Jostein Sæther

Facing past lives

Practicing dynamic meditation to achieve karma knowledge

Jostein Sæther, born 1954 in Sunndal, Norway, studied anthroposophy, Waldorf education, fine art, history, and art theory. He lived in Sweden for 21 years and worked as a painter, colour and exhibition designer and art teacher. He has lived in Germany since 1998 and has worked as a seminar leader, karma coach, author, blogger, and leisure artist. He has written six books on anthroposophy, reincarnation and karma, meditation, and history. One of them is an obituary to 400 years of *Fama Fraternitatis*, the story about the journey of Christian Rosenkreutz to Islamic countries. In his free time, he writes poetry and performs as a singer-songwriter. In 2023 he won the poetry competition hold by the Oslo magazine *Sivilisasjonen*.

Advance notice

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Manuscript

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The meaning of a person lies not in what he achieves, but in what he longs to achieve.[1]

Khalil Gibran

[1] Khalil Gibran: *Hinter dem Schleier der Nacht leuchtet das Licht.* Herder-Spektrum. Band 4495. Herder Verlag, Freiburg im Breisgau 1997. Page 103.

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Prologue

When I was a child of about nine, I came across the idea of reincarnation. Immediately I felt, this was not my first time on earth as a human being. When I was seventeen, I had a spiritual experience that contained image sequences from a previous life in North America. First, 25 years later, I was able to put these fragmentary images into a greater relationship with other previous lives through further acknowledgement imaginations from this incarnation in the 19th century. I was able to do so through karma exercises given by Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925) – the founder of anthroposophy – acquiring numerous karmic and spiritual insights also in other former lives. For me this was the long-awaited proof of the unique youth experience.

At a Goetheanum conference on reincarnation and karma in Berlin in the spring of 1997, I led a conversation group in which I spoke in detail about my karmic insights and which karma exercises I had done. I described how I came to the comprehensive findings and what impact they had on my everyday life. However, I was surprised that some of those present, who were open-minded to anthroposophy, were overly critical to my contributions or even rejected them as non-anthroposophical. Coming from outspoken Scandinavia, I could not initially classify the following question from a participant, because I thought I had already reported how I dealt with Steiner's instructions: "What methodological steps did you take?" Consequently, in my first book, *Living with invisible people* from 2001 (the German original in 1999), I treated in great detail about biographical events and my practice steps that led to the karmic insights.

The reactions to the first book in the anthroposophical scene ranged from enthusiastic and positive or reserved down to negative and abusive. The positive feedback meant that over the next

few years I was able to have enjoyable exchanges about spiritual experiences with numerous of individuals, couples, and groups in many European countries and to conduct research with many of them in meditative practice. In the second book – in German called *Einstimmen aufs Karma* – about tuning into karma from 2008, I once again justified my path of practice both epistemologically and art-scientifically.

Between 2011-2016 I published four more books about different spiritual, social and historical themes. A book deals with internal problems in the Anthroposophical Society around the question of the so-called culmination of anthroposophy, which Rudolf Steiner had predicted by the end of the 20th century. Another is a historical exposition of the legends surrounding Christian Rosenkreutz and his journey to Islamic countries, as told in Fama Fraternitatis from 1615. My last book to date deals with the central theme of the threshold to the spiritual world and how we can cross it through an individualization of anthroposophy.

In the book from 2008, I described a lot of biographical and meditative exercises with explanations and examples in order to show, based on my and others' experiences, what karmic images and spiritual experiences can develop. This exercise book for anthroposophical karma work is no longer available in German. Only around 300 copies were sold in total – which motivated me to try a new version in 2015 in order to give this "weird book" a second chance, which in my opinion it deserves because of the diverse practice and engagement with the idea of reincarnation and karma contributes to understanding our individual situation and also to understanding global conflicts.

I planned to publish the first four chapters of the book on the method of my karma research with the working title *Frühere Leben erleben* (Experiencing past lives) with my third publisher *tredition* in Hamburg. I wanted to give the remaining four chapters about dealing with so-called doubles and spiritual adversaries the title *Wunder der Seele – Persönlichkeitsreifung und Umwandlung*

des Bösen (Miracles of the Soul – Personality maturation and transformation of evil) in order to reissue them as a separate title. For several reasons, none of these publications occurred. For various reasons it was never possible to produce these new German editions.

Instead by starting in 2017, I made the book for some years available on the Internet in a thoroughly revised German version. Compared to the first print edition, I made both linguistic changes and shortened and expanded content in the online edition an completed each chapter with suitable illustrations. However, there was hardly any response to this opportunity to read the texts for free, so after a while I reversed everything.

This translation into English allows for further improvements, changes, and expansions to the previous text. My second German book was not only aimed at an anthroposophical audience, which is why it also included a glossary of anthroposophical terms to make reading easier. Such specific terms are explained continuously in the text or in the footnotes, or I have used other words and concepts. This manuscript is again aimed at a larger audience who are interested in reincarnation and karma and who would like to take a practical path that is otherwise only offered in regression practice and reincarnation therapy. I have divided the extensive text into different sections to make reading easier.

The method of image meditation and karmic retransformation is not offered as a therapy, but as a path to knowledge, so that any failure or a psychological reaction that would not be desired cannot be blamed on the author. All topics, motifs, ideas, and exercises that I describe here represent suggestions for the individual cognitive process that that everyone can consider, participate in, or imagine further about. It is always up to everyone to discover for themselves how they can individualize it and make it fruitful for themselves.

