



Kundalini Awareness



Rudolf Steiner

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INTRODUCTION

At our current stage in human evolution, the need for spiritual genius and wisdom, to elevate the race beyond the current materialistic viewpoint that pervades the globe, is an absolute necessity if we are to avert major disaster of immense proportions. In these days, the body, brain and spirit of the human being continues to remodel, adjust and progress as the demands of the cosmos set the stage for the challenges, obstacles and treasures that lie ahead. The veil between current human consciousness and the vision of hidden spiritual realities is thinning constantly. This divine experience, as necessary as it is for the leading minds of our worldly society, is also beckoning anyone who sincerely and reverently seeks it out or who, by the grace of creation, approaches it. This giant step comes to us with incredible side effects and perils if the recipient is not properly prepared physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Those within the human community who are drawn into the realm of an expanding consciousness have various options available to them. The examination of the evolutionary mechanism at work in humanity can follow a variety of paths: the following of modern day gurus; support from various organizations studying consciousness; studying the lives and the recommendations of personalities from the past who have exhibited symptoms of an active mechanism of awareness expansion; relying on the current medical community for assistance; or allowing divine grace and inspiration to help guide and survive the changes in one's inner being.

If one is to be directed towards a healthy and safe arousal of the evolutionary mechanism, the enlightened states of awareness of specific personalities in human history may prove extremely helpful. An intimate, objective study of the words, deeds and inspirations of such human souls may very well present knowledge of the evolutionary forces and spiritual realities that permeate all of creation. Such knowledge would lay the groundwork for the uplifting of human consciousness towards the truth and into a closer, more unified relationship with the creator.

To endeavour a study of an individual displaying soul and character qualities far beyond the norm of the day is a holy and rewarding experience of self-discovery. A seeker can become fully absorbed in the spirit of such a personality and, through this interaction, develop a growing awareness of one's true being. The objective of this study is to examine objectively: the inner processes active within an individual; the outward manifestations of these powers; and, hopefully, to expose to the human community spiritual knowledge that is beneficial to all. No attempt has been made to subjectively interpret or judge the philosophy, thinking or actions of the human soul under observation. Indeed, the greatest gift of this study has been and hopefully will be the spiritual journey of enlightening one's inner self through this intimate conversation with the spirit of Rudolf Steiner.

RUDOLF STEINER

“Since I entered this world with defined soul-predispositions, and since the course of my life, as it comes to expression in my biography, is determined by these predispositions, I must, as spiritual man, have existed before my birth. I must, as spiritual being, be the repetition of someone through whose biography human spirit appears as a repetition of itself with the fruits of its former experiences in previous lives.”¹

With these words, the reader begins a journey into the unfinished autobiography of Rudolf Steiner. He emphasized his spirituality during a lecture when he said:

“Before I was born or conceived in physical matter by my parents, I existed in a spiritual world where I had certain experiences; earlier still, I experienced going back into previous earthly lives. When I step through the portal of death, I will again enter a spiritual world. What I develop within myself in this life is the seed of earthly lives to come. I will experience these future lives with the same degree of certainty as this present one.”²

The philosophy of this spiritual teacher was simple: “Man is a spirit and his world is the world of spiritual beings.”³ Steiner’s spiritual research and personal experiences of life became a science of the spirit that he called Anthroposophy. His intimate relationship with and knowledge of the spiritual realm enabled his inner being to touch and deeply impact the inner being of countless souls over the last hundred years. Steiner’s awareness of his true nature and his relationship to the cosmos was a driving force in his intensive endeavours, thinking and insights.

Shortly after Rudolf Steiner’s death in March, 1925, a historian made the following observation:

“When a single individual after spending years in the comprehensive study of philosophy and the sciences as well as literature and the arts, after having produced a number of volumes of a penetrating philosophical character and deeply spiritual import, applies his thought effectually to the creation of a new type of architecture, a new therapy engaging the active interest of numbers of highly trained medical men, radically new conceptions and methods in agriculture, fundamentally new and challenging ideas regarding the social order, and a school numbering a thousand pupils based upon an entirely novel departure from current pedagogy and attracting widespread favourable interest, such a person must embody unique human traits.”⁴

Such a creative and innovative thinking process as was needed to share previously unknown insights and knowledge into the human condition on so many stages of human endeavour required a willing and capable channel tapping a hidden realm unknown to most. Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual insights dwelt calmly at the core of his being, inspiring this dedicated spiritual researcher to reveal a perception of reality based on his personal experience with his true home, the spiritual world.

From the earliest days of his boyhood, Steiner recognized that the only real world for him was the realm of the spiritual. This world of the spirit was, in fact, more real to him than any sensory perceived element of the physical world. His devotion and recognition of this spiritual realm manifested into the many achievements and endeavours that verified the significant impact of his revelations upon world thinking.

Rudolf Steiner was born on February 27, 1861, in the town of Kraljevic, an area of the Austrian empire where Croatia and Hungary met. It was a geographic region where polarities in culture and nationalities melted into a centre stage of east and west Europe. As the oldest of three children born to warm, simple and modest parents, his life as a young boy was spent close to nature, picking berries, enjoying a great variety of living creatures, following simple disciplines and basically exhibiting a powerful existence to the outside world. But his personal recollections of his early youth illustrate a world of life within him quite different from his exterior life, a world that remained active throughout his years on the earth. Some of these recollections follow:

“As a child I felt, without of course expressing it to myself clearly, that knowledge of the spiritual world is something to be grasped in the mind in the same way as geometrical concepts. For I was as certain of the reality of the spiritual world as of the physical world. But I needed in some way to justify this assumption. I needed to be able to tell myself that experience of the spiritual world is no more an illusion than knowledge of the physical world. I told myself that geometry was something that only the mind by the exercise of its own powers could grasp; this feeling was my justification for speaking of the spiritual world that I experienced in the same way as I did of the physical world . . . There were two concepts which, though vague, had

already become an important part of my mental life before I was eight years old. I distinguished things and essences 'that one saw' from those that 'one did not see'.⁵

"I racked my brains over the problem of where the parallel lines really meet; Pythagoras' theorem fascinated me . . . To be able to grasp something purely in my mind brought me inner happiness."⁶

"For the reality of the spiritual world was to me as certain as that of the physical. I loved to live in that world. For I should have been forced to feel the physical world as a sort of spiritual darkness around me, had it not received light from that side."⁷

A love of geometry was equalled by his affection for the surrounding natural environment and the elemental beings that, for him, permeated the physical realm that he viewed all around him. Steiner believed that his awareness or clairvoyance into the world of the spirit was a common trait shared by all. Very quickly, he learned to be silent about this ability, having discovered that this vision was not shared by others. One ability that he hid from everyone as best he could was the connection he experienced with human souls after they had died. As Steiner related to one of his biographers,

" . . . The spiritual individuality of each and every person was revealed to me with the utmost clarity. The physical body, and activity in the physical world, were merely its revelation. It was united with what came as a physical embryo from the parents. I followed the man who had died into the spiritual world."⁸

While sitting in a train station waiting room, this seven-year-old boy saw a door open and "the figure of a woman came through the door, advanced to the middle of the room, made gestures and spoke something like these words: Now and always, try to do for me whatever you can – then she stayed for a while, making gestures such as, once seen, can never be erased from the mind."⁹ This experience left a permanent mark in this young boy's memory. He knew that this was not only a physical encounter with a woman who, in fact, had passed away at that exact moment some distance away. Silence of this type of encounter became imperative if he was to maintain any level of normalcy within his family and among his friends.

As Steiner enjoyed his childhood days, his good natured humour and sociability balanced his unusual accomplishments in school. He would tutor pupils in subjects he had not even taken. Steiner recollected, "I acquired knowledge of analytical geometry, trigonometry, and also differential and integral calculus long before I learned these subjects at school."¹⁰ He was very fortunate that a friend of the family kept feeding him with books on natural sciences and mathematics, which he absorbed and understood without external help.

At fifteen, Steiner was attracted to Immanuel Kant during his efforts to determine the relationship between human thinking and the creative forces of nature. His awareness of the nature spirits still could not be shared with anyone until, at age eighteen, he met a herb gardener. This simple herbalist, named Felix Koguzki, had a distinct awareness of the spiritual world that enabled him to converse with plants and minerals, and use this talent to bring health to his customers through carefully prepared remedies. His glimpses into the spiritual world were shared with the young Steiner. During this time, Steiner crossed paths with a mystery personality who apparently instilled in the young Steiner a seed for spiritual knowledge that would germinate throughout his life and provide a road map for the external expression of Steiner's inner experiences. Steiner acknowledges one helpful guide that he received as follows: "To overcome the enemy, you must begin by understanding him. You can only become the conqueror of the dragon by slipping into his skin."¹¹

Heeding this advice, Steiner made efforts to reconcile the relationship between the physical world around him and the spiritual world that he experienced within. In his autobiography, Steiner mentioned: "I can truly say that I never let my spiritual insights interfere with my endeavour to acquire knowledge of the sciences as they were then presented. I applied myself to what was taught and only at the back of my mind was there always the hope that one day the union of natural science and knowledge of spirit would disclose itself to me."¹² Much effort was put into his experiments into the natural sciences that could confirm his own inner visions of the spirit realm.

Aside from his active inner life, Rudolf Steiner was intensely involved in the cultural and political issues of the day. He enjoyed many friendships and close personal relationships with his peers, none of whom shared his inner thought processes nor his vision of the spiritual realm and all its beings. Steiner gradually realized that

his thinking, although different from those around him, was actually a reflection of his own soul experience in the spiritual world. In one of his lectures later in life, Steiner revealed the kind of difficulty that presented itself to him at this time of his life:

“What the spiritual world revealed penetrated into my soul, formed itself into ideas, into thoughts. On the other hand, things that came easily to others were difficult for me. I was always able to grasp quickly the arguments of natural scientific thinking, but concrete facts would not remain in my memory, simply would not register there. . . . [U]nlike most others, I could not recognize a particular mineral if I had seen it only once or twice . . . I found it difficult to retain concrete pictures of the things of the external, material world. It was not easy for me to come fully into the world of sense.”¹³

His difficulty with the sense world did not diminish Steiner’s cravings for knowledge and the life of his thinking processes, where the reality of his inner experiences continued to be bathed in a divine light that brought him immense satisfaction.

By his twenty-first birthday, Steiner recognized that “spiritual vision perceives spirit as the senses perceive nature . . . [S]piritual vision does not rest upon obscure mystical feeling, but took its course rather in a spiritual activity which in its transparency might be compared completely with mathematical thinking.”¹⁴ Steiner wished to study the level of consciousness required to bring humanity into a direct awareness of the reality of life, nature and all phenomena. His penetrating research delved into the life of thoughts and found a spiritual reality that his soul experienced in a totally different way than normal consciousness could possibly perceive. Steiner stated, “I was approaching a level of inner experience within my soul that I could believe allowed my inner perception of the spiritual world to be justified before the forum of scientific thought.”¹⁵ Life for Rudolf Steiner was about to take on a deeper, more precise direction.

Living in Vienna, with all the friendships and cultural interactions, brought Steiner into a love affair with music, art and philosophy. Even though he cherished his personal interactions, Steiner still felt as if he was a lonely wanderer with no one to share his inner perceptions and vastly different views on life. This double inner life, although seemingly at odds, proved to be of great benefit to his life’s evolutionary path. His deep affection for the arts and philosophy, his voracious reading habits and his devotion to spiritual knowledge led Steiner to various individuals who helped pave the path of his early adulthood. Steiner was drawn to many personalities who followed Eastern philosophical thinking, and thus was exposed to those involved in the Theosophical Society, an organization initiated by H.R. Blavatsky.

