

Our Labor With Isis An Exercise in Practicing the Virtues

By Mary Stewart Adams

In order to attempt a life of contemplation in harmony with the starry world overhead, it is helpful to consider the three disciplines of astrology, astronomy and astrosophy. These three can be distinguished from one another by their appearance in the course of human history, which is demonstrated in the following verse by Rudolf Steiner, from 1922: *Stars spake once to Man, It is world destiny that they are silent now. To be aware of this silence can be pain for Earthly Man, but in this silence, there grows and ripens what Man speaks to the Stars. To be aware this speaking can be strength for Spirit Man.*

The first line refers to the flourish of *astrology* in the ancient Egypto-Chaldean period of human history. During this time, man retained a capacity to understand the rhythms and gestures of the planets and stars as the speech of the celestial world from which he descended to life on the physical plane. The stars spoke to him regarding the mysteries of life. This was the *astro logos*, when man felt himself as central to the attention of a living cosmos.

The next line: *It is world destiny that they are silent now* refers to the time in human history known as the Copernican Revolution, when the science of *astronomy* (the body of knowledge *-nomy* regarding the stars *astro-*) began to take hold. Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus published his work *On the Revolution of the Planets* in the 16th century, through which he introduced the idea that the Earth was not at the center of the cosmos and that it was moving in orbit around the Sun, as were all the other planets in our system. This idea had a groundbreaking effect in that it refocused the human being's attention from its spiritual relationship with the surrounding cosmos to its strictly physical relationship. Prior to Copernicus, it was not a question of what was physically at the center, it was a matter of feeling central to the attention of a living cosmos. When you consider the root of the word disaster, it is possible to see that the Copernican Revolution was a literal disaster, or separation from (dis) the stars (aster) in human thinking.

Since the time of Copernicus, man's striving to know his place in the cosmic order has been dominated by this quest to describe our physical position, the physical characteristics such as periodicity of an orbit, chemical composition of atmosphere, distance from one to the next, and so on. In this approach to the cosmos, the constant living exchange taking place between the human being and the stars is lost. *To be aware of this silence can be pain for earthly man...* Rudolf Steiner referred to this Copernican thought as the slaying of Isis, for just as the Egyptian God Osiris was slain, dismembered, and cast into an earthen grave, so was Isis slain, only she was cast into a celestial grave in this later period of history, spread out over the vault of heaven that was now only understood as a mighty machine governed by forces such as inertia and gravity.

And just as Isis must bring back the body parts of Osiris into a common grave, teaching ceremony as she goes, so must we re-member her. One of the methods for doing this is through contemplative exercise with the Virtues. The Virtues are twelve contemplations on what the good and true capacities are in a human being. They did not originate with Rudolf Steiner, but he renewed them by assigning each one of the 12 Virtues to each of the 12 constellations of the zodiac. He also gave expression to what the Virtue can become through practice. *In this silence there grows and ripens what Man speaks to the stars...*

In ancient Egyptian imagery, Isis is shown swallowing the Sun at the end of each day, and as the Sun moves through her body, it rays toward man on Earth, who sees this light streaming through the body of Isis as the stars overhead. At each dawn, Isis labors to give birth to the Sun once again.

In our time, we serve as midwife to this labor of Isis through the practice of the Virtues, through which we imbue the starry worlds overhead with the substance of our striving. This is *astrosophy*, which is the work of any and every individual who takes up an inner relationship with the rhythm of the Sun, planets and stars in daily life. This is one of the ways that *Man becomes aware of what he is speaking to the stars...*

cont. on pg 11

To wonder at beauty
Stand guard over truth
Look up to the noble
Resolve on the good:
This leads man truly
To purpose in living
To right in his doing
To peace in his feeling
To light in his thinking,
And teaches him trust,
In the working of God,
In all that there is
In the widths of the world,
In the depth of the soul.

Rudolf Steiner



Baron Arild Rosenkrantz (1870-1964)
Woman Clothed with the Sun

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If you would like to submit
an article for publication
please submit by:
September 30
for our next issue

Dear Readers,

In this issue we turn to the qualities of the Virtues. We may not always practice them, we may not even be able to name them all, however we *know* them when we come in contact with them. The meaning of the word 'virtue' itself is "the act of a divine being". The warmth and unequivocal acceptance of our being when these generous qualities are poured out over us make us feel safe, whole and loved. Our main article by William Bento called *True North: The Compass of the Heart*, informs us how our hearts are enervated and enlivened by practicing the virtues associated with the fixed signs of the zodiac and practicing these lead to a higher understanding. The second article is titled *Our Labor With Isis - An Exercise in Practicing the Virtues* by Mary Stewart Adams. Mary associates the Virtues with the signs of the Zodiac, using the Myth of Isis to kindle our desire to reunite with each of the virtues. Further, she associates the practice of each virtue with the soul enriching qualities that this practice can lead to as shown by Rudolf Steiner. We all attempt to practice the virtues to enrich our inner life, sometimes we may get side tracked by our own emotional response to stressful situations, but if we continue to take small steps and bring our will back to our intent, we shall without doubt, come to our own expanded awareness and heart strengthened feeling life.

Since many of you have been reading for quite some time and share your thoughts and insights on the books you are reading we have a new section in the newsletter titled: *Inspired by Reading*. This section is meant to give voice to your personal experience when reading a certain book. This section fits between a true *Book Review* and the section *Illuminations* where insights into inner growth are shared. In another section, we have printed a short article by *Mario* from *Represa, CA*. He dedicates his article to the tireless service of Cesar Chavez to better the working conditions for farm workers in America. If you have a story of someone you revere who touched your life in virtue, please feel free to share it with us.

We have received so many poems and artwork from you all! Thank you. As a result, the *Poetry and Art Evening* is now planned as a larger event and is still a work in progress. Our poetry and art event is meant to give you a voice, in the present tense, to the outside community. We would also like to include something from you that you might want to share, to be read as introduction before the poem itself is recited. We are still gathering your responses via a short questionnaire, which will help us convey something about you and also especially the tone, or emotion that you want to see your poem imbued with by the reader. We are already working with some young people who would like to be able to read your poem before the audience.

With respect to the Library, you should all have received our new updated *Anthroposophical Prison Outreach Library Book List*. On it you will find some new titles and we hope that these too will find their way to you. Regarding new participants, many come to us by word of mouth. If you are recommending our program to a friend, please let them know to write and request our *Introductory Packet*.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. How wonderful it is to receive each day your insights and your commitment to the path of self development and inner growth. This striving in itself is a virtue of great value.

Blessings on your path, Kathy Serafin

Illuminations

I AM CURRENTLY being held in the hole of a PA state prison for an undetermined amount of time. This is affording me great periods of time to study and learn. I have a lot of questions as why I am here, what is my purpose in life, can I ever become the person I'd like to be?

