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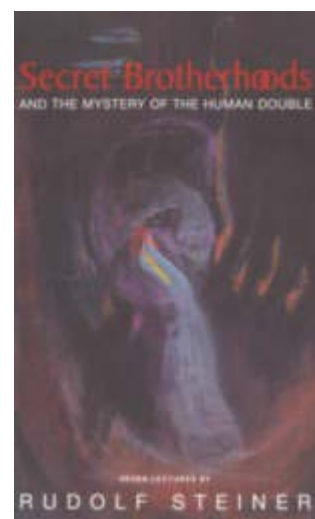


A READER'S JOURNAL

Secret Brotherhoods and the Mystery of the Human Double, GA#178 by Rudolf Steiner

7 Lectures in St. Gallen, Zurich and Dornach,
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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2005



This is another amazing book of insights shared with us by Rudolf Steiner. We learn how an

ahrimanic double is born in human beings and the destruction it brings to the world. How certain brotherhoods mine the insights of recently dead members to further their goals for power. How the way we deal with our deceased loved one can bring us disease or health. In this review [I](#) can only offer my extract of insights offered by Steiner in his seven lectures. Like any extract, this will seem bitter if one tries to ingest it directly — one must dilute it with the liquids of thoughtfulness to bring out the full flavor of the insights contained in the book. Or better yet, read the entire book.

Materialistic or earthly sciences end their study of the human being when the body dies. Spiritual science picks up its study of the human at that point and is our only source of information and data. Baconian science can *not* study what happens to the human being when the body dies because it has restricted itself to dealing only with sensory data — the tapestry of the natural world behind which one finds spiritual realities — it must exclude any other sources of data as fantasy or illusions. Steiner knew this about science and spoke of it frequently because he was a scientist of the earthly sciences as well as spiritual science. He knew his audience consisted of people educated in the earthly sciences. As a result, he offered them factual knowledge of the spiritual world to supplement their factual knowledge of the material world. And that knowledge takes its point of departure from the earthly sciences by focusing its study at the point when the human body dies. The human body dies, but the spirit lives on.

It is interesting to me that we have in English a word to describe existence in the time between birth and death, mainly, the verb "live," but we have no word to describe existence in the time between death and a new birth. Perhaps if we were to create a verb for that period of time between death and a new birth, it would facilitate us being able to coherently talk about it without using the awkward phrase "the period of time between death and a new birth." The phrase presupposes a non-existent condition because the materialistic connotations of the word "death" itself. [I](#) pondered over this conundrum for some time, and came up with a possible solution: press the noun, "spirit" into usage as a verb. The first definition (noun) is quoted from Cassel's Concise Dictionary (1997) for the noun form and the second is my definition of the verb form:

spirit (spir' it) *n.* a rational being unconnected with a physical body.

spirit (spir' it) *v.i.* exist as a human being unconnected with a physical body.

With this new usage of *spirit* as a verb, we can say that earthly science studies how the human being *lives* and spiritual science studies how the human being *spirits*. We live during the time between death and a new birth, while in the time between death and a new birth, we *spirit*, i. e., living ceases and spiriting begins. While both earthly science and

spiritual science have a lot to say about what we do while we are living, spiritual science is our sole source of information of what we do while we are spiriting. As human beings we alternate between living and spiriting and it behooves us to learn as much as we can about both processes.

[page 18] Once this has been established there can be a real penetration into realms where it can be said that death is the starting-point, just as birth and youth is the starting-point for the earthly sciences. But it has to be made clear that the death referred to is not the death that brings to an end what can be seen externally by the senses, which is how it is usually regarded. The death in question is a part of existence, just as the forces which are brought into life by birth are a part of existence. We encounter death not only as a one-off event, for we carry the forces of death — of destruction — within us just as much as we carry within us the forces of birth, those forces given to us at birth, which are forces of construction.

Steiner takes us to the border of earthly and spiritual science and helps us to resolve the confusion between thinking in the brain and experiences in the soul. The earth sciences take us on a muddy path when they claim that all thinking stems from our brain and only while we are alive. They are focusing on the tracks left by the thinker and ignoring the thinker.

[page 19] Those, however, who learn to perceive soul life by means of soul organs, spirit eyes or ears, such as I described in principle earlier on, those who really discover what soul life is, know that to call the brain a tool for thinking is just like talking about walking along a muddy path and leaving footprints there which someone coming along later tries to explain. How does he explain them? By saying that down in the depths of the earth there are forces that vibrate up and down and thus produce the footprints. The footprints, however, were not caused by those forces at all, but by me when I walked there.

Thinking as described by materialistic sciences such as physiology are correct so far as they go, but they don't go far enough. They can make electroencephalograms (eegs) which show the tracks of a human brain's thinking, but those are merely the muddy footprints left behind by the thinkers, not the thoughts themselves.

[page 19, 20] This is how physiologists today explain that what takes place in the brain is generated by the brain, and there is indeed something in the nervous system that corresponds to every thought and idea, every feeling. Just as my footprints correspond with where I have trodden, so is there something in the brain that does correspond with every impression encountered by the soul. But it is the soul that has impressed it upon the brain. The earth is just as little the organ for my treading or my footprints, it is just as little what produces them as the brain is the organ for all kinds of thought or ideation processes. I cannot walk without the ground, for I cannot walk in the air; I need the ground to walk on. And the brain is needed for the same reason, not because it produces the soul impressions but because the soul processes need the firm foundation upon which to express themselves during the period when the human being lives in a body between birth and death.

The way that physiologists imagine thoughts occur is as upside-down in our time as the way people thought the Sun moved around the Earth in pre-Copernican times. It is time for a revolution, Steiner avers, that will be as dramatic as the Copernican revolution was in its time. People will come to understand the brain is not the originator of thoughts, but the muddy path upon which thoughts remain behind. The brain operates in synchronism with the soul and, just as a muddy path, is progressively destroyed by foot traffic and cart traffic and must be re-built, so also must the nervous system be re-built constantly when the destructive activity over its pathways occur.

[page 20] There is also another aspect. As we continue along the path of soul research we find that the processes in the brain and nervous system corresponding with the life of the soul are, in fact, not constructive processes; they do not arise on account of there being constructive, thriving, flourishing processes in the nervous system such as those present in the rest of the organism. No, indeed. What the soul carries out in the nervous system is a destructive activity; while we are awake and conscious, and not asleep, it is a destructive activity. Only because our nervous system is embedded

in us in such a way that it is constantly refreshed by the rest of our organism can the destructive, decomposing and demolishing activity which thinking lets loose on our nervous system be ever and again counteracted. It is a destructive activity of a quality exactly equivalent to that experienced all in one go when the human being dies, whereupon the whole of the organism disintegrates. Death lives in us constantly so long as we use our powers of thinking. In tiny amounts it is constantly within us, and the one-off event that is death is merely a summation of what is constantly at work in us. Although the dying is continuously being balanced out, this balancing is such that when the time comes death can take place as a matter of course.

Our modern day science is correct in its observations and deductions therefrom, but it does not go far enough to view the whole picture for the simple reason that it has, since Bacon's time, restricted itself to sensibly perceptual data. The processes of soul and spirit which arise anew during thinking, e.g., are not sensibly observable, but are super-sensibly observable. And with the addition of the super-sensible data which Steiner provides us, a complete understanding of the processes of the human being are possible, just as in earlier times, the mathematical data of Tycho Brahe, Copernicus, and others led to a complete understanding of the positions of planets in our solar system. Mathematical data represented super-sensible data to the large majority of people of the time because they were uneducated in the realm of higher mathematics. They had to accept what those who were capable of such mathematics reported to them. Each leap in human evolution begins with us being made aware of super-sensible processes at work in our world. It happened with Pasteur's pointing to microscopic bacteria as the cause of disease, Salk's pointing to a virus as the cause of polio, and so on. These super-sensible agents of disease became available when human beings created instruments for viewing and detecting the previously super-sensible data which was present. Rudolf Steiner has shown us that the human being is such an instrument for detecting the super-sensible processes of the world around us. And he is talking of the soul processes of Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition for which our microscopes, oscilloscopes, and various man-made devices for measuring sensory data are totally inadequate. These are processes which reveal a world which is not measurable or viewable as sensory data, but instead a world which is hidden behind the tapestry of sensory data.

For the human being who is untrained in mathematics, the new world view of Copernicus had to be taken on faith. For the human being trained in mathematics, that world view of planets orbiting the Sun becomes a reality. Similarly, the human being who is untrained in super-sensible sight will have to take Steiner's world view on faith, but anyone who wishes to follow the processes of attaining super-sensible sight, the world Steiner describes will become a reality. The first step into super-sensible sight is the process Steiner calls, Imagination. Through Imagination, we humans are able to view, for example, the processes of destruction at work while we are thinking.

[page 21, 22] It then becomes possible to observe further how the soul element that works and weaves in us and which, within the limitations I have described, brings about destruction, is in fact also a part of an overall whole. What I have termed, 'soul development' pushes forward from ordinary consciousness to spiritual vision as I have written in my book [The Riddle of Man](#). This visionary consciousness makes it possible to attain knowledge through Imagination. Imagination in this sense reveals not what is externally visible to the senses but something that belongs to the human being although it is not physically visible. This element, which is the first thing to be perceived by such newly awakened consciousness, is what I have been referring to recently as the body of formative forces.

This is the supersensible body of the human being which is active throughout our whole life from birth, or one should say from conception, right up to our physical death. It is also the bearer of our memories, and as a supersensible being it is linked to a supersensible world that is external to it. Thus our physical life with its ordinary consciousness is like an island. Around this island and imbuing it lies what links our body of formative forces with the supersensible world by which this body, in its turn, is surrounded. We then see that our world of inner pictures and thoughts, just as I have described it, while being connected to our physical brain that provides it with a firm ground to stand on, is in fact carried by the body of formative forces. This is the bearer of our thinking, and our thoughts are formed within this body of formative forces, so that in the activity of thinking the human being lives within this body of formative forces.

The body of formative forces is also called by Steiner in other places the etheric body or the life body. This refers to an

entity visible to supersensible sight, namely, that of Imagination, which disappears shortly after death and dissolves into the cosmos at which time the etheric body as "bearer of our thinking" gives up to the cosmos all these memories to the cosmos. The portion of the cosmos containing all the memories of living humans is called in the Bible, [The Book of Jashar](#), and in esoteric knowledge, the Akasha or Akashic Record or Akashic Chronicles.