Steiner’s friendship with a German professor of literature, Karl Schroer, led him to the work and spirit of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose thinking and visions of life appealed to the young spiritual seeker in Steiner. Steiner’s inner vision of the spiritual man, and his perception of the light of the spiritual world, were strikingly consistent with the thinking and works of Goethe. At age twenty-two, Steiner began to edit all of Goethe’s scientific writings, and continued this task for ten years. This dedication was ample proof of Steiner’s conviction that Goethe’s views of the natural world could lead one more directly to reality and the world of spirit. Steiner described Goethe as the Galileo of the organic world and felt him to be a profound philosophical spirit. After hearing about Goethe’s contention that he could perceive ideas with his eyes, Steiner said:

“I derived comfort after a long struggle of the mind from what came to me out of the understanding of these words of Goethe to which I felt I had penetrated. Goethe’s way of viewing nature appeared to me as in keeping with spirit.”¹⁶

In his study of Goethe, Steiner recognized a method of scientific research that could lead one from the observation of organic nature to the perception of the spiritual principles at work and permeating the organic kingdom. Goethe’s spirit called to him: “Those who stride forward too quickly on the spiritual path can indeed gain spiritual experience within a narrow limit, but they enter an impoverished reality, stripped of all the richness of life.”¹⁷ Steiner learned that the spiritual gifts bestowed upon a human being through an act of grace should be approached humbly, quietly, respectfully, and without public attention.

Steiner’s autobiography characterized this segment of his life as a time of great aspirations, desires and questions as he gradually developed a bridge to communicate his own personal inner world perception with his social and cultural community. Personal statements made during this time reveal his state of mind:

“I spoke of man’s independent inner being which creates out of itself what gives meaning and content to life, and that this inner being cannot develop if external nature extravagantly provides him from without with what he himself should create from within.”¹⁸

“During this time I gained through spiritual perception a definite insight into man’s repeated earth lives.”¹⁹

“In my relation to the Goethe task I was able to observe directly how karma works in human life.”²⁰

“In the human personality I saw a centre where man is altogether at one with the Absolute Primordial Being of the world.”²¹

“A Philosophy of Spiritual Activity was taking shape within me; a picture of the spirit—thirsting, toward beauty striving sense world, a spiritual vision of the world of living truth.”²²

“Thus at the age of twenty-seven, I was full of questions and riddles in regard to man’s external life, while at the same time the nature of the human soul and its relation to the spiritual world stood before my inner perception in an ever more complete and definite form.”²³

Steiner’s endeavours with Goethe continued for many years at the Goethe Archives in Weimar where his own consciousness became aroused through new mental and spiritual energies that helped mould his inner perceptions into new levels of cosmic wisdom. Socially, the work in the Archives allowed Steiner to enjoy a stimulating life where acquaintances, discussion sessions, varying points of view, emerging world issues, and deepening emotional relationships kept his whole being active and fulfilling.

And yet, this external world appeared to Steiner somewhat shadowlike, unlike the light and clarity that characterized his relationship with the spiritual. About this, Steiner remarked:

“But if one can devote oneself with love and interest to the external world one soon becomes aware of its true nature, even though one must always return to the inner world of the spirit. In fact one learns thereby to live in the fullest sense within the spiritual.”²⁴

The bridge between these two worlds, Steiner discovered, was human thinking when it awakens through inner peaceful vision and becomes a creative and free spiritual activity. Steiner recognized that knowledge could have no limits and that this newly developed sense free thinking could approach the entire world of spirit as his own experiences had proven. This new living thinking or imagination thinking could comprehend the living organic world by perceiving the spiritual behind the physical. “This sense-free thinking I set forth as what unites the human soul with the spiritual reality of the world.”²⁵ Steiner continued in his autobiography:

“I rejected the path of knowledge that tries to break through to reality by means of sense-observation. I wanted to intimate that reality is to be sought by entering more deeply into the inner being of the soul, not by attempting to break through the outer world. . . . As man perceives the world through his senses, he sees an illusion. But when, from his own inner being, he adds sense-free thinking to sense perception, the illusion is permeated with reality: it ceases to be illusion. Then the human spirit experiences itself within man and meets the spirit in the world; the latter is no longer hidden from man behind the physical world; it weaves and moves within it. To discover the spirit in the world . . . will come about when man advances through self-development from experiencing the physically perceptible to experiencing sense-free thinking.”²⁶

Steiner’s inner perceptions, reinforced by his intimate work with Goethe’s spirit, and challenged by numerous social encounters of opposing views, were bubbling to the surface and looking for expression in any public arena, whether in the form of books, articles or public speaking engagements. His first major work, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, was based on an inner experience of human consciousness. The concept of freedom, illuminated in this book, gave witness to a completely new approach to the understanding of the human mind and the nature of thought. Steiner described a newly awakened organ of thinking perception that would embrace an inner experience where ideas would light up in a conscious way and direct one towards an objective freedom.

As Steiner entered his thirties, he strove to gain greater clarity in his perception of human consciousness. Due to his expanded social presence, the ideas of mysticism approached him more frequently, and Steiner’s own personal experiences directly exposed him to the life of the mystic. His views on the mystic were expressed very elaborately in his autobiography:

"It appeared to me that the mystic fails to find the right relation to the world of ideas in which, to me, the spirit is manifest. . . . I saw in this a path not to light, but to spiritual darkness. . . .

"But I was drawn to one aspect of mystical striving, to the kind of inner experience the mystics seek. They wish to unite inwardly with the source of human existence . . . However, I saw clearly that this very experience is gained when one penetrates to the deeper regions of the soul with a content of ideas that is clear and defined . . . I sought to carry the light of ideas into the warmth of the inner life . . . The coldness he (the mystic) experiences in ideas compels him to seek, in escape from ideas, the warmth his soul needs.

"I experienced just the opposite: warmth flooded my inner life when I formulated into definite ideas my first indefinite experience of the spiritual world. . . .

"To enter the inner being of the soul without ideas is to enter a region of mere feeling. . . .

"A path to the spirit based upon mere feeling I definitely had to reject.

"And yet in the mystical experience itself I did sense a remote similarity to my own relation to the spiritual world. I sought union with the spirit through ideas irradiated by the spirit in the same way as the mystic sought this union with something void of ideas. I could also say: My spiritual perception is based on a 'mystical' experience of ideas. . . . I had no wish to describe human experiences; I wished to point to the fact that through spiritual organs of perception an objective spiritual world is revealed within man."²⁷

Steiner wished to perceive an objective spiritual world as opposed to the subjective experiences of the mystic. He concluded in his autobiography that "when man surrenders himself, he makes it possible for the objective spiritual world to manifest within him, whereas the mystic enhances the life of his own inner being, thus extinguishing the true form of the objective spirit".²⁸

Encounters with three souls during this phase of Steiner's life made deep impressions upon his personal research into reincarnation and repeated earth lives. During a trip to Germany, he visited Friedrich Nietzsche and noted: "And so there appeared before my soul the soul of Nietzsche, as if hovering above his head, already boundless in its spiritual light, surrendered freely to spiritual worlds for which it had yearned before being benighted but which it had not found; but still chained to the body . . ." ²⁹ Steiner remarked how he witnessed the soul of Nietzsche: "a soul which bore within it from previous earth lives a wealth of the gold of light, but which could not in this life cause all its light to shine".³⁰

Another example of Steiner's spiritual vision was evidenced when he described his experiences with the fathers of close friends. Steiner wrote:

"The spirit of both men . . . shone with wonderful light after death, their souls were filled with images of those spiritual beings who are bound up with the creation of the world. . . . [D]uring their earthly life they found no opportunity to raise scientific thinking to the sphere where experience of the spiritual begins. After death they accomplished this fully."³¹

When he experienced such spiritual knowledge, Steiner was adamant that the pursuit of objective truths be conducted in the same manner, dedication and consciousness as is required in pure scientific thinking.

Steiner's devotion to his inner experiences did not prevent him from leading an active social, political and cultural life. His weekly discussions with co-workers and friends indicated to him how different his views of life remained as so few shared thoughts even remotely resembling his spiritual insights.

One of these insights, which soon became a focal point of his life, concerned the Being of Christ. Steiner wrote:

"I expressed my view that Jesus of Nazareth, through an extra-terrestrial influence, had received into himself the Christ, and that Christ, as a spiritual Being, is bound up with mankind's further evolution since the Mystery of Golgotha. This . . . has remained deeply engraved in my soul."³²

Steiner believed that this Christ revelation could become a deep inner experience when one comes to a full realization of one's being in a spiritually awake consciousness.

As his inner experiences developed in intensity and clarity, Steiner's productivity and energy levels increased. In addition to his editing work, Steiner had now written and published at least one hundred scientific and philosophical articles. This increased activity and the motivation behind this energy was laying the groundwork for a profound experience that would overwhelm his soul. Steiner's reality of an inner spiritual, moral and natural world was a result of his evolving consciousness. He was eager to demonstrate in public circles and with close friends that within the subjective experiences of mental imagery, an objective spirit is illuminated in the realm of consciousness. In his autobiography, Steiner stated that he "saw the centre of the soul's life in complete union with the world of spirit".³³ He added: "Through my direct experience and perception of the spiritual world the sense-world was revealed to me as spiritual, and I wished to create a science of nature in which the spirit is acknowledged."³⁴

Steiner's time in Weimar was coming to an end as he approached his thirty-sixth year. Significant changes in his consciousness became not only self-evident but evoked in him an intense impulse and drive to actively engage in an external life that promoted his inner soul experiences. In his autobiography, Steiner speaks of this time: "About a year earlier a profound transformation began to take place in my inner life. When I left Weimar this transformation had become a decisive experience."³⁵ He further explained this transformation:

Knowledge and experience of the spiritual world had always been something self-evident to me, whereas to grasp the sense-world through physical perception caused me the greatest difficulty. It was as if my inner soul-experience of sense-perceptions did not penetrate sufficiently into the sense organs to unite fully with what takes place in them. . . .

"This changed entirely from the beginning of my thirty-sixth year. I became able to observe physical things and events more accurately and completely than before. This was the case in regard to scientific investigation and also to external life in general. Wider scientific connections that must be grasped purely conceptually I had always found easy, while it caused me great difficulty to observe objects accurately and especially to commit them to memory; this now changed completely. There awakened within me a new awareness of sense perceptible things. . . .

"I was aware that I was experiencing an inner transformation of soul life. . . .

"The more exact and more thorough penetration of sense observation opened for me the door to an entirely new world. When the sense-world is approached objectively, . . . it reveals aspects about which spiritual insight can say nothing.

"This threw light also upon the spiritual sphere. . . .

"This experience was all the more incisive for my inner life since its effect showed itself also in human relationships."³⁶

This new ability allowed Steiner to fully embrace the physical sense world, live it objectively, and then to experience an enhanced spiritual world with increased powers of vision and understanding. He employed this new awareness as a test for the knowledge he had attained previously, and thus awaken a new harmony within his soul. Steiner's inner perception of evolution, humanity and the creative forces of the cosmos was transformed into a more vibrant reality. Steiner believed that humanity was the solution to the riddle of the world, for it was man's soul where the world could experience its own purpose and evolution. He therefore surmised that humanity was and will be the co-creator of the world. A new clarity of vision presented itself to Steiner's spirit, resulting in the penetration of a sharper focus into his every thought and deed.

An integral characteristic of this transformative process was the role and significance of meditation in Steiner's daily routine. Steiner expressed his feelings regarding this matter as follows:

"Significant inner experiences were associated with the transformation I have mentioned. – I came to recognize, through actual experience, the significant part meditation plays in attaining insight into the spiritual world. I had lived a meditative life before this time, but the impulse for doing so had been simply a conceptual recognition of its value for a world view that acknowledges the spirit. But now a demand for meditation arose within me as an absolute necessity for the soul's existence. The inner life had reached a stage where meditation became a necessity just as at a certain stage in the evolution of an organism, breathing through lungs became a necessity. . . .

“What now happened was that meditation became an absolute necessity for my inner life. And this led me to recognize the third kind of knowledge. This was knowledge that led not only into further depths of the spiritual world but vouchsafed intimate union with that world. I was compelled, out of inner necessity, to place repeatedly at the centre of my consciousness a particular mental picture. . . . If, for instance, one experiences the ‘I’ of man as the absolute, inner kernel of his being, unique to him, then one knows through the direct experience of this spiritual perception, that the ‘I’ existed before life in the physical body and that it will continue to exist after that life is ended. . . .

“During such meditation, practised out of inner necessity of spiritual life, one becomes ever more conscious of an ‘inner spiritual man’ who lives, perceives and moves within the spiritual sphere, entirely detached from the physical organism. Through the influence of meditation this self-contained spiritual man entered the field of my experience. This greatly enhanced my experience of the spiritual . . .