Scott, Pittsburgh, PA

A FEW DAYS AGO, I received the introductory packet. The first surprise I received was realizing that though there is a spiritual texture present in anthroposophical teachings, it is not divisive or sectarian. Anthroposophy is a new word in my vocabulary, and I am excited by the idea of becoming a better person. Everyone's journey from normal to healthy should be wholly individual. *Wallace, Represa, CA*

I PRAY that I will receive a better insight of who I am in this world, and what purpose I am to fulfill. If anything, how I fit in the 'chain'. Understanding how I got to be put in prison, all the things that led me here, is very important for me. I do not want to leave prison unless I am ready. Having a life sentence is very hard, because I don't know when I'll be set free. I believe that I will, one day, but I just don't know when. I trust that God will have me ready before I leave. *Juan, Milton, FL*

I JUST READ your *APO Spring 2006 No. 7 Newsletter*, and wondered how I would be able to sign up for your meditation techniques. I wish to put them in my life. I have been in prison four times and now I realize that I need help in my life. When I moved to my new cell I found your newsletter and like the way you show how to transform ourselves and recognize what we have failed to see within ourselves before. Now I wish to use this in my everyday life. I just hope that you're still helping us prisoners and giving us an opportunity. *Ramon, Amarillo, TX*

THANK YOU for the spiritual understanding you've provided for our community of prisoners by helping us to lift the true essence of self through your program. You've enlightened one, and that one realized he could enlighten

others, and I was one. I'm seeking a spiritual elevation. You have been placed in my path for a purpose. I have seen a few books in your *Book Reviews* that caught my eye and would like to read them and learn more in my journey towards a changing perspective, changing negativity to a more positive awareness. *Jason, Reidsville, GA*

I REALLY ENJOYED the enclosed reading material, it was very enlightening. You have sparked a flame of burning desire in my heart. A strong urge to learn and consume all I can attain. I have always wanted to learn more, but due to my situation, lack of funds, and access, I gave up. I just want to thank you guys from the depths of my heart. I know this is the knob to the door I have been searching for. *Osmond, Milton, FL*

I HAVE SO MUCH appreciation that for the last five years you have been a servant for God in the anthroposophy ministry. Many of us have learned so much from these books. If I had never come to prison, I would have never learned about God the way I have learned here because of the anthroposophical books from your program. *Richard, Ft. Stockton, TX*

I WANT something more to think about, to use, and to try. I'm still a student in life. I've been in prison for 30 years and I've withered, endured, and now I'm learning and having the time of my life. The things I've been through are training for my future. I want knowledge, peace, love and education. *Kenneth, Lexington, OK*

THE SHARING of your wisdom is truly appreciated by those of us who daily struggle to make sense of what is, despite the discord. You see, I always felt as if there was more, or something, other than what I was taught and brought up as a child to believe. Yes, I am aware that I am unable to comprehend anthroposophy wholly, for these books, I should confess, blew me away (in a good sense, of course)! Whether anthroposophy has stimulated my imagination, or awoke something within, I do not know, but I strive to continue to know my self and my relation with the cosmos. *Jorge, Livingston, TX*

TRUE NORTH: THE COMPASS OF THE HEART

BY WILLIAM BENTO, PH.D.

One of the most startling facts to assimilate when observing the daily news is the number of violent episodes continuing to dominant the attention of journalists.

Is this a symptom of a loss of the dignity and nobility that ideally defines the human being? Or are we so riveted on the dark side of human nature that we fail to acknowledge the indomitable spirit of thousands who orient themselves toward doing the good even amidst difficult circumstances? The reality, I believe, is that both phenomena are happening in our time.

In this Age of Consciousness Soul (1414 AD – 3565 AD) the tasks of every man and woman to reclaim the inalienable right to become spiritually active is being challenged mightily. To become spiritually active one must first attend to the care of the senses. In a world of constant distraction with countless technological and screen stimulation it is not easy to find peace in one's own sentient body. Restlessness and nervousness, as symptoms of a pervasive stress, become the first obstacles to finding the inner peace needed for self-reflection. Instead what tends to occur are mindless acts of discharging stress through violent means, whether verbal, psychological or physical violations.

From the time of the Age of Comprehension Soul (747 BC – 1414 AD) and the significant teachings of individuals such as the Buddha, Lao Tzu, Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Jesus the Christ, humanity has been given the opportunity to access the source of peace within. That source resides in the capacity to self-reflect and to consciously examine the state of one's own soul. This aspect of the inner work could be described as finding the way to the heart. This task to seek for the way, the truth and the meaningfulness of life is not something that can be assumed as complete or as less relevant to our times. Unfortunately, since the 18th century the foundation of Western formal education has lost the art of fostering moral-ethical sensibility. Instead the focus has been upon intellectual performance alone. We have witnessed an increasingly alarming cut in schools artistic, musical and movement programs in favor of preparing students to excel in the race for technological supremacy. Such cuts tear out the heart of education and sets loose the wildness of the human astral body. This body of desires that often propels us to act without conscience was dealt with in previous ages by the cultivation of the arts, music and movement disciplines.

Confucius sought to lay the cornerstones to the foundation of education by asserting the need for schools:

To enhance and enrich cultural life, To teach the necessity for engaging with others in wholehearted sincerity, To conduct all affairs on the basis of moral conviction To discern the truth.

This formulation can be considered the heart of education. Yet, none of us can blame the schools alone for this deficit of civil moral conduct in our society. The issue lies with each one of us, for each of us is responsible for our own continued adult education and self inquiry.

Today it is incumbent upon each individual to take responsibility for his or her own continued education, not only to learn about the accelerated changes of the conditions shaping the world, but to learn about the vital well-springs of the soul life. The starting point for taking up this task is to develop a practice of mindfulness. Being mindful in this respect has three primary areas of attention: 1. Filtering the essential from the non-essential sensory information throughout the day, 2. Turning an inward gaze to all the inner images and voices that arise in the still quiet of the heart, and 3. To act in accordance to what is rightfully needed in the moment. The first aspect of this practice of mindfulness is aided by focusing one's attention upon seeing and participating in the beauty of the world. The second aspect

entails a practice of self-reflection aided by journaling the truths of one's experiences. The third aspect can be addressed by taking up the meditative practice of the eight-fold path given by the Buddha – learning to practice right speech, right action, right standpoint, right livelihood, right memory, right thinking, and right examination.

The path of mindfulness leads to the awakening of *heart sensing*. It is the *heart sensing* that gives rise to the feelings of what is beautiful, true and good. *Heart sensing* offers us a tacit knowing, a knowing that intuitively in a substantial way as the hand grasps through touch. This hand of the heart is a compass that is always oriented to true north. It senses the virtues of what fashions the noble and dignified human being. The dynamics of this function of the heart's compass can be metamorphically perceived as the sensing of the blood through the four chambers of the heart. It is the "I" that streams in the blood circulating the light of consciousness within our heart and throughout our soul life. The "I" seeks to align to true north, the source of the laws of heaven, the source of what becomes the moral law within our hearts.

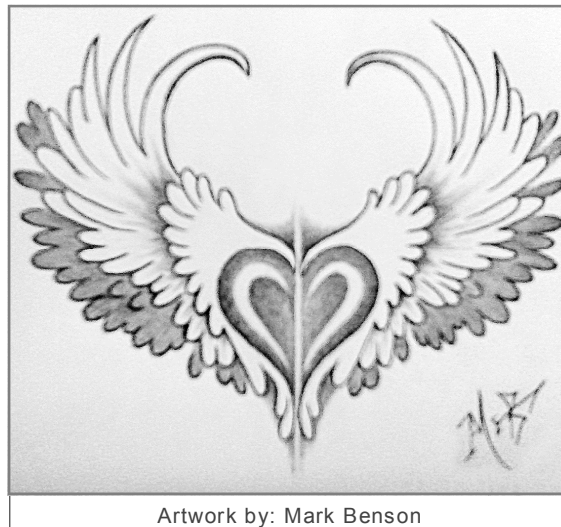
If we continue our metaphoric approach to the compass of the heart, we may associate the four chambers of the heart with the four fixed royal gates of the heavens, the zodiacal signs of the Bull, the Lion, the Eagle and the Waterbearer (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius). Each of these gateways in heaven were linked to Christian virtues throughout the last two millennia. The Bull was linked to the virtue of *Integrity*. The Lion was linked to the virtue of *Compassion*. The Eagle was linked to the virtue of *Humility*. The Waterbearer was linked to the virtue of *Discernment*.

Contemplation of these virtues can support us in maintaining the alignment of our "I" with the grand lawfulness of the cosmos. By weaving these contemplations into our

mindfulness practice we can augment our own self-education and cultivate the nobility of being fully human. The following can be regarded as a guideline for both contemplating and journaling the meaningfulness of living these four fundamental virtues.