The next level of supersensible entity attached to the human being is called the astral body and it contains our feelings and emotions. To discover the thoughts which fill these feelings and emotions requires a higher level of supersensible perception or soul experience known as Inspiration. This is another human capability of which modern science is as yet unaware. [\(1\)](#)

[page 22, 23] Proceeding now to another soul experience, that of feeling, we discover that things are different. Our feelings and also our emotions and passions do not relate to our life of soul in the way our thinking does. The spiritual researcher finds that the ordinary thoughts we have are attached to the body of formative forces but that this is not the case with our feelings and emotions. Our feelings and emotions live in us in a much more subconscious way; and at the same time they are linked with something much more far-reaching than merely our life between birth and death. I do not mean that we are without thoughts in this aspect of life, for all feelings are also imbued with thoughts. But the thoughts which imbue our feelings do not usually enter our consciousness; they lie below the level of consciousness. As our feelings surge up they are interspersed with thoughts, but these thoughts are more far-reaching, and we can only find them by rising up to a higher form of consciousness than that of Imagination, namely, Inspiration, an inspired consciousness — by which I am not referring to anything connected with superstition. You can read about this in detail in my books [\(2\)](#).

The third level is known as Intuition, and along with the other two processes of Imagination and Inspiration, it is capitalized to distinguish it from the mundane processes of the same name.

[page 25] Turning now to the realm of the will, we note that this is very far removed indeed from what human beings have in their ordinary consciousness. What do we know about what goes on inside us when the thought 'I want that' turns into the reaching out of our hand? The actual processes of the will are asleep in the human being. With regard to feelings and emotions we can at least state that in these we dream in ourselves. It is because the will is asleep with regard to ordinary consciousness that the question of freedom is so very fraught. [RJM NOTE: i.e., ... the question of freedom is so heavily laden with unconscious processes.]

We can only reach an understanding of the processes embedded in the will if we apply the spiritual consciousness of genuine Intuition, by which I do not mean the vague and hazy kind of everyday intuitive inkling. In my writings I have referred to the three stages of consciousness: Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition. To get into the realm of the will that ought to work and live in us it first has to be hauled up out of the depths of the soul. One then also finds that this will element, too, is imbued with thought, with spiritual thoughts — not ordinary ones which are something separate.

Steiner leads us to understand that Intuition is a direct revelation from the spiritual world, from the world of the Ego or "I" — a world of which, like that of the Will, we are completely oblivious, up until now. And Intuition as a gift from the spiritual world is fraught or pregnant with possibilities for spiritual activities which, when applied in our lives, are the essence of human freedom. Humans bring a plan from previous lives into this one and that plan is executed as one would a plan for building a house: one does not consider it an infringement on one's freedom if the house is executed according to one's plan. But one might, if one were unconscious of having made the plan in the first place, which is the case of humans who have no access to Intuition.

[page 25, 26] The way we carry our will within us means that what works into it is not only what we have experienced in the spiritual world or what works into our feelings and emotions between death and a new birth. It is our experiences in former lives on earth that are at work in our will. And at the same time impulses for future lives on earth also live in what we develop and cultivate in our

present will.

Genuine spiritual research sees that human life as a whole falls into two parts, those between birth and death, and the much longer ones — because the next physical existence has to be prepared over long aeons — which are experienced in the spiritual world. Human life as a whole is composed of these lives, lives on earth over and over again, and spiritual lives over and over again. This is not some fantastic notion; it is what we find if we learn to focus our spiritual eyes on all that is eternal, immortal in the human soul.

None of this excludes human freedom. If I build a house this year in which I shall live after two years, this does not detract from my freedom any more than does the way one life on earth determines the lives that will follow. It would be a misconception to put this forward as something that infringes the idea of human freedom.

Everyone has known someone who, in the middle of their lives, suddenly underwent some kind of "conversion" experience. This person led one kind of life before the experience, and suddenly as if compelled to change, an entirely new life style emerges. Steiner tells us that this amazing change comes about as a result of a violent end to a previous lifetime for that person.

[page 27, 28] When a violent death intervenes in someone's life this has consequences for the next life on earth by bringing it about that at a specific point in that life a change of direction occurs. Research into the life of the soul is going on even now, but on the whole this investigates only the most external aspects. A moment can arrive in a person's life when the whole course of his destiny changes and he steps out on new paths as though inwardly challenged to do so. Such things are termed 'conversions' in America because people like to give things a name. But it is not necessarily always a matter of religion. A person can be forced into a new direction of life, a permanent change in the direction in which his will takes him. A radical change like this in the direction of one's will originates in the violent end of the previous life. How frequently the type of death is of importance especially in the middle of the subsequent life is made obvious to concrete research. If death comes about naturally through sickness or old age, then it has much more importance for the life between death and the next birth than it has for the next earthly life.

When we receive spiritual knowledge of our destiny we begin to comprehend our destiny, we awake to our destiny, we see it in clarity whereas before we saw it as if in some vague dream we forgot about upon arising.

[page 30] From that moment onwards you realize that having this experience of destiny in such a purely spiritual way enables you to explain how destiny has positioned you in life, how one's destiny hangs on threads that have been spun out from former lives on earth as well as lives between death and a new birth, threads that then spin on from this life into the one that follows. You realize that ordinary consciousness merely dreams its way through destiny; ordinary consciousness merely accepts destiny without understanding it, just as one accepts dreams. Spiritual consciousness, in which we wake up as we wake up from dreams into ordinary consciousness, gains us a new relationship to destiny. We recognize destiny as that which works with us on our overall life, the life that proceeds on and on through births and deaths.

Between birth and death we have a consciousness which is spatial, whereas between death and a new birth our consciousness is temporal — based on looking backwards at our previous life in the flesh. What we do, what we think about, how we live thus influences directly our experiences as we spirit during the time between death and a new birth.

[page 31] Of course what happens after death is in some way connected with the life we live here in our physical body. Here through our body we have the consciousness of the normal waking state. After death, though, we have a consciousness that is not spatial and founded on our nervous system but temporal and built on looking backwards. We have in our nervous system the counterbalance and counterstroke for our ordinary consciousness between birth and death, whereas the foundation for our consciousness in the spiritual world between death and a new birth is formed by what is already in our consciousness here. Just as we are here surrounded by the world, so, once we have

died, does our life present itself before us as an important organ. Therefore much depends on the consciousness we have while we are in our physical body, since this reaches out into the consciousness that comes to meet us after death.

How we exist in the body determines how we will exist in the spirit later. Will we be bound to an earthly environment or will we enter a spiritual environment? The consequences are important, not only to us, but also to those left behind on the Earth because if we remain bound to the Earth, we will operate in a detrimental way. Steiner gives us an example of an atheist, which he calls extreme in his time, but which doesn't seem too extreme some 90 years later in our time, especially given the large number of atheists in the twentieth century and destroyers (e.g. terrorists) in the nascent twenty-first century.

[page 32] Take an extreme case which, however, is not very likely to occur. Think of a person who resists all supersensible ideas, someone who has become an atheist and has not gained even from religion the slightest feeling that he might want to take an interest in such things. (I know that I am speaking in paradoxes, but what I am saying has a good foundation in spiritual science.) Such a person is condemning himself to remain in the sphere of the earth, to remain here with his consciousness, whereas someone who has taken in spiritual ideas can enter into a spiritual environment. The person who has ideas based solely on the senses condemns himself to remain in the sense-perceptible environment.

We can work in a beneficial way when we are in our physical body in the physical world, for here our physical body acts as a protective cloak. But if we remain present in the physical world after death we work in a detrimental way. When our consciousness harbors physical ideas and inner pictures after death we become destroyers. I have already pointed out, in connection with the laws of heredity, how the human being's forces intervene in the physical world even when he is in the spiritual world. Those who cultivate only a physical consciousness and thus condemn themselves to remaining in the physical world become the focus for destructive forces that interfere in what happens in people's lives and in the world at large.

Impressed as you may be by these revelations, you may think that you have experienced none of them personally, unable as you may be to see into the spiritual world, and thus they are worthless to you. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as a map someone carefully created of the terrain can help you avoid a precipitous fall into an icy fjord on a hiking trip in Norway, so also the map Steiner has created of the spiritual world can benefit you directly.

[page 34] One might easily presume that to be someone who can enter into the spiritual world one must of necessity become a spiritual researcher. This is not necessary, although I have written a great deal in my book [How to Know Higher Worlds](#) about what the soul must do in order to enter there. Anyone can do this to some extent today, but not everyone needs to do so. What you develop in your soul is an entirely inner affair; but what it leads to is that the truths being researched can be formulated into concepts, so that you can clothe in thoughts and ideas like those I have put forward today — what a spiritual researcher tells you. It is something that can be communicated. One of the laws of spiritual research is that it does not matter whether you have found these things out through your own research or whether you have been informed about them by a reliable source. It is not a matter of finding these things out yourself, for the important thing is that you have them and develop them within yourself.

This next passage caused me to laugh out loud when I reached the end of it. In the story, Steiner illustrates that arguments against spiritual science brought about by materialists and atheists could just as easily be promulgated by any competent spiritual scientist without breaking a sweat. Those who call serious spiritual scientists *dilettantes* are very likely projecting an unconscious dilettantism of their own upon others.

[page 36, 37] In 1869 Eduard von Hartmann came forward with his *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, turning against Darwinism, which saw the world purely in external terms, and pointing to the need for inner forces, though he did this in an inadequate, merely philosophical manner — having no spiritual research to go on. Those whose enthusiasm focused on Darwinism were of course prepared

to call this philosopher a dilettante to whom it was not necessary to listen. Writings were published mocking the dilettante Eduard von Hartmann and stating that there was no call for a genuine scientist to take note of such views.

An anonymous paper appeared with a brilliant refutation of Hartmann's thoughts. The scientists and those who thought as they did were in full agreement with this paper, for it completely refuted Eduard von Hartmann. Everything that could be brought forward in a scholarly manner on the basis of science was indeed brought forward in this paper written by an anonymous author against Hartmann — in rather the same way as objections are put forward today against spiritual research. This paper was much applauded. Haeckel intoned: 'Here is a genuine scientist writing to refute that dilettante Hartmann; here we see what a real scientist can do; indeed I could not have written anything better myself; let him come forward and we will accept him as one of our own.' In short, the scientists made a good deal of propaganda about this paper which suited them so well, and it was soon out of print. A second edition was needed, and then the author himself came forward: he was Eduard von Hartmann!

