.

If your entire body is formed by forces from the etheric world and every cell in your body is renewed in the course of seven years, then your body must consist of those etheric forces which come from the "element that surrounds the earth in the light."

[page 205] Your heart is compressed sunlight! You really and truly have a heart that is condensed sunlight. And the food you have eaten has only given the stimulus for you to compress the sunlight so far. You build up all your organs from the light-filled surroundings, and the fact that we eat, that we take in food, only means that a stimulus is given.

From this you can begin to see that the Earth and everything that consists of earth, which includes every human being, breathes in light. Each section of the Earth breathes in light during daylight and breathes it out at night. During a 24-hour day we breathe about 25,290 breaths. If we live to the age of 72 years, we will have lived 25,290 days. Since each day corresponds to a breath of the Earth, "We take as many breaths in a day as the Earth does in the whole of our life." If a human's day-night cycle is 24 hours, the Earth's equivalent day-night cycle is one year, during which each section of the Earth moves from winter to summer and back again. If a human lives 25,290 days, that would mean that the Earth would live 25,290 years, or one Platonic Great Year. This cosmic connection of human breathing to the cosmic breathing of the Earth should make the most materialistic person among us sit up and take notice.

[page 221] If you take 25,290 years you get the time when the earth did not yet exist and when it will no longer be. We are now more or less a little bit beyond the mid-point, with the earth in existence for something above 13,000 years. After another 11,000 years or so it will perish again. Just as man lives 25,290 days, so does the earth live 25,290 years.

My daughter is a geologist and she would undoubtedly claim that the Earth is very much older than 25,290 years. Geologists, after all, drill holes in the Earth and can show that the Earth is dead material, rock, and that, by backward extrapolation using uranium aging, this rock has been around for millions of years. This geology is an interesting science and is taught at all the best universities in the world essentially the same way. But does geology correctly predict the age of the Earth? Steiner asks us to follow him on an

interesting journey to Lice University.

[page 222] You see, we could develop a peculiar science. The human head is round, as you know [drawing on the board] and has hairs on it here, unless a person is very old. Now there are creatures in these woods — this may not be desirable, but it happens. Let us assume they take the dandruff here and create a place where the cleverest of them always get together to teach the ignorant ones. That would be a louse university on the human head itself. Well, we can imagine such a thing. What would the clever lice teach the ignorant ones? They would teach: 'The head is lifeless, for we walk about on it. Lifeless dandruff develops. Digging down a bit we come to lifeless bone.' The clever lice would explain all this to the ignorant lice at their louse university up there. They would explain the human head more or less the way we explain the earth at our human universities. The louse professors — forgive me, I do of course mean the ones up there on the head — would therefore have no idea that the head is alive. They would develop a geology of the head and declare the head to be dead. But gentlemen, this is what people do in our universities! The earth is declared to be dead. They know nothing about its breathing. For one would never discover anything about human breathing at the louse university and therefore nothing about it would be explained. They would say: 'Man is dead; the human head is a dead sphere.' And unless the head lice were to make contact in some way with the body lice, the head lice would never know that there is a body.

And how could the lice know any better? Only if they were able to contact beings of a higher kind would they be able to improve their geology and learn that the planet they live upon is a larger being who lives and breathes and has a definite lifetime. This analogy can point the way to what we as humans should do if we are truly to learn about the nature of the planet on which we live.

[page 222] And that is how it is. Unless human beings on earth make contact with other entities of a higher kind they'll never discover that the earth sends its waters out into the universe and is fertilized, that it breathes and is fertilized. Yes, taking the idea of the kind of science taught at the university on our head, we can really get an idea of what science on our earth is like.