I have experienced that knowledge of karma strengthens self-confidence, develops empathy, and develops a comprehensive

awareness of how karma from previous lives affects the present. In deeper karma meditation – often called regression – which I led for 20 years; we were able to consciously unite with the otherwise unconscious experiences from previous lives. Re-experienced pain was transformed, and we freed ourselves from tensions, cramps and blockages that had formed deep in our being and were also embedded in the physical organism. Becoming aware of this karmic "reservoir" has enabled a clear view of the spiritual horizons of existence and thus of the future.

Jostein Sæther

Blieskastel, January 6, 2024

Outline

A spiritual world weaves through and supports all existence. This reality has been proven true by the authentic experiences of many people over the past decades. In many spiritual trends it is known that we can recognize through innate, soul-spiritual abilities that everyone can develop them through meditation or thanks to other methods in order to acquire supersensory experiences. A central theme in spirituality concerns the idea of reincarnation and karma. Currently there are a variety of methods by which one can gain insight into previous incarnations and an understanding of karma.

After regularly practicing certain karma exercises by Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925), the initiator of *anthroposophy*, I had a so-called enlightenment experience in 1996. As a result, I experienced a self-initiation, a spiritual breakthrough that brought about karmic clairvoyance. In my first book, *Living with invisible people,* which was published in German in 1999 and its English version in 2001, I traced the biographical and meditative paths that led me to these crucial insights. In it I describe how I understood myself as a meditative practitioner and researcher in purely mental and spiritual experiences.

The karmic insights provided support for significant perceptions into the structure of destiny. So, I was able to present twelve closely linked previous earth lives, including some insights into other individualities that have always been close to me. I risked revealing myself as an enlightening example to show that it is entirely possible to achieve karmic realization on a large scale in the present through sustained meditative practice. I wanted to make it clear that supersensory viewing, spiritual experience, and knowledge of karma based on reconverting past lives have positive consequences for everyday life in connection to today.

I could certainly have kept secret or limited such special intimacies or, as a friend recommended to me, reported everything in the form of a novel. After certain spiritual beings surprisingly informed me that I could try to make my spiritual experiences known, I decided, contrary to the opinion of many, to publish secretive karma. So, I took part in a turning point that other authors had started. I wanted to find out whether understanding karma can be socially effective and whether esoteric knowledge, when presented as current spiritual research, can parry public criticism.

Since I thought I had grasped the signature of the present, I tried to stick to the path of an outsider and consciously expose myself to the negative criticism that was emerging, while many claimed that I violated normal discretion. For me it was not an act of arrogance, as some critics explained, but rather I walked a narrow path of *modern mysteries*, as my karma allowed me. The fact that many things happened differently than I had hoped and that I had to withstand many attacks, including character assassination, does not change the fact that I would do it again today.

Although I presented many things regarding the meditative research path and the processes of supersensory consciousness in great detail in my first book, some things could only be conveyed sketchily and in some cases inadequately, due to the abundance of results and the experimental nature of revealing such confidential representations at that time. If a new German edition were to come out one day, a few religious-historical and other things would have to be corrected properly. I have already made such corrections in the English edition. On the whole, as far as spiritual, and karmic matters are concerned, what was published in the first book remains without exception reliable.

This karmic autobiography was originally published by Urachhaus, Stuttgart. It subsequently became a heated issue within the publisher's committees and far beyond, which is why it was no longer an option to publish my second book there. Many representatives of the anthroposophical cause could not do anything with my app-

roach and my results, or they rigorously rejected what was presented without objective examination as something incompatible with anthroposophy. Interestingly, after about ten years the book was booted from the renowned Stuttgart publishing house, while the English edition is still available today.

Despite this, a number of spiritual researchers have since confirmed many things to me through their own independent discovery of karma research. This is an extremely inspiring fact that would be important for general spiritual research if something about it were to be published in the future. However, there are some readers who have presented me verbally but not published divergent results that contradict some of my karmic findings. However, until more detailed checks on these controversies can be carried out, I consider the results given by me to be identical to the reliable.

In a new edition it would certainly be appropriate to expand the representations given there on karmic connections, because many of the personalities included have now died, which creates the necessary neutrality to enable insights that would otherwise be too intimate. On top of that, I have now been able to research a number of other lives about myself, which has given me new insights into earlier cultural epochs, e.g. gave rise to the so-called second post-Atlantean, ancient Persian culture. Here I am revealing one of these later researched past lives in the early Middle Ages, not because I want to benefit from it for my current existence, but because it shows something that is generally valid and peculiar as well as methodical for karma research, since it is about an incarnation of me with blindness.

The main trend of feedback from readers of the first book was very pleasing and stimulating. Through several hundred letters and emails, numerous calls, and many meetings, I came into fruitful exchange with numerous people about karmic and spiritual experiences or other everyday human issues. Through these contacts and the resulting inquiries, I was able to give some of them medi-

tative support and help in crucial life questions through personal encounters. Thanks to the moral and financial support that some of the new friends gave me, the opportune time came to start a practice for karma care, in which I am permanently able to further develop individually adapted soul paths and meditation practices. In a certain respect, the present work is a fruit of the many new contacts that emerged on the occasion of the first book.

