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Cover image: Hieronymus Bosch, Garden of Earthly Delights (detail of left panel) oil on oak panel (1490–1510), Museo del Prado, Madrid
Anthroposophic Nursing Practice

Foundations and Indications for Everyday Caregiving

EDITED BY ROLF HEINE

Forewords by Matthias Girke, and Michaela Glöckler
Introduction to the English Edition by Adam Blanning

With contributions from Klaus Adams, Frances Bay, Gudrun Buchholz, Annegret Camps, Bernhard Deckers, Carola Edelmann, Sasha Gloor, Renate Hasselberg, Inge Heine, Rolf Heine, Christel Kaul, Monika Layer, Regula Markwalder, Heike Schaumann, Jana Schier, Ada van der Star, Christoph von Dach, Ursula von der Heide, Gabriele Weber, and Anna Wilde

Anthroposophic nursing care goes beyond the communicative approach of soft skills. Nurses form a bridge between treatment of the body and treatment of the patient’s soul and spirit by actively valuing the human body, paying attention to touch, using warmth, cold, air, and light to promote healing processes, and much more. Although physical wellbeing, autonomy, and youthfulness are central to our modern materialistic culture, our bodies actually receive little respect and appreciation, especially when they become ill and eventually old. Nursing values need to be rediscovered that respect the debased human being, embrace illness as a part of existence, and allow time for healing. A key aspect of this book involves the idea and practice of “nursing gestures,” relating inner attitudes and practical nursing activities to one another in detail through numerous examples and overviews.

Anthroposophic Nursing Practice shows not only the possibility, but also the practical experience of nursing care, which aims to be both holistic and optimistic. The knowledge and perspectives gathered in this book have matured through the work of several generations of anthroposophically oriented nurses, all striving to refine a truly integrative nursing practice.

This unique book will no doubt become the classic text on the important practice of anthroposophic nursing.


$65.00 | 6 1/4 x 9 1/2 in. | 624 pgs

ROLF HEINE, RN (b. 1960), began his nursing career in a home for the elderly. He did nursing training at the Freie Krankenpflegeschule an der Filderklinik, Filderstadt, Germany. He gained professional experience on internal medicine and surgery wards with the emphasis on Anthroposophic Nursing for seriously ill and dying patients. He has been head of nursing in surgery, internal medicine, and gynecological departments. Currently he works at the Filderklinik. He has been a board member of the German Anthroposophic Nursing Association (VfAP) for 17 years and is a member of the German Council of Nursing (DPR) and board member of the Dachverband Anthroposophische Medizin in Deutschland (DAMID). Since 2000, Mr. Heine has served as coordinator of the International Forum for Anthroposophic Nursing, and as president of the International Council of Anthroposophic Nursing Associations (ICANA) since 2014.

“This first English-language edition of Anthroposophic Nursing Practice shows not only the possibility, but the practical experience of nursing care which is both holistic and optimistic in its orientation. That is a cause for celebration!

“A monumental contribution to the field of nursing and health care in general. It will no doubt soon become the classic text in this important area. Anthroposophic Nursing Practice spans the full gamut of practices that should be a part of contemporary holistic therapeutic care and extends them in significant ways: biography, inner development (meditations), nursing gestures, rhythm, warmth, washing, wound care, pneumonia, rhythmical massage, compresses, and specializations, for example in childbirth, childhood education, psychiatric nursing, cancer, and geriatrics, including palliative care. Every nurse who approaches the care of their patients with a modern spiritual perspective will want this book on their shelf and moreover in their heart.”

— ARTHUR ZAJONC, author of Meditation as Contemplative Inquiry
We need to think about the type and extent of the nurse's repertoire of work beyond purely functional and mechanical activity to a therapeutic level. Therefore, the question is: How can I, as a nurse, shape my encounters and actions in such a way that they become therapeutic? We need to think about nursing to approach an answer to this question. This should not result in a finished theory, and no nursing model should emerge from it. Rather, it is an effort to point out a way to developing more insight and awareness in nursing.

**Nursing takes us to a new therapeutic level**

If you ask nurses about their work, they will probably answer briefly: “I nurse people.” Or they might add a long list of actions: “Washing and positioning patients; accompanying them to the toilet; helping them with their meals; putting on bandages; administering injections, enemas, and inhalations; measuring temperature, blood pressure, and pulse; providing them with medication; comforting patients and their relatives; giving advice for home care; supporting doctors and therapists; organizing ward tasks,” and, depending on where they work, much more besides.

Regarding this long list, the question arises as to which of these actions are so specifically “nursing” that they justify three years of training. Is cleaning a bedside cabinet a nursing task or should it be done by a cleaning service? Is drawing blood a nursing activity or the task of the doctor or laboratory assistant? Couldn’t the families of patients provide basic care and food for them? The same applies to talks with patients. We have specialists for this today, too. Any nurse would be reluctant to consider their work to be something that everyone could do, but no one wants to. What, then, is the special task of nursing care? The answer to this question is certainly not to be found only in what nurses do. The type and extent of the nurse’s repertoire of tasks is influenced by progress in medicine, the disappearance of some diseases, and the emergence of new ones, as well as social and political developments. Therefore, nursing cannot find its identity in the changing roles of “what.” Rather, it must learn to attain awareness in “how” things are done. How do we handle patients when settling, washing or mobilizing them? Is our touch purely functional in nature? Or are there other, additional qualities to consider?

We can ask: “How do I touch a patient in such a way that he feels it to be pleasant and reassuring, experiencing a sense of security? What do I convey to a patient when giving an injection? What are the thoughts and intentions of the nurse when he or she administers a rhythmic oil application or applies a compress? What is the content of the conversation between the patient and the nurse?”

The answer to such questions must be different for each person, because only then can we speak of individual care. We must learn to ask the right questions based on our observation of the patient. Then we can find individual answers, through which our nursing care can become healing.

Nursing activities are performed either functionally, or in such a way that the specific nursing-healing intention behind them has an effect. A simple example will illustrate this:

A patient is lying in bed with a high fever and is bathed in sweat. It is advisable to quickly lower the fever and prevent macerations of the skin caused by moisture. To achieve this, we administer a fever-reducing agent prescribed by the doctor, wash off the sweat, and cover the moist, naked patient with a light sheet to further reduce the fever by means of water evaporation.

These purely utilitarian considerations will very likely achieve our objective: the patient is soon dry, and the fever has been reduced. A healing nursing approach to dealing with this situation would be to try to look at it from the patient’s perspective: what does it feel like to lie hot and sweaty in bed? It is not only the patient’s body that is affected by this stressful situation. The patient suffers from the heat, he is restless, he feels oppressed and uncomfortable in the moisture. How does our treatment feel to him? Are we considering his mental state while we are caring for him? If we consider these questions, we can also treat the patient as follows:

The aim is not primarily to reduce fever, but to make the patient feel comfortable in his skin. This is done by washing him. The temperature of the water is not simply cold, it is selected to feel pleasantly cool to this patient. He is then dried off so that he does not lie wet in bed and suffer a chill. This is followed by lukewarm lemon or vinegar calf compresses, which alleviate the symptoms caused by fever, such as headaches and aching limbs, feverish dreams and tachycardia, without exposing the patient to cold.

With this application, the patient can enjoy the familiar covering of his pajamas and the bedclothes. He does not feel as if he is at the mercy of his environment. The treatment is repeated several times as needed, so that on an emotional level the patient comes to feel that the attention associated with it is beneficial and healing.

In this way, nursing procedures are not only carried out from a functional point of view; they are also assessed according to their value for the patient’s well-being. In this sense, there are no nursing problems, only patient problems that nurses adopt as their own within the framework of the nursing process.

**“When caring for the sick the aim is… to bring the person into conditions which allow the greatest possible scope for natural healing.”**

—Florence Nightingale (1820–1910)

In addition to shaping our own nursing tasks, nursing is also a prerequisite for the work of physicians and therapists. Our presence and our support of the patient around the clock gives us an overview of almost all the patient’s personal activities. Nurses become intermediaries between physicians, therapists, relatives, and the patient. This task can be compared to the effect of water in nutrition: without water, ingested substances are not effective. Water alone does not cause growth, maintenance or healing. Without water, however, the ingested substances do not get to where they need to go.