In this section, Steiner gives the workers a quick review of the fifth Post-Atlantean Epoch which I will even more briefly summarize here. The Indian culture came first about 8,000 years ago. They called themselves the "sons of the gods" because when they were asleep and in the spirit world, they considered themselves gods. They did not talk of life after death, but rather of life before birth when they were with the gods. The only records we have of their time were written much later in a document called the Vedas. Veda literally means "the word". They considered the word as a gift of the spirit, of the gods. Some 2,000 years later in Persia another civilization developed that considered life as a struggle between heaven and earth, between light and darkness. This was the time of the first Zarathustra who named the force of light, Ahura Mazda, and the force of darkness, Ahriman. Another 2,000 years or so we come to the Egyptian civilization which built huge pyramids and developed a way of preserving human bodies in the form of mummies. They had come to like life on Earth so much that they wanted their bodies to remain intact on Earth. Having forgotten what the ancient Indians knew about life before birth, they were terribly afraid of dying. With the advent of the Greek civilization some 2,000 years later, the knowledge of life before birth was so much forgotten that Aristotle wrote that "when a child is born it is not only a body which is born, but also a soul." When that body dies, the soul has eternity to look back on that one life on Earth. Then came Christianity and in the 9th Century at the "eighth ecumenical Council in Constantinople the Church got rid of the spirit" and made doctrine of Aristotle's view that the soul is born with the body and thereafter spends eternity in heaven.

Now the Greeks had no idea that they had a life before the present one, "but they felt something of that life in them."

[page 231] You know, whether one knows something or not really does not influence the real situation. I can say for as long as I like, 'There's no table behind me, I don't see any table.' [stepping back and bumping the table], but the table is definitely there, even though I do not see it.

So it was with the matter of life before birth. It was there and people, even those who did not believe in it, would occasionally and bump into it. The Greeks about 500 years B. C. invented the word "conscience" for this something they could feel inwardly at certain times during their lives.

[page 232] And it has been this way ever since. People sense life before birth in themselves but they'll say, 'Well, that's how it is. It comes into existence somewhere down there and then it comes popping up,' but they don't take any real note of it.

They don't take any real note of it, except to say that their conscience is bothering them. The Church took note of this characteristic belief of the Greeks and took control of people's consciences. The Church fathers were the shepherds and everyone else were the sheep and followed the orders of the shepherds. If the sheep did not obey the shepherd, a ritual was performed to cast the sheep out of the flock.

Conscience, if you understand these matters presented here by Steiner, rightly comes not from the human body but from one's earlier lives. To set the matter in terms anyone can understand, Steiner tells us:

[page 235] For just imagine someone has a tremendous yearning for something, let us say. Such a thing has been known to happen. It is the material substances in his body, the physical matter of the earth, which urge him on and keep pricking so that he develops this yearning. His conscience will tell him: 'You must fight these desires.' Well, gentlemen, if the conscience had also come from the body this would be just as if someone were supposed to walk forward and backward at the same time! It's nonsense to say our conscience comes from the body. Our conscience is something we bring with us to earth when we are born.

Conscience then is a way of talking about karmic influences from our previous lifetimes — those things we brought with us to Earth to balance during this lifetime. It is a most creative part of us because it will cause us to do things that no one or no thing around us could predict or understand.

[page 239] And the most creative part of him is indeed his conscience, which is a sacred inheritance from life before earth and which we take out into the other world again when we go through death.

Steiner lets us see that the prevalence or importance of conscience is not the same in Vladivostok as it is in Los Angeles because "the further west we go the less do we find of this idea of conscience." (Page 240) Conscience diminishes from Asia to Europe and even more to America. One can learn a lot from the words that languages have or don't have for a certain process. Consider that we have a word for living after death, but no word for living before birth. One can speak of *immortality* but not of *un-born-ness* without coining a word. If immortality means lacking mortality or death at the end of our time on Earth, then perhaps we need the word *im-creativity* which means lacking creation upon the beginning of our time on Earth. But, unfortunately, whatever word that comes into use for that understanding will follow general acceptance of the process, not precede it.

"People today are really utterly ignorant." That's a bold statement from a man who honors truth with all his being, such as Steiner does. Listen in as he talks to the workmen and see if what he was telling them 80 years ago still holds true now, perhaps even more so than when he said these things (*italics* added for emphasis):

[page250]There have been tremendous changes in human history in recent centuries, and all that talking in theories is of no value to us. You can have the best possible theories —

Rousseau's theories, Marxist theories, Lenin's theories, anything you like, but these are all thought up, and you can't do anything with them if you lack the right knowledge. Thoughts only have value if you know what to do with them. All these people who have developed such excellent thoughts were utterly ignorant, if the truth be known. And it is a characteristic of our present time that *people are really utterly ignorant*. They want to present theories to people as to how to make the earth into paradise, yet they don't even know what happens to the human body when people eat potatoes. This is what causes one such heartfelt concern today, that people have not the least desire to know something. Now the masses are, of course, unable to do this, for they are persuaded that the knowledge possessed by those gentlemen at the university is absolutely right. And so schools are created for the people and they want to know what the others know today. But the truth is that exactly the people who ought to know things, who have made the business of knowing their profession, actually know nothing at all. And because of this people talk about all kinds of things today, but basically no one knows anything at all.