“The very instant I first attained ideal-spiritual knowledge I was convinced of its objective reality.”³⁷

A newly expanded awareness of divine spiritual knowledge, totally free of the physical organism, strengthened Steiner’s connection to the spiritual world and its infinite wisdom. Steiner’s vision for his external destiny now became harmonious with his inner perceptions. He came to recognize, in full clarity, the following objective reality: that not only was the physical sense world a world of spirit, but that humanity was living in a world of spirit, and that the future of human consciousness was to experience this spiritual world as its true home. This focussed perception could be absorbed and transformed into a living thinking where inner and outer observation became one. This level of cognition became, for Steiner, a fully disciplined and conscious instrument for knowledge unimpeded by subjectivity. Steiner now sought avenues to publicly inform his contemporaries of his perceptions of the truth, and thus vowed to himself to no longer remain silent. In order for a successful and fruitful public engagement process to be fulfilled, he set for himself certain guidelines that he mentioned in his autobiography:

“I wanted the results of scientific research to grow into insight of a spirit-permeated nature. I wanted to speak about a living divine reality, in substance both spiritual and natural, to be found within this world.”³⁸

All of Europe was to become Steiner’s new public domain where he would spread the knowledge of the spiritual world. The atmosphere and thinking of his day posed a severe test of his inner resolve towards sharing his perception of a realm of spiritual beings and the divine purpose of humanity. Steiner’s outlook on Christianity came under intense scrutiny and in many circles strong opposition. One of the results of his transformation process was a necessity for his soul to enter into a living experience of Christianity. He explained his struggle for expression in this way: “This experience culminated in my standing in the spiritual presence of the Mystery of Golgotha in a most profound and solemn festival of knowledge.”³⁹ Steiner saw the personage of Jesus of Nazareth, the experience of the Christ and the events of Golgotha as one of the most significant occurrences in human history. Steiner’s Christianity could not be found in any existing denomination since the true substance of Christianity, for him, unfolded within his soul as an inner phenomenon of knowledge that was quite different from existing dogma and superstition. He stated in his book *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, that he had a direct experience of the Christ.

Steiner now felt the time was at hand for his internal life and visions of reality to be expressed externally in social, cultural, scientific, artistic, and philosophical circles. Various opportunities opened up for an energetic Steiner as illustrated by the following activities that he pursued. He co-edited a literary magazine in Berlin. He taught at the Workers Educational Institute. He delivered numerous lectures and courses. He wrote a large number of articles on a variety of social, political, artistic, cultural, and philosophical subjects. He began work on in-depth spiritual manuals in book form. He was associated with an Independent Drama Society. He began significant discourses with a growing public that yearned for spiritual knowledge. In all these endeavours, his emphasis on portraying an active participation in the spiritual realm by all of humanity was received with respectful enthusiasm.

Steiner’s knowledge of the spirit was entirely the result of his own inner investigations. Many in the Theosophical Society became an attentive audience to Steiner’s views and research on the many aspects of the spiritual

world concerning the human condition, the evolutionary process and life in general. Steiner's numerous public lectures and gatherings with members of this Society led to his being elected to the position of General Secretary of the Society in Berlin and, in a broad sense, laid the foundations of his future work. Although he saw this Society as basically an Oriental movement, Steiner recognized that many searching for spiritual knowledge seemed to have gravitated towards it, and were eager to absorb all information pertaining to the hidden world of the spirit.

Steiner would satisfy the thirst for knowledge that these seekers possessed through a more active public engagement schedule. The frequency of his lectures would increase markedly, in these years, as a response to a yearning public. Although not well known in many European centres where he spoke, the audiences attending Steiner lectures continued to overflow the auditoriums. Many came to hear and witness revelations not offered by any other personality of the time. A participant at one of Steiner's lectures in Berlin observed: "He (Steiner) spoke with an inner warmth, and his words went straight to the hearts of his listeners, as he showed how spiritual forces were everywhere active influencing the course of historical events."⁴⁰ By speaking directly from his soul's perception of the spirit world, Steiner offered a "science of the spirit" that catered to Western souls and thinking.

Steiner's clairvoyant abilities, including perception of spiritual beings and the Akashic Record (an infinitely broad memory of all that has happened in the physical and spiritual worlds, bathed in what Steiner called astral light), as well as his thorough knowledge of the natural sciences, made him extremely attractive to anyone seeking deeper knowledge of the world. And, although Steiner looked upon the ancient wisdom of the Orient with great respect, he believed that this wisdom offered little to solve the scientific materialism that plagued the West.

In a lecture given in 1909, Steiner depicted the relationship between the wisdom of the East and the West as follows:

"... [T]he wisdom of the West has to gather together the whole of Eastern teaching, the whole of Eastern wisdom, the whole of Eastern research and, without allowing any of this to be lost, to illuminate it with the light which has been kindled in mankind through the Christ impulse."⁴¹

Steiner felt a need to offer Europe and the West a modern knowledge of the spirit that could reveal an objective reality available to every human soul. He related his own experiences in this domain:

"I elaborated the findings of my spiritual vision. On the one hand I stood within the spiritual world in full consciousness. About the year 1902 and in the years following I had imaginations, inspirations, and intuitions' regarding many things. But only gradually were these combined into what I then gave out publicly in my writings... During the years from 1901 to approximately 1907 or 1908 I stood with all the forces of my soul under the impression of the facts and Beings of the spiritual world that were drawing near to me. Out of the experience of the spiritual world in general developed specific details of knowledge."⁴²

In a letter, he further elaborated the key to his fountain of information:

"I will never say anything... about spiritual matters that I do not know from direct spiritual experience. This is my guiding star."⁴³

Travel, special appearances, daily speaking engagements, and many cultural events enabled more Europeans to physically experience Steiner's personality and physical presence. An aura of peculiar mystery enveloped his physical appearance as was attested by his biographers, Theosophical Society members, students, participants of various cultural and artistic endeavours, and many in the general public who may only have enjoyed minimal contact with the man. One of his biographers and close companion observed:

"Rudolf Steiner, in spite of his unusual external appearance—he was mostly clad in black and unconsciously stood out in the common run of persons through the measured dignity and confidence of his movements and gait and the marked character of his features—yet remained in constant friendly relation with all who came into contact with him, with peasants and philosophers, workmen and authors, simple people and scientists. Everyone felt at once that this was a man who respected not only the outer but the inner worth

of every person, who could establish contact with anyone without the need that either person should have to surrender or veil his individuality. In the atmosphere created by him there was an element of such kindness and ease of approach that one . . . felt at once completely at ease. Seldom can a person of our time have called forth so much natural affection and respect and also such frankness, merely through his presence.”⁴⁴

A student’s notes recorded his impressions of Steiner while visiting the university in Marburg:

“As he came down the street in his dark suit and hat, with the characteristic bow tie, with his umbrella under his arm, while he scanned the row of houses, looking for our number . . . I noticed how passing persons stopped and looked back at him; for they must have thought ‘that man there must be something special’. Steiner had an unusual appearance, anything but commonplace, which could not fail to be recognized among thousands of others.

“Later,

He began his lecture. His gaze, first turned outward, seemed now and then to be turned inward. He spoke out of an inner view. The sentences were formed while he spoke. There was power in his words. In his words dwelt the power to awaken to life the slumbering unison of hearts. The hearts sensed something of the power of which his words were formed . . . His talk went to the heart because it came from the heart that bore within it much of knowledge and of love . . . Toward the end, compared with which the beginning had been slow, almost hesitating, as if he spoke in a dream, his speech increased to a symphonic power, until he reached the crowning point in a victorious final cadence.”⁴⁵

Steiner’s scope of interest widened to any human endeavour that presented itself to him. His interests expanded with a greater range of topics in his lectures, his books and his theatrical stagings, which attracted a larger and more diverse audience. With the enormous workload that was now his fate, after 1903 there was very little time left for social events or friendships that did not involve his spiritual path. One of his biographers suggested:

“Almost every moment of every day was spent exclusively on the fulfillment of what he had regarded as his mission. . . . When he was not lecturing or preparing lectures or reading or engaged in solitary thought and meditation he was giving advice to all those who requested private interviews in which they discussed their problems with him. He seems to have done nothing that was not in some way connected with the work that he had undertaken . . .”⁴⁶

With increased popularity and more questions being asked of him, Steiner felt the strong impulse to offer a stern warning to all who heard and read him. He insisted that his readers and audiences accept nothing on blind faith alone, but all must test the knowledge given in every possible way, just as he himself had done in the past. Steiner’s own personal development allowed for a deeper understanding of his insights into the Akashic Record. He explained that this ability of unlimited vision was dormant in all human souls, ready to unfold, with the appropriate preparation, all of life’s hidden secrets and forces. During numerous lectures, Steiner would refer to a clairvoyance available to all, an ability that would awaken and become a new human sense of perception that could experience the Christ in the sphere of etheric life. Through his own clairvoyant insights, Steiner accepted that every soul appeared to him at a different stage of spiritual development. This realization made it necessary for him to describe evolutionary forces in the most honest and general terms, so as to be all-inclusive of everyone’s wishes and feelings.

In response to increased demands placed upon Steiner, an uplifting of his own energies and awareness seemed handed to him. In these years of intensified work, all hours of the waking day were spent sharing his inner perceptions of the spiritual world in one way or another; whether through lectures, books, articles, public appearances, private consultations, artistic endeavours, theatrical productions, or the birthing of a new spiritual movement that could engulf all of humanity. But these public demands imposed enormous pressures upon his physical, mental and emotional bodies. It was quite fortunate that his personal lifestyle eased the possible ill effects of such an unrelenting schedule of activities. As a vegetarian who discouraged smoking in his presence, he promoted proper nutrition, personal habits and thinking that could support his spiritual journey by encouraging inner peace, self control, reverence, objectivity, and a gradual awareness process into the world of spirit.

One area of creative expression was his insatiable urge to write and share with the world his personal research. Each year during this period of his life, a newly inspired book of spiritual knowledge found its way to the publisher's printing press. The subject matter in these books included the nature of man, karma, reincarnation, life between death and rebirth, humanity's relationship with other beings and the cosmos, distinct stages on the path of higher knowledge, evolutionary forces, practices and exercises for the spiritual seekers, and other aspects of his own personal spiritual research. One significant theme in his writing emphasizes that within each person, various faculties lie dormant, which, when activated through the exercises of Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition, awaken spiritual organs that allow the individual to gain knowledge of higher spheres.

In one of his books, Steiner emphasized the following

"The heights of the spirit can only be ascended by entering at the gate of humility . . . The knowledge that you seek merely to enhance your knowledge, merely to store up treasures for yourself, will lead you astray from your road; but the knowledge that you seek in order to ennoble mankind and advance the development of the world will carry you a step forward . . . So order all your acts and words as not to encroach upon the free will of any man. Create for yourself moments of inner repose and in these moments learn to distinguish the essential from the non-essential . . . If you do not understand something, rather than condemn, do not judge at all. You must set aside all prejudices . . . Learn to be silent about your spiritual visions. The golden rule is: whenever you attempt to take one step forward in the knowledge of hidden truths, take three steps forward towards the perfection of your character for good."⁴⁷

Lectures given to German audiences expanded into regular travel excursions throughout Europe, as more flocked to hear his freshly creative perceptions, so dissimilar from current modes of thinking. In each year prior to the war in Europe, as many as two hundred lecture appearances were scheduled. The subject matter of each lecture depended upon a variety of factors: the time, place and atmosphere of the lecture setting, as well as Steiner's internal reaction to the people and forces surrounding each engagement. Steiner never read from a manuscript and therefore maintained a living contact with his audiences, shifting moods in a flash and experiencing inwardly the energy of the event. A spectator named Edouard Schurè, at a 1906 lecture, commented on his impression of Steiner:

"When he spoke of the events and phenomena of the supersensible world, he spoke as one who was at home there. In familiar language he related what takes place in those unfamiliar regions. He did not describe; he beheld objects and scenes and made them visible . . . When one listened to him, it was impossible to doubt his spiritual vision, which was as keen as physical sight, only far more comprehensive."⁴⁸

An underlying theme in many of his speeches encouraged all in attendance to become "sources of power" capable of spiritual service for the benefit of all. His approach towards the expression of spiritual knowledge that differed from the emphasis on oriental spiritual wisdom became a constant reminder that his stage was set for a change. Steiner recognized that his task of creating a basis for Anthroposophy (Science of the Spirit) was quickly approaching. Through a thinking as objective as scientific thinking, Steiner's spiritual research and belief that Christianity was at the core of human evolution required immediate expression. A distinction between Anthroposophy and Theosophy was quite apparent to all.