In this way, nursing finds a special task in being like water: It makes everything that happens around the patient healing…
For the dying, what is taking place on their way toward death abruptly breaks through in the moment of death—complete loneliness. The deceased lose contact with everything they were connected with on Earth. They perceive how earthly inhabitants abandon them and how the body—the instrument that enabled them to observe, think, feel, and will—also abandons them. It’s as if they are stopped in their movements at the moment of death, as if the Earth is falling away from them. The Earth and all that belongs to it continues on its course through the cosmos; the deceased have the feeling that they are being left behind.

As long as we live on Earth we don’t particularly notice that the Earth moves with us through space. Our daily life experience reflects the opposite. The firm ground under our feet suggests that it is the heavenly bodies that move around us while the Earth stands still. Only when we die do we notice how our Earth is in progressive movement and that we now no longer participate in this progress. When we die we feel that we now remain behind; we feel ourselves coming to rest, and how we begin to be part of a world of rest. Those who have had a chance to spend time on a summer night observing the starry skies—somewhere that the stars still sparkle—might be able to identify with this experience of those who have died. For the dead it is a poignant and completely new experience to sense how their bodily sheath has abandoned them as the place where we can each be “myself” and identify with our own “self.” Now all help, all outside support has fallen away. Those who die can now rest only in themselves.

This first fundamental experience that comes with death creates an immense change. When people die, a feeling arises that is the complete opposite to what they were accustomed. During earthly life they felt supported and carried by everything around them. They were accustomed to the life of the Earth. Now, all of this falls away to be replaced by this certainty: The forces that carry life must now come from within. When we die, we know that we then have to find our support in ourselves. We sense how this asks for our own activity, and that we have to awake ourselves to life, that we have to wake to life what we now have become. We realize: This gives me the power to awake to life what I am.

Not everyone who dies goes through this experience in the same way. The relationship that people developed in life with their own body plays an important role, of course. At the end of life did this body provide the only certainty of existence? Had it become a burden, or a good friend to whom it is difficult to say goodbye as death approaches?

Moreover, how people die determines the way they experience this new awareness. Was death the end of a natural dying process at an advanced age? Did illnesses cut the process short? Or did death come through an outer violent intervention—perhaps through an accident or through suicide? We will explore later how differently the new awareness then develops.

The will to come to themselves leads the deceased to their self—that is, to all that is present in the soul. The certainty of having to wake themselves to life through their own activity invokes the life panorama. Now everything they lived through between birth and death appears before the soul as a stream of images. Their entire life arises from the center of activity that they themselves have become, like an overwhelming, self-arousing dream. But those pictures need inner power to become more than a fleeting dream. The dead find this power in the experience of their ability, in soul and spirit, to leave the former physical sheath behind. Consequently, the dream pictures receive the power of life; they become living pictures that represent the whole of the past life.

Nevertheless, the deceased still do not fully realize that they have left their old consciousness behind. As before, they live in their thoughts, but those thoughts no longer arise in the dreamlike way they did during life on Earth. They no longer simply disappear but begin to come alive; they rise livingly from the center formed by the dead themselves. They grow and replace the thoughts for which the human being was a mere channel during life. In this way they can carry the living pictures of the life panorama.

The pictures of this panorama of earthly life surround the deceased. Just as mountains and woods, streams and lakes surround us on Earth, and just as the Sun, Moon, and stars appear above us, so the dead find themselves in the midst of this landscape of their life. However, those pictures would remain dream pictures if they did not receive the force of life from the dead themselves. The panorama consists of their memories, but they are particular kinds of memories. On Earth, our memories are part of our life in time; we can call up what we have experienced, and depending on the elapsed time our memories have more or less paled. Now, however, they are all simultaneously present as the life tableau.

The deceased are in the midst of them, for they are themselves the source of this world of living pictures of their life. For a few days they live amid their own adventures and vicissitudes. What was experienced right before dying is equally present in that grand, living tableau as what was part of childhood. Everything is so distinct, fresh, and clear, as if these were not memories and had not arisen as memories. Nevertheless, they are indeed memories that they have consciously made their own. This life tableau contains everything they have made their own through thinking and with the help of their power of imagination. All that did not pass them by, all that they perceived and with which they connected themselves as individuals is present and as if being experienced for the first time.

At first, the dead barely realize that they have a different consciousness. They experience the transition caused by dying first as loneliness, and subsequently as a transition from passivity to activity. Now they no longer live as part of a world outside themselves or as part of thoughts that were only partly their own; they experience themselves living in a new world that consists of streaming, living thoughts. They are themselves these thoughts, and they are grand, no longer limited by boundaries. Indeed, it is only now that they are “free” of restrictions and free of the false life of rising and vanishing thoughts. Their thought world has become an absolute reality. In this world of thoughts, the deceased themselves become a living microcosm.

Now the deceased discover that they no longer feel abandoned and lonely. The life that has passed now fills their thinking as completely real images. Within this as their own living cosmos, they feel they are taken up into the macrocosm. Through its sounding, the heavenly music of the universe penetrates this newly independent reality of the life dream, which the dead have themselves become in the pictures of the life panorama. They sense what they were between birth and death—part of the cosmos. Permeated by the harmonies of the spheres, they are taken up into the cosmos...
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ARIE BOOGERT

Arie Boogert, a seasoned priest of The Christian Community, offers a detailed description of what happens after we die. He begins with the days immediately following death and, juxtaposing descriptions by Rudolf Steiner, shows how we separate gradually from our earthly existence, beginning with a vivid review of our life on Earth. He then shows how those who are deceased gradually leave physical life behind and acclimate to a new and very different reality—how we come to understand the effects of our actions and inaction by witnessing and feeling the slights and hurts we have caused others; and the realms we experience before we move on to form our destiny and a new life.

Moreover, the book shows how those still alive on Earth can maintain contact and help those who have died. With the help of Rudolf Steiner’s meditative verses and prayers and by understanding the deceased’s reality and experiences, we can accompany them on their way through the worlds of spirit.

ISBN: 9781584209119 | Paperback | Lindisfarne Books | 5.5 x 8.5 in., 204 pgs | $20.00

What Happens before We Are Born
Creating Our Living Web of Destiny
ARIE BOOGERT

What Happens before We Die extends much of what Arie Boogert expressed in his earlier book (above). He maps out many facets of Rudolf Steiner’s insights into the life that follows death, focusing especially on the period leading to a new birth. The author describes the experiences of the deceased, who—along with others who have died—are preparing a new incarnation on Earth and setting a course toward a “revised and improved edition” of their human adventure on Earth.

This second volume of Arie Boogert’s books on life between death and a new birth takes the reader into a realm that is, in the most encompassing form, our future homeland, juxtaposing many of Steiner’s descriptions to give the reader an impression of what awaits us. We don’t go into the subject in an abstract way but become directly involved with it. We begin to observe that reality while living on Earth by becoming aware of what is present in our world and learning to “see” by assembling the necessary concepts and mental images of that completely different world and existence.

The discussions here include descriptions of our path through the worlds of soul and spirit; the involvement of angelic beings in processing our past life and preparing for the next; the formation of destiny and karma; the continuity of our individuality; and our new incarnation.

Arie Boogert’s two companion books—What Happens after We Die and What Happens before We Are Born—are invaluable guides for all those coming to terms with their own death or the loss of a loved one.

ISBN: 9781584209133 | Paperback | Lindisfarne Books | 5.5 x 8.5 in., 268 pgs | $25.00

ARIE BOOGERT (1933–2013) was born in The Netherlands. He served as a priest in The Christian Community in The Netherlands, Australia, Denver, and Boston, and wrote several books on the subject of death and dying.

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The Chadwick Library Edition republishes—in new or thoroughly revised English translations—selected written works by Rudolf Steiner. The edition is named for the late horticulturist Alan Chadwick, whose life and work has served as inspiration to the small group from which the idea originated. Extensive experience with special bindings led to the selection—for the “trade edition” of 750 books—of a leather quarter-binding, with cloth sides, and a light slipcase. For the hand-numbered edition (100 books), the binding is full leather with a hand-gilt top of the pages in a fine, sturdy, cloth-covered slipcase (see left). The leather is blue calfskin, and the title stamping on the spine is in gold leaf. All of this is done by hand at one of the finest bookbinders in the world, Ruggero Rigoldi, Monza, Italy.