My inner relationship to Rudolf Steiner as a master of finding truth that is based on the spiritual achievements of the individual and therefore does not allow dogmas to arise, remains constant despite the distant attitude of anthroposophical celebrities towards my research. This also gave rise to the possibility of karmically identifying both him and many of his contemporaries in past incarnations and in the present time. I therefore illuminate the descriptions in this book in places with selected quotes from him, which are always verified.

When the karmic autobiography was published, I already planned to add to and deepen certain topics. On the one hand, I planned to write in detail about Atlantic culture and ways of life, and on the other hand, to make more known from extensive research on the 12th century. Since then, the many responses have inspired me to write and publish further six books in German with a expanded content, firstly to address readers' important karma and training questions, secondly to provide further clarity, such as spiritual training or a modern initiation that is based on an understanding of karma and a meditative karma research in the broadest sense wants to be created, strived for, practiced and maintained.

This is now a basic exercise book in English, which contains about half of the second German book. Each meditation, the associated preparations, the practicing moments, and the follow-up work are described as they were practiced by me and in the ongoing collaboration with many practicing people and are still practiced today. Consequently, they can be handled in a similar way by everyone. Unlike in the German version, where I addressed the reader as

second person, here I describe the exercise steps and the mental experiences in the first person, as this corresponds to my factual experiences. Nevertheless, this enables everyone to classify themselves in first-person while practicing the exercises described. By the way, I am of the opinion that in spiritual matters, if a unanimous attitude is sought, we can now stand on confidential ground with one another anyway.

How something has been cultivated by me or by some meditators who have shared their intimate successes and individual experiences for publication, is illustrated in many exercises through authentic and insightful examples. Therefore, you will have the opportunity to recognize all the steps for the conscientious exercise work proposed here, which emerges from an art-scientific perspective, in order to achieve imaginative, inspirative and intuitive consciousness yourself while maintaining the self-consciousness based on freedom.

The experience of others is so elaborated that where someone did not want to be recognized, it has been anonymized in such a way that it will not be possible to trace it back to anyone in particular. The brief suggestions on art and art appreciation in the first part are based on over 20 years of practice and teaching in these areas, particularly in Sweden. Much of the further material comes either from my own work, from countless seminars that I have held since 1997, from work in smaller groups, or it comes from meetings and discussions that I have had with friends at their homes or at my own home or with clients in my practice in Saarland or in numerous places and cities in European countries such as Norway, Denmark, Great Britain, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

Some exercises that I have found valuable over time and have used, sometimes further developed, or reshaped, and would like to pass on here precisely because of their practical value, I have adopted from others who sometimes work in a similar direction to me in biography and karma work. The psychological and spiritual con-

nections that I have worked out here are smaller in scope than those in the first book, but that does not make them less complex. As a result, their nature and meaning are now characterized in more detail, so that I have strived for clearer linguistic methods of representation for such content and for other spiritual laws and phenomena.

Still, the following can be said about the style of the book: Similar to how Rudolf Steiner once called for anthroposophy in Scandinavia to be given a popular character in the future so that people there would receive it better in their own way, I have presented some inner steps of the exercises and certain spiritual facts pictorially or illustratively. Concepts are used for them which, in this spiritual context, may perhaps seem trivial to some Central Europeans. If you get spiritual experiences through such exercises, you will definitely realize what is hidden in such metaphorical concepts.

What I am describing certainly represents only a few of numerous aspects for achieving higher types of consciousness. Understanding spiritual connections is so complex that it is not possible to do justice to all sides in a didactic presentation like this. But I hope that I have succeeded in working out the subtleties that will give you the necessary orientation to strive for knowledge of karma in a way that is acceptable to the spiritual world today. There are certainly many other questions about the topics covered that I could have shed light on. Therefore, some ambiguities must remain and be left to your courage and thirst for knowledge, or you can find further information in the literature mentioned.

I pay attention to general dangers, special pain processes and individual problems of karma training and initiation consciousness by emphasizing some typical tendencies, but I could certainly have written about them in more detail. It was now important to me to describe a necessary affirmative attitude so that the interested person can actually set out on the path to knowledge of karma. It's true that surprises can await us at every corner that could throw

us off course. At the same time, the willingness of good spiritual beings and helpers to help is so great today that we don't have to be afraid of negative influences or illusions. Rather, we should strive to detect and see through what is supposedly wrong in everything we experience. Living in the now out of pure trust in the spiritual world and without securing one's existence strengthens the courage required for meditative training.

However, it must be emphasized that what is described here as generally valid must be modified and sometimes very individualized for the individual in his own practice and life. As you gain experience with the various exercises and see how they affect you, you will find out, either on your own or in conversation with others who practice the same exercises, how you can successfully move forward. In this sense, spiritual training can only correspond to very individual paths. Consequently, what is relevant in this area is not what is prescribed in principle by an expert, but rather what the individual considers to be good for his development based on his own karmic needs.

Therefore, everything I present is intended only as encouragement and advice, not as a prescription for what you should do to gain karmic knowledge. Consequently, everyone must take responsibility for dealing with any failures and problems that will undoubtedly make themselves felt. However, experience shows that they have a personal reason that you also have to deal with yourself. Here, a training and educational path is clearly described in stages, explained with methodical steps, intermediate exercises and explanations, an esoteric path accessible to all readers, which was described rather abruptly and succinctly in the first book. That is why some readers in those years apparently found my personal development to be incomprehensible.