Integrity is a word that can evoke many images. To the degree that this quality exists in the very character of certain individuals respect is given. *Integrity* is about the fabric of integration, as in what is valued within is acted upon and what is acted upon is valued. The Native American Indian would characterize it as "walking one's talk". *Integrity* is the deep courage to remain resolved to what one knows is right. This virtue must become the guiding star of one's lifestyle. By living in *Integrity* one can make true progress in life, progress toward true north if you will. The dangers in our time are on one hand, the predominant lifestyle of busyness, incessant doing to acquire material possessions to the point that we lose a sense of our own being; and the all-too-pervasive lifestyle of hedonism, addictive pleasure seeking. These lifestyles are sustained by human vices that are counter to the virtue of *Integrity*. *Compassion* literally means to suffer with, i.e. the activity of *heart sensing* the vital realm of sentient life. In this process *Compassion* becomes the activity of uniting with the other from heart to heart, hence suffering the pains of the other with the other. In the Native American Indian culture this is the basis of the saying "to not judge until you have walked a mile in your brother's moccasins". For once you have felt the experience of the other you are less likely to judge from the cold sharpness of the mind, but more likely to find resonance of warmth with the other in your heart. Feeling united in warmth is a sense

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Artwork by: Mark Benson

of communion that can liberate the sting of aloneness through trials and tribulations. In today's world the sense of being overwhelmed and hypersensitive to so many injustices and sufferings that we can do little about creates a sense of helplessness and victimization, yet closing down our senses to this reality only robs us of our own humanity. The art of keeping the heart open, yet protecting it so that it can sense the world in a state of peace is a gift Steiner gave in his book, *How To Know Higher Worlds* (1904); particularly the basic six exercises for strengthening the heart chakra.

When taking up the inner work towards self-transformation, the most meaningful aspect of self development, it is important to realize that only through *Humility* may one approach the holy of holies. There are few phrases more descriptive of the attribute of *Humility* than the words of Jesus Christ, "Not my will, but thy Father's will in Heaven be done on Earth". A great deal of patience and forgiveness is needed to face the truths that we must eventually grapple with along the path to the truth. It is not always beautiful or always good. We must find the strength to face and cross these thresholds that lead to higher knowledge. Each crossing is a mini-death, but promises a rebirth to a more fully realized human being. The Native American Indian culture recognizes this in the saying, "It is a good day to die". For they knew the good that could come from such honest and humble surrender to that which is greater than oneself. No greater example is there for this schooling than Christ's words from the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they have done". In our inner work we must also learn to extend this forgiveness to one's self so that we may face the consequences of our own failings or misdeeds without fear of punishment. For it is in recognizing these misdeeds as our own that we surrender ourselves to the benevolence of a loving God who cares for our development in every phase of our life. Two of the tragic dispositions of the modern individual that eclipses the development of *Humility* are: the tempting pull into states of pride and arrogance wherein one assumes to know everything and the other is denial of the spiritual realities that play out in all of our lives. *Humility* is the means by which the human heart senses the presence of the God within and can thereby invite this Higher Being to speak to us. This Being is the voice of conscience that allows us to know and act out of the truth of goodness.

In the fourth chamber of the human heart flows the sensing for the essential truths that comprise the matrix of the macrocosmic and microcosmic. The teachings of the Hermetic Emerald Tablet, "That which is above is also below" corresponds precisely with the type of thinking necessary to develop the virtue of this chamber, the virtue of *Discernment*, or as Rudolf Steiner calls it, *Discretion*. In an age wherein so much critical thinking is aimed at deconstructing and devaluing basic premises for higher knowledge, it is hard to know with certainty what to trust in the world of ideals and ideas. This struggle is all the more difficult when we only attempt to apply the cool logic of the mind and leave the *heart sensing* out of consideration. When we can incorporate our *heart sensing* in the deliberation of determining essential truths, then we experience the truths as warm waves of confirmation in our heart. Such experiences of *Discernment* grant us confidence in knowing. And furthermore, helps us to affirm the alignment of true north – the source of the heavenly laws found in our hearts as moral laws. This affirmation leads to the restoration of human dignity and nobility. The glamour of science, its so many innovative discoveries and the many groundbreaking fields of study being open to mankind at this time can blind us from taking the necessary reflection to examine its true significance and value for our lives now and in the future. Each of us can so easily fall into this same trap of rushing forward with newfound knowledge, but not yet aware of how to apply it wisely and beneficially for our selves and others. Too little space is made for taking up the task of the examined life. And yet, it is this very Socratic notion that we need to implement into our own adult education and self transformation. If "I" do not ask the discerning question, who will? And if we do not dare to do this for one another, what will become of the madness for more intellectual power without the pre-requisite moral/ethical sensibilities? The sad answer to this question is that the evils of today will continue to hold sway and violence will become the prevailing way of humanity.

It is for this reason alone that we must all take responsibility for keeping our compass of the heart functioning, and to do what is necessary to align our "I" with true north. This is not just about an awareness of mindfulness practices; it is a matter of actively doing them. The doing is our collective prayer, our ritual of communion with the beautiful, the truth and the good. By doing this inner work as sacrament we increase the power of love in the world, the only power to eradicate the evils loosened into this post-modern world of ours. Engaging with the virtues of *Integrity*, *Compassion*, *Humility* and *Discernment* provide the cornerstones for creating the *Culture of Love* so needed in the world today. There is no other way into the future other than by participating in becoming the virtues and then offering oneself as a foundation stone in the *Culture of Love*.

In Christian esotericism this *Culture of Love* is referred to as the Future City of Jerusalem. Allow me to conclude this brief offering with a poetic formulation that addresses the very rich content written in the text of this article.

There is a Friendship

Among men and women who dare to open their heart's secrets to one another,
there lives the *Hope* and promise of friendship. In the deepening silence
they will bear with *Love* the knowing of what one has and has not done.
And in this understanding, friendship shall bring to each of them
the light of the Spirit Sun. *Faith* in this experience
of true friendship will be the foundation
of the World to come.

William Bento

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- STEPPING ONTO THE PATH -

I like how the program puts forth an effort to help prisoners who want to help themselves and want to develop a deeper spiritual life. There are so many blessings in that, if you only knew. *Richard, New Boston, TX*

I want to learn what my soul purpose is and to change my way of thinking. *Steven, Raiford, FL*

I would like to learn some of the teachings of anthroposophy and gain a better understanding on how life works and to attain knowledge, wisdom and spiritual insight, enlightenment. I'm looking for guidance to help better myself in all areas, and aid others as well. Be happy and healthy, and live a good life. *Mario, Represa, CA*

Hoping for a deeper sense of self and my relationship to the world/universe in which I exist. Total elevation and enlightenment of mind, body, and soul. Transformation. *Jose, Chicago, IL*

I would like to further understand the bond between life and death; to understand the common link to all living things. I want to achieve a balance. I really hope to gain a good enough understanding of life so I can help other people to understand also. I think I just want to be a positive part of something bigger than myself. *Robert, Cumberland, MD*

Wishing for insight into the Mysteries. *Terence, Meridian, MS*

Direction for dealing with other convicts, not for what crime or prison gang they may represent, but rather the individual they were born into. I am very tired of the judgments and stereotyping I find myself guilty of and pray to grow beyond that. I want to feel worthy of my spot here on the big blue marble. *Otto, Susanville, CA*

To get the help I need before I get out of prison, and to live a crime-free life out on the streets, go to AA meetings, don't do drugs, and stay out of prison. I'll have eight years of probation to do and I sure hope to make it all the way. *Roland, Warren, ME*

I would like a better understanding of life after death, spirit worlds. Friends I knew that are now in the other world. *Roberto, Susanville, CA*