For Steiner, Christianity was greater than all religions, which he felt only partially revealed spiritual truths. Steiner believed that Christianity, in time, would itself stop being considered a religion and thought of more as an evolutionary, cosmic process. At the core of this thinking was Steiner's experience of the mystery of Christ. Steiner emphasized a distinction between Jesus of Nazareth, the most highly developed human being in history, and the Christ, the highest spiritual being experiencing earth evolution directly. Steiner believed Christ to be a Being of divine heavenly origin with enormous spiritual life-giving power, a Being that, once united with humanity, would live within our earthly sphere, spiritually active but temporarily hidden. The Christ dwelt within the body of Jesus for the three-year period between the Baptism by John and the Crucifixion on Golgotha. Through the following events of death, resurrection and ascension, a complete union with our world commenced. Steiner perceived that the human being of the day was now capable of experiencing the Christ as never before in history. In one of his lectures in Sweden, Steiner emphatically related, "Through the Mystery of Golgotha a Cosmic Being has entered into the stream of the earthly life."⁴⁹

In another lecture during 1909, he emphasized a connection between humanity and the Christ:

“Just as far removed in conduct as mankind seems today from being permeated with the Christ Spirit in the physical plane, just so near to human souls is the Christ, who is coming, if only they will open themselves to him. . . . Since 1909, we live inwardly in a very special time. Moreover, it is possible today, if this be sought for, to be very close to Christ, to find Him in a quite different way from that of previous times.”⁵⁰

One can easily see Steiner’s disagreement with the Oriental view of Christ as a human soul who, after many incarnations towards perfection, became a forerunner of the human species of the future.

When the Theosophical Society, under the leadership of Annie Besant, wished to promote a young Indian boy as the reincarnated Christ, a separation from the Society was inevitable for Steiner. In a very short time, Steiner, with many supporters, initiated an independent spiritual research movement called Anthroposophy. By 1913, a new Society, which embraced the cultivation of a genuine spiritual knowledge, was inaugurated.

The scope of Steiner’s evolving inner life opened doors previously closed to him. New arenas of human creativity appeared as manifestations of Steiner’s expanded awareness. Steiner believed that art, religion and science had been in the past and will be inseparable. He saw in art an expression of the spiritual content embracing and permeating the sacred mysteries of life. He defined true art as “an expression of man’s search for a relationship with the spiritual”.⁵¹ Steiner wrote in his autobiography:

“When knowledge of spirit becomes inner experience, it takes hold of the whole man. All the powers of the soul are stimulated. And the light from this inner spiritual experience will illumine man’s creative imagination.”⁵²

From 1910 to 1913, Steiner wrote, produced and directed his four Mystery Dramas in Munich. They were written over the course of a few weeks prior to the production of each play. The majority of performers and working crews were usually engaged in other occupations, and therefore not professionals by theatrical standards of the time. Steiner threw himself, from morning until night, into all aspects of these productions, including physical labour, stage decorations, rehearsals, speech instruction, and general supervision of the entire endeavour. These dramas embodied all the knowledge of his books and, in fact, contained the whole life of Anthroposophy. These dramas illustrated the individuality of personal evolution, successive incarnations, life before birth and after death, and our relationship to each other and the earth. One of Steiner’s biographers concluded: “It is a proof of his extraordinary capacity for inspiring people to an unusual effort that he was able in only a few weeks to bring to life the beginnings of a new art of the theatre, in spite of the unsuitable accommodation of the theatre in Munich, and with entirely untrained personnel; with performers many of whom had never before trod the boards of a stage, with painters who had no previous experience of scene-painting; with assistants who had never before made stage costumes, and so on.”⁵³

Steiner related to this biographer: “That this humanity will advance toward a time in which the human being will feel himself to be a mediator between the spiritual world and the physical world, — to make it possible for this premonition to awaken, for this purpose, were those presentations produced.”⁵⁴

During this period in his life, the birth of eurythmy unfolded as a result of Steiner’s budding artistic awareness. He gave lessons on making visible speech and music through rhythmic movements and postures. By releasing within his audiences the obstacles of experiencing the spiritual creative forces behind music and the spoken word, more souls could appreciate this fuller aspect of spiritual forces in their daily lives. It seemed to those supporters around Steiner that a growing number of European minds were compelled to witness Steiner’s creative forces at work.

As the world was about to endure dramatic upheavals and tragedy, Steiner foresaw a more urgent need to arouse within as many as possible a clearer perception of the divinity within nature and mankind. He felt that it was his task “to create a basis for Anthroposophy through a thinking as objective as scientific thinking that does not stop short at merely registering the sense-perceptible facts, but advances to comprehensive knowl-

edge”.⁵⁵ Private consultations and conversations became a common feature in Steiner’s daily routine. Although very reluctant to use his abilities to focus his spiritual perception towards individual requests or personal matters, Steiner accepted that if a request was made by someone for the betterment of all, without infringing on the person’s evolutionary destiny, answers must be revealed in a responsible fashion, without any personal gain or profit resulting from his visionary advice.

Peaceful existence in the European community was becoming more uncertain, and growing tension between neighbours brought a dark cloud of anxiety to many of the nations in Europe. Steiner recognized what this meant for him and the Anthroposophical movement. He realized that Anthroposophy, the science of the spirit, needed a home base for a healthy evolutionary growth to be maintained during the upcoming troubled times. A building that was organic in nature and structure could become a safe haven for living thought and spiritual research, unencumbered by the dangerous forces of war. He therefore called upon his architectural insights and designed the Goetheanum, a building that spoke in a language of form, colour and design, easily understood by the spirit within. It was originally planned for Munich, but due to political and geographic concerns, was established in the Jura foothills in Dornach, Switzerland. Steiner explained the basic impulses that produced the completed edifice:

“If one is able to realize how the human body on the one hand is an instrument for thinking and on the other for willing and that both these faculties are held together by the power of feeling; if one understands the whole human structure, the formation of the head, limbs, and trunk, with the heart system as centre, then one is able to construct organic forms oneself also. The Goetheanum is such an organic form.”⁵⁶

The construction of the building began in 1914 at a time when nations began the fighting of a hostile war that seemed to physically encircle this endeavour. The enthusiasm and energy for this building attracted volunteers from as many as seventeen countries, some of which were on opposite sides of the armed conflict in Europe. Steiner acknowledged these sacrifices but maintained an objective detachment when he addressed the volunteers with the following words: “With respect to what each individual is called upon to do (in or out of the war), the only thing to say is that everyone must do his duty!”⁵⁷ An important question could be asked by an objective observer regarding the circumstances of the Goetheanum’s construction, that is, what type of personality would be required to inspire all those involved in this building’s construction and to maintain a harmony with a common goal in an atmosphere so explosive and unbearable?

Within the sounds of gunfire, volunteers and construction crews, under the direction of Rudolf Steiner, built a wooden structure with two intersecting domes. Such an architectural design, with flowing curves and colours, had never been seen or attempted within recorded memory. The lumber demands of this project had a significant impact on the whole timber market in Europe. The daily physical burden on most involved was intense. Although in his fifties, Steiner’s physical agility and untiring daily routines, which included carving, chiselling, drawing, painting, counselling, and directing, inspired all who witnessed his devotion around the construction site.

It was Steiner’s intention that this building’s design would speak in a language of the spirit, as all buildings might in the future. This centre would become a natural meeting place where spiritual realities could be encountered, studied, shared, and incorporated into various human endeavours, including education, medicine, art, social sciences, natural sciences, and other philosophical and cultural activities. Unfortunately, it burned to the ground at the end of 1922.

During the war, given all the destruction throughout Europe, many found it remarkable how much freedom for work on the Goetheanum and travel for lecture appearances was allowed and experienced. Steiner maintained a positive atmosphere that promoted love and respect for one’s fellow man regardless of nationality. He recognized the separation of people as at the very root of Europe’s social problems and suggested:

“This separation will be overcome only through a knowledge which lays hold upon the human being in an area beyond all separations: through a knowledge which belongs to every human being, because those separations on the basis of which people at the present time develop their feelings are valid only here in the physical world . . . one then realizes that all of this streaming forth of sympathy and antipathy is at the

same time a denial of the spiritual.

“All hatred among people, for example, is at the same time a battle against the Spirit. And, since our age is so inclined to battle against the Spirit, — this is the reason why our age possesses such talent for hatred among people. This is one of the profoundest mysteries of our contemporary culture. But for this reason there can be no way out except through a living grasp upon the Spirit.”⁵⁸

In addition to his work on the construction site, Steiner’s lectures and personal consultations continued to be a major part of his daily routines. Due to the circumstances and events transpiring around Steiner at this time, the topics of his lectures frequently dealt with questions of individual and national destiny and karma, the spiritual reality of death and life between death and rebirth. The increasing number of personal requests for advice kept Steiner occupied for many hours every day. His stamina seemed superhuman, as was attested to by many of his close friends and members of the Anthroposophical Society.

After the war, central Europe was socially, politically and culturally in turmoil. The months that followed seemed filled with turbulence, upheaval, explosive uprisings, and uncertainty. Steiner seemed to many who met him to be a beacon of inner calm and profound wisdom. Countless individuals sought him out for guidance. Although personally involved primarily with German issues, Steiner placed world concerns above those of any particular nation and found himself opposing most theories of the power brokers and politicians of the time.

Out of an insight into the three-fold nature of the human and social organism, Steiner responded to Count Otto von Lerchenfeld’s request for a solution to the turbulence that infected Europe after the war. The result became known as the Three-fold Social Order, which was an outline promoting a workable peace that respected the spiritual, political and economic elements of society. The contents of this plan provided individuals the freedom to think, act and make appropriate social, intellectual and religious choices. Steiner emphasized the requirement that individual citizens no longer be regarded as commodities in the work place. Thousands heard him speak on the following issues: the need to decentralize and limit state control, to allow the economy to find its niche locally, regionally and ultimately globally without impairing the individual and to appreciate that natural resources belong to no one individual or state but are to be utilized by all for the benefit of all. As enticing as this concept was, industrialists, trade unionists, politicians, and bureaucrats felt extremely threatened by this type of thinking. These power brokers eventually prevented these ideals from being implemented.

In answer to the cultural deprivation situation, Steiner wanted to see an education system free of all state regulation and control, and independent of all economic pressures. In 1919, the first Waldorf school opened in Stuttgart under the guidance of Steiner. This new school system would help the young fully discover their true identity by promoting their creative potential within a supportive community. The teaching faculty, initially handpicked by Steiner, was required to awaken abilities within their students, as opposed to filling their minds with impersonal knowledge and biased convictions. Steiner developed a curriculum that would fully appreciate all students as beings of body, soul and spirit, striving toward freedom. Although all German Waldorf schools were closed by the Nazis, the Waldorf movement has grown worldwide.

A sign of Steiner’s popularity was the increased number of public appearances and the size of his audiences. But Steiner was not influenced by the numbers who attended his lectures. He noted that when he faced a crowd of thousands, his words were directed to only one or two individuals present. When he spoke to younger generations, Steiner’s desire was to awaken their consciousness beyond intellectual knowledge and explore hidden realms of life. He warned of the dangers that threatened humanity from the imbalanced development of the intellect. He pointed out a severe problem in modern thinking that emphasized the physical aspects of the human body as forming the basic elements of human existence. This thinking, Steiner felt, was not only faulty but a dying element in us, and therefore should be discarded and replaced by an expanded awareness into the spiritual world. He repeatedly suggested that the analytical, mechanistic thinking of the day be replaced by a living organic thinking that approached the world as a whole organism. And, although Steiner did not want his audiences to trivialize the importance of their physical home, he emphasized that the home of our true higher being is of another realm to which we shall all return. During a lecture in 1919, Steiner spoke of forces at work, guiding humanity towards higher levels of awareness:

“I mean to say that for a certain length of time – especially since the beginning of the twentieth century . . . – while we as human beings move about in the world, we are within a new wave of the spiritual life, which is streaming into the rest of the life of humanity. . . .