This book, on the other hand, has a consistently consistent character, but everyone should feel free to take their own, individual steps through the exercises and meditations shown, or to develop their own further measures from them. Today it cannot be em-

phasized enough that, unlike in the past, an esoteric training can be undertaken alone, without this excluding the possibility of taking into account the necessary assistance of others or even seeking the direct supervision of a teacher. Many people found me to be their meditative advisor. However, this fact constantly presents me with the task of striving for a special commitment that shines as a guiding star above all genuine esoteric.

It can be important to cultivate your mental training in such a balanced and sober manner that it fits into a social setting with other practitioners. In retrospect, I saw the fact that in my own attempts, contrary to my original confidence until writing the second book, it proved largely impossible to integrate my karmic findings into the anthroposophical milieu, which I was connected to, as a personal and social tragedy. The spiritual researcher does not want to be left alone with his efforts and results. He therefore likes to be in contact with others in order to exchange and compare experiences and results. Seen in this way, you are holding a guide in your hand that is intended both as support for others and for exchange.

If I have not given any direct information about the emergence of these urgent karmic connections to specific people, the content either comes entirely from myself or individual motives may come from familiar source persons whose experiences and research completely agree with mine. I'm not mentioning their names because they want to be anonymous or haven't asked to be mentioned specifically. So, the full responsibility for publishing such things remains with me.

1. Artistic practice

Our hectic, dramatic, and tragic times show many spiritual impulses, spiritual movements and holistic images of humanity and world views. We all live in the midst of the collapse of Western civilization and so need transformative, empowering and healing ideas and perspectives. I have had a lot of spiritual experiences that I would like to share with others.

Taking life absolutely seriously and being awake to the signs of the present time enables me to pay attention to two tendencies in my soul. One makes me fundamentally open to spiritual things, the other gives me the opportunity to face everything that other people entrust to me in the way of supernatural phenomena in a free and differentiated manner.

If I don't consider the soul attitudes of caution, sensitivity, or thoughtfulness, which come from the first tendency, when dealing with my own spiritual experiences, there is a danger that I will overestimate everything that I experience myself, not only in the spiritual, but in the everyday life in general. If I do not observe the attitudes of honesty, sincerity and love of truth that come from the second tendency when dealing with the spiritual experiences of others, the desire for critical discussion quickly turns into rejection and condemnation.

Based, among other ideas, on the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925), I have developed a spiritual way of working that helps me not to allow myself to be taken over by extreme behavioural patterns or to get stuck in one factor. I follow my spiritual practice path in order to expand consciousness and because I want to grasp spiritual things in their essence. I can characterize my way of looking at things by two characteristics that are present in the mind:

1. Openness or to put it another way using an old concept of virtues: frankness.

2. Caution or expressed with a consistent term: prudence.

In terms of content, this book represents my journey with karma research. At the beginning I therefore characterize the artistic element in its connection with art appreciation and artistic creation as a fundamental prerequisite for spiritual practice. And I point out the relationship between the artistic and spiritual research. For me it makes sense that meditation and karma research are supported by experiences with the arts. The two basic mental attitudes mentioned above – openness and caution – are included in the respective statements. There are other states of mind, the care of which is one of the basic conditions that a spiritually practicing person has to fulfil in order to experience spiritual things calmly and consciously. I will address these later.

The artistic

In order to characterize the artistic, I would first like to consider it in comparison to the two other areas of human culture, the religious and the scientific. Religion, art, and science are traditionally three areas that can always have something to do with each other, but which can also appear independently due to their special characteristics. The individual areas can be managed separately without having to come into direct contact with each other. On the other hand, they can cross-fertilize and complement each other.

For example, there can be a religious art or an artistic scientific discipline. A religion can be consolidated through scientific research so that it appears contemporary and accessible without losing the original spiritual direction. A science that seeks to recognize the divine in natural phenomena will produce different inventions than that which is purely materialistic.

Science in modern times has placed itself increasingly at the service of social utility and has therefore increasingly lost the urge to orient itself towards a spiritual world, which it still had in the Renaissance. The authorities of the large religious communities – even in modern times – repeatedly became involved in political disputes, so that in a modern, secularized society, in addition to the traditional religions and denominations, other spiritual currents and forms of training also came into focus or emerged, whose representatives often declared: that they could accomplish the attainment of spiritual insight and enlightenment more cleanly than the traditional faiths.

Modern artists have bowed less than scientists to the social pressure to surrender their artistic work to materialistic demands and materialistic thinking. In dialogue with old styles, they created the new, whose influences and styles have increasingly had a major influence on modern education. The fact that an autonomous religiosity or spirituality often significantly influenced the creation of their works of art was sometimes only discovered by art historians after the artists' deaths.

The specifical artistic is expressed in such a way that the performer through the artistic act something that he experiences or seeks, which was initially immaterially present in his soul, which he could only imagine, with the help of physical means, be they from nature or originated through culture, realized in the sensory world, insofar as it does not work spontaneously without any intention. As an art viewer or enjoyer, I approach the work of art and accept it to the extent that I am able to draw from the artistic sources of my soul when encountering or dealing with the work of art.

Through art experience, the artistic element that has been sensualized by the artist in the work of art is given a spiritual purpose again, which can ignite a spiritual energy in the soul of the viewer, which under certain circumstances leads to new creative acts. The artistic is at the same time something completely unselfish. It en-

ters into the work of art in order to be able to be revived when viewing art. Therefore, the artistic has the ability to go through a process that can be compared to dying and sprouting. In the world of culture, the artistic represents the law of dying and becoming of the organic world. This artistic law of the processual is also rediscovered in the experience of spiritual phenomena.

