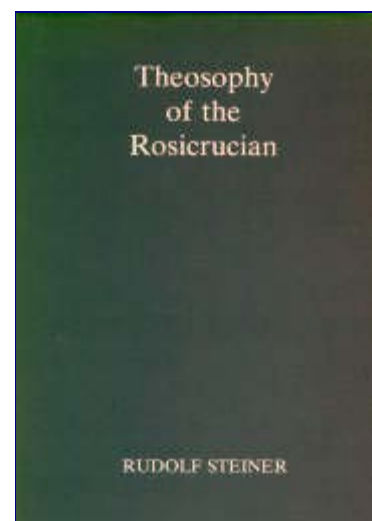




A READER'S JOURNAL

The Theosophy of the Rosicrucian, GA# 99
by
Rudolf Steiner

Fourteen Lectures in Munich, 1907
Published by Rudolf Steiner Press, UK in 1981
A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2003



Allow me to begin this review with a quote from the end of the book to set the stage:

[page 160] I am not bringing forward Rosicrucian theosophy for any external reason, but because it is the first stage of the Rosicrucian Initiation.

What Steiner is teaching in this book is not Theosophy, but theo-sophy in the manner of the Rosicrucian. He makes the crucial distinction early in the book "between the actual *discovery* of spiritual truths and the *understanding* of them."

[page 11] Clairvoyance is the necessary pre-requisite for the discovery of a spiritual truth, but only for its discovery. For a long time to come, nothing will be taught exoterically by any genuine Rosicrucianism that cannot be grasped by the ordinary, logical intellect. That is the essential point.

In the last years of Carl Jung's life, he confided to a friend that he considered his archetypes to be spiritual beings, but he hadn't wished to write that for the general public. In talking about the World of Intuition, which Steiner describes as the World in which we "merge into" other beings, he says that "it is so far above the ordinary world that it casts a shadow-image only into the world of men." Of this highest world, also called the World of Reason, Steiner says:

[page 21] A concept in the physical world is the shadow-image of Beings in this highest world.

In another synchronicity of concepts, Jung said that in every male was a female spirit he called the *anima* and in every female, a male spirit he called the *animus*. Compare that with the following passage from Steiner:

[page 23] I tell you that the etheric body in the male is female and in the female, male. Without this knowledge much will remain incomprehensible in practical life.

For those who are skeptical about the existence of the etheric or life body, in the following passage Steiner explains how the absence of the etheric body can be experienced when one's arm or leg falls asleep.

[Page 34] Partial separations of the etheric body also occur when a limb has "gone to sleep" as we say. If a hand, for instance, has gone to sleep, the seer can perceive the etheric part of the hand protruding like a glove; parts of the etheric brain also protrude when a man is in a state of hypnosis. Because the etheric body is woven in the physical body in tiny, pin-point formations, there arises in the physical body the well-known sensation of pricking in a limb has gone to sleep.

In another book Steiner mentioned that the sensation of pain in general occurs when the etheric body is somehow missing from a part of the body. When a child skins his knee and his mother kisses it better, the mother is intuitively restoring the etheric body to the point of the injury, thus "making it feel better." Much of the salubrious effect of laying on of hands and auric healing, I suspect, comes from the insertion of the healer's etheric body in the place that the sufferer's etheric body has vacated, thus easing the pain and encouraging their etheric body to return to its proper place. Perhaps a seer could relate some experience that would confirm this to be the case.

One of the things that a seer can experience is the contents of the Akasha Chronicle. In it are all the events of our lives recorded.

[page 40] But we must not imagine that these pictures are images of the physical personalities. That is not the case. To take a simple example. - When a man moves his hand, his will pervades the moving hand and it is this force of will that can be seen in the Akasha Chronicle.

When my wife's grandmother got within months of her 100th birthday, she died, and we held the birthday party and reunion we had planned to celebrate the occasion anyway. In our front yard is an althea bush with purple, trumpet-shaped flowers that had bloomed a little each year. That bush we had gotten many years before from this grandmother. About a month after she died, this althea bush began to bloom with hundreds and hundreds of flowers where formerly it had only dozens of flowers. This continued for many years after her death. That next winter, the poinsettia bush that we had gotten from her and planted in the ground began to bloom and exhibit large numbers of bright red leaves. This plant has continued to bloom each year as well. Is there a connection? Read what Steiner says about the light that plants receive.