I hope to grow and learn to open my heart again. Obviously I am here because my life needed to change. I feel I can make new connections with all aspects in the world, and have always believed the spiritual connection is imperative for my growth. The literature and beliefs you offer are not easily obtainable here, and I am working against a lot of beliefs, and regulations daily in this environment. *June, Ocala, FL*

Help with transformation, learning to meditate, learning new ideas on how to cope with life's trials and tribulations. *Terea, Ypsilanti, MI*

To learn about who I am and why I am, and then learn how to work with myself to become just a better person in every way and to learn how to meditate. *Steven, Ely, NV*

The ability to overcome the inherent negativity of prison that at times seems on the verge of overwhelming and consuming me. *Ernesto, Tehachapi, CA*

I hope that I can meditate and concentrate on Steiner's abstract concepts. When my mind is not thinking, I hope it comes freely onto its own and eliminate the negative thinking. I hope to reverse this mechanism because I have spent most of my life bathing in the negative thinking and in this way caused my own suffering. *David, Gatesville, TX*

I'm on a quest for "true" enlightenment and based on my life's experiences, I've come to the realization that I'm here to fulfill an im-

portant task for our creator. *Jaugere, Marcy, NY*

I hope to gain insight into myself and understand more about this vast universe and gain more knowledge with what I already have about my spiritual self. *Anthony, Dillwyn, VA*

Hoping to create a better, healthier, happier life for myself, and others around me. *Joseph Frank, Tennessee Colony, TX*

Learn more about myself and to overcome a lack of confidence/self-worth. Also, to rebuild my faith and understanding of what my part in life can be again. Making myself a more productive citizen and to gain self-control of my reactions to others in a more positive way. *Keli, Ypsilanti, MI*

First and foremost, to control, as much as I can, my anger, addictions, and learn a new way of thinking so I can begin anew in life. *Tommy, Tehachapi, CA*

Knowledge on how to meditate and how to beat my addiction with drugs upon my release from prison. *Thomas, Ridgeland, SC*

I believe your program can help me. I've worked on myself trying to transform since my incarceration but I know I cannot do this myself nor am I a genius to answer my questions. I am serious about transformation and hope to gain wisdom, enlightenment. I have many unanswered questions about life and myself and want to get a clearer understanding about myself so I can attempt to put the broken pieces together. I hope to gain peace of mind and cleanse my soul to become a man of peace, virtue, dignity and integrity. *Saul, Tehachapi, CA*

A better understanding of myself and others is needed. Acceptance of self and an understanding of the life force that created us. *Robert, Jackson, GA*

I hope to gain knowledge, wisdom and understanding; to be able to find peace in a world full of chaos and suffering. *Raul, Fort Stockton, TX*

Gain knowledge of self. There is so much I do not know about myself, let alone the reasons behind my thoughts and actions. I want to discover all my weaknesses, strengths, as well as abilities. Most of all, with the knowledge and experience I gain in my studies, I want to reach out to others and teach them what I have discovered. *Casey, Kennedy, TX*

Spiritual enlightenment and a better knowledge of our creator and his plan and purpose for us. *Barry, Springville, AL*

I hope to gain a more empathic nature towards others, to gain a broader understanding of the oneness of all things that exist. To learn more of my spiritual nature, improve my ability to make good and better choices. *Kenneth, Marion, OH*

I truly hope to gain some order, control and discipline in my life. I wish to move forward in a positive direction in my life and stop going backwards. I hope to reform and better myself and my life. *Stanley, Taylorsville, NC*

I am currently in segregation and I've been struggling all my life to find the answers to many questions. Who am I? Why am I here? Can I really accomplish the goals I have set in my mind? I really hope to find the answer to these and many more questions from the books you provide. Plus learn tools of life to help me when I encounter the not so pleasant times and places out there. *Dean, Lawton, OK*

Work toward increased awareness, more coping skills, self-betterment, insight, and knowledge. *Magnus, Corcoran, CA*

*We welcome
your creative
work
for our
Art and Poetry
Evening*

A Mentor Responds

Marian, I want to learn and develop these ennobling processes, ways to understand and care for others and listen with my heart; see everything with the eyes of my soul. Alonzo, Philipsburg, PA

Alonzo, In your letter you write of your desire to learn and develop higher inner qualities of soul. Believe in your sincerity. You can do it by learning to 'develop' these qualities, which are basic for anyone trying to understand 'the science of the spirit'. As you know Anthroposophy is a path 'of knowledge', not 'to' knowledge. In a way we must permeate the knowledge we receive, with the deepest feelings. You could say that we must learn to 'earn' this privilege. Let us start this important task by exercising the quality of 'reverence'. It would be very helpful. Reverence to 'all truth'. This will lead to knowledge and in time it will lead to complete devotion, necessary for esoteric studies. Marian

Art and Poetry

What Matters?

As I'm laying here
In this world of mine
I find myself
Looking inside
And all around me
As my lost soul shrieks
And rattles my brain
Cause from a young age
I paid no mind
To what was worthwhile
Or really mattered
So I now reach out
As I say to you
Please listen real close
This big world's evil
And corrupt by far
Now the ones who care
May be the ones shunned
What your friends might think
But please ponder this
Cause there's more to life
Than fame and fortune
So search and you'll find
This tree abundant
And full in His light
Known to so many
Thoughts rarely spoken
"This is what matters!"



Johnny, Woodville, TX

AS THE MOTHER GODDESS FILLS

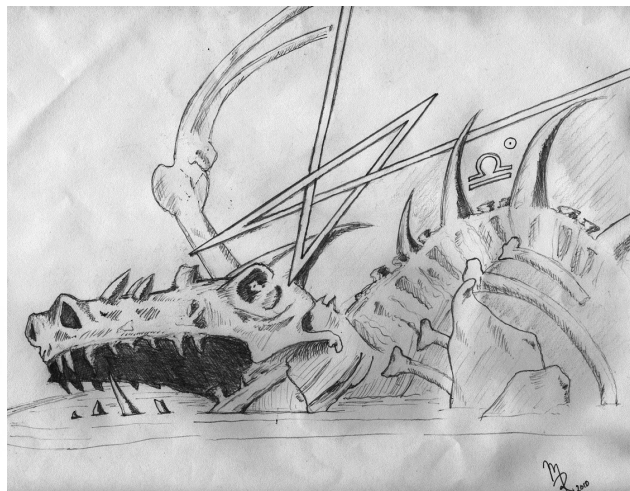
*As the mother goddess fills
The essence of Ra's rays after
The nurturing rain,
Mother Earth is replenished
And things are born again
We have the promise of the
Mother Earth's love, that will
Always remain the same!
Through darkness and light,
Sunshine and rain...*

Reginald, Milton, FL

Gnosis

A shell of nothingness
Cold, empty, lost in its way
Superficial emotion radiating
abroad
Endlessly cycling from
expected origins
Enter light:
Frosted with eternal wisdom
Infecting every atom within
Changing, morphing,
growing with certainty
Exploding with hope and love
Giving birth to a
light filled pearl
A whole and complete
awakened Being.

Joshua, Walla Walla, WA



Mark, Livingston, TX



Johnny, Amarillo, TX

Book Reviews



The Cycle of the Year Rudolf Steiner

We find from Dr. Steiner's explanation of the spiritual and esoteric cycle the breathing patterns of the earth through the year. He presents this as a means whereby we might bring ourselves into synchronization with the holy and spiritual patterns through which we might bring peace upon earth. The discord we find at this time, upon and throughout the earth, is in direct proportion to the extent man has separated himself from that light and the Christ-Impulse that would bring harmony. This book is easy to read and understand, and when taken to heart, we each might spread a peace that would in time enlighten the entire world. *Donny, Ft. Stockton, TX*

The Fourfold Path to Healing Thomas S. Cowan, M.D.