An artistic element is not only located in the traditional art world, but it has to do with the all-encompassing creative element in life, which can be found wherever we place ourselves in the world in a contemporary way, even if we are not artists or not particularly think a lot about art. Nevertheless, we best get to know and understand the artistic where it is cultivated out of an inner necessity, namely in the various arts. For this self-evident reason, I would like to address fundamental questions of the classical arts as well as some other artistic forms and their current relationships to people and then take a closer look at the position of the artistic in relation to nature and the spiritual.

The visual arts and the supersensual

The visual arts traditionally exist in three or two dimensions, resting in the sensory world, so that they can be continually viewed or revisited in order to experience them again. Their main tendency is for their artworks to be located predominantly in a particular geographical location over a period of time, if consequently they have not been relocated. What is significant here, is that if they are allowed to present themselves monumentally or creatively, through their presence they also radically shape and dominate the place or space where they are located. They also have a promoting or inhibiting effect on people who live and work in this cultural setting, depending on the character and style of the design. It also depends on the extent to which someone allows themselves to be controlled or influenced by their environment.

We have many examples from the past in preserved works of how the three visual arts were created and developed in earlier cultures. Cave painting confirms the achievements of a former advanced civilization more than ten thousand years ago. During numerous archaeological excavations, settlements, cities, palaces, temples and tombs from many cultures and eras were uncovered, which can still testify today to the architectural, sculptural, and painterly energy and skill of former builders, architects, and artists.

At the same time, art history reflects humanity's entire development of consciousness. So, it was a happy confirmation for me to experience that the best preparation was to familiarize myself with history in general and with art history in particular through sensual observation, before I could expand my consciousness and learn about old forms of culture and life to experience and view again in a meditative way.

It is my experience that through practicing preparation using the arts, a spiritual sense of form and a spiritual ability to orientate are developed. Through them I can know myself better when I move or temporarily stay in spiritual regions. Building on my historical knowledge, I was not only able to better orientate myself in karmic retrospection, but also to give other people who were less trained in history clues so that they could recognize the cultures and times in which they had lived in the past. Rudolf Steiner, in lectures from his art-scientific and spiritual research, showed many points of view that make it clear what the inner relationship between artistry and spiritual research consists of.[2] He described that genuine art, as it exists in the sensory world, is not erased in the spiritual world for one who is capable of seeing spiritually, but remains evident:

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[2] Rudolf Steiner: *Kunst und Kunsterkenntnis. Grundlagen einer neuen Ästhetik.* GA 271. Taschenbuchausgabe. tb 650. Dornach 1986.
Kunst im Lichte der Mysterienweisheit. GA 275. Dornach 1980.
Das Künstlerische in seiner Weltmission. GA 276. Dornach 1961.

> "You cannot be a spiritual researcher from morning to evening. Looking into the spiritual world is tied to certain times; one knows the beginning and end of the state in which the soul penetrates the spiritual world. In this state the soul is able to completely ignore the impression of the external senses by its own strength, so that nothing is present of all that the external senses see colours and hear sounds. It is precisely through this looking at nothing that the perception of the spiritual world emerges. [...] The seer can erase everything that comes to him from the outside world, everything that surges up from the ordinary memory into the mental consciousness, but he cannot erase certain impressions, even if he puts himself in this state come from works of art that really come from the creative imagination. I do not want to say that the seer in such states has the same impressions of the works of art as the non-seer. He has these in non-seeing moments. But in viewing moments he has the possibility of completely erasing the sensual, the memory-like in relation to the external world, but not in relation to a work of art with which he is confronted."[3]

This striking bond between the creative fantasy of the artistic and the spiritual research conducted of devotion and autonomy makes it clear whether Steiner's statement is true about the importance of the artistic for spiritual work. In this context he went through several arts, as clairvoyant person experiences them in the spiritual world in another way than in the sensory world. He presented it in a distinct way using the art of painting as an example:

> "The painter forms his imagination by drawing on the inner creative forces of sensual perception, which he experiences as he needs it. It comes in from outside to the point where it transforms what lives in the room in such a way that it works in lines, shapes, and colours. He takes this to the surface level of the painterly view. The clairvoyant seer comes from the opposite side. He destroys what is in his visionary activity, down to

[3] Rudolf Steiner: *Kunst und Kunsterkenntnis.* Page 147f.

spiritual colours. He imbues what is otherwise colourless with colours, as if internally illustrating them; he develops imaginations. One only has to correctly imagine that what the painter brings from one side, comes from the opposite side in what the seer creates from the inside out.

To imagine this, just read the elementary basic concepts in the last chapters of Goethe's theory of colours about the sensual and moral effect of colours, where he says that every colour triggers a state of mind. The seer receives this state of mind last, with which he tinges what would otherwise be colourless and formless. When the seer speaks of aura and the like and uses colours in what he sees, one should be clear that he is tinging what he experiences internally with these states of mind. When the seer says that what he sees is red, he experiences what one normally experiences with the red colour; the experience is the same as seeing red, only spiritually.