One cannot blame only the universities for this pervasive lack of knowledge. Remember that it was the Church who first founded or sponsored organized universities in Paris around the 13th Century when Peter Abelard and others were professing their truths on the steps of houses in the city. Surely the Church fostered and preserved humanity's accumulated wisdom through the creation of universities, you might think. Yes, they did — that is well-known — but what is less well-known is that they destroyed much ancient wisdom by burning every copy of books containing it and then assigning church scholars to re-write the books according to a church doctrine which was completely *counter to* the wisdom in the books they burned.

[page 254] For some centuries before and also at the time of the birth of Christ, much, very much still existed in writing of the ancient wisdom. These things were burned by the Church, for they did no want this ancient wisdom, which people gained from their heads, to be passed on in any way to their descendants.

What was this ancient wisdom that the Church systematically destroyed and then replaced with something called by the same name, but completely skewed and unrecognizable in its new form? That ancient wisdom was called *gnosis*. The shepherd did not take kindly to the sheep having access to a care and feeding that did not involve the shepherd directly. The shepherd wanted well-behaved sheep that depended on the shepherd and stayed under control of the shepherd's staff. In the Church this meant that no one was allowed to view spiritual worlds directly as the ancient wisdom of *gnosis* taught them to. *Gnosis* was made a *heresy* and those who were caught practicing it were excommunicated and/or burned at the stake. Today Church fathers can point to the documents on *gnosis* and claim they contain no worthwhile truth — no wonder! — the Church had already squeezed any semblance of truth out of the documents over a millennium ago!

Everyone knows how connected the heart is with the kidneys. If your blood pressure gets too high, your kidneys begin to fail, etc. What thoughts we formerly received with our lungs, we now, in recent centuries, receive with our kidneys. It is not generally known that formerly we thought with our lungs. "When human beings had lung knowledge, they would be breathing in air and in doing so receive the stimulus for knowledge." Hmm, doesn't this sound like the process of food providing a stimulus for our physical bodies to receive forces of life from the etheric world? Air used to provide the stimulus for us to receive knowledge from the spiritual world. And now we "depend on getting the stimulus for knowledge from the kidneys." (Page 255)

[page 256] But the kidneys will not give anything to the head of their own accord. You have to make an effort first, as I have described it in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*. So in the first place we have to say that when the lungs still provided a stimulus for the human head, people were able to gain knowledge because a spiritual principle was still flowing into their lungs. Anything of the spirit that flows to the kidneys is at an

unconscious level, so that people cannot know about it unless they go through the things in mind and spirit which I have described in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, doing so in a fully conscious state.

This gives us a clear picture of why learning to know higher worlds, to see into the spiritual world requires an enormous effort for us today. The knowledge we seek flows to us, but at an unconscious level — which we must break through if we are to become conscious of it. At the beginning of the twentieth century a world-wide conflagration took place, the Great War as it was called then. Later, when an even greater war took place involving the entire world, the two events were called World War I and World War II. Both of these wars, in Steiner's view, were due to an undetected kidney disease which prevented the nations and peoples of the world from paying attention to the spiritual guidance that was pouring down from the heavens. In the quoted passage, he refers to the beginning of the 20th Century, but with hindsight, we can say both the beginning and middle of the last century.

[page 258] At a future time people will ask: 'What clouded the minds of people at the beginning of the twentieth century? A kidney disease that went unnoticed.' This is what concerns us so deeply today. And we can decide to go in two directions. We can let things go on the way they are going now. The doctors will then have a great deal to do one day. People will be less and less able to use their common sense. They will come to think less and less of making sensible arrangements that will take them forward. The whole of the senseless way of going about things, which has really developed to a very high degree today, will reach its highest level. People will be weak, and the physicians will examine their urine. They'll find all kinds of nice things in there, you know — proteins, sugar, and so on. They will only discover that the kidneys are not functioning properly. For when you find all those things in the urine, the kidneys are not functioning properly. And they'll find: 'Strange, isn't it, that the world has never before produced as much sugar and protein as it does now!' But they won't know the real situation.