“The other fact is that human beings, precisely according to their contemporary attitude of mind, need to energize themselves, need a certain activity, in order to observe that such a wave is streaming into the life of the world. . . . While human beings live upon the earth, . . . they are the receiving apparatus for what is streaming into life. . . . The human being may resist accepting this in his consciousness. But he cannot, nevertheless, prevent his soul from receiving the thrust of this wave; the fact that the thrust of the wave is within him.”⁵⁹

This time in Steiner’s life was evidence for the immense reservoir of energy that he possessed. From morning until night, his schedule included travelling, lecturing, writing, personal consultations, and initiating numerous projects in a variety of human endeavours. And, yet, he still found time for meditation and the study of extensive materials in the fields of science, art, history, literature, philosophy, and medicine as a means to maintain an all encompassing data base readily available for his interactions with the public. Any topic of discussion that crossed his path, Steiner contemplated, but never allowed others’ views to alter the direction of his own thoughts and research. The unlimited range of his knowledge on any topic that arose was noted on numerous occasions.

When approached about the many disturbing health issues of that time, Steiner emphasized a need for a renewal of medicine through an intimate understanding of the nature of the human being and the relationship of humanity with the cosmos. Steiner spoke to doctors and medical students on: the dynamics of the human organism; new methods of preparing medicinal remedies; focussing attention on treating the whole patient rather than treating the symptoms of a problem; and learning to understand the subtle book of nature and cosmic forces. By understanding how physical processes work within living organisms, and using an insight of the workings of the spiritual realm, Steiner believed that our whole being could be activated towards good health. Steiner’s knowledge of medicine seemed remarkable to many medical students, but he never wished to place himself between the physician and the patient. He offered the following thoughts:

“I desire, of course, never to intervene in any way whatever in the actual practice of healing. . . . This is to be left to the practising physicians. But whatever may come about through spiritual-scientific stimulation is to occur through a reciprocal activity between spiritual science and the physician himself.”⁶⁰

The Arlesheim Clinic became the inaugural foundation of Steiner’s medical initiatives.

Combining Steiner’s work in the fields of education and medicine opened a door to new methods of understanding and dealing with developmental problems in the young. The first curative institution that incorporated the findings of Steiner’s spiritual research was the Camphill Community initiative, which still continues today in various parts of the world.

Young theologians and students also looked to Steiner for guidance in their field and vocation in the hope of a renewal of the religious experience. The difficulties around religious life in Europe, although significant, were not a primary concern of Anthroposophy, which was more concerned with the objective search for truth and knowledge. Steiner’s general response went as follows:

“It is impossible to convert anthroposophy directly into religion. But anthroposophy, genuinely understood, will create a genuine, true, unfeigned religious need. . . . The human soul needs not only the power conferred by knowledge, it must be penetrated by that warmth that comes from the kind of contemplation of the spiritual world that is peculiar to religious faith, to true religious feeling. . . .

“We should never behave as if the quest for spiritual knowledge were a substitute for the practice of religion and the religious life. Spiritual knowledge can greatly sustain religious life . . . but we should be perfectly clear that religious life and the practice of religion within the human community kindle the spiritual consciousness of the soul.”⁶¹

Steiner did, however, suggest that the pastors and spokespeople of the Christian religion become god inspired and promote the equality of all souls with no limits imposed upon their freedom of belief. An independent movement called the Christian Community was formed as a result of Steiner's input.

Steiner's personal secretary, Guenther Wachsmuth, who took on the task of writing Steiner's biography commencing where Steiner's autobiography was halted due to his death, made an interesting observation about interest in Steiner's opinion:

"This was a unique phenomenon: a single human being in that time invited by teachers, students, theologians, economists, spiritual, social, artistic circles, without regard to boundaries between countries, to provide in all these various realms of life the inspiration for a united renewal of culture on the basis of his unitary substance of knowledge. It was the unique personality of Rudolf Steiner which enjoyed at that time in Europe the confidence of so many persons regardless of all the usual boundaries and differences . . . "62

With all his activities becoming more publicly noticed, the press began to regard Steiner as a possible national political figure. Large numbers of individuals flocked to hear him speak, but most found his subject matter pertaining to spiritual knowledge beyond their scope of interest. Although his public lectures covered an enormous spectrum of knowledge, Steiner felt that his private sessions with friends, workers and inquisitive spiritual seekers were of the greatest importance and benefit to all concerned. It was, however, this flood of personal requests that drained his energies more than any other activity. And as his reputation grew throughout Europe, an endless stream of visitors from all across the continent approached his door daily. These confidential conversations, although not long in duration, changed and influenced the lives of countless souls. A description of such a conversation was given by Steiner's secretary:

"When one sat before him in the quiet room and presented one's questions, while he directed upon the visitor his large, kindly, luminous, and penetrating eyes, or closed them in reflection, testing the spiritual being of the questioner, directed them now and again in agreement or in friendly sternness or even humour upon the questioner, and listened to what was said, one came under the spell of this atmosphere of calmness and composure, courage and firmness, inner concentration and self-mastery, and was strengthened by it. Much of what one had eagerly intended beforehand to say was recognized now in the realm of this conversation as unimportant and was omitted; germs of new ideas came to birth in one's inner being; what had been unclear was clarified; the inner core of one's self, released and lifted by him, became manifest as if visible and audible to one's consciousness, deciding between the true and the untrue, the genuine and the spurious; demanding unveiled sincerity. These were the moments of greatest concentration, true experience of oneself, the appearance within of new sources of thinking and willing for reaching one's decisions. When one then left the room, . . . inwardly calm, firm, thankful, joyful, capable of action, . . . one then began to understand for the first time how it was possible for the personality with whom one had just spoken, in the midst of his innumerable lectures, programs, journeys, conferences, and personal conversations, to be in himself always a centre of calm and composure and at the same time a point from which radiated never-wearying inspiration and bestowal for others."63

Steiner left time each day for personal visitors seeking answers to their own particular problems. He only stopped these personal conversations at a time very close to his death when he recognized that his physical body could no longer handle the strain and stress of this practice. When his wife, Marie, questioned the limits of the compassion behind his devotion to these consultations, Steiner responded: "No, compassion has no limits" and of love, he said: "It is a giving faculty. The more one gives, the more one has to give. Every true love, according to his words, has the quality of infinite extension."64

When asked specifically as to the nature of his vision of spiritual truths, and the responsibility associated with such vision, Steiner urged his listeners to develop an objective vision of cosmic events and the manifestations of these spiritual truths in our physical world. He explained the necessity of this process for future human development:

"Persons who strive to arrive at a vision of the higher worlds in an impersonal way . . . , persons who do not permit themselves to shrink back from entering upon this difficult but sure path, will develop within themselves in connection with their clairvoyance something impersonal, most of all a higher interest in the ob-

jective knowledge of the world, in that which occurs in the realm of the cosmic and in the realm of historical development.”⁶⁵

Steiner also spoke of a characteristic of spiritual research that seekers must bear in mind:

“It is a false preconception if one supposes that a person who sees into the spiritual world can at once provide information about everything. Just as things must be investigated gradually here in the physical world, from epoch to epoch, so likewise with regard to the spiritual life things must be investigated gradually.”⁶⁶

It was now 1922 and, having written at least twelve books, given thousands of lectures, authored countless letters and articles, Steiner’s name was well recognized throughout Europe. Life was proceeding relatively harmoniously, but tragic events were about to cause Steiner to re-evaluate the path for Anthroposophy and his life. On New Year’s Eve, the home of Anthroposophy, the Goetheanum, burnt to the ground. Although devastated by the event, upon deep reflection, Steiner recognized a need for a renewal in the thinking and direction of the Anthroposophical Society. Many of the young active membership brought with them a thinking developed in the external world and an opposition to the central theme in spiritual research needed to be addressed.

Steiner pointed out that Anthroposophy could never become a significant movement without a change in its character:

“What we have to give attention to is that Anthroposophy is the mother of this whole movement . . . There must not exist as a separate thing a Waldorf School Movement, a Movement for a Free Spiritual Life, a Movement for Religious Research . . . but all of this can succeed only if it feels itself as being within the mother movement, the Anthroposophical Movement.”⁶⁷

Steiner suggested that Anthroposophy can serve every human being as a stimulus for spiritual work, regardless of religion, social standing, scientific or artistic bias, or nationality of the seeker. He promoted an open community that would eliminate the walls of separation and become a society with real spiritual content. Steiner insisted that every truly enduring and fruitful movement must be universally human, not based upon special group ideals. In addition to promoting that all share in the responsibility of the central movement, Steiner accepted the leadership position in the progress of Anthroposophy.

With this new commitment, Steiner’s role as a teacher took on a greater vitality and intensity. Realizing that what holds humanity back from spiritual knowledge is a lack of soul courage, Steiner encouraged the membership to search within themselves with restored vitality and motivation. He delivered the following message to the membership as a warning:

“Human beings want to receive everything passively, to sit down in front of the world as though it were a movie, and to let the microscope and the telescope tell them everything. They do not want to temper the instrument of their own spirit, or soul, through activity.”⁶⁸

Steiner therefore requested all members, through individual meditative activity, to awaken to a new level of consciousness. In addition, there was an increasing need for all members to penetrate into the mysteries of nature and humanity through the spiritual metamorphosis of individual awareness. This process could be accomplished by the development of human spirit forces, not from external substances and matter. An example of this more direct process being utilized within the Anthroposophical movement was the almost immediate initiation of plans for the rebuilding of the Goetheanum. Steiner’s new plans for a living centre quickly became a reality. This would become the new home where science, art and religion would come together in a spiritually harmonious union. Steiner directed special attention, at this time, to defining Anthroposophy so there would be no misgivings as to its central purpose:

“Anthroposophy is a path for knowledge to guide the Spiritual in the human being to the Spiritual in the universe. It arises in man as a need of the heart, of the life of feeling; and it can be justified only in as much as it can satisfy this inner need. He alone can acknowledge Anthroposophy, who finds in it what he himself

in his own inner life feels impelled to seek. Hence only they can be anthroposophists who feel certain questions on the nature of man and the universe as an elemental need of life, just as one feels hunger and thirst.”⁶⁹

As work commenced on the new Goetheanum, an interesting question was posed to Steiner regarding his inability to predict the burning of the first building. He responded in the following way: “Supersensible faculties, which are a gift from the spiritual worlds, may not be used for personal ends, not even to save one’s life.”⁷⁰

During a conversation with his secretary, this same question arose and was answered as follows:

“He (Steiner) said that the effort must be made to convince such persons that one who is working in accordance with the good Spiritual Powers is never permitted to ward off a blow of destiny from himself even if he should foresee it. This, he said, is a spiritual law. Moreover, that the conception such persons hold of the nature of clairvoyance is utterly inadequate. They hold the utterly erroneous conception that the clairvoyant person must have a vision of all present and future events, and be able to control these for his own advantage. . . . [S]uch thinking ignores the fact that the clairvoyant person must direct his attention deliberately toward a present or future occurrence in order to see it. Even if one stands in the presence of the spiritual, he does not constantly see all supersensible occurrences, but the spiritual vision must be directed toward a definite occurrence just as the physical eye must be directed in perceiving . . . the clairvoyant person who obeys spiritual laws does not direct his look toward that which has to do with his own destiny or which might be directed against him. He will concentrate his look upon what concerns humanity and will seek for what contributes to the progress of spiritual research and work.”⁷¹

With this renewed vigour, Steiner’s focus became more refined and a new clarity engulfed his spiritual vision. Physically, an extraordinary capacity for accomplishing enormous tasks amazed and inspired many of his close friends and members of the movement. Over the course of the next year, Steiner designed an architectural model for the new Goetheanum, made more than seventy addresses, gave over three hundred lectures, entertained countless private conversations, handled daily correspondence from all over Europe, wrote numerous articles, provided physical assistance to those working on the new building, directed rehearsals, aided artists, and still found time to read, carve, paint, and direct the younger members in a variety of external activities. The sharing of knowledge increased profoundly and continued to be the result of his personal research into the spiritual realm.