[page 45] The light that surrounds us forms the "bodies" of the Dead; they have bodies woven out of light. The light that enfolds the earth is "substance" for the beings who are living in Devachan. A plant nourished by the sunlight receives into itself not the physical light alone but in very truth the activity of spiritual beings, among whom there are also these human souls. The souls themselves ray down upon the plants as light, weaving as spiritual beings around the plants.

Are our thoughts duty-free? Steiner raises this question and then proceeds to answer it with a definite NO! The question means, "Can we think about anything we like and nobody in the outside world will be affected? The answer will surprise and shock the materialistic thinker who goes by the premise that, "Sticks and Stones may hurt my Bones, but Names will never hurt Me."

[page 60] The materialist agrees that injury is caused if he throws a stone at a man, but he thinks that a thought of hatred which he may harbour against a fellow-creature, does not hurt him. Those however who have real knowledge of the world know that far far stronger effects proceed from a thought filled with hatred than can ever be caused by a stone. . . . When you send out a loving thought to someone the seer perceives a form of light shaped like a sort of flower-calyx, playing around his etheric and astral bodies, thereby contributing something to his vitality and happiness. On the other hand a thought of hatred bores its way into the etheric and astral bodies like a wounding arrow.

Amazingly, the processes we know as truth-telling and lying have consequences that affect the evolution

of humankind. Telling the truth furthers it whereas telling lies hinders or reverses the course of evolution. Rightly understood, which, by the way, is a way of telling the truth, Rudolf Steiner has furthered the evolution of humanity more than any other person of the 20th Century. Here's how he lays out the consequences of truth and lies:

[page 61] A thought is related to a thing and is true if it coincides with that thing. Every event that happens causes an effect in the higher worlds. If someone relates this event truly, an astral form rays out from the teller, unites with the form emanating from the event itself. These strengthened forms help to make our spiritual world richer and more full of content which is necessary if humanity is to make progress. But if the event is related untruthfully, in a way that does not coincide with the facts, then the thought-form of the teller comes up against the thought-form that has proceeded from the event; the two thought-forms collide, causing mutual destruction. These destructive "explosions" caused by lies work on the body like a tumour which destroys the organism. Thus do lies kill the astral forms which have arisen and must arise, and in this way they obstruct or paralyze a part of evolution. Everyone who tells the truth actually promotes the evolution of humanity and everyone who lies, obstructs it. Therefore there is this occult law: Seen with the eyes of Spirit, a lie is a murder. Not only does it kill an astral form, but it is also self-murder. Everyone who lies places obstacles along his own path.

Seems to me as though a certain president of the USA at the end of the 20th Century missed these lessons early in life and had to learn them during his Impeachment Trial in the Senate. He will certainly have to undergo a correction in his next lifetime. How will those deeds show up in his next life? Steiner gives us a clue in the next passage.

[page 63] A man who enjoys good health, who has great powers of endurance, unfolded good qualities in the previous life. A person who is continually prone to illness, has worked bad impulses into himself.

Specifically Steiner says that love for one's fellow humans creates in the next life a youthful body full of energy, whereas a spiteful attitude leads to a body that wrinkles at an early age. "Disinterested striving" leads to a "strong power of resistance to infectious diseases." (Page 64) It occurs to me that knowing the above relationships between lifetimes, one can look at one's own present life and learn from it the circumstance of one's previous life time. Whereas one cannot change what one did during that previous lifetime, one can certainly, at whatever stage in life one encounters these thoughts, begin to change one's mode of operation in preparation for the next lifetime.

[EAT-O-TWIST](#) stands for Everything Always Turns Out The Way It's Supposed To and Steiner's description of the flow through the human bodies shows us the layers of this *supposing* in our lives. The sustained emotions in our astral body appear in a later lifetime in the etheric body. The sustained emotions in the etheric body appear in a later lifetime in the physical body as bodily tendencies and physical reality. (Page 66)

What happens to a person who lies? The lies eventually grow into demons, which are "beings who permeate the astral body and make it unfree." (Page 67) The beings that permeate the etheric body are called "Specters" or "ghosts," and those in the physical body are called "Phantoms." Those who permeate and direct the Ego body are called "Spirits" and the Ego is also a Spirit. Now this may all seem foolish and fanciful balderdash to some of you, but I remember a time when I lived in a house that was invaded by large rats, both under the house in large tunnels and in the house. Finally they nested in the space under the counter in the kitchen. It was only after our dog killed one and left it on the kitchen floor, that we finally located the nest and cleaned it out. During that same time period in my personal life I was learning very pertinent lessons in the art of truth-telling and the folly of the lies I had been telling myself and others. Now read what Steiner says about the connection between vermin and lies.