Why are there so many gangsters, racketeers, and corrupt politicians, judges, and business people today? Steiner asked himself this question in 1923 and answered it thus, "Because the part of the human organism which is of a lower order and is setting the pace today should really be given a stimulus in mind and spirit." Ah, but if that stimulus is to come from the kidneys and being immoral in this time causes stress with its concomitant high blood pressure — look at what you have: undetected kidney disease which prevents the very stimulus in mind and spirit from getting to the very people who need it most. Our doctors know how to accurately measure blood pressure and know a lot about the relationship of the heart to the kidneys, but their materialistic medicine hits a dead end on the physical body avenue: they have *nothing* that was taught to them in the universities about the relationship of the kidneys to morality! And morality is what we get when we willingly receive stimuli from the spiritual world.

[page 259, 260] And so materialists are good at taking one's blood pressure, but they do not know what it means if the blood pressure is too high or too low, and that a low blood pressure means that the astral body and the I do not enter sufficiently into the physical body, whilst high blood pressure means that the astral body and the I enter too deeply into the physical body.

In 1965, I was beset by a variety of minor illnesses, mostly fatigue and a bout with amoebic dysentery that kept me going to my doctor on a weekly basis. Dr. Peter Everett was some forty years my senior, and I soon came to like his gentle bedside manner. Each time I went he took my blood pressure and would murmur, "It's low." Finally after a dozen or so times of hearing this, I became bold enough to ask him, "What does it mean that my blood pressure is low?" He answered, in his best fatherly tone, "It means that you will likely be cursed with long life." Here was a materialistic doctor's description of the effects of low blood pressure. Note how dramatically different it is from Steiner's description. Let me relate Steiner's description to my low pressure at the time for those of you who haven't already picked up the clue I dropped in the early part of this paragraph. If my low blood pressure meant that my I did not enter too

deeply into my physical body, how might that have shown up in my behavior? Imagine another young man of 25 going to Dr. Everett for the first time and being told his blood pressure is too high — what might he say, with his I deeply entered into his physical body? With a strident voice, he'll ask immediately, "What does that mean, Doc?" What did young Bob do? I didn't ask anything for over a dozen visits and only then did my "I" grow bold enough to ask. That's a sure sign that my "I" was not entered very deeply into my physical body at that age or I would have asked the first time he mentioned it. An anthroposophically trained doctor would have noticed that immediately and offered me some advice for strengthening my "I" — a process that took me on my own some twenty more years to learn about and which goes on yet today.

When one learns to perceive things of the spiritual world, the energy centers the East calls *chakras* begin to rotate as seen by spiritual vision. These chakras have a circular structure which resembles lotus petals, with various numbers of lotus petals associated with each chakra. People who could see with these lotus petalled chakras used an ancient design to let others know of their ability. This ancient design was used by the German Nazis as their party emblem, the swastika.

[page 267] During my visit to England where one had a wide view over the area, one could find such signs there, swastikas, a symbol used to create much mischief in Germany today. This swastika is now being worn by people who have no idea that it was once a sign used to indicate to people who came from a long way off that the people in that place saw not only with their physical eyes but also with the eye of the spirit.

Why do they put blinders on horses? And only on certain horses and not on others? I've heard the usual explanation, the materialistic explanation which is usually only a half-explanation, worse than none at all: to keep the horses from spooking and running wild. In open areas such as the Old West, any shadows a horse encountered were upon the ground, and with the horses's eye set to look to each side, they normally did not see the shadows on the ground. But, in a city with tall buildings, even before the turn of the twentieth century, horses needed blinders in cities because they could detect shadows in very many places to each side of them. This is what spooked them. And why did shadows spook them? The reason is given in the question itself — because horses see spooks in shadows!