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Written work originally published in 1904 (CW 10)

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The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity

Fundamental Features of a Modern Worldview: Results of Soul Observation According to the Natural-scientific Method (CW 4)

RUDOLF STEINER

Written in 1894 (CW 4)

While not Rudolf Steiner’s first book, The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity is the cornerstone of the thought-edifice of anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science. And given the great variety of approaches to be found in its English translations (e.g., The Philosophy of Freedom and Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path), Steiner’s contention that it would also endure the farthest distance into the future seems to hold true, for great books are recognized by their ability to spark new perspectives over generations.

Readers should be prepared to journey into the life of thinking, to orient themselves within it, to take stock of its characteristic features, and then to observe how it relates to the rest of world phenomena in the act of knowing.

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We are given a succinct description of the path of knowledge, along which each person can begin to understand the marvelous and harmonious complexity of the psycho-spiritual worlds in their fullness.

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The School for Spiritual Science: Its Significance and Purpose
EDITED BY PETER SELG & MARC DESAULES

Foundation Statutes of the Anthroposophical Society of 1923 (“The Christmas Conference”):
5. The Anthroposophical Society sees The School for Spiritual Science in Dornach (Switzerland) as a center for its activity.
9. The purpose of the Anthroposophical Society will be the furtherance of spiritual research; that of the School for Spiritual Science will be this research itself. A dogmatic stand in any field whatsoever is to be excluded from the Anthroposophical Society.

Leaders in The School for Spiritual Science discuss its multifaceted nature, purposes, and future arising from its inception in 1923/24 during the reestablishment of The General Anthroposophical Society in Dornach.

Contributors: Peter Selg • Mario Betti • Matthias Girke • Tomáš Zdražil • Johannes Kühl • Tomáš Boněk • Thomas Meyer • Johannes Greiner • Stefano Gasperi • Marc Desaules • Ingrid Everwijn

ISBN: 9781621482529 | SteinerBooks | pbk, 5½ x 8½ in., 252 pgs | $25.00

Esoteric Lessons for the First Class of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum

Volumes 1 – 4
RUDOLF STEINER
19 lessons, 7 recapitulation lessons, 4 individual lessons, Feb.–Sept. 1924, various locations (CW 270)

This authentic, accurate, and high-quality bilingual edition of the 19 esoteric lessons—containing both English and German parallel texts—is published in conjunction with The School for Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum. This compact, 4-volume cloth-bound set features plates with Rudolf Steiner’s handwritten notes of the mantras and reproductions of his original blackboard drawings in color.

The translations of the mantric verses have been reworked by a committed group of translators, linguists, and editors to express the subtleties of meaning, grammatical accuracy, and poetic style, while retaining the original sound and meter of the German mantric forms. Three versions of the existing English translations are also included.

ISBN: 9781855845824 | Rudolf Steiner Press | cloth, 6 x 9¾ in., 1,728 pgs | $125.00

The Aims of Anthroposophy and the Purpose of the Goetheanum

RUDOLF STEINER • TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION BY MATTHEW BARTON

11 lectures, Basel, Dornach, Prague, and Paris, April 1923 – May 1924 (CW 84)

In his final lectures to the general public, Rudolf Steiner speaks with great clarity and purpose about the inner and outer necessity of the anthroposophic impulse today. Following the fire that destroyed the first Goetheanum building in Dornach, Steiner focused his efforts on rebuilding and reorganizing the Anthroposophical Society. He also continued to travel and speak publicly to explain the purpose of the Goetheanum and to shine a light the broader aims of his spiritual work.

These lectures, including a semi-public series in Dornach, are published in English for the first time and include an introduction, notes, and an index.

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ISBN: 9781621482130 | SteinerBooks | Hardcover, 6 x 9 in., 250 pgs | $35.00

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Rudolf Steiner’s astronomy lectures, given in early 1921, took place at the original Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany, during their Christmas/New Year vacation. These lectures were initially intended for scientists, physicians, and the school’s teachers only. As it happened, the organizers did not follow the plan. This may have caused a dilution of the intended talks. You can see from the section “premonition” below that Steiner was given to quick adjustments based on who was present in his audience. Originally, he hoped to persuade mathematicians and human biologists that they take a mutual interest in each other’s research. For this reason the lectures have been called “interdisciplinary.”

Similar interdisciplinary ideas appeared later in Norbert Weiner’s Cybernetics (1948).

Today there are few scholars who can call themselves mathematicians or physicists or biologists without restriction. A man may be a topologist or an acoustician or a coleopterist. He will be filled with the jargon of his field, and will know all its literature and all its ramifications, but, more frequently than not, he will regard the next subject as something belonging to his colleague three doors down the corridor, and will consider any interest in it on his own part as an unwarrantable breach of privacy. ... It is these boundary regions of science which offer the richest opportunities to the qualified investigator. They are at the same time the most refractory to the accepted techniques of mass attack and the division of labor. If the difficulty of a physiological problem is mathematical in essence, ten physiologists ignorant of mathematics will get precisely as far as one mathematician ignorant of mathematics, and no further. If a physiologist who knows no mathematics works together with a mathematician who knows no physiology, the one will be unable to state his problem in terms that the other can manipulate, and the second will be unable to put the answers in any form....

Premonition

In the summer of 1914, a month or so before the assassination in Bosnia that sparked the First World War, Alexander Strakosch, an Austrian engineer, came to Switzerland to hear a talk given by Rudolf Steiner; architecture was the announced subject. There was, however, a peculiarity connected with this lecture. Here is Strakosch’s account, translated from his Lebenswege mit Rudolf Steiner.

At the end of June 1914, it was possible for me to come to Dornach for a few days. Immediately after my arrival, I hurried up the hill in order to hear Rudolf Steiner’s lecture announced for that evening. The audience was gathered everywhere in the big hall of the Schreinerei, the carpentry shop. Chairs were set up between the machines, some in front of the podium, which is still there now. The machines themselves offered an opportunity to sit on them. They were already being used. I quickly took a chunk of wood down to the first row of chairs. Rudolf Steiner entered and went immediately to the podium.

He gazed back and forth through the hall on that occasion, and saw me squatting in front and greeted me with a friendly gesture. Then, he held the lecture, “New Ideas in the Art of Building.” It was published in Pathways to a New Style. It was surprising that a quite different topic was planned for the evening; suddenly, it was astonishing to hear of various geometrical forms: circles, ellipses, hyperbolas, Cassinian curves and circles of Apollonius were all mentioned.

Carl Unger, who sat in the rear of the hall, came striding to the front as though he was looking for somebody. He saw me there, absorbed in thought, squatting on my piece of wood, and he pointed to me, saying laughingly, “Now, I know why this particular lecture was held today.”

You could actually get the impression, that these curves were pointed out to me personally, because later, in 1919, Rudolf Steiner said in the seminar course, that he gave for teachers just prior to the opening of the Waldorf School: “And now, Mr. Strakosch will show in his energetic way how these curves, which have been discussed in Dornach, can be presented to students of approximately fourteen years of age.”

His remark caused me to take hold of the topic right away; and I found a construction for the Cassinian curves that combined two right triangles and made possible a simple specification of the construction procedure. Later this construction was available for the children of my class when they reached that age....

Future

Elisabeth Vreede was a Dutch woman whose immediate family included Theosophists, at a time when Theosophists were the main audience for Rudolf Steiner’s talks. He suggested that she take up scientific studies. When her astronomical studies were finished, she organized a library that would include the transcripts of notes from Rudolf Steiner’s lectures. Following the Christmas 1923/24 reorganization of the Anthroposophical Society, she was on the Board of Directors and managed the newly created Mathematics–Astronomy Section of the Goetheanum.

Steiner died in March of 1925 and over the course of time it seemed that various scientific and technical people drifted away from the anthroposophic center at the Goetheanum. Vreede was forced to leave the Board of Directors in 1935, but continued to write newsletters for the Mathematics–Astronomy Section.