In Lecture 2, Steiner introduces the concept of the double and geographical-based medicine. But first he fills in some details about the geocentric view of the cosmos. One salubrious effect this view had on people is that when they died they were not earthbound because they knew a spiritual sphere circled the Earth. Therefore they did not become destroyers as is the lot of all spirits who are locked into the earth-sphere after passing through the gate of death. With the advent of the Copernican view that the Earth circled the Sun, people lost this protection from becoming earthbound after death. Since the beginning of the fifth post-Atlantean Epoch in 1453, it became necessary for humans to spend "this life searching increasingly for inner pictures, concepts and ideas about supersensible matters." We can *not* wait and see what will happen when we die.

[page 45, 46] We cannot do this because it is necessary for us to know *now* — between our birth and our death — about certain matters concerning the spiritual world, as I pointed out yesterday, in order to be in possession of these inner pictures and ideas when we step through the gate of death.

This was not the same in earlier periods of human evolution. As you know, up to the sixteenth century, when the Copernican view was presented, people had quite different beliefs about the structure of the universe. Obviously it was necessary for human progress, and to enable human freedom to enter into the evolution of humanity, that the Copernican view of the world should make its appearance on the scene, just as it is now necessary for spiritual science to appear. Nevertheless, the physical view of the world which people had before the arrival of Copernicanism — call it wrong, if you wish — that view of a physical world in which the earth stood still while the sun and the stars circled round its skies, and where beyond those skies there was a spiritual sphere where spiritual beings lived, that was a view which human beings could still take with them through the gate of death without being held back in the earthly sphere once they had died. It was a view of the world which did not cause them to become destroyers in the earthly sphere once they had passed through the gate of death. But when Copernicanism burst upon the scene it brought a view of the whole universe spread out in space ruled only by spatial laws; and it was when Copernicanism showed the earth circling round the sun that this view bound human beings to physical, sense-perceptible existence and prevented them from rising up into the spiritual world in the appropriate way after death.

It prevented humans from *automatically* rising up in the spiritual world after death as they did before Copernicanism was universally accepted; it essentially required that human beings develop and nurture views (pictures, concepts, and ideas) of the spiritual world on a volitional basis in order to rise into the spiritual world after death. Those who succumbed to the Baconian view — that all they could learn about the world must come from sense-perceptual data and who presupposed that meant that all of the world was comprised solely of material things and forces — they were the ones likely to bound to the earth-sphere after death and become destructive forces. What is needed is for people to be concerned both about the world of effects *and* the world of causes which underlie the effects. (Page 48)

[page 48] We must imbue ourselves with this feeling entirely if we are to understand rightly the immeasurable and profound significance of what is achieved through living together in spiritual

collaboration now and in the future of humanity.

This is not something that can be gained on the basis of any kind of clubby fellowship, for it is a sacred task laid upon present and future humanity by the divine spiritual beings who govern the world. People will be unable to avoid taking in at least some inner conceptions about the supersensible world because such conceptions will less and less be forthcoming from the sense-perceptible world. By its very progress, science will increasingly drive conceptions about the supersensible world out of the world of the senses.

With science removing systematically every aspect of spirituality (which it considers to be superstition), people will less and less receive conceptions of the supersensible world from science. It will be up to human beings to heed the impulse received from the spiritual beings as their major source of inner conceptions about the supersensible world. Since this can only be done volitionally, one can choose to do nothing, but to do nothing to counteract the tendencies of science is to condemn oneself to a lugubrious end.

[page 48, 49] If human beings failed to take in any supersensible, spiritual concepts, this would eventually exclude them entirely from the spiritual world; they would be condemning themselves to becoming after death totally bound up with the physical earth alone, and with what the physical earth will one day become.

Since the physical earth will become a corpse in the future, human beings would thus be facing the frightful prospect of condemning themselves to inhabiting a corpse in the guise of its soul if they failed to decide that they must learn how to live in the spiritual world and take root there. A most important task has thus indeed been set for the cultivation of spiritual science. Once every day we should fill our soul with this sacred thought so as never again to lose our enthusiasm for this matter of spiritual science.

One practical way of filling our soul daily with a sacred thought is to recite the first [14 verses of the John Gospel](#) each morning, whose fifth verse says, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." This exercise was shared with me by Kristina Kaine who said the practice goes back to the Essenes. Assiduous recitation of these verses while alive will help one to remain linked through love to those souls of loved ones living on Earth when one is spiriting in the world beyond Earth. The alternative is unpleasant to consider.

[page 49] All those inner conceptions which can multiply more and more if we join in with the many concepts about the spiritual world which have already come from that world into our spiritual stream, all these conceptions that are coming to us enable us to free ourselves from being bound to the earth, to what is destructive in the earthly realm, so that we can derive our work from another direction. So we do remain linked with the souls we have left behind on the earth and with those with whom we are karmically connected, and also with the earth, but from the direction of other realms. We are in fact more intensively linked with the souls left behind on the earth when our links with them derive from higher spiritual realms and when we are not condemned by a purely materialistic way of life to haunt the earth like ghosts without being linked through love with anything on it but are turned instead into focuses of destruction.

Do you believe in light after death? You may have done a double take when you read the previous sentence, but I mean it quite literally. We will each reside in darkness after death if we do not make the effort now while among the living. If you find a resonant chord with the people Steiner characterizes in the next passage, you may consider this a wake-up call.

[page 51, 52] People today feel uncomfortable if they have to acquire spiritual concepts. They like going to meetings where they are shown lantern slides or similar things and therefore do not have to think in a supersensible way; they like to see things in front of them, or at least hear lectures that tell them only about what they anyway always have before their eyes. People today shy away from making an effort to ascend to concepts that are more difficult here because they have no outer object since their objects are the facts that relate to the supersensible world. Over there, however, these concepts are the forces which actually bring the reality of the world to us.

Through spiritual ideas and concepts we gain the wisdom we need in order to have light over there where otherwise everything will be in darkness. What we attain here in the way of wisdom is light, spiritual light, over there. Wisdom is spiritual light. We need wisdom in order not to find ourselves in darkness over there. Not to acquire spiritual concepts is the best way of having no light over there. And when one has no light one moves away again from the sphere into which one ought to be casting light; one drifts back to earth and wanders about there as a focus of destruction. At most one might be used from time to time by a black magician in order to provide inspiration for certain quite specific functions, but also for destructive activities on the earth.

"Wisdom," Steiner says, "is something we need so that we can have light after death." But, he adds, we need something more, namely, love. But the love of the physical world is a low kind of love which will cause us to remain attached to the Earth will lead us to be agents of destruction. I wonder how many animal lovers, tree-huggers, and environmentalists will fall into this category when they are spiriting.

[page 53] Love, however, is something that can be either high or low depending on the realm in which it unfolds. If you pass through the gate of death and then have to remain in the earth realm as a focus of destruction, well, this is also due to having developed great love. The fact that you have to remain like this is a consequence of your having been bound up with purely naturalistic concepts, but then you employ this love for works of destruction; you love the work of destruction and are condemned to observe yourself loving the work of destruction.

Preachers today are still for the most exhorting their flocks to believe the same things as they have for millennia, but all this preaching will be no help unless it is accompanied by descriptions of what the world will be like for humans after passing through the gate of death. Religions, by not changing, have begun unknowingly to relegate their deceased members to imprisonment in the earthly sphere. Why must religions and preaching change today? Because of the materialistic world we are imbued with from our birth — which only came into being in recent centuries.

[page 53, 54] In former times when scientific, naturalistic concepts did not yet exist, and because people had not yet become infected with the merely material interests which have gained so much ground since the sixteenth century, it was in order for preachers to talk about the supersensible world in the way the various religious denominations still want to talk today. But this is not in order now. In deep compassion for humanity it unfortunately has to be said that people today often become ensnared for the very reason that they want to promote their own eternal bliss in an egoistic way via the religious denominations. By this very means they become excessively ensnared in the physical, sense-perceptible natural world, thus blocking their own ascent once they have passed through the gate of death.

It should be clear that spiritual science provides the essentials necessary for human beings in our time to avoid being ensnared in the clutches of the earthly sphere and thereby to avoid becoming a force for destruction when their time for living is over. It should also be clear where the sources of destruction in our present world originate. And what the corrective actions should be.

[page 54] This is yet another reason why it is necessary to emphasize profoundly how important it is for humanity to occupy itself with spiritual science in the present time and in the future, for those who are unable to form ideas about the life after death deserve the utmost commiseration. One of many reasons for the need to try and spread the word about spiritual science is that it must be done out of deepest sympathy for people because it is so lamentable if, from lack of understanding, they continue to resist making any approach to the ideas of spiritual science.

When we are born we are new to our body when we arrive in it as a soul. We are like a child who has inherited a large home from his deceased parents — before it has examined all the rooms, someone has taken up residence in one of the rooms. This being which enters us at birth is what is referred to in the title of this book as the human double. It lives below our consciousness, in our subconscious, like a hitchhiker in the back of a pickup truck of which we are unaware. The characteristics of this human double is that of an ahrimanic spirit in the sense that it strives for power,

immortality in the earthly sphere, and will manipulate its host to achieve that. It wishes for us to become free, but immoral.

[page 56, 57] So, we arrive in this world with the garment of our organism without being able to reach down into it with our soul to any great extent. Instead, shortly before we are born, not very long before we are born, there is also an opportunity for another spiritual being, apart from our soul, to take possession of our body, namely, of the subconscious part of our body. This is a fact. Shortly before we are born another being indwells us; in the terminology we use today we would call this an ahrimanic being. It is just as much in us as is our own soul.

These beings lead their lives by making use of human beings to enable them to inhabit the sphere in which they wish to dwell. They have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence and a very significantly developed will, but no qualities of soul, nothing like what we would call the human qualities of soul and heart and mind. So we proceed through our life while having our soul and also a double who is far cleverer, far cleverer than we are, very intelligent, but with a Mephistophelian intelligence, an ahrimanic intelligence, and in addition also an ahrimanic will, a very strong will, a will that is much more akin to the forces of nature than it is to our human will which is ruled by our heart and mind.

Even the electrical currents which course along our nerves are due to the presence of these ahrimanic beings. No wonder that when our scientists attempt to create robotic beings, they use such electric forces — the robots are purely ahrimanic constructions and are basically immortal if maintained indefinitely, which would suit any ahrimanic being.