[page 268] The horse's eyes are set in such a way that they look to the side. Because of this the horse does not actually see the shadow itself, but perceives the spiritual element in the shadow. People will of course say the horse is afraid of its shadow. But the fact is that it does not see the shadow at all, but perceives the spiritual element in the shadow.

In the enclosed ritual caves of the Druids and other ancient people one can find evidence that these ancient people could also see the spiritual element in shadows. An ability that humankind has lost over the millennia. To see the spiritual element in shadows also requires a certain condition of weather, a type of weather that is common here in New Orleans, home to many kinds of spiritual practices, tarot reading and voodoo, among other things. It is much warmer here than where the Druids lived, so that means the astral body goes deeper into the physical body here, as we have learned earlier.

[page 272] We have to understand of course that to observe the kind of thing the Druids once observed one needs to have quite specific regions on earth. You can still see this today. Living over there in Wales — the course of lectures took a fortnight — one always had rapid changes in the weather from small cloudbursts, I'd say, to sunshine and back again. It changes by the hour, so that the air there is quite different from the way it is here; it is always more full of water. If you have air like it is over there, where the Druids were, you can make such observations.

The Druid's monuments were designed to be calendars to assist in the planting of crops and the timing of rituals based on the position of the Sun and the cosmos in relationship to Earth. This past January Del and I went to [Dzibichaltum](#) in Mexico where a monument was unearthed several decades ago. The purpose of this Sun Temple was identical to that of the Druid's standing stones — a living calendar that everyone

could read. During a time when reading was not a common human ability, it was essential for the life of the people to have a calendar that all could refer to for planting crops, performing seasonal rituals, harvesting, and livestock reproduction, among other things.

We have mentioned before about how fruits of plants are digested in the intestines — the flatulence produced by beans is notable evidence of that fact. Potatoes, however, are digested by the head — it goes into the intestines and enters the blood which goes to the head area where its digestion is completed. Every try to think clearly when flies are buzzing around your head everywhere? Eating potatoes has that effect on your head.

[page 288] Now if the head has to be used to digest potatoes, it can no longer think, for it needs its energies to be able to think, and the lower body must provide the energy needed for digestion instead. And if someone eats too much potato which has been increasingly the case since the potato came to Europe and became an important food here — the head is gradually less and less available for thinking, and the individual progressively loses the ability to think with his middle head; he will then only think with the front of his head. But this front part of the head, which depends on the salts, causes him more and more to be only a person of materialistic rationality. The situation is, therefore, that thinking has indeed grown less and less in Europe from the moment when potatoes became a staple food.

This sounds foolish to you? Potatoes being digested in the head? "That's very unscientific, isn't it?" You may be thinking. Well, let's look over Steiner's shoulder as he analyzes what is done by science in his day and we'll find it to be even more the case in our day. Read the following and then you decide what foods you would like to eat when. Real freedom to choose can only come when the surface knowledge of materialistic science is supplanted by the deep truths uncovered by spiritual science.

[page 290] Now we may ask: 'What is done in science?' Well, analyses are made to establish how much carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen and other things a protein contains — these are the main elements to be found in it. So it is found that a protein contains so and so much carbon, so and so much hydrogen, in per cent, with different percentages found in fat and different ones again in carbohydrates. But people have no idea as to the significance of these elements. — They only know the percentages. But this will get us nowhere. The nutrients are simply in a different way inside potato than they are in rye and wheat, and one has to know that when we eat a flower or a fruit this is digested in the intestines, whilst a root is digested in the head. Otherwise one also can't make use of them in medicine. Someone who is able to think in a proper medical way will know that a tea made of flowers or seed, or of fruit, will act mainly on the intestines. Roots boiled in water, which is then offered as a tea, can have a medicinal effect in the head. If we eat the roots, this has a material effect on the head. This is particularly important to know.

If experts in science are not telling us how to choose what we eat properly, to whom do we look for answers? Certainly not to the clergy, who are supposed to be infused with the wisdom of the spirits.

[page 295] You're unlikely ever to hear from a pulpit what people should do where a diet of potatoes or wheat is concerned, so as to be strong. Most Protestant or Roman Catholic clergy wouldn't think of telling their congregations the situation regarding eating rye and wheat for their health. They'd consider it of no importance. They'd say it was not holy, for to be holy means to pray or talk about the Gospels and similar things.