In her newsletter from 1930, following an account of current interest in variable stars, she expressed her hopes for the future.

Just in these last years most comprehensive investigations have been undertaken by science with regard to variables and to the star world in general. These set forth in most varied ways, sometimes even in statistical form, many relationships between the color, brightness spectrum of the stars on the one hand, their position and distribution over the whole sky in comparison with the plan of the Milky Way, etc. This vast material will someday enable us to grasp the starry heavens as an expression of a spiritual substantive, as the archetype of man. Then for the first time it will acquire meaning, significance, order, and harmony. Only very little could be brought forward here out of the abundance of those scientific investigations and their results, only as much as is capable of being connected with the contents of our Anthroposophical teachings at the present time. Everything else must await further research. Then, one day when chaos, which still holds sway today in this enormous mass of facts, divested of its materialism, will be changed to a cosmos of spiritual ideas, imaginations and inspirations through this knowledge—these results of the immense scientific research work of the 19th and 20th centuries will be able to pass over into the new mythology of the starry heavens of which we spoke. What we have brought forward so far ought, however, to enable man to imbue himself to some extent with that sacred mood in respect to the starry heavens,
which our teacher, in the booklet Christmas, characterized with the words:

“When a man looks today at the starry sky with the help of the abstruse science of astronomy, he sees it inhabited by abstruse material worlds. But these celestial bodies will again appear to him as the bodies of souls and spirits; space will once more appear to him permeated by spirit and soul. He will find the whole cosmos warm, and have the feeling that he has when reclining on the bosom of a friend: though, of course, the spirit of the cosmos is more majestic and sublime.”

Even though many people are now unable to see the night sky because of artificial light, there is still interest in astronomy. In recent years there have been various descriptions of a screw-like motion of the solar system that resembles lemniscatory movements. Some of the proponents seem to have academic credentials. In my occasional experience with teams in outer-space work, I found what seemed to be a dependency on computers. That is surely necessary, but it should not be allowed to cripple the imagination.

What is the relationship between the human being and the world of the stars? Can we comprehend the structure and movement of celestial bodies solely through advanced mathematics, or is there in reality a point beyond which mathematical functions no longer apply? Can we, in fact, transcend the limits of three-dimensional space through our thinking?

In eighteen lively lectures from the beginning of 1921, Rudolf Steiner dives deeply and courageously, though carefully, into these and other profound questions. His conclusions and indications for further research are at once fascinating, stimulating, and quite possibly revolutionary in their implications.

The subject of these lectures is not astronomy, broadly considered, but the relationship of astronomy to the other fields of natural science. As he does elsewhere, Steiner maintains that the rigid specialization so prevalent in scientific endeavors will not bring us any closer to an integrated, singularly comprehensible understanding of the reality of our world. In particular, a true grasp of the workings of the universe will not be possible until its mirror, the study of human embryology, is recognized as such and penetrated with this reflective relationship in mind.

Steiner once again shows himself to be both an utterly unique and masterful commentator on scientific and intellectual history, as well as a living light, shining a possible forward path for human progress and self-knowledge.

Interdisciplinary Astronomy is a translation from German of Das Verhältnis der verschiedenen naturwissenschaftlichen Gebiete zur Astronomie: Dritter naturwissenschaftlicher Kurs (GA 323, 2nd ed.).

ISBN: 9781621480709 | SteinerBooks | pbk, 6 x 9¼, 342 pgs | $30.00
NEW SCOOCHIE STORYBOOK FROM BELL POND BOOKS

Scoochie Mouse and the Miracle of Life

THERESA ROACH MELIA

Scoochie Mouse makes her home in the chicken coop beneath the nest of her friend Henrietta, on the farm of a kind, loving family with two children, Tom and Jessica, their friend Birdie, and their dog Woof.

Scoochie's adventures and growing knowledge of the world are interwoven with farm and family life, with the circle of the seasons, and with fairy tales told during quiet evenings. The world in which Scoochie and the farm family live is our world, too, seen through the innocent eyes of childhood.

Born from the wisdom of the Waldorf approach to early childhood learning, Scoochie Mouse and the Miracle of Life—as well as its companion, The Adventures of Scoochie Mouse—are gentle, healing books about deep reverence for the natural world, abiding kindness toward all creatures, love, and goodness.

The short chapters are perfect for reading aloud to young children and are appropriate for early readers (and grown-ups!) to read themselves.

(Ages 3–6 years)

ISBN 9781952166068 | Bell Pond Books
pbk, 7 x 8 in. , 168 pgs. | Illustrated | $13.95

The days grew shorter, the nights longer. The arc of the sun’s path was low in the sky. In the deep midwinter, the family celebrated the beauty of Christmas, Hanukkah and all the Holy Days and Nights. As the stars showered their blessings onto the earth, everyone was moved to shower each other with more and more love. The magic of deep winter arrived with twirling dreidels, a shimmering Christmas tree, family songs sung into star-bright nights, and crystalline frost shining each morning.

One freezing morning, Scoochie ran out to the chicken yard to find her favorite food, sunflower seeds. As she nibbled happily, Spitzer shimmered into view. “My dear mouse girl, what do I see?” Spitzer smiled. Scoochie was sitting on her haunches nibbling a sunflower seed. Her belly was getting rounder. “I see that tiny mouse star babies have traveled from the Great Mouse Star in heaven to grow in your belly.”

Spitzer was so pleased. Scoochie said, “I am so chubby now, I dare not squeeze into the farm house. What if I got stuck. My whiskers tell me that I must stay out while my belly is full of mouse star babies.”

Then Scoochie was quiet. She said, sadly, “I will not be able to sleep in the tiny cradle on the Christmas tree. I will not be rocked by the Christmas Tree Fairy.” “You are a fine mouse mother, dearest Scoochie. I will tell the Christmas Tree Fairy why she will miss you. I will gather our gnome friends to rock you in your feather cloak.” “Yes, yes,” squeaked Scoochie Mouse. Furbit appeared. He bowed to Spitzer. Then Furbit gave Scoochie a mouth pouch full of sunflower seeds. “Yum, my babies ask me to eat lots of good seeds, so we can all grow and become.”

Spitzer shimmered away full of happiness. Furbit nuzzled Scoochie and then ran off on his mission to make their nest deeper and thicker. He found a pile of feathers that Henrietta had collected for him and brought them back to their nest. He arranged the feathers on top of the straw, lichen, and moss. The dried flower petals were still colorful and lightly fragrant. Furbit ran back outside. The frost had melted, so he snipped lots of dry grass stalks to bring to their nest. All day Furbit worked and made their nest thicker and warmer. Scoochie was so delighted and grateful.

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ALSO AVAILABLE
The Adventures of Scoochie Mouse
ISBN 9781584209911
Bell Pond Books
pbk, 7 x 8 in. , 152 pgs. | Illustrated | $12.95
Scoochie Mouse was in Henrietta’s nesting box. Scoochie loved Henrietta’s eggs. There were five big brown eggs. Henrietta turned them carefully with her beak, and Scoochie waited patiently on her eggs, watching. Scoochie got so hot under Henrietta’s warm feathery tummy that she squeezed out from under to breathe the cool air. Scoochie groomed her face and whiskers with her little paws. She looked at the tiny dust motes shining in the sunbeam that streamed into the henhouse. “Tiny stars are floating,” thought Scoochie, “tiny golden stars in the air.”

Henrietta was napping. She wiggled and clucked now and then. It was a lazy, dreamy summer afternoon. Scoochie felt a little peckish, so she ran down the ramp into the chicken yard. Mom had left lots of feed in the dispensers. There were even still some old bread scraps scattered about. There was plenty of water in the sipping trough.

Scoochie nibbled a bit. Then she filled her mouth pouches and brought seeds and cracked corn up to Henrietta’s box. Scoochie spit the seeds out along the rim of the box. Henrietta would find them when she woke up.

Scoochie heard the family car approaching, and then their voices. She heard Woof running about, sniffing his familiar trees and bushes. “Woof is home!” said Scoochie, and she scampered out to greet her friend.

Woof was standing by the chicken wire fence when Scoochie appeared. They were happy to see each other.

Scoochie ran close to Woof, she sniffed him through the chicken wire. As Woof stood there wagging, Scoochie said, “There are new smells on you, Woof.”