[page 57] In the nineteenth century science discovered that our nervous system is interspersed with forces of electricity. Science was quite right. But the scientists are wrong if they believe that the nervous force which belongs to us and which provides the foundation for our inner world of pictures and thinking has anything to do with the electric currents that course along our nerves. Those electric currents are the forces that are introduced into our being by the being I have just been describing. They do not belong to our being at all. There are electrical currents in us, but they are of a purely ahrimanic nature.

These ahrimanic beings cannot stand to remain in the human body at the point of death and must leave. This has come about because of the Christ being who came to Earth, entered a human body, and went through the process of death in the deed that Steiner calls the Mystery of Golgotha. Here we have another salubrious effect of that deed.

[page 58] If the Mystery of Golgotha had not taken place, if Christ had not passed through the Mystery of Golgotha, these beings would long since have gained the ability on earth to remain in the human body after a karmically predetermined death. They would then have gained control over human evolution on earth and would have become the masters of this human evolution on the earth.

The presence of our ahrimanic double is something each human being must come to know about, otherwise our light after death will greatly dimmed. People need the concept of the ahrimanic double when they pass through the gate of death.

[page 58, 59] Everything we experience here, including what lies beneath the threshold of consciousness, is needed by us after death when we have to look back to this life and in this looking back must comprehend it, for being unable to do this is the worst thing that can happen to us. But our concepts for understanding this life as we look back over it are insufficient if we cannot throw light on a being who plays such a part in our life as does this ahrimanic being who takes possession of us before birth and is ever-present as a feature of our subconscious. Our concepts for understanding this life are insufficient if we cannot throw light on these things; for wisdom is transformed into light after we die.

The health of all future humankind depends on the dissemination of the knowledge of the ahrimanic double, a knowledge which secret brotherhoods have withheld from humankind, up until now. Steiner explains clearly that the time has come for this knowledge to be revealed because the current stage of human evolution warrants it, in fact,

requires it. As he discusses these issues in the next passage, notice how ahrimanic beings are at the root of our bodily diseases and luciferic beings at the root of neuroses.

[page 60] Something is opening up here which will in future definitely have to be pursued if humanity is not to meet with endless hindrances, endless frightful happenings. This double of whom I have been speaking is neither more nor less than the originator of all physical diseases that arise spontaneously from within, and to know this being fully is what is meant by organic medicine. Diseases that come spontaneously from within, not those caused by external injuries, do not come from the soul but from this being who is the originator of all organic diseases that arise spontaneously from within. This being is the originator of all organic diseases, while his brother, whose nature is luciferic, rather than ahrimanic, is the originator of all neuro-psychological and neurotic diseases, all diseases which are not really diseases at all but merely, as one says, nervous diseases, hysterical diseases and so on.

Steiner explains that what geologists know of the Earth we live upon is equivalent to the knowledge that could be acquired about living human beings in his audience if someone examined an X-ray of the room. All that would be visible would be the bones of those present. All the organic matter, the living forces at work within the human being would be overlooked. The living forces at work in the Earth do not show up in the eyes and instruments of geologists, but only the supersensible sight of the most delicate instrument of all, the human being. We all know from biology that the various differentiated organs of the human body are distributed around it: the pineal gland is separated from the kidneys, the heart from the spleen, the eyes from ears, etc. Similarly the Earth:

[page 61, 62] And the earth is differentiated in the same way. Our earth is certainly not a being that sends up the same emanations to its inhabitants wherever they may be. All kinds of different emanations come up out of the earth in different regions. There are various forces, magnetic, electrical and so on, but also a great deal more in the living realm which rise up out of the earth and influence human beings in manifold ways at different places on its surface. The influences on people vary depending on the geographical formations.

Geography as we know it is like faint X-ray of the Earth regions to which whose living forces the ahrimanic beings are attracted. Steiner explains how certain pre-Columbian migrations from Europe to America were made by humans attracted to what could be learned about medicine on the American continent. As an example of how the forces emanating from the ground differ, he tells us that the ones, "which rise up out of the earth and take hold of the human double, are of the very best kind in the island of [Ireland](#)." (Page 168)

We have all heard the stories about Leif Erickson sailing to North America from Norway before the tenth century, but have you ever wondered, as I have, "Why didn't people continue to sail to America between that time and Columbus' time some 500 or so years later?" In the Lecture 2, Steiner explains that the pause in journeying to America came about to protect the peoples from developing a relationship with the ahrimanic double while still at the *intellectual soul* level of development. It is only since Columbus' re-discovery of America which coincided with the advent of the *consciousness soul* that we are able to attain a right relationship with the double.

[page 64, 65] During the centuries preceding the fourteenth century people had to be protected against the double. The double had to disappear from people's view and has only been permitted to reappear now in our age when human beings must bring order into their relationship with it. For the double to disappear from people's view a very significant arrangement had to be carried out which it was only possible to set in train in the following way. Gradually from the ninth, the tenth century onwards the situation was created in Europe that caused Europeans to lose a certain contact which they had previously had, a contact that had been important for people of an earlier time, during the seventh, the sixth post-Christian centuries. Beginning from the ninth century and reaching a culmination in the twelfth all traffic with America, such as was possible with the ships of the time, was discontinued.

This will no doubt sound rather strange to you, and you are likely to exclaim that history has never told you of such a thing! Well, in many ways history is a legend. For in centuries of European

development long ago ships did indeed set off from Norway, from what was then Norway, to America. Of course it had a different name then and was not called America.

People knew about the region in America where especially those magnetic forces rise up which bring human beings into a relationship with the double. The most noticeable relations with the double emanate from that part of the earth which is covered by the American continent. And in those early centuries people sailed in Norwegian boats to America where they then studied diseases. Coming from Europe, people went to America to study the diseases caused by the earth's magnetism. That is where we can find the mysterious origin of ancient European medicine. That is where it was possible to observe the course of diseases, which would not have been possible in Europe where people were more susceptible to the influences of the double.

Amazingly, Europe's forgetting about America was due to the Catholic Church which expunged from the records any mention of this land we now call America. (Page 65) It was, in fact, the Irish monks such as Columban and St. Gall who put up spiritual walls to insulate Europe from the influences which might else have come to Europe from the Americas. (Page 66, 67) Not surprisingly, America was re-discovered during the onset of the age of materialism in the fifteenth century, and its early exploration was dominated by a strong desire for gold.

[page 67, 68] Only when the age of materialism began was America rediscovered. Then America was discovered under the influence of the greed for gold, under the influence of a purely materialistic culture with which people have to reckon in the fifth post-Atlantean era and with which they must establish an appropriate relationship.

These are the things that are genuine history. And they are what throw light on what is real. The earth has to be described as a living being. It has geographical differentiations in the way the most varied forces stream up out of all kinds of different terrestrial regions. That is why human beings must not be separated off according to terrestrial region but must take on from one another whatever each region can uniquely produce in the way of what is good and great. And that is why the world view of spiritual science is mindful of the need to create something that can be truly accepted by all nations in all regions. Human beings must progress through a mutual exchange of their spiritual riches. It is this that is crucial.

One of the prominent geographical structures in North America is its long ranges of mountains from north-south. The Rockies in particular which extend northward close to the north magnetic pole. In such regions of the Earth, the influence of the arhimanic double is particularly strong.

[page 69] There is one specific part of the earth's underlying ground which has the greatest kinship with those forces. When people go there they enter into that sphere of influence, but when they go away again they are no longer influenced in that way. These are geographical forces; this is not a matter of ethnicity or nationality but purely of geography. The region where that which streams upwards from below has the greatest influence on the double and where, because of this kinship with the double it reflects back to the earth as well, this is the region where most of the mountain ranges do not cross from west to east but run mainly from north to south, where the magnetic North Pole is nearby for this, too, is connected with those forces. This is the region where, through the prevailing external conditions, above all a kinship is developed with the mephistophelian-ahrimanic nature. This kinship has many effects on the further development of the earth. So people must not go along blindly with the earth's development, for they must see and understand these conditions.

Steiner at this point in Lecture 2 launches into what could seem like a lambasting of historians and the press for missing the reality of the underlying events, but he says he was not criticizing, but characterizing how those involved recorded those events.

"Medicine can only endure if it is a spiritual science." (Page 73) Certainly medicine is not a spiritual science today — no where close. Drugs and invasive surgery are usually the first resorts to healing people, not the last resort. What if the drugs administered to fight these diseases merely feed the ahrimanic demons something it could not get directly from human being itself? Medicine was once a spiritual science, and will have to become one again. (Page 74) The

underground practitioners of spiritual science will one day arise as the early Christians did from their catacombs into the light of day. Once they did, the Romans were converted to Christianity without any Christian firing a shot.

[page 75] The Christians of those times actually had to descend into physical catacombs while up above them all the things went on which those distinguished Romans considered right and proper while those fantastical Christians were down below. But once a few centuries had passed things had changed. The Roman world had been swept away and what had been down below in the catacombs had risen to the surface. What had once dominated culture had been torn up by its roots.

We record and pay tribute to one's *physical* birthday, but rarely to one's *spiritual* birthday, the day one dies and is born into the spiritual world. In this next passage Steiner allows those present at the lecture in St. Gallen to join him in taking note of what I would call Stinde's "spiritday." I mention that my own mother's spiritday was appropriately on Mother's Day, 2000.

[page 76] At this moment I am thinking once again about Sophie Stinde, who worked so faithfully at the Goetheanum, because the anniversary of her physical death is approaching again, her supersensible birthday into spiritual life.

If we attempt to model our lives out of the classical teachings of the Greeks such as Plato, Aristotle, etal, we will find a huge gap due to their obliviousness to things that we are aware of today. This is a consequence of the course of human evolution which shifted dramatically between the Greco-Latin Age and the current age which began in 1453. The things humans of that time were kept unaware of are the very things we must be aware of today. Those ancient Greeks soared to great heights of intellectual achievement as befit their placement in the intellectual soul age, but today we find ourselves immersed in the middle of the consciousness soul age and we must become aware of things the ancient Greeks had no clue about.

[page 80] Throughout the whole period of the fourth post-Atlantean epoch it was in order for human beings to be kept unaware about certain things. But many of the things about which the people of the fourth post-Atlantean epoch, the Greco-Latin epoch, could be kept unaware are the very ones of which the human beings of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch must become more and more conscious. In fact, this fifth post-Atlantean age will anyway be one in which much that was formerly outside consciousness will have to enter into the consciousness of human souls.