Steiner’s lecture tours spanned a large geographic area that covered much of Europe. His audiences varied, but the responses to his presentations were generally those of bewilderment, amazement, a relief from anxiety and thirst for knowledge, and an intense respect for subtle, hidden forces at work within the human soul of Rudolf Steiner. Mention of the inspiring brightness emanating from Steiner’s eyes and the calmness of his demeanour were common observations from those in attendance. The topics of his lectures explored hidden truths made available to Steiner through years of spiritual research. Steiner spoke of karma, reincarnation, illumination of human consciousness, multiple earth lives, world and human history, destiny, the nature of the human being throughout time, and other relevant spiritually enhanced knowledge pertinent to the audience of the night. No matter how one responded to Steiner, all felt that he possessed a remarkable amount of factual knowledge on any topic and with descriptions so vivid that one believed he had personally experienced and lived the knowledge.

With a stronger organizational body of members, led by Steiner’s renewed focus, the General Anthroposophical Society was founded in Dornoch. Membership had topped twelve thousand and, under the guidance of the new president, Rudolf Steiner, there was great hope for a free society of spiritually inclined individuals that would become a unifying force in the world. An American visitor to the inaugural conference of the Society described Steiner in the following manner:

“The calm moving dignity of his frail form clad in black, against the blue curtains, the power and erect carriage of his head, the profound kindness and gravity of his features, the unforgettable depths of his gaze – these rise again in memory. For a long moment he stood silent, as was his custom before he spoke, an enormous quiet surrounding him. Then his deep voice sounded, and with a few simple, impressive words, he announced the opening of the Christmas Conference, welcoming all who were present.”⁷²

On Christmas day, the foundation stone for the new Goetheanum was laid. An observer at this ceremony noted:

“Never had I seen Rudolf Steiner as he appeared then. There was a light from his eyes, a power and majesty about him, which gave the impression that he had grown to a great size. There was an intensity and activity, united with a cosmic calm, that was breathtaking, and indicative of what was to come. . . . [I]t was as though . . . he spoke not only to the whole earth but to the assembled heavens; as though he became like a sun, light-outpouring, his voice like gold, a Michaelic fire infusing his words. Something poured forth of such a magnitude, and in a realm of such awakened consciousness, on this Christmas morning that it can only be likened to a spiritual birth.”⁷³

The year was 1924, and the activity around Dornoch was brisk. It seemed that all around the building site were energetically performing their tasks under the direction of Rudolf Steiner. His busy speaking and writing schedule was imbued with other activities at this time that included curative care education, preparations of medical remedies and the art of healing using spiritual science knowledge. A new opportunity presented itself to Steiner in the form of farmers and landowners concerned about the declining health of the soils, plants and animals on their farms. A ten-day agricultural course given by Steiner offered a totally different impulse into the nature of the earth organism, its relationship to the rhythms of cosmic forces and how, through appropriate cultivation of the soil organism, the health and nourishment of the human race could be accomplished. Through the application of biological preparations, enhanced composts could restore the earth to a healthy condition. This new approach towards sustainable health looked at the spiritual in the plant, animal and human being. It is now recognized as the Biodynamic Agriculture method of farming that is now practised worldwide.

Steiner’s knowledge of the physical elements of nature astounded students and farmers alike. He emphasized the use of the rigours of scientific research in his exploration of the spiritual world:

“ . . . just as the mathematician has his problem before him, so does the spiritual researcher have his own ‘spiritual eye’. For him, therefore, the scientific method rests first of all upon the preparation of his ‘spiritual organs’. If his ‘science’ resides in these spiritual organs, he can then make use of these, and the supersensible world lies before him. . . . The researcher in the spiritual fosters his science as a preparation for vision . . . Just where the science of the sensible worlds ends, there begins the science of the spirit.”⁷⁴

Steiner offered the members of the Anthroposophical Society numerous opportunities to uplift themselves into a personal contact with the spiritual realm. He made every effort to convince those around him that a true knowledge of humanity must come from research of the full totality of the human being: body, soul and spirit. Steiner added that the human being of his time was adequately prepared to observe, to experience and to communicate out of their own spiritual nature and thus change the world around them.

But Steiner recognized a need for guidance and support that many required on their own path. He offered the following advice for the contemporary seeker of the spirit:

“For the modern human being the situation is such that this immersion in pain, in suffering, becomes an inner way of the soul so that it occurs purely in the soul, that the body really does not participate in it provided the body is robust and strong and adequate for the external world, as is the case in general with the present-day human being. But, through the fact that man begins to permit his knowledge to come to him as something in itself which signifies suffering, he once more enters today those regions of the spiritual life out of which once upon a time the great truths of religion were obtained. The great truths of religion . . . these truths cannot be achieved without painful inner experiences. When they have once been thus achieved, they can be given over to the general consciousness of humanity . . .

“This is said not for the purpose of creating discouragement, although it is discouraging at present for many persons. It is stated for the simple reason that it is true. What good would it do to say to human beings that they can enter comfortably into the highest worlds when this is simply not true, when entering into the higher worlds simply demands that there must be an overcoming, that what caused suffering must be surmounted.”⁷⁵

The path that he had personally experienced was not an easy one, so Steiner felt that appropriate warnings were required. But his words were always double-edged with a hope and promise for a bright future based on

spiritual guidance. Steiner reminded his listeners that when the human race was ready for a significant evolutionary step, an individual soul would be prepared in the spiritual world. This soul would possess new capacities of being that would eventually become common qualities to all humanity. It must be mentioned that Steiner never considered himself to be such a forerunner of the human species and never took any personal credit for his part in the communication of spiritual truths. One of his biographers described Steiner as follows:

“He simply lived and worked at all times and always as if it was his life mission to perform the task of revealing to such of mankind as would listen, the reality of the spiritual worlds as he perceived them in direct vision, and what the spiritual beings whom he perceived expected of man.”⁷⁶

In his book, *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, Steiner offered a list of guidelines detailing the steps required for the journey that one must undertake, of their own volition, in furthering their understanding of the evolutionary impulses within humanity. Through appropriate training in meditation, concentration and the self-control of one's inner forces, Steiner attempted to reinforce this evolutionary process within each soul. Whenever an individual showed symptoms of their initial supersensible vision, Steiner intuitively became available to support and encourage the spiritual seeker. This encouragement was usually tempered with the strong but subtle suggestion, “But do not think about this.”⁷⁷ It was Steiner's belief that, although the time of the guru may not have been over, the average human soul could now experience spiritual knowledge and insights from their own observations and from other sources.

As the year progressed, Steiner's activities intensified in a most varied assortment of tasks and endeavours. Even his younger friends and associates found that they could not maintain the sixty-three-year-old's strenuous daily schedule. And, yet, unknown to almost all around him, a terminal illness, which made all food act upon him like a poison, was causing him enormous suffering. Only his small daily intake of food gave evidence of a severe problem. One of his biographers made the following observation: “Steiner must certainly have been sustained by spiritual forces that most of us are unable to tap, and this alone can account for the prodigious amount of work he was able to do in the fifteen remaining months of his life.”⁷⁸

At a summer conference in Holland, Steiner's tragic physical suffering became public knowledge. Although ill before a lecture, Steiner's determination to start the talk would be rewarded by a boost of energy that maintained him throughout the entire event, keeping the audience totally unaware of his predicament. There appeared to many of his close friends an air of eloquence and devotion about Steiner that seemed permeated with a sense of immense urgency. His personal secretary noted that Steiner's activity in September of 1924 had reached such an intensity that only superhuman forces could maintain such a schedule. As an example of Steiner's daily workload, his secretary observed that he would give four lectures, help teachers, doctors, clergy, construction workers, and students in a vast array of human endeavours, and still find time for private sessions. Another biographer wrote about a doctor's impression of Steiner during his lectures on Pastoral Medicine:

“All of us who went to Dornoch to attend the new courses in September 1924 felt that we were lifted into other spheres, high above our ordinary consciousness; our very faces changed, we were seeing and hearing beyond the range of our own capacities. . . . There were moments during the last lectures of the course on Pastoral Medicine when only love and spirit radiated from Rudolf Steiner – with such intensity that it was almost difficult to listen to what he was saying.”⁷⁹

Although Steiner maintained an incredible pace, his inner self, recognizing his physical deterioration, bubbled forth at an accelerated rate for as long as fate would allow. Talks on the nature of the human being, the evolutionary process and the role of karma in creation, to name a few topics, took on a higher level of importance. At the Christmas Conference, Steiner warned of humanity's recent loss of direct knowledge of the spiritual worlds. He deemed it an absolute necessity for all human souls to accept spiritual revelations in order for the human race to evolve in a healthy manner. Steiner provided specific guidelines, exercises and the thinking necessary for the eventual experience of the spiritual realm. In a report given at the Goetheanum, Steiner said:

“It is necessary for one who really seeks for knowledge of man to observe that all which nature manifests in beauty, greatness, sublimity cannot lead to the human being. For the inner man, active in the external

world, has his fountainhead not in the natural world but in the spiritual. But in this it is impossible for the senses and also for the intellect bound to the brain to penetrate.”⁸⁰

Steiner was adamant that intellectual thinking distracts the human race away from the reality of pure natural phenomena. This intellect, which has become so dominant, threatens both human and earth evolution towards a path totally alien to and isolated from our true home, the Spirit. Steiner’s words, “Human beings must learn again to bring together in their thinking the spiritual and the course of nature”⁸¹, once again reveal his concern that we initiate a living thinking whose origin lies hidden behind a thin veil of intellect.

Before the end of the year, the severity of his illness would not allow Steiner to travel or give public lectures, and eventually forced him to his sickbed in his studio in Dornoch. Guenther Wachsmuth, Steiner’s secretary and personal friend, related his experiences with Steiner during this time while Steiner was bedridden:

“The room now had to be kept quieter. He could speak intimately with only a few people. His voice grew weaker and listening taxed his physical strength . . . His eyes spoke of pain, but they were kinder and brighter than ever. His noble spiritual power created . . . the gifts that from now on could flow out to people only in the form of the written word.

“When you came into the studio during these weeks and months, you would usually find Rudolf Steiner half sitting up in bed, reading or writing. He never stopped working . . . The stream of questions and requests for advice from around the world never ended.

“. . . In addition to this creative work (hand written communications to the members of the Society in lecture form) which Steiner carried on from day to day from his sickbed, he also did a tremendous amount of reading, keeping himself continuously informed regarding literature newly published in the fields of science, art, history, and all others. . . .

“It has already been said that, even in this time of great suffering, he shared intensely in all that was going on in Dornoch and among those all over the world united in this work.”⁸²

During this time when his writing maintained a level of spiritual focus unequalled previously, Steiner found the energy to write a chapter of his autobiography every week until his death. Steiner mentioned to his secretary that all the knowledge and insight that was now being distributed to the members and workers in Dornoch, was shared with him directly out of the spiritual world and that he could not take any credit for this work. Steiner’s last letter advised that it was mankind’s current task to elevate to a level of knowledge as far beyond nature as the depths to which technology threatens to isolate us beneath nature. Steiner continued working right up until the day of his death, March 30, 1925. Guenther Wachsmuth described the last few moments of Rudolf Steiner’s life in these words:

“The last moments in his earthly life were free from all struggle with the physical entity, free from all uncertainty such as characterizes the death of many human beings; his countenance spoke of peace, grace, inner certitude, spiritual vision. He folded his hands over his breast; his eyes were shiningly and strongly directed into worlds with which in vision he was united. As he drew his last breath, he himself closed his eyes; but this filled the room not with the experience of an end, but with that of a most sublime spiritual action. . . . Even in dying, Rudolf Steiner bestowed upon humanity the most sublime gift of consolation: the certitude that death is a waking entrance into worlds of life and action.”⁸³

With Steiner’s passing, the spirit of Anthroposophy took the next evolutionary step where the membership was enabled with a new responsibility to become the leading advocates of the results, accomplishments and inspirations of a spiritual being whose life was totally dedicated to the science of the spirit. The new fields of human endeavour and the vast encyclopaedia of spiritual knowledge expounded upon by Rudolf Steiner include the following: the Waldorf school system; the Institute for Curative Education; medical research clinics stemming from Anthroposophy; Biodynamic agriculture; the art of eurhythm and various dramatic mystery plays; innovative architectural designs (Goetheanums); the religious movement called The Christian Community; the continually growing General Anthroposophical Society, plus other impulses in the fields of science, art, philosophy, social sciences, and the nature of the human being.