[page 69] A passage in *Faust* indicates how much deep truth is contained in myths and sagas. You will find there a connection between vermin and lies in the role played by rats and mice in connection with Mephistopheles, the Spirit of Lies. Legends have often preserved wonderful indications of the connection between the spiritual world and the physical world.

Interestingly, the moving of people away from established religions, as shown in their declining attendance for the past fifty years, augurs well for humanity as it indicates a movement towards spirituality. Now I know that sounds paradoxical, which originally meant "out of the orthodox," where the straight teachings or "ortho-dox" referred to the teachings of religion. From the materialism of religion sprung the materialism of science. Consider two sample paradoxes: ancient Greeks who loved the flesh had the survival of the pure intellect as an ideal; early Christians who had an ascetic scorn for the body insisted on the resurrection of the physical body. What is the consequence of this movement of first religion and then science into materialistic ways?

[page 70] Men who have been too lazy to deepen their religious life - it is they who have introduced materialism into science. And the derangement of the nerves caused by this materialism works itself out among racial stocks and among whole peoples, as well as in the individual. If the stream of spirituality is not powerful enough to influence lazy and easy-going people as well, the karmic consequence of nervous derangement will gain greater and greater hold over humanity, and just as in the Middle Ages there were epidemics of leprosy, so in the future, materialistic thinking will give rise to grave nervous diseases; there will be epidemics of insanity besetting whole peoples.

It may be only a minor exaggeration to say that the large number of people taking anti-depressant drugs today comprises an epidemic, but there is little doubt that nervous disorders of all kinds in humanity are at an historical high, up until now.

The following passage I included in my review of Steiner's [*Macrocosm and Microcosm*](#) book.

[page 75] Bearing within us the effects of past deeds, we are the slaves of the past, but the masters of the future. If we are to have a favorable future, we must make as many good entries as possible in the book of life.

Should we help someone who is suffering or just shrug it off, saying, "That's just her karma." Do we interfere with their karmic balance when we do such a thing? Yes, we do; we tip the scales for them, just as Christ Jesus improved upon humankind's karma by His deed on Golgotha.

One interesting way of thinking of evolution is "the long weekend" of creation. On Saturday, our physical body was formed in the warmth of Old Saturn. On Sunday, our etheric body was formed in the gaseous air of the Old Sun. On Monday, our astral body was formed in the watery vegetative matter of the Old Moon. The fourth day was Earth Day, and our fourth body, our Ego, was formed in the mineral condition of the Earth. In the following passage Steiner gives us another way to think of these fourth stages, in terms of their state of perfection of development.

[page 78] To-day the physical body is the most perfect; the etheric body is less perfect, the astral body still less perfect, and the Ego is the "baby" among the bodies.

Given the three past stages of evolution during the long weekend of creation, one might wonder about the next three stages. These will be Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan. We are in the middle of the seven stages of evolution because that's as far as we can see backwards in evolution and as far as we can see forward in evolution. And with each stage of human evolution there is a state of consciousness that is present in humankind. In the old Saturn stage the consciousness is "deep trance consciousness." In the old Sun stage our consciousness was "sleep-consciousness" and similar to a non-dreaming sleep of humans today. In the

old Moon stage our consciousness was similar to the "picture-consciousness" of our dream-filled sleep. In the fourth or Earth stage our consciousness is such that "the pictures we formerly perceived as colour-pictures floating freely in space, wrap themselves, so to speak around the objects." Thus we can speak of the image of the object as being one with the object. The next three states of consciousness for Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan are the spiritual processes known as Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition. The details of these three stages are given on pages 87 through 91.