What our task is becomes clear: we must prepare ourselves for the approaching age(3) by developing spiritual capacities to accompany our intellectual inheritance from the Greeks and the consciousness soul capabilities we are currently developing.

[page 81] This part of humanity will certainly represent the best basis for what is to come in the sixth post-Atlantean age, the age that will follow our present one, but in the fifth post-Atlantean age during which it is making these preparations, this part of humanity will have little inclination to turn its attention strongly to matters of the physical plane. It will be concerning itself a great deal with bringing the life of heart and soul on to a higher level and putting certain spiritual matters in order. And because of this others, who are rather less suited to such spiritual life, will be enabled to seize certain conditions of power for themselves.

As Steiner talks about developing our spiritual capacities, I search around me for examples of how this might already happening. Something that has puzzled me in recent years has been a certain technique of film-making where isolated facts of multiple sets of people are shown in a haphazard fashion without any discernible pattern. The various groups of people seem to have no connection with each other, and I feel frustrated by being unable to perceive a connection between them. Slowly as the film progresses, I am able to grasp the connections and to discern the underlying pattern which will tie all the pieces together by the end of the movie. Movie-makers more and more, it seems to me, have been incorporating into their movies techniques which equip us for our experiences in the spiritual world to come.

[page 83] There is also another fact that those who know about it regard as very important, so that

because of its importance they must bring it into connection with various others. I have mentioned this in lectures from time to time. (4) When you have stepped across the threshold to the spiritual world and are making spiritual observations there, you find that single facts, always individual facts, appear before your soul. It then transpires that facts which at first sight appear to the spiritual eye to have nothing to do with one another are actually connected when you grasp their meaning. Such facts illumine and clarify each other and then enable you to press on further into the essence of the spiritual world in the profoundest sense.

What is evil? This is a subject that Steiner clarified for me and which has helped me to understand the world much better since that time. "Evil is a good out of its time." Think of a weed. People consider it an evil plant, don't they? And yet what is a weed? It's a plant where and when you don't want it to be. A plant out of its time.

What is terrorism? Those activists who are murdering innocent people of all ages in various parts of the world — what are they doing? What effects do these acts of violence have on those who are killed precipitously and what effects do they have on the world we live in? In these next passages Steiner discusses acts of terrorism which plagued his time during the Great War.

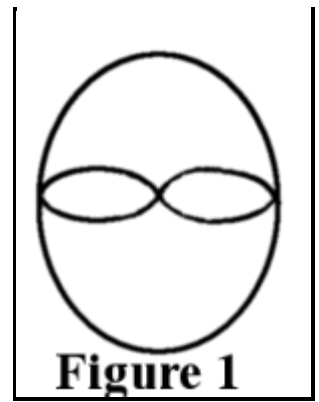
[page 85] The situation is that the souls who have passed violently through the gate of death retain something on account of having lost their life in that way here in the physical world; they have retained certain possibilities of being able to make use of forces which they have had here, for instance the force of the intellect. . . . These people, these activists who murder people, are only doing it in order to draw attention to the misery in the world; it is a means of incitement and so on. But if you analyze the matter and try to bring it into the context of social laws you notice immediately that none of this has any meaning. It becomes meaningful, however, if you know that souls sent up into the spiritual world by such means understand things up there which they ought not to understand yet and which souls who have died in the normal way even shy away from. . . . if you analyze the matter and look at the individuals who have been dispatched to their death in this way you realize that they must have been selected on purpose, though not on the basis of criteria applying to the physical world but rather on the basis of criteria applying to the spiritual world.

By first murdering people using killers(5) and activists and then using skilled mediums to obtain information from their souls, secret brotherhoods can dominate large masses of people. This happens through a normal process that is souped-up or supercharged and the result is a good which arrives out of its time or pure evil.

[page 89, 90] Indeed, it is actually an important task for a number of people who are now passing through the gate of death to use — when they have become mature enough for certain secrets — the normal forces in connection with those secrets rather than learn about them through a foreshortened experience by using forces brought into play by a violent death. These human souls do indeed have the task of finding out about these forces and inspiring people who are here on the earth with them, people who are not mediums but who should find out about them in a normal and proper way through Inspiration. In normal life one has to wait for this. When things that ought to come later make their appearance as spiritual premature births by the means I have described — through criminal occult activity — when this happens those whose intentions towards humanity are not good, in other words those who are black or grey magicians, can gain possession of such secrets.

We live in a materialistic world for which the idea of a spiritual world is null and void, a non-starter, nil, zip, nada, nothing, a big ZERO. But our chore in this fifth post-Atlantean age is to develop our knowledge of spiritual science to the point where we can say with confidence to those materialists enthralled by ahrimanic powers and beings, as Faust did to Mephistopheles, "In your Naught I find my All." Inside of the materialism's *Big Zero*, we can find spiritual science's *Infinity* — which I represent diagrammatically in [Figure 1](#). (Page 94, 95)

[page 95] The attitude of mind must develop in which one can look into what the



materialistic view sees as 'naught' and there see the spiritual world.

Steiner closes Lecture 3 with a discussion of two ways in which people make progress today: (1) by noticing the importance of coincidences and (2) by noticing the manner in which spiritual insights are coming to people today.

[page 98, 99 (1)] Suppose you read of a particular person having died at a specific place and at a specific time. A number of things will suggest themselves to you if you ask yourself what would have happened if that person had died three months earlier or three months later. This is, of course, merely a question concerning supposed possibilities. But if you ask yourself such a question you can be sure that it can awaken forces in you through which you will reach different insights. Or perhaps you are traveling on a train and have a very important conversation with someone, a conversation that means a great deal to you; or something similar. A materialist will of course regard such things as pure coincidence. But someone who wants to find his way gradually into being able to look behind the scenery of existence, such a person will pay attention to such things. He will ponder these things, not by forcing them into conceptual forms but by sensing the feelings they generate. He will concern himself with these things because they are like hints of the forces at play between things that happen, forces that are more than merely mechanical or mathematical.

The second way reminds me of a caveat from Harry Boyd, "When you are swimming in a sewer, the best thing you can do is keep your mouth shut!" People are reluctant to talk about experiences which defy the cold rational logic of the materialistic world with its mechanical and mathematical precision. It is these very experiences which reveal the presence of the spiritual world and its salubrious effect upon our daily experience. Even the most recalcitrant atheist is tempted at times of inspiration like Steiner describes below to say, quietly, "Thank God!"

[page 99 (2)] The second, which I want to keep on and on mentioning, is that despite today's materialism much that is spiritual is being revealed to human beings. But people are embarrassed to say too much about spiritual experiences they may be having. When someone opens up a little and begins to tell you things because he has developed trust in you, you will hear about how one person did this or another did that. If a person tells you really honestly and candidly why he founded this newspaper or why he did something else, he is telling you a dream, something like a dream; he is describing these things as suggestions coming from the spiritual world. You will find this happening everywhere, much more than you would imagine. Many more things are put into practice out of spiritual impulses than you would think. Only people are embarrassed to admit to this because others do not take them seriously if they talk about such things.

In Lecture 4, he continues his rolling back the curtain to reveal what is "behind the scenes of external events." He is talking to an audience in whose minds the tragic events unfolding in the Great War are ever present, just as the events unfolding in our lives since September 11, 2001 have been in ours. He could be talking to us today:

[page 100] I want to broach a subject that so much needs to be discussed, a subject that the present tragic events in human life are forcing us to face, a subject that could be defined briefly with the words: Humanity urgently needs to find its way once more to knowledge and awareness of how what takes place here in the world on the physical plane is linked with a concrete spiritual world. Humanity urgently needs to become aware that a spiritual world is working down into every detail of existence in the physical world.

We are living in momentous times in this nascent millennium. Things all about us are in transition, and we must come to grasp what is transiting because the transition is not only here in the physical world, but also the spiritual world. People who not do give serious consideration to the events of the spiritual world will come into serious problems due their presupposition that only the material world is worth learning about.

[page 102] We are impelled by our sympathy for people who must have these ideas and who are doomed to take terrible things upon themselves if they do not have them.

Christians who profess to believe in God, to pray to God every day, and to have a personal relationship with God are often abhorred to hear someone who professes to be a Christian who talks about the hierarchy of spiritual beings. It's as if their very monotheism were threatened by the thought of other spiritual beings such as Angels, Archangels, etc. Out of their awareness, people such as this have established a personal relationship with their personally assigned Angel (traditionally called Guardian Angel), which is good, but they refer to this Angel as God, which is not good.

[page 103] Let us be clear about what this means. When a person's only relationship with the spiritual world is the one that is regarded today in religious circles as the usual one, the one cultivated by a Church that fancies itself as enlightened, then that person only has a specific relationship with the spiritual world, a relationship which, although it is one of feeling, only concerns the protecting Angelos, the angel being with whom he does have a real relationship. And such a person then refers to that angel-being, the only being he can relate to and have certain feelings for, as his god. If he is a Christian he calls this angel-being Christ. He mistakes the angel-being for Christ. It is perhaps difficult to imagine this, but it is so. Protestant theologians who fancy themselves to be enlightened warn strongly against polytheism so that people should gain a direct relationship with the one being, Christ. But however much they talk to people about Christ, what they are saying about Christ refers solely to the individual's relationship with his own angel-being. Thus in our time monotheism is in danger of becoming the worship by each human being of his own individual angel.

One consequence of this prevalent way of thinking of one God is similar to what is happening in the world today: each country wants to have its own god.

[page 103, 104] In fact the monotheists of today each pray only to their own angel, but as the words resound together which each is speaking to his own angel in an egoistic relationship with his own angel-being, they think that they are talking of a god whom they all share. If this were to develop further, people as individual human beings would begin to develop more and more what we already see nations manifesting in a terrible way. Although still speaking theoretically of the One God, they do not seriously want to recognize this divinity, especially now, for each nation wants to have its own god.

We see today numerous voices in the mass media saying things like, "We must get rid of sweat shops," or "We must have minimum wage standards for the whole world," etc. It seems as if so-called liberals today, who are in no way distinguishable from socialists of Steiner's time, are wanting to apply the standards of the most industrialized nation of the world to the least industrialized ones.