Steiner's devotion to the profound journey into spiritual realms through a living thinking involved meditation and trained concentration, which brought him to the inevitable truth that the real world is the world of spirit and the sense world only a manifestation of this world of spirit. The emergence of Anthroposophy, a force inseparable from the life of the man Rudolf Steiner, was a divine gift to help humanity broaden the boundaries of knowledge and in so doing uplift the species into wider realms of human experience. Steiner's desire for spiritual science was that it encourage all human souls to better understand the latent powers and hidden opportunities that all of us possess and that are destined for universal expression. Steiner was cautiously respectful that the path to the world of spirit may be full of evils, if one does not enter the supersensible world in full consciousness, trained by self-discipline, reverence, humility, devotion, and pure selfless love. Steiner recognized that dormant powers, organs and abilities within the human being were ready to be awakened and fostered in an active functioning stature at this juncture in human evolution. He suggested that the seeker clarify the mind, purify the moral and ethical nature in their being, balance the power of concentration, deepen human feeling towards all life, and subdue fear, hatred, ego, and imbalanced physical desires. These qualities, he believed, were a prerequisite for the conscious entrance into the spiritual realm.

Although the clairvoyance, which he possessed from a very young age, was very focussed and often described as 'directed' as opposed to 'omnipresent', a great deal of effort, much time and inner work were needed before Steiner felt secure enough to publicly share the results of his own spiritual research. As his personal abilities matured, clarity in his vision expanded to include the needs of every single person who he came into contact with, while, at the same time, respecting each person's freedom to act and think according to their own convictions.

By the end of his life, Steiner had written thirty books, delivered six thousand lectures, many of which were transcribed and made available in written form, and answered countless questions during thousands of personal conversations. Whether the questions asked were of a personal nature or involved a broader spectrum of human endeavour, Steiner's focussed clairvoyance made all feel inspired and better prepared for future life situations. It was in these private consultations that Steiner felt his insights of spiritual knowledge could be of greatest benefit to anyone earnestly seeking answers for their own betterment. Following are hypothetical questions that could be asked of Steiner by a seeker of knowledge. The responses are taken from Steiner's written word in an attempt to simulate a personal interaction with Steiner's inner spirit. Although some injustice to Rudolf Steiner may result in this exercise, the hope is that this additional sharing of his inner thinking will benefit others who were not able to physically meet with the man, Rudolf Steiner.

Q.: You spent a great deal of time speaking about the Christ Being, the Mystery of Golgotha and the impact of this historic event upon humanity. Can you elaborate on this thinking?

A.: Now, through the Mystery of Golgotha, the Son of God has united with the earth's life, and man is able to develop an awareness of what St. Paul meant when he said, "Not I, but Christ in me." Now man can so direct his inner life as to let the Christ impulse come to flower in him; he can let Christ's life flow and breathe through him. He can absorb the stream which has come to us from pre-earthly life and bring it to fruition in his life on earth.

A first stage in the reception of this stream consists in man noticing that at a particular point in his life he feels something flowering and coming alive in him. Previously it sat under the threshold of his consciousness, and he notices for the first time that it is there. It rises, filling him with inner light, inner warmth, and he knows that this inner life, inner warmth, inner light, has arisen in him during life on earth. He acquires a greater knowledge of life on earth than was his birthright. He learns to know something which arises within his humanity during his life on earth. And if man is sensible of the light and life, of the love arising in him, and feels there the flowing living presence of the Christ, he will receive strength—strength to grasp the fully human, the post-earthly, in the free activity of his own soul. Thus the Mystery of Golgotha and the Christ impulse are intimately bound up with the attainment of human freedom, of that consciousness which is able to suffuse with inner life and warmth our mere thinking that is otherwise dead and abstract.⁸⁴

Q.: You have spoken of hidden powers within us and offered a description of these powers as being the source from which everything around us has sprung. What does this say about the human species?

A.: These powers constitute as yet a nothing, a sheer possibility. Yet people are illuminated from within by the power that fashioned all things, including themselves. They also feel something urging them on to higher creative life. There lies within them something that pre-existed their natural being and will outlive it. It brought them into existence; nevertheless they can seize hold of it and share in its creative force. Such feelings pervaded the life of the ancient mystai as a result of their initiation. It was the felt presence of the eternal, the divine. Human action became an integral part of divine creativity. A higher Self had been discovered, a Self extending beyond the bounds of perceptual process, prior to physical birth and existing after death. It is an eternally creative Self, spanning time past and time to come. The empirical personality is a product of the Self; but that is henceforth only a subordinate part of its creative life within. Now is created something higher than the senses can grasp, something for which the personality is a mere instrument of its creative power, something in humanity that is divine.⁸⁵

Q.: You have spoken about how an Anthroposophist would have firm convictions on the validity of karma and reincarnation. Can you briefly discuss the role of karma in human existence?

A.: Above all, it follows from the idea of karma that we should not feel ourselves to have been placed by chance into the world-order, into the positions in which we find ourselves in life; on the contrary, we should feel that a kind of subconscious decision of the will underlies it, that as a result of our earlier incarnations, before we passed into this earthly existence out of the spiritual world between death and a new birth, we resolved in the spiritual world – a resolve we merely forgot when we incarnated in the body – to occupy the very position in which we now find ourselves. Consequently, it is the outcome of a pre-natal, pre-earthly decision of the will that we are assigned to our particular place in life and have the actual inclination to steer towards the blows of destiny that befall us. If a man then becomes convinced of the truth of the law of karma, he will inevitably begin to incline towards, even possibly to love, the position in the world in which he has placed himself – no matter what it may be.⁸⁶

Q.: What is the importance of possessing knowledge on karma in modern life?

A.: Outer laws and institutions will make life so complicated that men may well lose their bearings altogether. But by realizing the truth of the law of karma the knowledge will be born in the soul of what it must do in order to find, from within, its path through the world. This path will best be found when the things of the world are regulated by the inner life of soul. . . .⁸⁷

Only if we can come back again, if in a new life we can put into effect the experiences gained in earlier lives – only then does life acquire meaning and purpose. In either case it is senseless to strive for real progress in this earthly existence if it is regarded as the only one, and also for an eternity beyond the earth . . .⁸⁸

What is contained in the soul of a man who has passes through the Gate of Death has significance not only for a sphere beyond the earth, but the future of the earth itself depends upon what his life has been between birth and death. The earth will have the outer configuration that is imparted by the men who have lived upon it. The whole future configuration of the planet, as well as the social life of men in the future, depends upon how men have lived in their earlier incarnations. This is the moral element in the ideas of reincarnation and karma. A man who has assimilated these ideas knows: According to what I was in life, I shall have an effect upon everything that takes place in the future, upon the whole civilization of the future! Something that up to now has been present in a limited degree only – the feeling of responsibility – is extended beyond the bounds of birth and death by knowledge of reincarnation and karma.⁸⁹

Q.: During your life, you gave the student interested in spiritual knowledge guidelines for experiencing the process of inner development. Can you sketch in simple terms this process?

A.: This is what everyone must do: We begin in the simplest, most elementary way in order to reach an understanding of these teachings. Human nature and the nature of cosmic beings are profound, infinitely profound. Nothing is achieved in this domain except through patience, endurance and love for the cosmic powers. In the inner world, these qualities are forces, not only moral but also cognitive forces.

Once esoteric students have practiced allowing such truths to dwell in them for a time, and once they accept these truths with gratitude toward those who reveal them, a moment comes to each one who has allowed peace and stillness to develop in his or her soul. This is the moment when the soul itself begins to speak, when the person's inner being begins to perceive great eternal truths. Then suddenly the surrounding world is illuminated with colours never before seen and resounds with sounds not previously heard. The world glows with a new light; new sounds and words become perceptible. This new light shines from the soul world, and the newly audible sounds resound from the spirit world. It is characteristic of these worlds that the soul world is seen, the spirit world heard.⁹⁰

Q.: Why is the study of the spiritual world and spiritual beings necessary?

A.: In the physical world, we are surrounded by beings of the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdoms. Similarly, when we release our powers of thinking and speech from the body and make use of an inner, soul-spiritual mode of experiencing our surroundings, we enter a world where we are surrounded by spiritual beings, forces and processes. Today it is still somewhat unforgivable to speak about this world. Some philosophers take the liberty of speaking about a spiritual world in general terms, but they say nothing more than that a spiritual world exists behind the sensory world. . . .

Real spiritual research takes a different approach by considering the soul-spiritual aspect of the human being and the physical body as truly separate, thus revealing that the soul-spiritual aspect is as different from the living physical body as hydrogen is from water. Spiritual science enters the spiritual world in a way that makes it possible to distinguish concrete individual beings and events there. Through such spiritual research, we confront the spiritual world in the same way that we human beings in the physical world research the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdoms. When we look at the physical world, we are on its highest level, but when we look at the spiritual world, we are on its lowest level. As our souls begin to find their place as spiritual beings in the spiritual world, we see above us the hierarchy of superordinate spirits. We ascend to the ranks of spiritual beings to which our soul-spiritual aspect belongs just as the physical human body belongs to the physical, mineral kingdom.⁹¹

Q.: As physical beings on the earth, why do we have so many problems identifying the basic instincts of nature and life?

A.: We should be clear about the fact that the forces we need for life do not only come from the realm of the physical body. They emanate essentially from a supersensible world to which we belong between death and rebirth. This can be understood only if we are able to form mental images of life between death and rebirth.

Man is mostly enveloped in a kind of dreaming-sleeping condition. Those who go through the daily routine without thinking about the events they experience are in fact asleep to life; and those who concern themselves with what lies beyond material existence are also those who awaken to physical life. . . . Spiritual science rightly understood is capable of entering fully into all aspects of human existence. Inasmuch as spiritual science permeates our civilization, humanity will experience an awakening from a sleep of life.⁹²

Q.: How will this experience be accomplished?

A.: The farther back we go in ancient periods when souls who are incarnate today were already present on the earth, the more we discover that man then was rightly connected to the spiritual world. Man has lost increas-

ingly the old spiritual inheritance, and today we live in a period when there is a radical change in the evolution of humanity . . .

We have reached the stage in the cycle of evolution of mankind when souls dwelling in a physical body must learn the language of the spirit. We must acquire a knowledge of higher worlds here. . . .

Today there are souls who feel, even if out of the deepest recesses of their instincts that they wish to experience something of the spiritual world! They are the pioneers of a future when souls will come who will consider it important to cultivate a spiritual life founded on the cognition of the spiritual worlds.⁹³

Q.: What are the prerequisites for an individual entering the world of spiritual knowledge?

A.: The capacities by which we can gain insights into higher worlds lie dormant within each one of us . . . All we need to know is how to begin to develop these faculties for ourselves.

Many people believe that they must seek out masters of higher knowledge wherever such masters may be found in order to receive teachings from them. On the one hand, if our aspiration to higher knowledge is sincere, we will certainly spare no effort and avoid no obstacle in our quest for an initiate able to lead us into the higher mysteries of the world. On the other hand, we can be certain that, if our striving for knowledge is sincere and worthy, initiation will find us whatever the circumstances. There is a universal law among initiates that the knowledge due a seeker cannot be withheld. But there is also another universal law that esoteric knowledge may not be imparted to anyone not qualified to receive it. . . .

Only within our own souls can one find the means of opening an initiate's mouth (re: higher secrets). But before one can receive the highest treasures of the spirit, one must develop definite inner qualities to a specific high degree.

We begin with a fundamental mood of soul. Spiritual researchers call this basic attitude the path of reverence, of devotion to truth and knowledge . . .

We will not find the inner strength to evolve to a higher level if we do not inwardly develop this profound feeling that there is something higher than ourselves. Initiates found the strength to lift themselves to the heights of knowledge only because they first guided their hearts into the depths of veneration and devotion. Only a person who has passed through the gate of humility can ascend to the heights of the spirit. . . .