Studying books on naturopathic healing, I wondered what a doctor's view would be today. The book *The Fourfold Path to Healing* by Thomas S. Cowan, M.D. shows how doctors' viewpoints have changed to become more open minded regarding alternative medicine. This book fills in a

large gap of understanding about natural health cures. The doctor goes into detail about the real spiritual causes of many maladies and the best alternative methods to use treating ailments. There are a lot of preventative exercises and diets included within this book. This book is an excellent selection for anyone interested in learning more about their health. *Gabriel, Florence, AZ*

Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path Rudolf Steiner

From 1900 until the completion of his earthly mission, Rudolf Steiner continued to recommend this book which was initially titled: *The Philosophy of Freedom*. His heartfelt belief was that in order for humanity to communicate with higher worlds, a radical change in our thinking was required. Intuitive thought is introduced by the writer as the manner in which we may most pragmatically understand ourselves, our world, and enter sincerely the road to spiritual initiation. The processes of perception, emotion, will, and thought are thoroughly investigated and at the conclusion of the text, no doubt remains in regard to the nature of the highest stage of individual life; the ability to think intuitively. The overarching goal of this seminal work is true freedom. All serious travelers on the spiritual path are provided through Steiner's wondrous labor with a preeminent tool to aid them on their journey. *Martin, Avenal, CA*

An Introduction to Anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner's World View Francis Edmunds

This book literally defines the aspects of what it means to be a human being and our duties to humanity through evolution. This book also recaps the previous epochs and their cultural contributions. It also gives a brief description of the Michael Age and the part that he will play in our evolution. It also says that when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan, that this was the birth of the spirit, that this is when the Christ impulse began throughout the earth. If you're participating in the *Self Awakening EduCareDo Course*, then this book is a must for explaining the values of developing your sense perceptions. This book also has quite a few charts that you might want to copy down in your notes for future studies. *James, Florence, AZ*

How to Know Higher Worlds Rudolf Steiner

For a good awakening, the book *How to Know Higher Worlds* will help open your mind through each preparatory step and strengthen faculties of the inner nature of your individuality. You are able to feel and experience the effects of the application of the exercise. These are given so that anyone can master them as well as know their true self. Many of Rudolf Steiner's books and lectures give an understanding of initiation, hidden wisdom, and knowledge. We are great travelers and start the same as we meet others who can bear witness of the invisible as we all inhale and exhale the pristine spiritual wisdom and knowledge as being receptive to the forces of sublime hierarchies. *Danny, Lake City, FL*

~ Reverence for Selfless Service ~

We welcome your stories of another who has touched your life

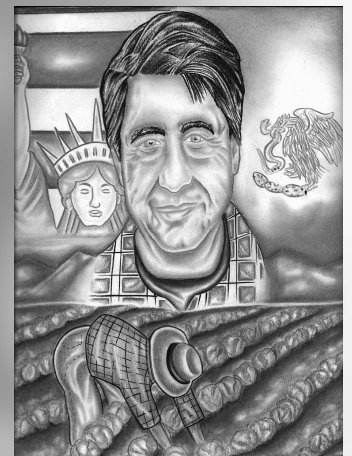
The drawing alongside depicts a good man who fought against discrimination, oppression, and other injustices that were going on in a time of turmoil in American agriculture. His name is Cesar E. Chavez. What can be said to properly honor and describe this man's many contributions to the conditions, hearts, and lives of many people around the world. His life's work is a living testimony to both his Mexican and American upbringing. Cesar Chavez was a man of humble beginnings who maintained a simple manner of living while at the same time fighting to gain equal rights for the migrant farm workers, many being our parents and grandparents. Cesar Chavez is a true example of selflessness as his work was all aimed towards bringing about positive change for the lives of agricultural workers. Cesar Chavez organized many non-violent protests and marches to bring attention to the United Farm Workers (UFW) movement. This was a movement not just designed for the Mexican campesinos (Mexican peasants), but rather campesinos of all races, religions, and backgrounds. While even today conditions for migrant agricultural workers are not perfect, we must appreciate and acknowledge all that has been gained and continue to march on the path of social change. This is how we of today can honor the life work and legacy of one man; Cesar Estrada Chavez.

Mario, Represa, CA

Prayer of the Farm Workers Struggle

Show me the suffering
of the most miserable;
So I will know my people's plight.
Free me to pray for others;
For you are present in every person.
Help me take responsibility
for my own life;
So that I can be free at last.
Grant me courage to serve others;
For in service there is true life.
Give me honesty and patience;
So that I can work with
other workers.
Bring forth song and celebration;
So that the spirit will be
alive among us.
Let the spirit flourish and grow;
So that we will never tire
of the struggle.
Let us remember those who
have died for justice;
For they have given us life.
Help us love even those
who hate us;
So we can change the world.
Amen.

Cesar E. Chavez



~ Inspired by Your Reading ~

Having just finished Dr. Childs' book *Understand your Temperament*, I now understand that I have a lot to learn, more so, that I must learn to understand myself better. I'm at last seeing that my temperament is made up of more than just being in a bad or good mood. I see that any combination of my temperaments (choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, and melancholic) can affect my life and how I go about making decisions at any given time. So does this knowledge guarantee that I make better choices when I decide? No it doesn't, but it does help me understand how I came to decide some things and I can learn and grow from there. *Tommy, Tehachapi, CA*

In the book *From Normal to Healthy*, I especially appreciated how Georg Kuhlwind emphasized the importance of limiting one's talk to what has been actually experienced, instead of indiscriminately repeating what others have said. *Alexis, Holdenville, OK*

When a fellow inmate first introduced me to anthroposophy a few years ago, it was with the concept of reincarnation that he lit the spark. As we talked it over he saw that my mind was open to the possibility, and he had a book I could look over. This book was *The Soul's Long Journey*, by Edward Smith. I believe my spirit recognized the truth revealed in this book and I had to find out more. I wanted to read *The Burning Bush* which it referred to often, but I noticed this book was full of references to charts and tabulations all pertaining to the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. Thus I set myself to the quest. It was with great anticipation (not to be disappointed!) three years later that I requested *The Burning Bush*. I'm glad I took the time to get a good grasp of anthroposophy first as this allowed the book to flow much better. The book started to take on meaning immediately with Mr. Smith's point of departure—The Prodigal Son. This happens to be one of the parallels that spoke to me when I first started reading the Bible. It whispered to me of a deeper meaning. Not only did I see my life reflected in the literal sense, the many years I wasted under the influence, but also that I had strayed from God spiritually. I also had the feeling that it wasn't just about me that somehow this was about all of humanity. When the concept of reincarnation in the cycle of evolution is added it unveils a much deeper and profound meaning. Mr. Smith has done a commendable job of revealing these deeper truths and meaning of the Bible in the light of anthroposophy. *Conley, Palestine, TX*

The information in *Cosmic Memory* was so extensive that I re-read every chapter to fully understand it, and to formulate an evolutionary chart and apply all of these Rosicrucian teachings. I never dreamed that there would be that much information in a single volume. *Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz* enlightens cover to cover. I use much of the information therein when addressing our "Rosicrucian Study Group" during the weekly lectures I give. This book really gives a solid explanation to the hidden stream of Christian thought and process. It opens one's eyes in a completely new way of thinking, especially to newcomers. Many of our members have asked where I found these books, so I expect you will be hearing from others at this location in the near future. *Dennis, Bismarck, ND*

After reading *Christ and the Human Soul*, not only did I have a greater understanding of Christ's role in the evolution of humanity, I also ascertained a greater intimacy with Christ Consciousness within myself. Dr. Steiner leads us on a pathway by which we journey through Christ, into oneself, and consequently into all of that which Christ embodies. Many ambiguities surrounding aspects of Christ's nature, being, and mission are clarified as well. This work left me very inspired indeed. *Dauan, Lexington, OK*