[page 105, 106] Humanity today wants to apply the same yardstick to everything and invent theories according to which people all over the globe may be awarded the same standard of earthly happiness. Today's socialist thinks that certain ideas apply equally to human life in England, America, Russia or Asia. If every state were to arrange its affairs as socialism prescribes then the happiness which people everywhere dream about would automatically ensue. That is what people think.

But this will not work, but will only cause endless confusion and chaos. (Page 106)

[page 106] Only those who can build a bridge from their soul to the objective facts can work in a

beneficial way to shape earthly existence.

People who perceive a lacking in their own souls project that lack onto the peoples of the under-developed countries and strive to get their dream from own soul implemented in the external world. This will not work. When they recognize their own projection and switch to working on their own soul in a real way to fill that lack, then the reality of the external world will reveal itself to them. What was previously felt as a lack, will be found to be a fullness when viewed from a spiritual perspective.

The next event Steiner takes us behind the scenes of is one I call the EAT-O-TWIST Event. Let me explain this to those of you this may be new to. EAT-O-TWIST is an acronym for the process Everything Always Turns Out The Way It's Supposed To which I created about 25 years ago to help remind me of a spiritual truth I stumbled upon. This was several years before I heard of Rudolf Steiner or read any of his books and lectures. I incorporated EAT-O-TWIST into Matherne's Rule #10 which says facetiously "EAT-O-TWIST! never breaks. You'll use it from now on." Yes, it was intended to be amusing. Cannot a spiritual truth be amusing? Especially if it helps people to begin using it. One day after Del and I had begun using it, I shared with her that I was discouraged about something and she said, "Remember, EAT-O-TWIST." I gave her this look which said, "Oh yeah! Well, not this time!" and she looked right back at me and said, "EAT-O-TWIST never breaks!" That made me immediately change my supposing about what would happen in the situation which had me discouraged, and Matherne's Rule #10 was born. You can read the [EAT-O-TWIST story](#) on the website, but for now, I simply want to explain that the "supposing" part of the acronym refers to whatever internal images, words, thoughts, sounds, and feeling you might have about something in your world at any moment. Wait long enough, hold those supposings in you long enough and watch what happens: your outside world will reflect those supposings. As Del said, "EAT-O-TWIST never breaks!"

What I didn't consciously know 25 years ago when I promulgated EAT-O-TWIST is that the process it embodies had only come into full force about one hundred years earlier. It came to the Earth as spiritual wisdom in 1879 following a 38-year-long battle in the spiritual world between the forces of darkness and light. When the forces of light under the leadership of Michael the Archangel won, the forces of darkness were thrown out and "the heavens are now free of them while the earth is full of them." (Page 107)

[page 107, 108] But now that those spirits of darkness are moving about amongst human beings here on earth, they are once again working to confuse people. Their aim now is to make sure that people fail to enter into the right relationship with the spiritual truths, so that the healing purpose of those truths is kept away from human beings.

The battle is won and heaven is free of the confusion caused by these dark spirits but the Earth is full of it. These dark spirits are aided by the secret brotherhoods who wish to keep these truths from being taken seriously by humankind.

[page 108] On the other there are the closed secret brotherhoods of a nasty kind whose very aim is *not* to let the wisdom enter into humanity, so that people will remain stupid and foolish as far as the spiritual world is concerned while those within the closely guarded brotherhoods carry on their machinations from there.

EAT-O-TWIST contains a supposition that would be very healthy for human beings to have beginning in 1879, but any supposition can be poisoned by a presupposition. If you suppose life works a certain way, and you hear someone employ in their speech a presupposition that holds the opposite to be true, your original supposition will immediately dissolve and be replaced by the opposite supposition. Unless you consciously recognize the presupposition, you have no defense against its doing its work on you. You may not even notice that the presupposition had any effect upon you, which is what makes the whole process so insidious and so hard to detect when it happens to you. If you wish to learn to recognize presuppositions in speech patterns, Richard Bandler and John Grinder have written a book [The Structure of Magic](#) which has a detailed list of [presupposition speech patterns](#).

When some spiritual truth becomes available, people feel as if a light has been turned on — but when the forces of darkness attack, the light goes out. These forces typically attack by using presuppositions to instill fear, and then people turn away from the spiritual truth because they have unconsciously introjected the presuppositions and created misconceptions from them.

[page 108] You will feel as though a kind of light has been turned on regarding what is happening behind these matters when I tell you of certain truths, truths that, like ripe plums dropping from a tree, are meant to drop down out of the spiritual world into the human realm but are being prevented from spreading also because people have presuppositions and misconceptions about them and are afraid of them.

I don't like unripe plums: they are hard, they are bitter and unpleasant, but wait till the plum gets soft and ripe and there is no finer, juicier, or more delicious fruit on the face of the Earth in my opinion. Clear thinking is like a ripe plum which it is important for us to eat during this time on Earth. Without that clear thinking we will miss the ripe fruits of the spiritual world which are dropping down today.

[page 109] Never before has there been a time when clear thinking has been as necessary for human evolution as are eating and drinking for the preservation of the physical body. For if people think without clarity now in our time and on into the future, they will not be able to see in the right light those ripe truths that are to drop down from the spiritual world.

What are some of those ripe truths? One is the importance of the Mystery of Golgotha to the evolution of the Earth. A second is the return of Christ to Earth in the etheric plane since the early twentieth century. A third is the EAT-O-TWIST Event in 1879 which we mentioned above. In a nutshell people born before 1879 were insulated from the full force of EAT-O-TWIST. If they supposed there was no spiritual world waiting for them after they died, they were protected from that being the case. Those born after 1879 lost that protection from their suppositions because EAT-O-TWIST began to operate with its full force. The effects of this change can *not* be over emphasized. It affects every human being today since everyone reading this is under 126 years old, so far as I know. Note that "suppose" is equivalent to "regard as" in the passage below, so Steiner is talking about EAT-O-TWIST.

[page 110] This profoundly incisive event has the effect, especially, that in their souls human beings become increasingly similar to their thoughts, to what they regard as their understanding of things. This may be a strange truth for the people of today, but it is a truth nevertheless. It is important and essential to see certain things in the right light, with clear thoughts, with valid thoughts, with thoughts imbued through and through with reality. To see Darwinism correctly, for example as I endeavoured to present it yesterday in the public lecture, this is good. But to see it as the basis for the only valid view of the world, to see it as meaning that only one thing is correct, namely, that the human being is descended from the animals, to have the living thought about oneself 'I am descended from the animals, I have originated only out of the same forces that also form the animals' — all this leads souls nowadays to resemble their own inner pictures.

Specifically this means when one enters the spiritual world, EAT-O-TWIST works in full force. What one supposed before one died is lived out — there is no longer any shield from one's materialistic misconceptions or presuppositions. Is it important to know this?

[page 110] It is important to know this! When a soul like this has laid aside its body it undergoes the misfortune of having to see itself as resembling its own inner pictures. Those who believe while in the physical body that only animal forces have played a part in their development are building for themselves a consciousness after death with which they will have to perceive themselves as animals. For now that the event of 1879 has properly brought to fulfilment the character of the fifth post-Atlantean age, the thoughts which human beings make for themselves serve to make human souls become transformed into these thoughts.

Clearly one cannot wait until one dies to discover the truth about the spiritual world, because by then the spiritual world will consist of what one supposed it would be *before one died*. There is no way to sugar-coat this truth. Steiner was speaking in 1917 when people who were born before 1879 were still alive. We are currently living "in the future" that he refers to in the passage below. We *must* become aware of our true connections with the spiritual world today.

[page 111] Harmony with oneself coupled with knowledge that allows the human being to be human

after death, this will only come about in the future if human beings become aware, while they are here in the physical body, of their true connections with the spiritual world.

It is almost an anthem of the materialists that "we humans are what we eat", but it is rarely stated as such. But ask a materialist if the human being is different from that of an animal which eats the same things as we do, or different from the ape from which we are supposedly descended, and they'll likely say, "Very little difference except for some increased brain size in relation to body weight." If one supposes "we are what we eat," then what happens when we die and everything formed from what we ate rots and decays in the grave? If people know very little, they could be materialists and yet never think about such things — obtaining some protection from their ignorance.

[page 114] But if materialism triumphs, then people will increasingly believe: All that is left of the dead person is decaying in the urn or in the grave. This thought is a real force. It is an untruth. If those left behind think that the dead person is no longer alive and that he is no longer here, then this is an erroneous thought, but this erroneous thought is nevertheless real and actual in the souls of the people who think it. And the dead person perceives this real thought; he perceives it as something very significant for himself. It is not unimportant, but in fact profoundly important, if those who remain behind here cultivate in their living inner soul life the thought of the dead person continuing to live in the spiritual world, or if they merely give way to the lament: 'He's dead, that's all, he is decaying.' These two things are not equally valid for they are actually very essentially different.

Consider the difference if one lights a candle while thinking of person as spiring in the other world, alive and spiring, and one talks in one's head to the other person in the second person, present tense. If one talks as if the person were alive, one acknowledges that the person is present in spirit and is, in fact, spiring at the moment one is living. This creates a direct communication which benefits both oneself and the other person. Exactly how it does this will be elaborated further down.

In my Catholic youth, I made fun of my mother when she lit candles for her departed relatives. "As if that could do any good for them," I thought. It is amazing how different the world becomes as one studies it carefully from youth into adulthood. And amazing how many people drop their study of the world when they leave high school or college — it's as if education were for them something that must be forced upon them by their parents. It's apparent they need a parent to learn about the world, but the time of parents is gone, as is the time of prophets, those super-parents who were needed by ancient humans to tell them what they had to do in order to establish a right relationship with the spiritual world.

Another isolated fact which will fit in later: Steiner was speaking in Zurich at the same time that Carl Gustav Jung was living in Zurich developing, practicing, and teaching his analytical psychology. Steiner thought it was good because these Jungian analysts were confronting directly matters of soul and spirit, even looking for causes of hysterical symptoms in the soul realm. Searching for the subconscious causes only in the personal history of the person, such as some sexual aberration, however, is not enough, in fact, it is the least consequential aspect of the matter. (Page 116)

[page 116] One thing above all, though, is certainly true, and that is that countless subconscious elements do indeed haunt human beings today, and they are much harassed by these; and the diseases of civilization are caused by them.

What is this? Consider what I have already said. The thought of the dead person who is no longer here lives in the soul; it lives somehow, without the soul thinking about it much; it lives only because the soul is today still without thought, and the soul is rather sensitive with regard to such thoughtless thoughts. When this happens the dead person is forced by eternal universal laws to live with this thought; the dead person haunts the soul of the living person who has remained behind.