"There is no democracy about truth," Steiner tells us. No majority of votes will ever make the three angles of a triangle add up to more than 180 degrees. No amount of voting will determine the truth in occult matters, even in the face of contradictory claims. Steiner tells us there are really no contrary claims in true occultism.

[page 144] In genuine occultism that is not so. It is the same in occult things as in materialistic things, there too someone asserts this and another that, but then one of them is false. Even so is it in genuine occultism; it is only that people often have a bad habit of judging occult matters before they have been understood.

If I may hazard a paraphrase: Rightly understood, people do better to judge their own maps, instead of others' maps. Otherwise, it is as if they were saying, "I have judged my own map and have found it to be different from my map of your map!" The result would be ludicrous - but for the seriousness with which they hold their own maps, and the complete *obliviousness* of their process of comparing their own maps to their maps of others' maps. It's *maps* all the way down.

Generally I've found that people who judge fields with which they're not familiar are unwilling to take the effort to study in depth the fields so as to understand them fully. Even so it is not necessary to understand fully something in order to apply it practically to one's life. If that were so, hardly anyone could operate the simplest modern device as a television or microwave oven.

[page 144-145] But that is not necessary; understanding of the highest principles often comes much later than their application. If mankind had wished to wait in the matter of digestion till the laws of digestion were understood then the evolution of mankind would not have been possible. So too one does not need to be aware of all spiritual laws in order to let spiritual science flow in to everyday life.

In several places I have previously encountered the concept in Steiner's teachings that the larynx will become the future organ of reproduction. Humans will speak and other humans will issue forth from their speech. How is this possible?

[page 148] Later on, not only will the word press forward in its rhythm from the larynx, but it will be irradiated by man, it will be penetrated by very substance. Just as to-day the word only becomes air waves, so in the future man's inner being, his own likeness, which to-day is in his word, will issue from the larynx. The human being will proceed from the human being, man will *speak forth man*.

To introduce the next topic that Steiner covers, imagine in an inlet from the sea, a gate is suspended at its top so that it may swing back and forth as the waves from the sea impinge upon it. Would one imagine that the waves in the sea are all created from this one swinging gate moving back and forth? That would seem to be a folly, wouldn't it? Yet consider that is exactly what materialistic medical doctors do when they claim that the heart is a pump instead of a hydraulic ram responding to the pulsations of the circulation of the blood. In very early term fetuses, it is possible to detect the pulsations of the circulating blood before any structure is detectable in the heart that could "create" the pulsing waves of the circulating blood. "The soul drives the blood, and the heart moves because it is driven by the blood," Steiner tells us. [\(1\)](#)

[page 149] All that goes on in the soul changes the organism. And if you now imagine the man who is able to create his own likeness through the spoken word, whose heart has become a voluntary muscle, who will have altered yet other organs, then you have a conception of the future of the human race in future planetary incarnations of our earth.

We are each at the cross-roads in the evolution of humanity and the choices we make determine whether we will, by thinking materialistically, produce frightful beings or, by thinking spiritually, produce beautiful human bodies. (paraphrase of 150)

[page 151] A man would neglect his duty to mankind if he did not wish to become acquainted with the forces which work in the direction of right evolution or against it. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge would be egotism. He who wants to know in order to look in to higher worlds acts egotistically. But one who tries to carry this knowledge into the direct practice of everyday life, furthers the advance of the coming evolution of humanity. It is extremely important for us to learn more and more to put into practice what exists as the conception of spiritual science.

Where might we find that vital knowledge to apply in everyday life? Steiner suggests that we may do so by considering the Gospel of St. John as a book of meditation. Through a dedicated meditation on that Gospel we can come to experience this knowledge as "an awakening force" in our soul. We must learn to proceed from the washing of the feet, to the scourging, to the crowning of thorns, to the crucifixion, to the mystical death, to the Burial and Resurrection, and finally to the Ascension. With the difficulty these stages present to the average person today, Steiner points us to the more practical seven stages of the Rosicrucian method, namely: Study, Imaginative knowledge, Inspired knowledge, Preparation of the Philosopher's Stone, Correspondence between Macrocosm and Microcosm, Living into the Macrocosm, and Divine Bliss.

Not with democratic votes, but only with knowledge can we proceed confidently into the future in freedom and light.

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

Footnote 1.

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

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

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

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