Both of these books complement each other on many levels and are an excellent pairing. Rudolf Steiner brings new meaning to the word and world of religion, trying to unite mankind, helping one see his way to our spiritual being dwelling in all of us. Mr. Steiner opens up the context of *The Apocalypse of St. John* to the mind's eye. Everything completely makes sense and 'fits'. I've been studying many philosophies, mythologies, and histories in my meager forty one years, and now I

know why the meditation practices are so important. Mr. Bock's book of similar title, uses the knowledge from Steiner's lectures and expounds upon them, adding his own insights. It reconfirms my original thinking about the spiritual world instead of it being represented as a 'person'; this Christ-principle. I think now that he was trying to spread this 'word'. Now going back with this knowledge, the Bible 'fits' and makes complete sense. The way the Bible was taught to me was you had to worship this person and did not get proper instructions. Seek and ye shall find and so I did. I have knocked and the door was opened. I am still seeking that which is dwelling and alive in me. The higher self is there, just a hand reaching out just beyond my reach. *Richard, Tehachapi, CA*

Thank you for the books you sent to me, In *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path* you have to give your undivided attention to it and you can't have the radio on or any other type of distractions while reading. I had to read the same thing over three times because my mind would wander off while reading, and then I would get to a good point or a conclusion and have to backtrack and get a better understanding on what was said. But I got the concept that we are one with the universe. It goes into different ways of thinking or having different outlooks on thinking and life, and could lead to a greater level of consciousness. *Corey, Greenville, IL*

I am literally struck with awe as I read these books and digest their insights. I have so much appreciation for your outreach program, as I am getting answers to all of my questions about human existence and the meaning of life. I am so excited to be alive in the beginning of this age of consciousness! I read *The Great Initiates* book twice and am still very excited to have learned what "Son of Man", etc., signifies. I also experience a very deep peace knowing that my Creator's goals are also for me. *Joshua, Vacaville, CA*

I am returning *Spiritualism, Madame Blavatsky, and Theosophy*. For me, this book is a reflection of how important it is to experience and realize the certainty of immortality. I like the sincerity of Christopher Bamford in his introduction of the book in which he expresses that "to begin with this public esoteric work...such a choice does not, of course, tell the whole story." To begin to complete it, we would have to add, at the very least, as we shall see, Hermeticism (or alchemy), then, when I was reading about the eighth sphere, what came into my thoughts was the discovery of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts in 1945. The translation among the non-canonical gospel "The Dialogue of the Savior", Matthew said, "Lord I wish to see that place of life...pure light." The Lord answered, "Brother Matthew, you will not be able to see it as long as you bear flesh." Matthew said, "Lord, even if I will not be able to see it, let me know it." The Lord said, "Those who have known themselves have seen it." The Gospel of Thomas said, "If you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will realize that you are children of the living Father." That being so, the kingdom of the father is spread out upon the earth but people do not see it. *Miguel, Hudson, CO*

The book *Christ Consciousness* was very interesting in its descriptions of the life of Christ. I was captivated by the story lines of the two Jesus children who later became one. I have a better understanding of Christ's progress as he slowly entered into the vehicle of Jesus. And I enjoyed the chapters about the Christ's time on earth after the crucifixion. This book broadened my understanding of what the Christ went through in order to take away the sins of humanity, and make us accountable for our own actions. This doesn't mean that we cannot still destroy the earth with our negativity, but it does show that as individuals we can quicken the spirit and thereby slowly lead the Christ impulse to our inner freedom. *Jason, Holdenville, OK*

The book you sent me, *The Gospel of St. John* is quite intriguing. The cosmos is a place from whence we all sprang from, so first and foremost, we must develop these insights to enlighten the path of righteousness and truth. Once we can penetrate the dark recesses of our minds and understand it, we become one with the universe. So my heartfelt wishes go out to the library in hopes that as inmates, we are able to continue to

Meditations

I have started to read through the *Self-Development* and *Introduction to Meditation* pamphlets. I will follow the exercises before I start my day, and I will not give up. *Anthony, Menard, IL*

I have been working with the Seed Meditation and it's been like peeling an onion every day. I discover a new layer of work that needs to be done. For example, as I contemplated the seed it occurred to me that the seed grows and fulfills its destiny regardless of any surrounding circumstances and to me that moment spoke of detachment, it was quite special. I've been in SHU now for nine months, I only wish I would have contacted you sooner for this has turned out to be a great monastery for my development. *Rafael, Greenville, IL*

It's uncanny on how I ended up choosing this book in this sequence because I was left wondering at the end of reading *The Apocalypse of St. John* on how to attain such said goals. Everything connects on such a high level and on many levels at one time. Steiner truly knows how to open a person's 'eyes'. What captured all my attention was how to meditate and why, it really helped everything just 'click' into place. I believe that as a result of this knowledge, I experienced what is called 'imaginative cognition' during a very 'wakeful sleep'. Thank you very much for access to the means to the end. *Richard, Tehachapi, CA*

I've made some progress in my meditation practice working with *The Spiritual Practices* by Dennis Kloczek. I'm so very in it right now. I've been applying some of the things that I've read to my daily life and I've been like a new person. I've been becoming aware of myself and of other people more each day, and I've been experiencing feelings that I had all but forgotten. For grow I must, as change is the one constant in the universe and I feel like I'm on a journey that has its rewards. I don't regret any of my past life except for the people I judged and the needless pain I caused. I guess it was all necessary for me to reach the low point, to help me understand my proper relationship to other human beings and my creator. Truly, this quest for truth is the most satisfying and rewarding action I have ever undertaken. I get better rushes meditating than I ever did doing drugs. It doesn't take but a seed of truth to set a man upon the path, and you not only provided the seed, you also provided the love to nourish it. *Lavon, Rosharon, TX*

I am gaining inner peace and serenity, which I have not been able to obtain by any other means than meditation of spiritual things and my spiritual self. I'm becoming more aware of spiritual influences and forces. *Barry, Springville, AL*

The book *Turning Points in Spiritual History* in its Buddha chapter quoted the great philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, "Life is precarious, and it is through deep meditation that I seek to alleviate its burdens." This quote makes me think how different the world would be if everybody were to practice meditation. That said, I just wish I had been introduced to meditation at a younger age. *Santiago, Represa, CA*

I've worked on the meditation exercises and integrated them with some

breathing exercises. At first it was difficult to concentrate (it still is at times) because of the noise and everything that goes on in prison. I have been making progress, and I think the breathing exercises help because they relax my mind and body and help to distract me from the noise. *Clifford, Joliet, IL*

I have had great experiences with meditation and I have learned to see God in *everything*. It has helped me be a better person and artist. My studies are the same. They have opened my eyes to see the world in an entirely different way. *Jack, Represa, CA*

I have done some of the meditative practices and have gained a real sense of peace and well being from them. *William, Winnsboro, LA*

The experience I have acquired through meditation, for me, is a development of concentration. *Louis Ray, Tennessee Colony, TX*

I meditate once a week and love to talk to people about spiritual beliefs. *Kevin, Canon City, CO*

Having only just begun about six months ago on a regular basis, I have not experienced a lot of what I read about. However, I have had some success and will continue on. I do not just contemplate and meditate at certain times when all is peaceful and quiet, like at night or early in the morning. I sit back or lay down during the day or evening when there are others around, or by myself and ponder, meditate, and contemplate on things I see and perceive, or on thoughts that come to my mind. I always block out the static thoughts that attempts to drown out the relevant. *John, Hutchinson, KS*

I have tried visualized prayer and also the control of feeling exercise. *Raul, Fort Stockton, TX*

I meditate every day throughout the day as a form of relaxation, enlightenment, prayer, and for striving to remain centered in my thoughts, deeds, and actions, as a way to stay positive and balanced, while dealing with life's ups and downs, and lessons that I'm confronted with. *Vincent, Frackville, PA*