This requires a bit of explication as the translation seems to leave some ambiguities as to Steiner's meaning. Let's suppose Molly and Sam loved each other dearly for many years. Sam dies and Molly is still alive and mourning her loss. Sam is spiring, but has difficulty because Molly is living and she is supposing that Sam's body is decaying in his grave. She talks about him in the third person to her other friends, "Sam's dead now. I loved him, so. I miss him." and so on(6). What does Sam do? He stays around to haunt Molly, not out of malice, but out of a wish to get her to believe

he is spiriting. He wants her to begin talking to him in the second person, present tense, the way we talk to people who are alive and in our presence. This is how we should talk when we communicate with loved ones who are spiriting if we would help them and ourselves progress best in our respective worlds.

For you to do otherwise is to subject both your departed loved ones and yourself to various neuroses and diseases of the type that analytical psychology deals with. This is the elaboration I promised you of the benefits of talking to one's loved ones as if they were still alive. Fact is they are alive in the spirit and immediately at hand to listen to your words or your thoughts at all times. Consider how your loved one would have felt when alive if you ignored them when they were present and talked about them in the third person as if they were not there? That's exactly how deceased loved ones feel if you do that to them today.

[page 116] The only way to counteract this is by knowing that the dead person lives. People on the physical plane will be more and more driven into soul illnesses by their lack of belief that the dead are alive. As a rule it is not youthful sexual aberrations that bring about these diseases, but thoughts that do not believe. For in our time thoughts are called upon to become real forces. They are called upon to become real forces, but not only forces that work for themselves; they work for themselves when after death the soul increasingly resembles what it imagined itself to be while it was in the body. But these thoughts become real forces in a higher sense as well in that they even bind beings, in this case those who have died, in a wrong way to those who are still alive.

The only way to counteract this is by maintaining as far as one can a connection with the one who has died in that one regards him as continuing to live. This saves the relationship with the dead person from becoming a disaster not only for oneself who has remained behind but also in some ways for the dead person who is necessitated by an eternal, wisdom-filled law to haunt the one who has remained behind in a way that does not come to the consciousness of that person but manifests purely in symptoms of disease.

In the movie *Ghost*, when Molly finally begins to talk to Sam in the second person, present tense, Sam is able to continue his journey into the spiritual world and all the neurotic symptoms that Molly exhibited disappear. To us movie-goers Molly did not seem neurotic *because* we were allowed to see the spiritual truths behind's Molly behaviors so that we saw them as normal instead of neurotic. Take the case of Oda Mae Brown's behavior in the bank or in the street with the nuns, her behavior certainly seemed neurotic to the people around her.

As shown in the movie above, the real remedy for Molly's symptoms was for her to learn about the truth of the spiritual world from which Sam was enthralled to her until she did.

[page 117] So what is the real remedy for many of the symptoms which psychoanalysts are encountering today? The remedy is to spread knowledge about the spiritual world. This is the universal remedy, the universal therapy, and not those individual treatments that are bestowed upon individual patients.

But do people want knowledge about the spiritual world today? No, what they want is pat answers to problems, things to do which can be applied in every corner of the globe. They want people and books to tell them what to do. If they wish to become creative, they want a book to tell them, "Here's five ways to be creative."

[page 122] People want abstract programs nowadays, they want to hear stated in five sentences what should be done all over the world; they want delegates to be sent from every state on earth who will meet in a world tribunal and vote on everything that is to happen all over the earth in accordance with an accepted norm. Yet the important thing to realize is that knowledge of the spiritual world is what is required of human beings, a continuous effort to make contact with the spiritual world.

It is clear to all that we are living in an age of materialism, but what is now becoming clear is that *opposites coincide* — that is, the appearance of an extreme in one area of the world leads to its opposite arising in another area of the world. And by world, I refer to both the material world spiritual world.

[page 131] We know that materialism has been reaching it zenith since about the middle of the

nineteenth century. However, the reality is that opposite poles always coincide. The zenith of materialism in human evolution has to coincide with its opposite, namely, an inwardness in human evolution that leads to Christ being indeed seen in the etheric realm.

We have been approaching the zenith of materialism, but it is still slightly increasing and will continue to do so for another 500 years. If anyone spreads some doctrine that materialism is fizzling out, they are either already misled or have some personal interest in misleading you.

[page 131, 132] Those unfortunate, pitiable, 'clever' individuals who spread the doctrine . . . are more less serving those who have an interest in putting about something that is untrue, namely, that materialism has fizzled out. This is an untruth, for materialism is, on the contrary, still on the increase, and it will flourish best when people delude themselves into believing that they are no longer materialists. Materialism is on the increase, and it will continue being on the increase for another four to five hundred years.

Our environment when we spirit during the time between passing through the gate of death and a new birth is largely determined for us today by how much we absorb of spiritual concepts before we die. If we absorb little or no spiritual concepts we are relegated to wandering lost about the face of the Earth, and we become forces of destruction because the human body, which separates us from our surroundings (matter is impenetrable, but spirit is not) protects us from destructive acts, does not accompany us into the spiritual world. One look at the evenings news tells us that there are many forces of destruction at large on the Earth already.

[page 134] So, our environment over there is determined by whether or not we absorb spiritual concepts here. It has to be said with much pity that many of those who have resisted or been prevented from absorbing spiritual concepts here during life find themselves wandering about on the earth even when they are dead, for they remain bound up with the earthly sphere. And once the human soul is no longer separated from its surroundings by a body that would prevent it from acting in a destructive way, this human soul becomes a focus of destruction within the earthly sphere.

It has to be said that this is quite a normal situation. Under today's conditions, souls who enter the spiritual world after death, having wanted to know absolutely nothing about spiritual concepts and feelings, become focuses of destruction because they are detained in the earthly sphere. Only those souls who have already here been filled with a degree of connection with the spiritual world pass through the gate of death in such a way that they are taken up into the spiritual world in the right way and removed from the earthly sphere; they can spin the threads in the right way that link them with those who have remained behind, threads which are continually spun. We must not forget that the spiritual threads linking the dead souls with those of us here who have been connected with them are not sundered by death; they remain and even become much more intimate after death than they were here. What I have been describing must be accepted as a serious and important truth.

Paradoxically the most dangerous of the brotherhoods or societies are those who vociferously spread the gospel that materialism has already been overcome because, deep down and in secret, their aims really are for power. They obtain this power by inculcating in their members materialistic beliefs which ensure that these members will remain attached to Earth in the human realm after death. It is from these attached souls that these societies extract their power.

[page 136] These materialists are not materialists because they do not believe in the spirit; these materialistic initiates are not so stupid. They know very well what are the implications of the spirit. But they cause the souls to remain within matter even after death in order to make use of them for their own purposes. They create a clientele of dead souls that remain within the sphere of the earth. These dead souls possess forces that can be guided in various ways which make it possible to gain quite specific powers over those who are not party to such things.

This is quite simply something that certain brotherhoods set in train. And this is seen clearly only by those who are not prepared to believe in anything that is obscure or nebulous, and who do

not allow themselves to be persuaded either that such brotherhoods do not exist or that what they do is harmless. These things are not at all harmless; they are very harmful, for the intention is to make human beings go further and further into materialism. What these initiates want is for these human beings to believe that although spiritual forces do exist they are nothing but forces of nature.

If you find yourself in such a society and the initiates tells you that there are higher forces in nature than electricity and magnetism and they merely tapping those forces, chances are they are tapping the forces of the dead and not telling you. What is your defense against these things? Steiner puts it bluntly, "The only defense against these things is knowing about them. If you know about them you are protected." What you have encountered is "brothers of the left-hand path." These brothers led seances in the latter part of the nineteenth century — one can only guess what form of activity they use during the nascent twenty-first century.

[page 138, 139] What they intended and indeed expected — was that during spiritualist seances people should say: 'Higher forces of nature do indeed exist.' But the brothers of the left-hand path were then disappointed when most people said instead: 'The spirits of the dead appear during the seances.' This was a bitter disappointment for the initiates, for it was exactly what they did not want. Belief in the dead was the very thing which they wanted to take away from human beings. People were to be deprived not of the workings of the dead, not of the way the forces of the dead worked, but of the thought, that very significant thought, that these things do come from the dead.

As you can see, this is a higher form of materialism, a materialism that not only denies the existence of the spirit but that wants to imprison the spirit in matter. Materialism still manifests in ways that make it possible to deny its existence. People can say that materialism has gone and that what we are talking about is spirit. But they all speak about the spirit in a vague way. Making all nature into spirit in a way that leads to psychism as the end result is a very good way of being a materialist. But what really matters is the ability to see into the concrete spiritual world, into concrete spirituality.

These societies or brotherhoods have another goal, which is to make the appearance of Christ in the etheric plane during the first third of the twentieth century pass by unnoticed. Since we are some 70 plus years distant from that event, and it is basically unknown outside of anthroposophical circles, one can say that they have been successful in their goal, up until now. In the place of Christ they wish to install another being which has this distinct difference from Christ: it has never been incarnated as a human being in the flesh upon Earth.

[page 141, 142] For the brotherhoods will give the name of 'Christ', the actual name of 'Christ', to that other being whom they want to make into the ruler. It will therefore be crucial to learn to distinguish between the true Christ, who this time will also be an individuality not incarnated in the flesh, and that other being who differs from the true Christ in that he has never been incarnated throughout earthly evolution but whom those brotherhoods now want to install in the place of Christ who, they intend, shall pass by unnoticed.

If you have ever heard of eastern or western lodges and wondered about the difference between them, Steiner lays it out for you in this next passage.

[page 144] The western lodges have the dead who are imprisoned in matter; the eastern lodges of the left-hand path have demonic spirits, that is, spirits who do not belong to earthly evolution but who creep into earthly evolution by putting on ether bodies laid aside by human beings.

When these beings invade a living human, the human is unconscious of the origin of the effects they create. The various therapies that lay the cause to sexual repression as a child, etc, are masking the true cause which is this: the person is experiencing an impulse from a spiritual being. Steiner says it is sad that such efforts are made to keep people in the dark about the true source of the problem.

[page 145] This is why it is so sad when efforts keep being made to persuade people that when the unconscious, the so-called unconscious, works in them it is the result of repressed love or something similar, whereas in fact the impulse of very conscious spirituality is being brought in to move about

amongst humanity from all sides which, though, remains relatively unconscious if one does not make efforts in one's consciousness to be aware of it.