It is the same thing that the seer sees and what the artist conjures up on the canvas but seen from different sides. The seer meets the painter. This encounter is a remarkable, meaningful experience. It makes painting appear as a special characteristic of supernatural knowledge. This is particularly evident in a phenomenon that must become a particular problem for every soul: the incarnate, the colour of human flesh, which actually has something as mysterious as it is attractive for those who want to penetrate such things internally, which goes into deep nature. and spiritual relationships can be looked into. The seer experiences this incarnation in a unique way."[4]

From these considerations it emerges that prior knowledge of classical artistic activity supports the development of clairvoyant activity. The extraordinary scope of such points of view is the basis on which my practice and research methods are based. I

[4] Rudolf Steiner: *Kunst und Kunsterkenntnis.* Page 147f.

learned that meditative processes could base upon the artistic – including creative fantasy.

> "When the seer says that what he sees is red, he experiences what one normally experiences with the red colour; the experience is the same as seeing red, only spiritually."

I have considered this statement repeatedly and visualized its meaning in my mind's eye. It says that nothing that appears internally as colour and form is similar to what is present in the sensory world. Meditative observing is about the aforementioned state of mind, which I call the emotional vehicle and emotional structure. If I try to perceive accurately internally, a feeling will first be available that is comparable to soul, in which spiritual contents are embedded, which can be observed in the same way as colours, shapes and images.

Art consideration

As a child and teenager, I had a lot of opportunities to be artistically active, also because I had a great interest in drawing, art and crafts. Some people I met and guided were not allowed to practice much art in childhood. As adults, we should always be clear about our relationship to works of art and allow ourselves to experience art, especially since the spiritual path of practice emerges from viewing art. It is always worth seeing a beloved work of art in its original form and taking an art study trip to do so. Looking at casts or photographs and reproductions, even if they are of excellent quality thanks to modern printing processes, can never replace the immediate experience of the original.

If I know in advance that I will be able to see a work of art – for example a building, a cathedral, a castle, or monastery ruins – several times, I can let the building "navigate" me, when I look at it for the first time in order to experience what I can discover, where my feet take me and where my eyes are drawn. I can let fate guide me,

so that I allow the architecture and the relevant works of art to become a conversation partner for me. When I first arrive, I ask a kind of open question: "What would you like to tell me about your secrets?" I allow the corresponding work of art to be a sensual and moral counterpart to me.

At an architectural conference in Järna, Sweden, in the mid-1980s, the Japanese architect Yugi Agematzu presented his research on what he discovered to be a relationship between the twelve senses – according to Rudolf Steiner's research – of human being and the architectural basic elements. His comments came to mind recurrently during architectural walks many years later. It is a wonderful task to look for subtle connections between man and buildings when looking at a work of architectural art.

Experiencing architecture

When I first came to Chartres and discovered that the cathedral was on a hill, I was amazed because all the distant photographs I had seen before always showed the wonder as if it were standing in the middle of a grain field. When I look at architectural buildings more carefully, for example on a second visit or when I have more time available, I basically want to first discover the house or building complex from the outside and examine how the architecture has taken root in the landscape or in the district. In order to learn to read the interior of a building, I first differentiate between the floor, the walls, and the ceiling. As I walk around and look, I examine whether there e.g. are different, changing floor levels and whether there are steps, stairs, landings, and balconies. I pay attention to how it feels when I go up or down a flight of stairs.

For example, how does it feel to be standing at the bottom, "meeting" someone coming down the stairs, and how different is it to be standing at the top when someone is coming up? I have practiced situations like this in seminars where the participants' experiences

have always been insightful. Then I look at the walls, how the wall surfaces are shaped – whether they are broken by portals, doors, windows, openings and whether they lead to corridors or passages. I explore what it feels like to walk down a narrow corridor or to have to stoop to pass through a low doorway – such as those found in Norwegian stave churches.

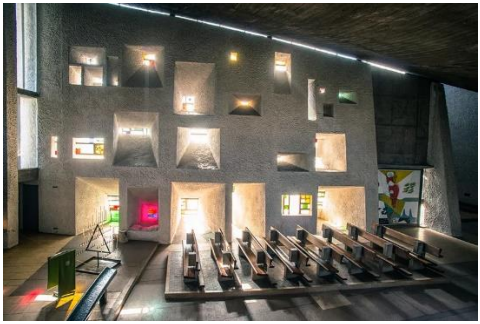
Le Corbusier: *The chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Haut in Ronchamp* (1950 – 1955).

I look at piers, supports, pilasters, beams, balustrades, and arches. How do I experience standing in silence next to a cathedral pillar for several minutes? How do the diverse surfaces and shapes affect me? Then I look at the ceiling. How high is it to get there, how is it shaped? Is it flat, dome-like, ogival towards the middle or is the ceiling constructed completely differently?

Then I get an overview of the different rooms: large and small rooms, halls, foyers, corridors, rooms, parlours, chapels, and apses. How do I feel in the different volumes of the rooms? How does the geometry of the room affect me, such as a square, a rectangular, an oval, a round room? How do I feel, for example the difference between an old farmhouse that has lost its right angles through the ravages of time and a functionalist house from the 20th century that has retained its clear shape?

The north side.

So finally, in this first round of investigation, starting from the centre inside the buildings, in an inner vision, in a thinking imagination, I can "paint out" the design connections. I wonder what the relationship between inside and outside is like in the house. Finally, I can also ask myself where I truly am: "Am I in the exact geometric centre or in an artistic centre created through aesthetic means?" Do these two coincide, and if not, how do I experience the relationship between the two focal points?