The *Self-Development in the Penitentiary* exercises has helped me greatly to learn to use my 'will' in my spiritual progress and to better my concentration through meditation. *Casey, Kennedy, TX*

I have confronted my thoughts and feelings since beginning meditation and reading spiritual books. I am not angry like I once always was. I know how to give without expecting anything in return. I have felt completely at peace in meditation and for eight years in prison I've only gotten that feeling of bliss with the use of narcotics before. On March 17, 2012, it will be one year clean and sober. *Frank, Blythe, CA*

As for meditation, I meditate each day before I write. *Steven, Clallam Bay, WA*

I have, and enjoy, a regular practice of meditation, and see it as vital for my day to day being. As well, I share with other inmates my input and knowledge of meditation. *Artemas, Iowa Park, TX*

Illuminations cont. from pg 2

THE INFORMATION and insight I obtained from these books just totally put me in awe. The most profound thought being; what a wonderful God we have, to realize his hand wrote all of this. That He had all wisdom when He brought each person's soul into existence. All we have to do is try to live in a way that brings glory to Him and everything else will work itself into place. *Jeff, Palestine, TX*

I HAVE FELT the works and changing of things around me from childhood until now. The seer within me has longed for other spheres and my mind was struggling in the sense world. My heart is pure and old, I felt as if I was at war within, so I moved often and ended up here. I do feel that there is ancient wisdom within me. I have encountered beings of light from the start and felt it. I am really beginning to understand how my life has more purpose than that of materialism. The readings are also giving me the ability to see the consubstantiation with an anthroposophical view, as with the parables and words of Christ. A light grows within me and I feel myself changing for the better. *Maurice, Cumberland, MD*

THANKS FOR THE BOOK loan, the material was superb! I sure can use

this text as part of my rehabilitation and help me have a better understanding in all my future decisions. *Armando, Coalinga, CA*

I SOAKED UP THE BOOK like a sponge! I've been into the occult for about 10 years now. First, it was towards the darker side of it, but obviously, as with anything, it has blossomed and matured into a more cultivated and enlightened inner-being. For I am truly working on awakening my inner consciousness, the path is long and involves a lot of sacrifice, soul searching and self awareness, I'm forever learning and always will be. To say the least, it has been a wonderful experience and continues to be so. *Dexter, Mercer, PA*

I'VE GAINED MUCH KNOWLEDGE and open-mindedness; but I'm lacking spirituality and discipline. I've never taken a course before, and I seek and intend to follow and finish here. *Scott, Delano, CA*

I HAVE BEEN placed on the path and it is one I will never stray from, but my biggest regret in life is that I've never been truly close to another human being. I want to find love on this earth as I prepare to be one with the creator in the next life. *Christopher, San Luis Obispo, CA*

~ SELF-AWAKENINGS ~

EduCareDo Correspondence Course Response Summaries

Lesson 1: Introduction

The experience of virtuous behavior can be limited or rendered less effective by attaching negative judgments to our responses. By adding judgment to our responses, we can create a mental filter that causes us disharmony because it causes us to perceive trivial challenges as a big deal. Which in turn generate the emotional energy for a psychological storm. Like the teacher in the lesson, I recognize that in my path to become more spiritual and responsible, I have actualized disharmonic emotions by becoming upset with others for having what I perceived to be irresponsible behaviors and thoughts. This has the effect of clouding my mental state. I'm currently reframing how I view the actions of others and actively minimizing tendencies toward judgment. I am viewing the actions of others as right for them at their current level of understanding. *Rashad, Trion, GA*

Lesson 2: First Steps in the Light on the Path

New to me was the perception of images in these four objects that appeared to bring forth a different visual effect as to see things in depth. The pictures seem to change in different objects depending on what your mind sees it to be. Important was the depth of perception that's showed using ones inner eye to actually see these objects in their true form; the utilizing of the thinking system to obtain clear pictures, reflection on casting a deeper meaning to objects and, pulling out the truth through added depth of perception. This will also encourage me to further my growth and continue to use inner reflection to restore the truth. *Tommy, Joliet, IL*



New was the awareness of polarities everywhere. I will use this conclusion to help raise my self-knowledge. One item was closest to my heart: the affirmation that through artistic creativity flows the *joy of life*. Also the idea, that an increased level of cognition is possible apart from the sensory data. Not just a higher state through meditation, but a grasping of the underlying activity that is outside our perceived range of sense input. With these findings, I will encourage artistic creativity in myself and others as I never have before. Since the Intro Lesson One, I have placed a priority on living in the moment. I have since meditated at the same time every day, and for the first time experienced peace in my inner monologue. It is really something to delve into a 'science of spirit' to live as the spiritual creature with love and light. *Joshua, Vacaville, CA*

Lesson 3: Understanding, Caring and Developing the Human Senses, Part 1

The twelve sense arrangement and descriptions were new to me. That is, in relation to the will, feeling, and thinking centers. Clear and concise. Most important and closest to my heart is the consciousness and awakening to be found between polarities. Exercises concerned with similar areas bring to mind some of Gurdjieff's exercises, or Sufi. Recognizing different aspects of the senses; self-movement, balance senses, etc. I also liked the description of stimuli and sense perceptions from 'outsiders'. The material certainly shows the importance, responsibility we all have to foster creative and wholesome environments for the young and developing minds and souls, as well as our personal obligation toward fellow human beings; divinity, attachment, recognition, union, gratitude and service. *Sean, Eloy, AZ*

Lesson 4: Understanding, Caring and Developing the Human Senses, Part 2

I got a deeper understanding of the twelve senses and how we are affected by today's technology. I will do what I can to strengthen the senses each day and cultivate my awareness of them. I have been starting the day with some stretching. To do more of the things that will strengthen, enliven, and harmonize the senses. I am limited in the things that I can do, but I am doing what I can and I can see some changes. The senses are well explained and made clear. I now have a better understanding of how to cultivate the senses. All of these technological devices have been dulling my senses, stopping me from developing them. All the things I have been doing are not helping to strengthen and enliven the sense organs. I will adjust as I go and learn. *Sybounthanb, Brunswick, NC*

Lesson 6: The Threefold Human Constitution and Control of Thinking

New to me was that the nerve system is related to thinking, the rhythmic system to feelings, and metabolic system to willing. How these systems are automatic and yet can be educated, taught, improved through this knowing. I would like to become more aware of how this affects us, our environment and future. *Kenneth, Stringtown, OK*

Lesson 7: The Human Being in its Relationship to the World

I found to be important that the human rhythm of eighteen breaths/minute grows to 1,080 breaths/hour, which results to 25,920 breaths/day. This number of breaths equals the number of years in a platonian, or a Great year: the precession of the equinoxes. The exercise focuses on the interconnectedness with nature, human beings, and inanimate objects; this connection makes me feel one with the universe. I concentrate while meditating on my breath and remember the union I share with the planets. It changed my whole conception on how I see the galaxies and other worlds. I'm learning to implement the exercises and knowledge into my daily life. *Matheu, Raiford, FL*

Lesson 11: Elements, Ethers, their Origin, and their Evolution on Earth

Lighting the Candle: As the fire consumes the wick and burns closer to the wax, the wax turns from solid to liquid and runs down the candle shaft. Once the melted wax begins to cool, it solidifies again; as the flame burns the process is repeated. The breaking down of solid to liquid, etc. until the wick is completely consumed by the fire. This can be compared to the life cycle, each day we begin anew, consumed by daily events; some of us go through daily routines rarely changed. How we handle events around us can be good or bad, depending on our evaluations and actions. As the candle burns the oxygen spirit and fuels the flame, the wax liquefies and slows the wick's consumption by the flame. *Carl, Calico Rock, AR*