One of the things logic seeks to teach its students is that contradiction is not allowed: one thing cannot be itself and something else. Contradiction is simply not allowed in the pristine halls of Logic. Reality is not so pristine — it does not fit neatly into our logical maps of the world. In nature we see a unified system because everything has been screened out except what comes in through our senses. We wear, as it were, "nature-colored glasses", and make logical deductions about nature, which are accepted as truths until they proven wrong and replaced by other equally suspect, but accepted truths.

[page 160, 161] Behind the tapestry of nature, however, there lies something else which receives its direction from quite another quarter. This, though, is excluded from our observation of nature.

So what we call nature is indeed a unified system because everything else has been screened out. It is as though we perceive nature through the filter of our senses. Everything that is contradictory is filtered out and the nature we have before us is thus a unified system. Once we cross the threshold, however, and include reality in our explanation of nature — the elemental beings, influences of human souls that can be directed towards nature — then we can no longer talk of nature as being a unified system. For then we also have to include the workings of individualities who either obstruct one another or support and strengthen one another.

What is our task as human beings during this fifth post-Atlantean period? "We must come to grips with evil," Steiner tells us. Instead praying to be "delivered from evil" as the Lord's Prayer exhorts, we might pray to have evil delivered to us so that we may come to grips with it.

[page 162, 163] I have given a general description of the task of the fifth post-Atlantean period by saying that it will be up to humanity during this period to come to grips with evil as an impulse in world evolution. We have talked variously about what this means. It is essential that the forces which manifest as evil if they appear at the wrong place must be taken in hand by human endeavor in the fifth post-Atlantean period in such a way that humanity can achieve something with these forces of evil that will be beneficial for the future of the whole of world evolution. Because of this the task of this fifth post-Atlantean period is an especially difficult one.

Evil is a good arriving out of its time. When such a good out of its time arrives on Earth, we are exhorted by Steiner to take this good and find ways to apply it in proper ways for this time. This can only be done by someone who is fully conscious of the nature of the good which is arriving out of its time.

[page 163] When little by little the powers of evil make their appearance, human beings may naturally be much more inclined to give in to this evil in every field instead of taking up the fight to bring what seems evil to them into the service of world evolution in the sense of what is good. Yet this is what must come about: to a certain degree evil must be placed at the service of world evolution in the good sense. Failing this it will be impossible to enter into the sixth post-Atlantean period, which will have an entirely different task. Although human beings will still be linked with the earth, the task will be to enable them to look continuously into the spiritual world and live in spiritual impulses.

How will we learn to convert evil into good? We will need a lot of help, and that help will come from an ever-present source of spiritual power that we have at our disposal: we have only to ask for it.

[page 165] But something even more significant will occur for the development of the fifth post-Atlantean period when human souls recognize that in Christ they have the I helper they need to transform the forces of evil into good.

Our task, he tells us, is to grasp the spiritual world with our reason in the remainder of this fifth post-Atlantean age. Through Steiner's 6,000 lectures disseminated in his over 300 books, he offers opportunities for us to exert our reason and grasp the spiritual world — its existence and mode of operation. Thus he provides us with the means to achieve

the results he says are so necessary for humankind if we are to move into the sixth post-Atlantean age. And he avers of a certainty that the spiritual world will be revealed to us: that is a direct result of the battle won by the forces of Michael the Archangel in 1879.

[page 164] The spirit will be revealed, that is certain. Because the spirits of darkness were overcome in 1879, more and more spiritual wisdom will be able to flow down from the spiritual worlds, for those spirits would only have been able to prevent this if they had remained up above in the realms of spirit. They can no longer prevent spiritual wisdom from flowing down, but what they can do is create confusion and bring obscurity to human souls.

In addition, he tells us we must become warriors for the spirit. That we are the best warriors when we strive toward the spirit in freedom and light. If Steiner's great corpus of works is imagined as a building, then the foundation of that building was laid in his book, [The Philosophy of Freedom](#). One must ever return to that book for new insights. In recent months I have worked with [Tom Last](#) to help him share his multi-ordinal view of the contents of this book. The good news is that we, you and I, are no longer to be led around like children, especially by nefarious societies and brotherhoods, it is time for us to step out in freedom and light.

[page 165] There is one thing connected with this feature of the fifth post-Atlantean period, one thing which one should inscribe anew into one's soul every day, one thing which one should I not forget even though human beings are particularly prone, to forget this particular thing. This is that in this fifth post-Atlantean period the human being must be a warrior for the spirit; human beings must experience how their forces ebb away if they do not continuously hold them in check for the purpose of winning through to the spiritual world. In this fifth post-Atlantean period human beings stand on their freedom to the highest degree! This is something they have to go through with. The idea of human freedom is the yardstick against which must be measured everything that human beings meet with during this fifth post-Atlantean period. For were their forces to weaken, this could cause everything to turn out for the worst. In this fifth post-Atlantean period human beings are not in the situation of being led like children. If there are certain brotherhoods whose ideal it is to lead human beings like children, as they were led in the third post-Atlantean period, and in the fourth, then these brotherhoods are not doing what is right; they are not doing what actually ought to be done for the evolution of humanity.

Steiner presents information in his books and lectures with a matter-of-fact attitude which seems strange at first, and then as one reads more of his works, it begins to seem new and refreshing. He may exhort, but he never asks the reader to do something simply because he wants them to. He always allows us the choice, in complete freedom, to decide how to live our lives. He lectures, he writes and allows us to use this information as we wish. Contrast his approach with that of your Sunday preacher.

[page 165, 166] Anyone who speaks about the spiritual world must do so in a way that leaves people free to accept or reject what he is saying. Someone speaking about the spiritual world in this fifth post-Atlantean period must constantly remind himself of this. Because of this certain things can only be said in this fifth post-Atlantean period, and the actual saying of these things is now just as important as anything else was in other periods. I will give you an example of what I mean.

In our time, the most important thing is to bring forward truths-put plainly, to give lectures about truths. What people then do about this is up to their freedom. One should go no further than to lecture on, to communicate truths. Whatever consequences there are should follow as a free decision, just as consequences follow when decisions are made out of the impulses one has on the physical plane. It is exactly the same in the case of things that can only be guided from the spiritual world itself.

We mentioned earlier about Ireland being a special place with respect to the forces arising from the Earth. We know it is called "The Island of Saints" known for St. Patrick who is said to have banished the snakes from Ireland. Lacking any historical record of a time before Patrick when there were snakes in Ireland, I wondered as I read the next passage if there were, in fact, *never* any snakes in Ireland. This seems plausible given the identification in the Bible of Lucifer

with the snake and that Lucifer was not allowed on Ireland as a necessary condition for Lucifer entering the Garden of Eden.

[page 167] Once upon a time humanity was driven out of Paradise because Lucifer had led humanity astray in Paradise. So humanity was scattered across the rest of the world. The rest of the world already existed at the time when humanity was driven out of Paradise. So this legendary, fairy-tale description distinguishes between Paradise with Lucifer in it and the rest of the earth into which humanity was driven. But Ireland is different, for it does not belong to the rest of the earth in the same sense because before Lucifer entered Paradise a likeness of it came into being upon the earth, and this likeness became Ireland.

So please understand this: Ireland is that portion of the earth that has no share in Lucifer, that portion to which Lucifer has no connection. The part which had to be separated off from Paradise so that an earthly likeness could arise would have prevented Lucifer from entering into Paradise. So according to this legend Ireland was seen as the separated off part of Paradise which would have prevented Lucifer from entering into Paradise. Only when Ireland had been separated off was it possible for Lucifer to enter Paradise.

Consider the large number of Catholic priests which Ireland has produced over the years. How can one account for that? Steiner tells us of a brotherhood in Asia Minor who knew about the special emanations from the ground of Ireland and sent people there to glean the benefit from those forces. Yet today, the Irish are known world-wide to have special qualities of heart and soul.

[page 169, 170] They knew that the forces rising up out of the earth through the soil of the island of Ireland work on human beings in such a way that they are little influenced towards becoming intellectual, little influenced towards becoming egoistic, and little influenced towards being able to take decisions firmly. The initiates who sent those colonists knew this very well, and they selected people whose karmic inclinations seemed to make them suitable for being exposed to the influences of the island of Ireland. Today there are still descendants in Ireland of that ancient population transplanted so long ago from Asia Minor who were to develop so as to have not even a trace of intellectuality, not a trace of reason, and not the ability to take firm decisions. On the other hand they were to develop special qualities of heart and soul.

Movements of people in those times were initiated by such spiritual conditions as recounted above, but those spiritual realities are not to be found discussed in any history books of today. Historians today, Steiner says, have "the kind of understanding that can be found in the street!"

[page 170] So when you hear historians who do not understand this — though of course they have plenty of understanding of the kind that can be found lying in the street — when you hear these historians describing those people of ancient times, you must always be aware that such colonizations were imbued with profound wisdom. They were guided and steered always with an eye to what was to take place in the future, and account was always taken of the special characteristics of the earth's evolution.

There is more, much more in these lectures. I have, in effect, held up some of the large nuggets of gold from the mother lodes of riches contained in this eldorado for you to stare at in wonder. Take your own pick-axe and work into these glimmering veins of richness to extract your own golden treasure to use in freedom and light.

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

Footnote 1. The word Inspiration is capitalized to distinguish it from the ordinary process we know as "inspiration" — Steiner capitalizes Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition because he means specific soul processes which are described in other places, such as Steiner's books, [The Riddle of Man](#) and [Riddles of the Soul](#).

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**Footnote 2.** Here are some of several dozen books by Rudolf Steiner which I have reviewed that contain information about the level of supersensible knowledge known as Inspiration:

[The Mystery of the Trinity](#),  
[Fruits of Anthroposophy](#),  
[At Home in the Universe](#),  
and [Cosmosophy, Volume 1](#).

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Footnote 3. To see the dates of the seven post-Atlantean Ages, check this table: <http://www.doyletics.com/7stable.htm>

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**Footnote 4.** See, for example, [The Archangel Michael](#) series of lectures and writings by Steiner.

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Footnote 5. Such as the Order of Assassins or the Indian Order of Thugs, which operated over centuries doing such nefarious work and whose existence is doubtful today.

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**Footnote 6.** This example is very close to what happens in the 1990 movie [Ghost](#).

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