“I was at the big water of the ocean where creatures fly and swim, and I rolled in the good beach smells,” explained Woof.
NEW FROM BELL POND BOOKS ON WALDORF EDUCATION

Educating for Balance and Resilience

Developmental Movement, Drawing, and Painting in Waldorf Education

A practical guide to strengthening the foundations for professional development, student capacities and readiness, and parent support

JEFF TUNKEY

“Each child in every age brings something new into the world from divine regions, and it is our task as educators to remove bodily and psychical obstacles out of the way...” —Rudolf Steiner (Aug. 19, 1922)

There is growing recognition in educational circles that helping children to build the skills they need to thrive in adult life is as important as content delivery linked to achievements on benchmark tests. These important skills include communication, persistence in the face of challenge, adaptability, teamwork, good manners, self-control, responsibility, and punctuality.

A unifying goal for every Waldorf–Steiner school—anywhere in the world, large or small—is to provide a gradual progression of challenging academic content for which the students are (or soon will be) emotionally and physiologically prepared. Waldorf schoolteachers recognize that all true learning requires inner composure and flexibility, and that what can be seen and developed through outer movement is vital for mental health and acuity throughout life. Physical activity fuels the brain with oxygen and decreases stress. Every movement creates and strengthens connections within the brain and in the nerve pathways throughout the body.

The importance of developmental movement is also clearly validated by modern science as a path to physiological and emotional development, and might be just as important as academic presentation, especially in the early grades. Activities that build such basics as postural control, spatial orientation, physical coordination, and body geography are not merely classroom extras. All children (perhaps more than ever before) need a rich diet of developmental movement, drawing, and painting exercises, as indicated by Rudolf Steiner, Audrey McAllen, Karl König, Olive Whicher, and numerous others.

Although nearly all of these tools have been within the domain of Extra Lesson practitioners and Waldorf movement teachers for decades, Jeff Tunkey asserts that they should be staples for all students, in all classes, every day.

JEFF TUNKEY is a teacher and founding board president at Aurora Waldorf School in West Falls, New York. A graduate of the Spacial Dynamics® 5-Year in-service training, he is one of the lead instructors in the Remedial Teacher development courses for the Association for a Healing Education. He leads intensives for Waldorf teachers from across North America and beyond, including class, movement, and remedial teachers, as well as pedagogical directors.

ISBN: 9781952166006 | SteinerBooks | pbk, 8½ x 10, 170 pgs | color | $30.00

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“Our rightful place as educators is to be removers of hindrances”
—Rudolf Steiner

I consider myself very fortunate to have begun my explorations of anthroposophy and Waldorf education in the late 1980s, shortly after I turned 40. At that time, there were still teachers and lecturers in North America whom I would classify as being in the “second circle from the sun.” That is, not part of the generation who were colleagues and associates of Rudolf Steiner, but among those who came along during the immediate period thereafter, i.e., beginning in the 1930s or ’40s, and who had met some of the founding circle, or who had even been younger colleagues of those involved during Steiner’s career. Leading lights I was blessed to hear talks by, or even meet a little, included Henry and Christy Barnes, Werner Glas, William Ward, Ann Pratt, and a few others now lost to (my) memory.

Then, my early years of teaching at Aurora Waldorf School (AWS) near Buffalo, New York, would not have been possible without contact with and help from many in the “third circle from the sun”—master teachers still leading the schools movement in the ’90s. One of these, with a pithy ten-word question, set me running on the path to what I hope has been a serious attempt at Waldorf teaching.

The Question

This highlight moment occurred during my Spacial Dynamics® training with Jaimen McMillan. One evening in a discussion circle, Jaimen posed to the group the following rhetorical question: “By what right do you call yourself a Waldorf Teacher?” The meaning, for me at least, was bracingly clear: Consider very carefully the responsibility of thinking oneself and representing oneself to be a Waldorf teacher.

Let’s follow that along. What would Rudolf Steiner say—or do—if he were to walk into my class-room today? Cringe, grimace, and have me hauled off to the Goetheanum, there to be dealt with by a squad of punitive euthymists? How can I possibly know if I’m actually “doing Waldorf” a century after its founder passed from the scene, and in such a changed world? During his relatively brief life, Dr. Steiner gave some six thousand lectures, not all of which have been translated into English. His philosophy of the human being, his indications for education, were presented from many perspectives in hundreds of different lectures now collected in scores of different books that comprise the teachers’ canon. And then, important pedagogical gems are also found here and there in the nooks and crannies of hundreds of other lectures on seemingly non-pedagogical topics. I do feel like I’m walking the winding yellow brick road seeking courage and a brain. By what right, I ask, may I call myself a Waldorf Teacher?

Teacher Trainings

As I began my teaching career, striving to create a cohesive program blending insights from gym program movement and remedial/student support, I decided to make myself a checklist of topics to keep studying and working to apply. I filled one book cabinet, and then a few more. Completing each book lead me to add to, not shorten, my to-read list.

After about 10 years of studying, attending workshops, and receiving a lot of mentoring, I noticed that sometimes the newer class teachers joining AWS from Waldorf teacher training institutes seemed less well versed in these foundational themes than those who had taken certificate courses in the past. This might be because—as the Waldorf movement evolves and passes from one generation to the next and the “circles from the sun” get wider—the orbit that teachers need to travel in order to gain understanding increases by a factor of pi or more. Perhaps some of Rudolf Steiner’s core concepts are a little less likely to be passed through oral traditions, and more likely to be fractured by pressures on curriculum and tested results. Does this ring true to you?

In any event, I began getting requests to provide faculty meeting study guides at AWS, and workshop at other Waldorf schools. For AWS, I formed a monthly book study course, dubbed “A Scaffold for Waldorf Teaching.” Each month for a year, participants completed a reading assignment; then we’d gather for five or six hours on a Saturday to discuss the topic and explore it through movement, speech, and artistic activities. I led three cycles of this course, and almost all of the teachers then at AWS attended it at least once. The syllabus and reading list for this course is provided in section 4. The balance of the chapters in this section will take up many of these foundations, and also provide some ways to find connections between these gifts from spiritual science and the findings of modern science.

Conclusion

In a lecture titled “Facing Karma,” Rudolf Steiner suggested we should never lapse into a sort of basking in personal pleasure when success comes our way (as for instance when a teaching day goes blissfully well) but rather should remember to be thankful for the gifts of wisdom that passed through us. And, when things go less well and we feel discouraged, that we can find help outside of ourselves, through the One who walks along with us on our earthly journey.

All of the study items listed are not only interesting in the abstract; they are invaluable lenses for daily lesson planning, student observation, and self-evaluation. When a lesson or school day goes well, one can find ingredients of success in these staples of Anthroposophy; when things go otherwise, invariably help for redeeming the next day can also be found by reflection on the list. Did I include laughter and tears? What was the quality of breathing in the room? Was there a student or students in shutdown mode? How was my posture?

A century after Rudolf Steiner began the Waldorf school movement, none of us can know for sure if our pedagogy and approaches would be what he might have intended. However, the world clearly needs Waldorf schools, so I believe we can all continue to provisionally claim to be Waldorf teachers so long as we keep striving to read and listen, and to discipline ourselves to place our self-evaluations in the light of the framework provided from the past.

Thus, in order to stand in front of students, parents and colleagues as a Waldorf educator, one must be willing to travel on a never-finished journey of research and self-understanding. Hold to the motto that every step forward with pedagogy requires two steps forward with personal development.
“Without the slightest doubt there is something through which material and spiritual energy hold together and are complementary. In the last analysis, somehow or other, there must be a single energy operating in the world.”
—Teilhard de Chardin

“The measuring device has been constructed by the observer, and we have to remember that what we observe is not nature in itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning.”
—Werner Heisenberg

Not until the expedition that resulted in the present book was well on its way did I become aware of its actual destination—and my unrealized intent—to understand how the world is made. Not a scientist by training or vocation, I never entertained the aspiration to climb my way to a point of view on creation—let alone the thought I could ever set eyes on what was to loom as a deeply heartening ground of cosmological understanding.