Lesson 17: Female and Male Spirituality and The Clay Exercise

What was closest to my heart was really the idea of self-sacrifice and selflessness; being selfless and concerned with the needs of others. To know, to truly listen to others and find a common ground between one another just helps one realize all of us have similar beliefs as well as differences in belief. Well, I have got room for change in being selfless. *Jerry, Ione, CA*

Lesson 21: Introduction to Biography Work

In writing about myself, I see more that my influences changed often and I associated very little with large groups. I spend more time and energy with individuals and small groups. I found that overall, the actions I took to try to meet my needs/wants and that the guidance I received was either ignored by me or were not appropriate! But why would I not respond to the appropriate suggestions? I will try to pay more and particular attention to suggestions and/or instructions with the consideration of why a person is providing these—ulterior motive, or to help? I am becoming more open to suggestions and instructions, along with developing the ability to look more objectively and thoroughly at results by projecting forward. Soon, I should be working on this in the 'real world', putting it to the test of life. By this time I'll be much more confident in how this works and have worked out a means to apply. *Lee, Hudson, CO*

An Exercise in Practicing the Virtues

cont. from pg 1

To understand how to do this, let us begin with the following consideration: While many of us are familiar with the saying *patience is a virtue*, it is through Rudolf Steiner that we learn that patience is the Virtue which corresponds to the constellation Scorpio. And rather than just state the Virtues in their relationship to the constellations, Steiner also rendered them according to what they become through the free activity of the human being. In his rendering, *patience becomes insight*.

Now we may ask, how does patience become insight? And why is it related to Scorpio? Are we bound to the heavens in such a way that it is only when the Sun moves through Scorpio that we can be patient to any degree of success? No. The human being is a spiritual being endowed with the free will to exercise patience at any time throughout the cycle of the year. And if my striving toward patience is true, then I create substance that can be used by the spiritual world in the weaving of human destiny.

Now let's further consider Steiner's alignment of the Virtues to the Sun's movement through the constellations. When, at any time throughout the course of the year, I strive toward patience, then the substance borne of my striving is woven into human destiny in such a way that when the Sun radiates toward Earth from among the stars of Scorpio, it weaves insight out the substance of my prior striving toward patience. This may seem a cumbersome thought, but we will hold it as an imagination that the world can work this way.

The activity of sunlight when it moves through each of the 12 constellations of the zodiac changes throughout the cycle of the year. We participate in this change when we strive toward the good and the true, which we are describing here as the Virtues. Through our striving, we release a gift, not only for ourselves, but for humanity. The Sun makes use of that gift by maturing it and radiating it back toward us: *Patience becomes insight*. The only way to know if this is so, is to practice, and to also consider, when I don't exercise patience at those times when it is needed, it just might be that I rob myself, and others, of the insight that might otherwise help us all to greater understanding.

To give another example, let's consider the Virtue associated with the constellation Leo: *Compassion*. In Rudolf Steiner's rendering, *Compassion becomes freedom*. To demonstrate compassion for the sufferings and circumstances of others ~ and even for oneself in the face of one's own struggles ~ creates the necessary substance that the spiritual world needs in order to free us. What we are "freed from" is self-judgment and feelings of guilt, which can weigh us down and bind us to consequences in the inner life. In his rendering of the Lord's Prayer, Rudolf Steiner includes the passage: *Let our compassion for others be a compensation for the guilt to which we succumb within us*. By demonstrating compassion, we give opportunity to the spiritual world to harmonize our activity in such a way that we are freed inwardly. Outwardly, the freedom that streams toward humanity on the rays of the sun finds expression in each person's sense of humanity, and it is perhaps for this reason that compassion is the Virtue linked with Leo, which is the constellation associated with the noblest forces of the human heart.

By practicing and working with the Virtues in this way, and by contemplating how each Virtue is in harmony with the Sun as it appears to move through the constellations of the zodiac, it becomes evident that we are engaging with a living spiritual world that can then bring about, through the course of the year, a greater harmony on Earth.

The list below follows this mode of thinking and applying each one of the Virtues, acknowledging that there are many more ways to work with this material. For now, we can take this simple step toward testing the knowledge by practicing on ourselves and holding the thought from Rudolf Steiner's book *Theosophy*: *Just as our bodily nature works from below upwards to set limits on the soul, spirituality works from above downwards to expand it. The more our soul is filled with what is true and good, the broader and more inclusive its eternal aspect becomes*.

The Twelve Virtues For the Months of the Year ~ to be meditated upon and observed in one's life.

When one practices these virtues in a certain way, new powers and capacities will arise. ~Rudolf Steiner

Steiner advised beginning the practice of a Virtue on the 21st of the month before the month in question until the 21st of the following month. This aligns the practice with the appropriate constellation. For example, for the Aries Virtue of Devotion, one would practice from March 21 to April 21, followed by the Taurus contemplation starting April 21 to May 21 and so on. Overtime this type of practice gives us the capacity to know that we are *speaking to the stars, which is strength for Spirit Man*.

Books referenced in this article include:
Occult Science, The Secret Stream,
Guidance in Esoteric Training, Theosophy

Aries	April	Devotion becomes Power of Sacrifice
Taurus	May	Balance becomes Progress
Geimini	June	Perseverance becomes Faithfulness
Cancer	July	Unselfishness (selflessness) becomes Purification
Leo	August	Compassion becomes Freedom
Virgo	September	Curiosity becomes Tact of Heart
Libra	October	Contentment becomes Equanimity
Scorpio	November	Patience becomes Insight
Sagittarius	December	Control of Speech (Thoughts) becomes Feeling for Truth
Capricorn	January	Courage becomes Redemptive Power
Aquarius	February	Discretion becomes Meditative Power
Pisces	March	Magnanimity becomes Love

SELF - AWAKENINGS


cont. from pg 10

Lesson 22: Getting in Touch with Astronomy

Making the planet clock was new for me. Heaven's wisdom has been with mankind since the dawn of time and a remnant of its knowledge is still close to humanity. The essence of the planet clock has been misplaced over the eons. Notice I did say "misplaced" and not "lost", one can find answers to all of life's mysteries embedded in the entities of the skies. "Seek and ye shall find." I will search the heavens when I'm in most need of answers. To look at the natal charts of myself and those close to me to find ways through the heavens to build upon what is there already. *Steven, Beeville, TX*

Lesson 25: Health and Nutrition

The temperaments of various foods and how soy beans and other legumes have expressed morphing toward the animal realm. The polarity our illnesses on the warm side and those on the cold, and how over the last century, more causes have been related to the cold which is reverse from what I would have expected. Find the balancing effect in everyday life, such as the walking exercise to pulse/breath rhythm to support primal healing forces. Preventative medicine arises by becoming more in touch with the soul senses. Also, the cause and effects of drugs in the appendix helped me to realize the futility of reliance on the use of drugs. *Richard, Frackville, PA*



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The Lord's Prayer

*Father, Thou who wast, art and shalt be,
In our very inmost being,
Thy Being is glorified in us all and highly praised.
Thy Kingdom expands itself in our deeds
and in the conduct of our lives.
Thy will we perform in the activity of our lives
As Thou, O Father, in our inmost being has laid it.
The Food of Spirit, the Bread of Life
Thou offerest us in super abundance
In all the changing conditions of our lives.
Let our compassion for others
be a compensation for the guilt
to which we succumb within us.
Let not the Tempter work in us beyond our strength:
For in Thy Being no temptation can persist,
For the Tempter is but illusion and deception
out of which Thou, O Father, leadest us,
through the light of Thy knowledge.
Thy power and majesty work in us
In all cycles of time.
Amen*

Rudolf Steiner

The above rendering is based on Rudolf Steiner's research as a spiritual initiate.
For further reading, please request: *The Christian Mystery*