All I can say is this: [Mr. Potato Head](#) cannot bring his arms together in prayer! You can verify this by clicking on the link and seeing what Mr. Potato Head looks like if you forgot. When I was about five years old this toy was introduced. It is now trademarked by and being sold by Hasbro toys. This image of Mr.

Potato is of the very first model that I recall from my youth. The basic construction material for mounting the various elements of nose, lips, ears, glasses, and hat was, what else, a potato. Since our mom cooked mostly rice instead of potatoes, we had to beg to get a potato to use with our game. Here, in a child's game, the *bane* of our time, *eating too much potatoes*, is demonstrated big time! A man whose head is full of undigested potato! Unable to think or move very much at all.

Note also the huge size of the head in relation to Mr. Potato Head's body. This is another clue as to the effects of eating too much potatoes, not by Mr. Potato Head himself, but by his mother. Hydrocephalus is the name for a process that is commonly called "water on the brain" or an enlarged head containing excess fluids within it. Severely large headed babies with "water on the brain," who greatly resemble Mr. Potato Head, usually are unable to develop normally, often becoming imbeciles. The eating of potatoes in the mother's diet is directly connected to enlarged and watery heads in the womb, even though the head may shrink in the process of being born.

[page 296] You'll say, gentlemen, that one does not see many people with hydrocephalus around. Of course not, for other forces then counteract it and when the head is born it is no longer as big as it was in the embryo. But it is no longer able to take in anything but potatoes and water. It may even grow small in the process and yet be a watery head. The important thing is that heads have been too large in the maternal womb ever since potatoes became part of the diet. They are pushed together later, but it is exactly this pushing together before they are born that causes harm, for they will then not be able to take in the right things, but solely and only materialistic things. When the individual is born, you no longer see the watery head if you just look at the size. Now of course, hydrocephalus in the usual sense depends on the size, but here it is above all a question of whether water is acting in the right way, or something else is able to act. And it is just as important to know this as it is to know all the other things presented to mankind through science on the one hand and theology and religion on the other. But it is certainly necessary that one looks at the matter carefully and properly.

Those people who are opposed to anthroposophy often say that it is full of secrets. They do have an element of truth on their side. Gnosis is a secret to church goers because the truths of gnosis have been hidden from them by the shepherds of their church. On the other hand, no one has hidden the truths of anthroposophy from those who oppose it. If the truths seem hidden from them it is only due to their own reluctance to do the study necessary to uncover the truths for themselves.

[page 297, 298] But things cease to be a mystery the moment they are discovered. There is no intention of being mysterious in anthroposophy, but rather to bring to light the things which others have been trying to keep secret.

There is the anthroposophic form of secret — the kind that one avoids, not because it is hidden from view, because it is too difficult to understand. People today at the advent of the 21st Century, especially those who overindulge in a diet of potatoes, are unable to read Steiner's words and juggle all the concepts in their watery heads necessary to understand the open truths that Steiner presented in his over 6,000 lectures in the first two decades of the 20th Century. Even for rice-eaters like myself, it is no small feat to comprehend just one single lecture of Rudolf Steiner. I read ten of his books before I really first began to understand a little of what he was saying. Since then every book has deepened my understanding of what he is writing about in full view for humankind to comprehend. As a result, each review I've written of a Steiner book has tended to be longer than the previous one, not because of some long-winded tendency on my part, but because of the importance of the concepts that I had encountered before, but previously had been unable to do justice to them by writing about them in a review.

This review has been a *mammoth* undertaking — it spreads over thirty pages. I thank you for the time that you have taken to understand what I have presented herein for you. I hope it will encourage you to work your way through the book on which these thoughts were based at your earliest possible opportunity.

Steiner's books have only been widely published in English since 1965, and by reading them you are joining a vanguard of human beings who are learning how to live their lives in accordance with spiritual principles that you will not likely encounter anywhere else.

~~~~~ *footnotes* ~~~~~

1. Hitler changed the name of the German Workers Party to the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), which later became known as the Nazi Party. By placing the name "National" in the front of his party's name he set the stage for equality for only those of "German blood." The history of the world records the horrors and disasters that proceeded from that re-naming.

[Return to text before footnote 1.](#)

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