Not until the trails started to assemble into a coherent landscape did a majestic unity begin to rustle around its inner folds and a unison gather from within the whirling—a single tone that continued to grow in volume and depth as it reverberated around the peripheries of world physicality and consciousness.

However satisfying facts may be, whether mathematical or geometric, biological or astronomical, the understanding they grant is relatively local and contextual. One aspect of reality is visited, elucidated and marveled at. It may brush up with the reality of the world as a whole, it may deliver applications that revolutionize human experience. In and of themselves however, isolated facts cannot embrace, let alone explain the living phenomena of nature and cosmos. Abstracted from nature’s formative processes and cycles of becoming, facts never seem to catch up with the intelligence of life.

The fractal character and symmetric arrangement of the forms of nature, the recurrence of the golden mean and Fibonacci series in its geometries, the dynamics of the electromagnetic field, the quantum mechanics of matter, the periodic order of the elements stand out as some of the most eloquent facts of nature. Each is an expression of the phenomenon of phenomena: creation. Each also represents a seal on its mystery.

This book shares the adventure that took me to a panoramic viewpoint on the beginnings of the universe and the generation of the forms of nature. As the journey unfolded from intrigued broodings over cosmic order to lucid marveling at its underpinnings, trails were laid for future travelers to find their way from admiring nature’s wonders to understanding the vibrant principles at work in their formation and composition—an understanding at once scientific and spiritual. What emerged in the end was a unitive view of nature and being, cosmos and consciousness, physics and psyche.

Who has not been awed by the precise geometries of crystals and flowers, the constructs of shells and fruit, the wondrous coincidences among cosmic measurements? Why it might be so, however, and what operation could govern these enigmatic orderings of nature, is the great mystery veiled in its exuberant foliage and myriads of stars. To lift a corner of this veil proved to be the essential purpose of this cosmic—spiritual journey.

If you have entertained such questions as: What is the relation between consciousness and matter? If there is unity in the universe, on what does it rest? And how might it coexist with its obvious diversity? Could there be a universal pattern at work in all forms of life? Why is the golden mean so prevalent in nature’s forms? What is the secret behind the rhythmic intervals between successive branches and leaves? If such questions have crossed your mind, this journey is for you.

If you wonder what quantum physics might be saying about the world, and how it could possibly fit with our ordinary perception of reality,

If you are intrigued by key numbers (such as seven and twelve) in the age-old partitioning of time, space and consciousness,

If you once probed into the mystery of such recurrent numbers and rhythms in nature or cosmos, but felt dismayed by the shoddy approximations this apparent cosmic order is fraught with,

If love of music draws you to explore the Pythagorean pathways to cosmology hidden in notes and intervals,

If you believe astrology rests on deeply logical grounds yet to be fathomed,

This cosmological journey is definitely for you.

If an interest in psychospiritual development is leading you to seek an integrative understanding of human nature and becoming,

If, a Buddhist or a Christian, Jewish or Moslem, you sense the great constant behind the many figures and symbols of God,

If you ponder the grounds of a unitive approach to objective and subjective worlds, cosmos and consciousness,

If esoteric traditions have brought you to see the underlying unity of creeds and cosmogonies, and you anticipate that science will eventually join hands with the world’s ageless intuitions about Creation to elaborate a unified cosmogony,

The trails ahead will take you to such a unitive viewpoint.

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Harmony, the Heartbeat of Creation

The Convergence of Ancient Wisdom and Quantum Physics in the Triune Pulse of Nature’s Forms

MONIQUE POMMIER

“This captivating journey does more than marvel at the recurring geometries of nature, it unravels their enigma. As a scientist, to realize how the same harmonic laws underlie physics, chemistry and biology, psychology and cosmology, is revelatory. To grasp how life and love actually penetrate every particle of cosmos does more: it transforms you. A profoundly symphonic work, this book will leave you resonating with the omnipresent heartbeat of the universe.”

—Irene Goncharov, MS, theoretical physics, Waldorf school math teacher

The author takes readers on a journey into the formative mysteries of the universe. Starting from the compelling hints at a universal order presented by recurrent numbers and geometries in nature and cosmos, the author penetrates into the cosmological processes that result in the physical forms we see and the forms of consciousness we are. Harmonies, we discover, play out these forms, and the laws of harmony reveal the fundamental triune dynamics of all living systems. Spelled out in ancient wisdoms, whispered in quantum physics, the secrets of cosmology are the secrets of harmony. What pantheons worldwide worship as gods are tones and harmonies of the love-essence of the world being.

“A comprehensive and illuminating exploration of the fundamental mystery of number and how it relates to the human soul.”

—Richard Smoley, author of A Theology of Love: Reimagining Christianity through “A Course in Miracles”

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Stargazers’ Almanac 2021

A Monthly Guide to the Stars and Planets

BOB MIZON

“This Almanac will show you the wonders of the night sky, a sight that is becoming ever more precious with light pollution often masking our view.”

—BILL BRYSON, author of A Short History of Nearly Everything

Stargazers’ Almanac 2021 is a beautiful monthly guide to the night skies. It’s designed specifically for naked-eye astronomy—making it ideal for beginners, children and backyard astronomers. It is a perennially popular Christmas gift—and one that lasts the whole year round. Each monthly chart features two views of the night sky, looking north and south, and a visual guide to the phases of the moon and the movements of the planets.

ALSO FEATURES:

∞ Overhead reference map of the sky
∞ Reference plan of constellations
∞ Glossary of constellations and Latin names
∞ Glossary of brightness of stars
∞ Guide to the signs of the zodiac and how they relate to the stars

Suitable for astronomy enthusiasts throughout the Northern Hemisphere’s temperate (non-tropical) latitudes.

ISBN: 9781782506423 | Wall Calendar | Floris Books | $25.00 | 16¾ x 12 in. | 32 pgs

Elsa Beskow Calendar 2021

ILLUSTRATED BY ELSA BESKOW

Elsa Beskow’s picture books have been known and loved for more than a century. This monthly calendar is beautifully illustrated with seasonal artwork from Elsa Beskow’s books. The main US, UK, and Swedish public holidays are indicated.

The calendar includes illustrations from Children of the Forest, Ollie’s Ski Trip, Thumbelina, Christopher’s Garden, The Sun Egg, and many more—all published in English by Floris Books.

ELSA BESKOW (1874–1953), born Elsa Maartman in Stockholm, was a pioneering author and illustrator of children’s books in Sweden—perhaps the best-known Swedish children’s book artist. Her books were inspired by her own childhood experiences, as well as those of her six children. Central themes were the relationships between children and adults and children’s independent initiative. Her books are continually reprinted, and many have become classics. She also illustrated ABC books and songbooks for Swedish schools.

ISBN: 9781782506416 | Wall Calendar | Floris Books | $13.95 | 12 x 12 in. | 24 pgs
This is the third volume of the annual Star Wisdom (formerly Journal for Star Wisdom), intended to help all people interested in the new star wisdom of astronomy and in the cosmic dimension of Christianity, which began with the Star of the magi. The calendar comprises an ephemeris page for each month of the year, computed with the help of Peter Treadgold’s Astrofire computer program, with a monthly commentary by Joel Park. The monthly commentary relates the geocentric and heliocentric planetary movements to events in the life of Jesus Christ. 

Jesus Christ united the levels of the earthly personality (geocentric = Earth-centered) and the higher self (heliocentric = Sun-centered) insofar as he was the most highly evolved earthly personality (Jesus) embodying the higher self (Christ) of all existence, the Divine “I AM.” To see the life of Jesus Christ in relation to the world of stars opens the door to a profound experience of the cosmos, giving rise to a new star wisdom (astroosophy) that is the Spiritual Science of Cosmic Christianity.

Star Wisdom is scientific, resting on a solid mathematical–astronomical foundation and a secure chronology of the life of Jesus Christ, while it is also spiritual, aspiring to the higher dimension of existence, expressed outwardly in the world of stars. The scientific and the spiritual come together in the sidereal zodiac that originated with the Babylonians and was used by the three magi who beheld the Star of Bethlehem and came to pay homage to Jesus a few months after his birth.

In continuity of spirit with the origins of Cosmic Christianity with the three magi, the sidereal zodiac is the frame of reference used for the computation of the geocentric and heliocentric planetary movements that are commented upon in the light of the life of Jesus Christ in Star Wisdom.