The interior south facade of the chapel is "pierced"
by a series of tapered windows decorated
with drawings and handwriting by Le Corbusier

In the next round, everything that has to do with building materials and surface colours is to be discovered. If I have not already done so, I may have to distinguish between the architectural, plastic, colour design and picturesque aspects of the building. In this context, it will be important to experience the lighting conditions. What is created by daylight, wall windows or skylights, and what is created with the help of artificial lighting? How do coloured glass windows affect a location?

It is important to experience the moods in the rooms and what appears through colouring, shading, coloured shadows, and darkness. How do the wall colours look when they are opaque or translucent, saturated, or pastel-like? What effect does the dawning light have? How do sun rays appear when they are refracted through coloured glass or come in through open windows? What does the twilight hour feel like and how does a room change when the electric lighting is turned on? How do I experience candlelight in certain rooms?

I can touch surfaces of handholds, hand ladders, railings, furniture, etc. that are easy to touch as I walk past and, where permitted, touch other construction surfaces. In this second tour, an aesthetic impression gradually emerges, often as if from an inspiration, a mental impression of the whole thing, on the one hand how it affects me, and on the other hand what the total work of art says about itself, so that under certain circumstances it can becomes apparent to me what has been set up in it by the builders, architects, artists, and craftsmen.

Everything that I have observed with the senses and newly grasped and understood through thought will, through this presence of mind effort, with which I will acquire a more comprehensive view, become a basis for the very first impressions of the soul, which will develop a part of the first stage of imaginative consciousness.

In a third round, I go back to certain places, rooms, works of art that made a lasting impression on me or that initially seemed particularly beautiful to me. What was the amazing, the impressive, the beautiful? But then I also look at what I found to be not beautiful or even ugly about the building. Why, if anything, did something repel me? After all these observations when encountering architecture, I have matured enough to form my own sense of assessment. I can learn from it what the artistic side of all of this is like. Will I then be able to characterize what is artistic based on my own experiences?

These interpretations that I have presented here do not impair the freedom to approach architectural art in a completely different way. Very interesting experiences arise when, for example, I let a friend lead me into the middle of a house with my eyes closed in order to get an overview from here, going from detail to detail, without bias. I will then be able to better perceive warmth and coolness, the nature of the ground, impact noise, drafts, and smells. I have now provided points of view that are congruent with classic approaches to architectural walks.

Sculpture, painting, and interior

When studying sculptures and reliefs, I can look at the corresponding work of art from different distances and angles. As I did with architecture, I do the same with sculpture: I go from the big to the smaller, from the whole to the details. From an overall perspective, I gradually discover the components. I move from the general to the concrete, from the formal tendencies to the artistic motif. After I have “moved” the work of art internally and perhaps found the aesthetic or artistic idea, I examine its location in a room or place and how it fits into the architectural or landscape forms of its immediate surroundings.

What is the difference between sculptures that can appear independent in a garden, on a market square or outside in a compound and those that are better placed directly in an architectural context? What identifying marks give a sculpture the right to be considered a supreme work of art?

By paintings, I differentiate between works of art tied to architecture, such as stained glass, integrated wall or monumental paintings, and free images, usually in frames, such as oil paintings, watercolours, or lithographs, which can also be hung elsewhere.

The charioteer of Delphi.[5]

[5] The 1.80-meter-tall statue at the Archaeological Museum of Delphi is one of the best-preserved original bronze statues from ancient Greece. It was found in 1896 near the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. The surviving inscription names Polyzalos, tyrant of Gela, as the donor of the votive gift, which therefore must have been created between 478 and 474 BC. been.

At first, I observe the larger areas and shapes in the picture, then lines, figurations, and smaller spots up to dots. I discover the motif or certain content-related things from the overall composition and the colour tones.[6] Just as a painting may have been made from large strokes in which the details emerged gradually, I follow the painterly, so to speak, by means of a "backward sequence" in order to understand it.

When it comes to colour, it is about taking the individual shades into account, but also paying attention to how they influence each other or how, for example, the same spread colour appears visually different in its shades when there are two spots on a different coloured background. How do the different colours in an image look when they appear on surfaces of different sizes? What do I notice when I see a blue and a red spot e.g. next to each other on a green background that are painted the same size? When does yellow appear to have the strongest luminosity: when it is surrounded by violet or green?

In this respect, I can ask myself a series of cognitive questions and turn the art experience into an art-scientific matter in order to learn to use my thinking as a "free-floating" judgment, as a scale in consciousness. When I am meditatively aware of circumstances in which I can no longer fall back on sensory input, only free thinking is helpful. When looking at art, I can of course take photos if I see it, for example needed for teaching purposes. However, I should not confuse observing myself with taking photos. Much better than taking photos it is to make quite simple sketches or aquarelles directly while observing, which do not have to be of high artistic standards.

Another area that should not be forgotten is textiles. I can initially understand tapestries in the same way that I viewed painterly art. With larger wall-hangings, which in earlier times often decorated

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[6] In my book *Weisheit wahrnehmen. Individuation und Kulmination der Anthroposophie* (tredition 2014) I evaluate an image observation in this sense of Giorgione's picture *The Three Philosophers* (around 1505).

entire walls in palaces and castles or also functioned as thermal insulation, I can pay attention to how they integrate into the interior. Even with floor carpets or any other type of floor decoration, I try to experience what impression the material and its surface, including the patterns and colours, make on me. Curtains, drapes, blinds, and veils of all kinds are, on the one hand, part of the architectural benefit, but on the other hand, they can be considered part of the colour scheme and interior decoration.