Spiritual life has its laws just as physical life does. . . . [I]f one knows the fundamentals of esoteric science, one knows that every feeling of true devotion unfolded in the soul produces an inner strength or force that sooner or later leads to knowledge. . . . But just as surely as every feeling of devotion and reverence nurtures the soul's powers for higher knowledge, so every act of criticism and judgment drives these powers away . . .

If we wish to become esoteric students, we must train ourselves vigorously in the mood of devotion. . . . Therefore we must begin our inner schooling by bringing devotion into our thought life. Experienced spiritual researchers know what strength they gain by always looking for the good in everything and withholding their critical judgment. Each moment that we spend becoming aware of whatever derogatory, judgmental and critical opinions still remain in our consciousness brings us closer to higher knowledge. We advance even more quickly if, in such moments, we fill our consciousness with admiration, respect and reverence for the world and life. Filling our consciousness in this way opens our spiritual eyes. We begin to realize that previously we saw only a part of the world surrounding us. We begin to see our fellow human beings in a different way than we did before.⁹⁴

Q.: Can you mention any other fundamental laws that should be observed?

A.: The purpose is not to accumulate learning as our private store of knowledge, but to place what we have learned in the service of the world.

One fundamental principle must never be violated: Every insight that you seek only to enrich your own store of learning and to accumulate treasure for yourself alone leads you from your path, but every insight that you seek in order to become more mature on the path of the ennoblement of humanity and world evolution brings you one step forward.⁹⁵

Q.: You have mentioned that the higher self within human beings remains mostly concealed. Can you share your thoughts on what the future holds for those in spiritual research?

A.: For each of us, a day will come when all around will become bright with spirit. Then, to eyes we did not know we had, a whole new world will be revealed . . . As our higher life makes its influence more and more felt in our ordinary, established lives, the calm of our contemplative moments begins to affect our everyday existence. Our whole being becomes more peaceful. . . .

The “higher self” within us evolves continuously. Only inner calm and certainty can ensure that its evolution unfolds organically. . . .

As esoteric students, we ourselves must give birth to a new, higher being within us. . . .

We must reach the point of contemplating those things that concern us as human beings, as completely independent of the circumstances and conditions of our particular life.

As we do this, our view is directed toward worlds higher than those our everyday life brings us. We begin to feel, to experience, that we belong to these higher worlds . . . The centre of our being shifts inward. . . . Quiet, inward contemplation and dialogue with the purely spiritual world completely fill our soul. For students of the spirit, this quiet contemplation must become a necessity of life. . . . And then the moment will approach when we begin to realize that what is revealed to us in the silence of inner thinking activity is more real than the physical objects around us. . . . Out of the silence something begins to speak to us. An inner speech, an inner word is disclosed to us. The first time we experience this we feel supremely blessed. Our outer world is suffused with an inner light. A second life begins for us. A divine, bliss-bestowing world streams through us.⁹⁶

Q.: Spiritual practitioners in other parts of the world have used a type of prayer or meditation in order to quiet the mind and awaken the divine within. Can you comment on this?

A.: This life of the soul in thoughts, gradually broadening into life in spiritual beingness, is called in spiritual science or gnosis “meditation” (contemplative reflection). Meditation in this sense is the way to supersensible knowledge.

We should not lose ourselves in feelings in these moments of meditation. Nor should our souls be filled with vague sensations. This would only keep us from attaining true spiritual insight . . . Rather, we should fill ourselves with high thoughts that more advanced and spiritually inspired souls have thought in similar moments. . . . Practicing such meditation will completely transform us. We begin to form quite new ideas about reality . . . In no way does this transformation estrange us from our daily responsibilities . . . Once our interconnection with cosmic beings and world events becomes clear to us in our moments of contemplation, we will enter our daily round of activities with new and increased strength, because now we know that all our work and all our suffering are work and suffering for the sake of a great, spiritual, cosmic interrelationship. . . .

When we raise ourselves through meditation to what unites us with the spirit, we quicken something within us that is eternal and unlimited by birth and death. Once we have experienced this eternal part in us, we can no longer doubt its existence. Meditation is thus the way to knowing and beholding the eternal, indestructible, essential centre of our being . . .

Meditation, properly carried out, opens the way to knowledge of our experiences before birth and after death . . . Each of us can attain this knowledge; each of us possesses the capacities to see firsthand what true mysticism, spiritual science, anthroposophy, and gnosis teach . . . Spiritual science offers us a method of developing our spiritual ears and eyes and of kindling the spiritual light.⁹⁷

Q.: During meditation, when one finds oneself surrounded by a spiritual light, what are some signs of an altered state of awareness?

A.: We feel ourselves to be a part of the whole of life. . . . It is but a small step to the insight that, as a member or organ of humanity as a whole, I am jointly responsible, with all human beings, for everything that happens. This insight should be calmly cultivated in the soul. . . . Another sign . . . we win through the conviction that thoughts and feelings are as important for the world as actions. We should recognize that when we hate our fellow human beings it is just as destructive as when we physically strike them. This brings us once more to the insight that anything we do for our own improvement benefits not just ourselves but also the world. . . .

We must know that what we feel has as much impact upon the world as the work done by our hands. . . . We must acquire the conviction that our true nature does not lie without but within. . . .

The very basis of esoteric training is feeling that we are soul-spiritual beings. . . . We must find the middle ground between following the demands of the world and doing what we see as the right thing to do. . . . We will develop the “balance” – on one of whose trays lies a helpful heart, open to the needs of the world, and on the other, inner firmness and unshakable endurance. . . . All that stirs us to action must be subsumed in love. If we act out of love we shall never tire of transforming our resolutions into deeds, no matter how often we may have failed in the past . . . We must learn to offer up our deeds, our very essence, to the world – regardless of how our offering may be received. We must be prepared for this life of sacrifice and service. . . .

We should know that our very existence is a gift from the whole universe. . . . Grateful thoughts must become second nature . . .

Only if I love something can it reveal itself to me. And every revelation should fill me with thankfulness, for I am made richer by it. . . .

We need to bear in mind that the higher self – which until now has lain dormant within us, seedlike and unconscious – is here born into conscious existence. This birth is a literal birth in an absolutely real sense: a birth into the spiritual world. And, if it is to be viable, the being that is born – the higher self – must enter this world with all its necessary organs and faculties. . . . The laws that are instrumental in the development of our higher spiritual organs are none other than the sound laws of reason and morality in the physical world. . . . No one can give birth to a healthy higher self who does not live and think in a healthy manner in the physical world. Living in harmony with nature and reason is the basis of all true spiritual development.⁹⁸

Q.: What should be the motivating factor behind our work towards the higher worlds?

A.: Above all, we must avoid any disharmony between our higher experiences and the events and demands of our everyday life. Our work is wholly here on earth. And if we evade our earthly tasks and try to escape into another world, we can rest assured that we will never achieve our goal. . . . We must achieve and be blessed by the spirit so that we can introduce its revelations into the sense-perceptible world. In other words, we must transform the earth by implanting in it what we discover of the spiritual realm. Our task is the transformation of the earth. Therein lies the only reason for seeking higher knowledge. The earth as we know it with our senses depends on the spiritual world, and this means that we can truly work on the earth only if we share in those worlds where creative forces are concealed. This realization should be our only motivation for wanting to ascend to higher worlds.⁹⁹

Q.: Whatever a spiritual student sets out to do, it must have at its core the ideal of service. Is this an accurate statement?

A.: Let nobody imagine that he or she gains any advantage over fellow human beings by developing clairvoyance, for that is simply not so. One makes no progress that can be justified on any ground of self-interest. One achieves progress only insofar as one can be more useful to others. The immorality of egoism can find no place in the spiritual world. A person can gain nothing for him or herself through spiritual illumination. What one does gain is gained only as a servant of the world in general, and one gains it for oneself only by gaining it for others."¹⁰⁰

This limited attempt of a possible interview with Rudolf Steiner is a tiny glimpse into his capacity for spiritual revelations. It cannot do even the slightest justice to the impact felt by observers and those who experienced Steiner in person. One biographer stated:

“He was, after all, ‘Rudolf Steiner’ and he had the capacity to transform every situation into an unforgettable moment. . .

He had, as it were, a therapeutic smile, the countenance blossomed . . . one felt that one had nothing of the kind to give in return. He had the gift of the smile, the faculty of direct expression from the heart . . .

Our last meeting went like this: He greeted me and led me into the room . . . Steiner was pale as death; it isn't easy to listen to such large numbers of people one after the other when each comes with his most urgent problem. His answers were always concrete, but they unfolded their full nature in the course of the years. . . . This conversation of twenty minutes lives within me as if it had lasted many hours, not because I would have been capable of saying everything but because he replied to everything beyond any word. The answer grew out of the facts of the following years of my life. . . . In his subdued, somewhat deep voice . . . I felt how his atmosphere of warmth and fervour enveloped me too. . . . [T]his atmosphere of glowing warmth that purified me from my sins and my pain could not be grasped; this comprehension only developed in the course of years as the best in me."¹⁰¹

This same biographer spoke of Steiner in a manner that showed he was just another human soul but, at the same time, a soul chosen by the creative powers to teach us so many lessons: “Steiner was an honest man, a man with the courage of a lion, with a vitality and endurance that were almost superhuman, with a personal charm and a never failing sense of humour, and above all an endless patience and love for his fellow men.”¹⁰²

CONCLUSION

When one examines a particular personality in history, and looks for indications of a creative evolutionary force active within this individual, one may find specific character traits and talents that would serve as evidence of such a divine mechanism at work. In fact, such personalities could be considered prime examples of souls who, through numerous incarnations, have reached a stage of perfection where this mechanism is released to produce special gifts and levels of awareness not possessed by the average human being of the time. No matter what the philosophy or belief structure of a spiritual seeker, an objective study of an individual who possesses insights and talents beyond the reach of most could show evidence of an evolutionary essence that permeates humanity and is constantly working to bring the human species closer to the creator. It has been proposed by Gopi Krishna, an Indian philosopher of the twentieth century, that there are specific character traits and personal experiences that would indicate the presence of an activated divine force that transforms the human consciousness into a more direct contact with spiritual realities.

Gopi Krishna, a philosophical, scientific and spiritual researcher, proposed that this divine essence, called Kundalini, although dormant within most of humanity, is subtly expressing itself in the human being and would eventually be recognized as an evolutionary impulse moving the human race towards higher worlds and truths. He suggested the study of remarkable personalities in human history who exhibited, externally, the symptoms

of an expanded consciousness in order to uncover and validate the existence of this super intelligent and creative spiritual entity.

The specific topics of examination of an individuality would include the following:

- a) Age when the divine entity (called Kundalini by Gopi Krishna) became active within the human being. Times of interest would include: (i) early pre-consciousness; (ii) a surge during the middle thirties; (iii) an undiminished old age; and (iv) when the great talents were first revealed;
- b) the attitude towards the creator and the cosmos; a sense of oneness; an expanded consciousness; a love of nature;
- c) the capacity for work; learning and concentration;
- d) personal magnetism;
- e) a sense of immortality with no fear of death;
- f) a higher moral nature;
- g) experiences including: mysticism, inspiration, visions, prophecy, inner sound and light;
- h) special talents, genius, uniqueness, the initiation of something "new";
- i) a humility that enables the individual to keep their own personal experience quiet.

As objectively as possible and using the limited language of words as a medium for expression, this study has addressed the above issues with respect to the life of Rudolf Steiner. This journey into the world of Steiner has been offered as an appeal to spiritual seekers to thoughtfully explore evolutionary forces within this human being. Whether one appreciates the accomplishments and initiatives of the man, or is touched by his spiritual insights, knowledge and devotion of the human condition, one can determine, objectively, the importance of his role in human evolution. That Steiner's life was devoted to the science of the spirit and governed by his love of creation can only be concluded after careful scrutiny of his words, thoughts and deeds. Did he exhibit the character traits of a soul with a heightened state of awareness? Did he offer answers to questions never examined before? Did his life follow a path whose purpose was the uplifting of the human species into higher realms? Is this a possible path for all of us? The answer to these questions is already within us all.

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