Thus, all zodiacal longitudes indicated in the text and presented in the following calendar are in terms of the sidereal zodiac, which needs to be distinguished from the tropical zodiac widely used in contemporary astrology in the West. The tropical zodiac was introduced into astrology in the middle of the second century AD by the Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemy. Prior to this, the sidereal zodiac was used. Such was the influence of Ptolemy on the Western astrological tradition that the tropical zodiac replaced the sidereal zodiac used by the Babylonians, Egyptians, and early Greek astrologers. Yet the astrological tradition in India was not influenced by Ptolemy, and so the sidereal zodiac is still used to this day by Hindu astrologers.

The sidereal zodiac originated with the Babylonians in the sixth to fifth centuries BC and was defined by them in relation to certain bright stars. For example, Aldebaran (“the Bull’s Eye”) is located in the middle of the sidereal sign–constellation of the Bull at 15º Taurus, while Antares (“the Scorpion’s heart”) is in the middle of the sidereal sign–constellation of the Scorpion at 15º Scorpio.

The sidereal signs, each 30º long, coincide closely with the twelve astronomical zodiacal constellations of the same name, whereas the signs of the tropical zodiac—since they are defined in relation to the vernal point—now have little or no relationship to the corresponding zodiacal constellations. This is because the vernal point, the zodiacal location of the Sun on March 20–21, shifts slowly backward through the sidereal zodiac at a rate of 1º every seventy-two years (“the precession of the equinoxes”).

When Ptolemy introduced the tropical zodiac into astrology, there was a nearly exact coincidence between the tropical and the sidereal zodiac, as the vernal point, which is defined as 0º Aries in the tropical zodiac, was at 1º Aries in the sidereal zodiac in the middle of the second century AD. Thus, there was only 1º difference between the two zodiacs. Thus, it made hardly any difference to Ptolemy or his contemporaries to use the tropical zodiac instead of the side-real zodiac.

Now, however—the vernal point having shifted back from 1º Aries to 5º Pisces owing to precession—there is a 25º difference, and thus there is virtually no correspondence between the two. Without going into further detail concerning the complex issue of the zodiac (as shown in the Hermetic Astrology trilogy), the sidereal zodiac is the zodiac used by the three magi, who were the last representatives of the true star wisdom of antiquity. For this reason, the sidereal zodiac is used throughout the texts in Star Wisdom.

Readers interested in exploring the scientific (astronomical and chronological) foundations of Cosmic Christianity are referred to the works listed here under “Literature.” The Chronicle of the Living Christ: Foundations of Cosmic Christianity is an indispensable reference source for Star Wisdom. The chronology of the life of Jesus Christ rests upon Robert Powell’s research into the description of Christ’s daily life by Anne Catherine Emmerich in the three-volume work, The Visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich.
The School for Spiritual Science
Its Significance and Purpose
EDITED BY PETER SELG & MARC DESAULES

“The members of the School will . . . make the Anthroposophical Society into something that alone can give justification to its existence.”
—Rudolf Steiner (November 1922)


5. The Anthroposophical Society sees The School for Spiritual Science in Dornach as a center for its activity.

9. The purpose of the Anthroposophical Society will be the furtherance of spiritual research; that of the School of Spiritual Science will be this research itself. A dogmatic stand in any field whatsoever is to be excluded from the Anthroposophical Society.

In this book, leaders in The School for Spiritual Science discuss its multifaceted nature, its purposes, and most important, its future arising from its inception in 1923/24 during the reestablishment of The General Anthroposophical Society in Dornach.

This collection of talks should be of crucial interest to all current and prospective members of the First Class and Anthroposophical Society. It offers important and relevant thoughts on the past, current condition, and future of The School for Spiritual Science and its place in the Anthroposophical Society and modern spiritual culture.

Contributions:

Peter Selg: Rudolf Steiner, the School for Spiritual Science, and Civilization

Mario Betti: The Path across the Threshold in the Michael School’s Nineteen Lessons

Matthias Girke: The Meaning of the First Class for Medical Work

Tomáš Zdražil: Educational Work and the School for Spiritual Science

Johannes Kühl: Natural Science and the Work of the School for Spiritual Science

Tomáš, Boněk: The Christian Community Priesthood in the School for Spiritual Science

Thomas Meyer: Evil in Light of the Michael School’s Path of Meditation

Johannes Greiner: The Meaning of the First Class for the Discovery and Realization of the Good

Stefano Gasperi: The School for Spiritual Science: The Union of Rosicrucian and Michaelic Impulses

Marc Desaules: Being a Representative: Rudolf Steiner’s Condition for the School

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I gaze into the darkness; 
In it light arises, 
Living light. 
Who is this light in the darkness? 
It is I in my true reality. 
This reality of the “I!” 
Does not enter my earthly existence. 
I am only the image of it. 
I will, however, find it again, 
When I, 
With good will for the spirit, 
Have gone through the portal of death. 

—Rudolf Steiner (Mantric Sayings, p. 82)

Regarding the esoteric course of schooling in the “First Class,” and regarding the General Anthroposophical Section in which the First Class is situated, Rudolf Steiner once said that it (the schooling) is there “for every human being” “who seeks a deepening of his or her soul life.” And, in the present time, this “deepening” of the soul life (as I tried to say earlier) is not a luxury and has not been a luxury for some time; it is not an exclusive path for those who carry special capacities and concerns within themselves. It is rather a path of life and survival. In the face of massive forces of alienation and self-alienation that surround us all-powerfully, how are we to hold ourselves upright if not by the “deepening” and “attainment” of the “genuine ‘I,’” the best forces of our individual self?

Rudolf Steiner emphasized once that “the esoteric for all human souls” can be found in the General Anthroposophical Section of the School for Spiritual Science. However, we must ask ourselves whether during the time since 1924 we have succeeded in making this clear. If anything, the opposite is the case. Since 1924, the nineteen Lessons that comprise the course of schooling in the “Goetheanum’s esoteric school” have been seen primarily as the “exclusive purview” of a group of people who are meditatively more evolved, or who at least think of themselves as such, since the assessment of such a claim in this realm is admittedly difficult.

Many friends of Anthroposophy maintain a distance from the First Class and from the entire “School,” not because of a critical attitude toward them but often out of humility and propriety. They had the impression that they should study for a much longer time in the “school” of Anthroposophy before it has anything to do with their biography, and that they are unworthy of any place of “higher education.” In addition, many of those individuals—who are often extremely engaged anthroposophically—have never come to see themselves as “representatives” of the Anthroposophical Society and movement. In reality, who among us can make such a claim? What qualifies any of us to attest such a self-evaluation? As self-knowledge awakens, don’t we daily experience the weaknesses and frailty of our own existence, our own soul that is still not purified and transformed sufficiently?

These and many other questions prevent people from applying for membership in the “First Class”—as does the conduct, or rather the “behavior,” of various Class circles that give rise to the impression that they are the “true” and only “worthy” anthroposophists.

All the while, they never, or rarely ever, take an active part in the anthroposophical initiatives where they live, that they never concern themselves with the circumstances and work of the local Waldorf kindergarten and Waldorf school, the dismal situation of Demeter agriculture, to say nothing of the catastrophic state of the world. All of this has worked and works to make it seem unattractive to people. And then there is the question: Why should modern people be obliged to apply for membership in a School about which they know virtually nothing and that is surrounded by a curious atmosphere of secrecy?

Since the publication of the Class lesson texts, the situation has changed in some respects, yet it has not become simpler. Many people now study the texts and the mantras, alone or with others, without officially becoming a member of the School. To members of the School, this—like the whole history of the publication itself—seems like a huge betrayal, and they take it upon themselves to protect and guard even more intensely the substance entrusted to them. Thus, we find ourselves in a situation between Scylla and Charybdis. Today, with a “click” anyone can conjure on the screen of any electronic device Rudolf Steiner’s esoteric lessons—lessons that he gave after the Christmas Conference, and that are among the most beautiful, most profound, and in some respects the most “sacred,” and surely the most significant of his works. Anyone can use them, make use of them, and misuse them in any way imaginable. On the other hand, efforts are made to protect the treasure of the First Class, often with such intensity and rigor that hardly anyone can find it—find it in the form of an esoteric lesson that is heard and experienced with others, which is how I understand the original intention of the whole to have been and to be.

However, we can and must ask ourselves how we are to succeed in this situation that has its luciferic and ahrimanic polarity? How are we to find the middle way, the Christ path, and achieve the necessary openness of heart, while sustaining our earnestness? What is utterly certain for me is that the long-standing and nearly total secrecy surrounding the Class lessons, as well as the misunderstanding of them as the private domain of particularly privileged people, must be acknowledged as a failure to offer help, and it must be rejected. To cite just one example, among other things, we know from the Class lessons the meaning Rudolf Steiner attributed to their significance for life after death, for the inner orientation in the spiritual world, and for the preparation of a subsequent, ideally determined, earthly incarnation. Thus, out of Christian charity and responsibility for the future progress of civilization, the impulse must arise in us to make this treasure accessible to people who are seeking it and need it, and to find the appropriate forms for doing so.

What Rudolf Steiner describes as the “anguish of not understanding [after death]” and the “anxiety of soul” resulting from it is serious and must be taken concretely. Because of the materialistic way human beings conduct their lives and because of their attitude of soul, humanity is in danger of losing its connection with the creative spiritual forces (on earth and in the spiritual world) and suffering “death of the soul.”
Biodynamic Farming and Gardening

Renewal and Preservation of Soil Fertility

EHRENFRIED E. PFEIFFER

“Modern agriculture has become an economic objective; it has been invaded by economic thinking. Increasing industrialization and technical considerations now exercise an influence on the structure of the agricultural establishment.” —Ehrenfried E. Pfeiffer, 1938

There have been numerous developments and advancements in biodynamic agricultural methods since Ehrenfried Pfeiffer introduced North Americans to the foundational principles and practices of biodynamics, the basics of which continue to be used today. Thus, although Biodynamic Farming and Gardening was first published in 1938, it remains a foundational text for anyone who is or plans to become a serious biodynamic farmer or gardener.

In this volume, Pfeiffer lays out the essential practices for successfully operating a biodynamic farm, including the principles behind each technique and practice. He backs up these methods with scientific research and data, as well as his own experience as a farmer and researcher, describing what works and what doesn’t. Pfeiffer covers soil qualities, making compost, crop rotation, best planting practices, using biodynamic preparations and sprays, and much more—all with the goal of growing the highest-quality foods by using sustainable methods and working with nature and caring for the earth.

This detailed book is an indispensable guide for both experienced, beginning, and prospective biodynamic farmers and gardeners.

DR. EHRENFRIED PFEIFFER (1899–1961) was born in Munich. He worked closely with Rudolf Steiner to test and document many of the effects of biodynamic practices. Pfeiffer visited the U.S. several times during the 1930s, and was awarded a doctorate for his groundbreaking theory of Sensitive Crystallization Processes as a blood test for detecting cancer. In 1940, he immigrated to the U.S., where he pioneered biodynamic agriculture and helped establish the Biodynamic Farming & Gardening Association. He worked until his death in Spring Valley, New York.

Dr. Pfeiffer was also the author of The Biodynamic Orchard Book; Chromatography Applied to Quality Testing; Pfeiffer’s Introduction to Biodynamics; and Sensitive Crystallization Processes, among others.

ISBN: 9781938685293 | Paperback | Portal Books | Illustrated | $22.00 | 6 x 9 in. | 228 pgs
A single abandoned farm in a well-cultivated region means widespread damage to the environment—for example, the spread of weed seeds by the wind and a change in soil quality. The presence of many such farms together in the same area can lead to the devastation of a whole district and to natural catastrophes. Examples of this sort are known; in ancient times, Mesopotamia and, more recently, dust storms in the U.S. In matters of technique, we are dealing with a preponderance of inorganic material, for which the calculability and individual factors are clearly definable. Agriculture, however, deals with the conditions of life. The growth, health, and disease of plants and animals, as well as restoration of the soil, are continuously variable factors whose individual levels of importance are interdependent and unite into a higher unity, or a complete whole as an organism.

The technological process of production takes raw materials and manufactures them into finished products. The production machine between these two conditions alters very little, except through the wear and tear to which it is subjected. Agriculture receives fertilizer and seed as “raw materials” and delivers vegetables, grains, beets, and other produce as the “finished articles.” The life process occurs between those two factors. Economic thinking in agriculture cannot be justified unless it includes the life process in its calculations. If biological unity of the agricultural enterprise becomes the basis of calculation, then the following statement will apply: Whatever is biologically correct is also the most economically profitable. Three fundamental characteristics become clear in every life phenomenon:  

The first is the fact that life (if the corresponding conditions are at all prevalent) always wants to create growth and increase. Unlimited exuberance of growth is an unrestrained expression of life.

The second characteristic points to an inner condition of strain—for wherever life and building-up exists, deterioration, breakdown, decay, and death are also present. One contains the other within itself—indeed, presupposes it. Goethe beautifully expressed this reciprocal relationship in his essay on Nature, “Life is Nature’s most beautiful discovery, and Death is her artifice for obtaining abundant life.” This condition of strain between two processes is often called “equilibrium.” This does not mean a stable, fixed mechanical equilibrium, but an extremely active, mobile state. This state can be better described in the sense of Hippocrates and Heraclitus as eurusia—the right mixture. Thus, it means active occurrences whose final result is “life.” All of the factors that participate in the creation of a phenomenon of life stand in a certain equalizing relationship to one another. Thus, it is not merely a matter of the inner characteristics of an individual living being, but one of the influence of the whole surrounding world. This can never be overestimated. When the harmony is disturbed, this expresses itself in a continuous dislocation of all the conditions of life.

The third fundamental characteristic can be outlined somewhat with the following:

The whole is not the mere sum of all its parts, but a harmonious unity of a higher order that, as organic being—as an organism with laws of a higher order—lifts the world of the physicochemical inorganic to the world of the organic and living.

Expressed consciously for the first time by Goethe, today this truth increasingly affects all of our biological thinking. Through this, we learn not only that any person, animal, or plant is an organism, but also that the cohabitation of plant world and earth, of plant with plant in certain groupings, of plant with animal and human, likewise forms itself into an organic unity. Indeed, the entire development of the “living space”—let’s say, of a people or a continent—is fashioned according to the same fundamental laws of “the will to evolve,” or “the proper interaction of all factors,” and “the organic unity of a higher order.” The disturbance of one factor means the disturbance of the whole system. Since we are then dealing with a changeable, unstable, strained condition, an insignificant disturbance might, in due time, lead to serious consequences.

These three fundamental characteristics of life point to one result—the inner efficiency of the organism. In technological terms, we speak of a “safety factor” or a “modulus of elasticity.” A steel rod breaks under a certain stress or loses its elasticity under a certain tension. Every material has a specific factor of safety that cannot be exceeded without causing structural damage. Today, we hear much about the use of technology in life—for example, the increased use of technology in agriculture. This is conceived as increased efficiency through the use of machines as means of increased production and such. All of this, however, advances only to a certain limit—namely, the biological efficiency of a given natural foundation….

In conclusion, the author would like to express a more general human view. He is convinced that the cleverest methods of technology and chemistry alone do not suffice to make good farmers, even when they have mastered them well. It is a peculiarity of the farming vocation to deal with “living matter.” Our entire inner attitude has to take this fact into consideration. Technology and our attitudes must be brought into harmony before improvement seems possible. I am aware of the fact that this statement will often be set aside as impractical or impertinent to the problems of Western countries; idealism doesn’t not pay the bills. Although life, health, and lack of health can be expressed numerically, they are far from being something one can buy and sell. We must bear in mind the fact that we have here a creative task to perform. First, however, to create something new requires a building plan; we must have the idea for this if we don’t want to be taught by the damage that arises from uncontrolled empiricism.

The reader will find references to certain “preparations”—numbers 500 to 508—that are an essential of biodynamic farming and have become known to farmers by these numbers…. Biodynamic farmers can make these preparations themselves or obtain them from other biodynamic farmers. The substances from which they are made are described in this book.
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