Interestingly, some lamps, sconces and lighting fixtures can be experienced as sculptural elements, at the same time as they influence the entire aesthetic mood of an interior through their lighting effects. Also, furniture and inventory of all kinds - such as armour and weapons on display in old castles – I can partly see them as spatial bodies, as sculptures. They do not have to only have practical functions.

I remember spending several hours in the room where the Charioteer was on display at the museum in Delphi, because I wanted to copy this wonderful work of art that is thousands of years old. Because of the many tourists and visitors, I had to keep changing positions to get a clear view.

The effort to make a few sketches and fragmentary drawings under such capricious circumstances in an attempt to capture my art experience had a surprising effect a year and a half later during a meditative exploration in which I found myself inwardly at my discretion in the same place stayed in ancient Hellas and using the available knowledge about the position of a charioteer in antiquity, looked at certain karmic research in connection with the chariot race.

I was able to fathom both men, the athlete who, because of his championship, was actually allowed to serve as a model for the work of art that would become so famous thousands of years later, and his supporter, a certain sovereign from a Greek colony, who was based on this same athlete in competition. After his victory he

had the wonderful work of art made in order to bring it as an offering to the cult site of Delphi.

Review of the art viewing

When I get back home, I process what I have experienced and seen through memory work. Before I look at my pictures and photos, I let the work of art recreate in my mind's eye. Later I may have my memories corrected through photographs and purchased reproductions. If I have neglected or not gotten around to making written notes on the spot, which would not only have been incredibly good for memory but also expanded interest in the matter, I now take notes. This helps me to bring forgotten experiences back into focus and even to notice things that I may not have been fully aware of before.

When I think to know the work of art well, I look at catalogues and books to find out what the architects, artists and art historians have said or written about it. So, I compare my own impressions with those of others. Of course, it is not wrong to inform yourself through literature before an art trip, especially if you want to prepare other people, schoolchildren, or students, and impart knowledge to them.

It might also be helpful to listen to someone who has experience before or to take a professional tour. However, I have often realized that it is my own collected experiences that lead to deeper insights, even if the insights of others were of course beneficial to my own cognitive process.

Looking back, I am thinking backwards and trying to understand how I came to a final overview. Which observations led me to further considerations that proved beneficial in opening my eyes to important things? If I had the choice to go in different directions, what caused the coincidence or my decision to go in the exact direction that quickly led me to an interesting sight, subject, or

image? With questions like these I touch a spiritual field where I can find the keys that can open my eyes to whether or not I am connected to the place, if it is an old complex, from a previous life.

Artistic humour and seriousness

Great artists are characterized by the fact that they can implement their artistic concerns seriously, but also have a direct connection to the humour that can be found in their works. The Danish architect Erik Asmussen (1913 – 1998) – who worked primarily in Sweden – made his cheerfulness a creative quality visible in his buildings.[7] Especially since I knew him well privately and also got to know his professionalism in several projects in which I was responsible for the entire colour design of the houses signed by his office, I appreciated his discreet but explicit humour.

Erik Asmussen (1913 - 1998): Fireplace in the dining room of the former Rudolf Steiner Seminar (completed in 1978), Robygge, Ytterjärna, Sweden. Photo 2011 © Jostein Sæther.

[7] Gary J. Coates: *Erik Asmussen, architect.* Max Plunger, Photographs, Susanne Siepl-Coates, Drawings. Byggförlaget, Stockholm 1997.

Because Asmussen was a trained bricklayer at the beginning of his career, he later incorporated his practical knowledge of wood heating and the comfort of an open fireplace into the architectural design. For an angled dining room – later a public restaurant – of a functional building on the site of the then Rudolf Steiner Seminar in Ytterjärna, Sweden, called Robygge, which has many windows and wooden panels, he created the design of a large, open fireplace in the innermost seating area of the hall. In this case it is a so-called "öppen Spis" in Swedish, which has the fireplace at the level of the room floor. It protrudes upwards with its large opening and its sculptural form swings to the left around the visible, white-painted chimney, which stands behind it like a pilaster.

The plastered surfaces of the tall heater protruding into the room give the impression that you have a graceful sculpture in front of you, which creates a harmonious, gentle atmosphere due to the beautifully stretching upward lines. In the middle of the upward movement, the corner line on the right side makes a crinkle bend to the left, so that the harmony is somewhat confused by the intended trick. Overall, this passage seems like a bit of a joke. Something amusing emerges and turns this fireplace into the work of art that it is for many people.

I recognized the seriousness of this architect in many buildings and found it again in his plans, which were created in his architect's office. At the *Kulturhuset* (Culture House) in Ytterjärna, I observe both the serious and the cheerful in many places. Viewed from different angles, the complex building with its convex and concave roof shapes appears amusing, lively, and cheerful from the outside. On the west side of this study and event location, where everyone arrives by means of transport, the cultural centre appears austere, conscientious, and monumental.

When studying architecture and visiting exemplary buildings, spiritual laws can be found in the sensory world. Initially it is about practicality, the functional, the immediately practical, which

reveals itself objectively and archetypally. We can find our way around it, feel at home and overcome any fears we may have about the seriousness of the matter. Funny things come into play here and lively things appear – in short: amusing things happen. In this phase, however, the seriousness should not be lost sight of. From the background of his own soul, it must give a resonance to the external trigger of humour, so that a kind of conversation with the unknown, an appropriate joy of playing, can arise.

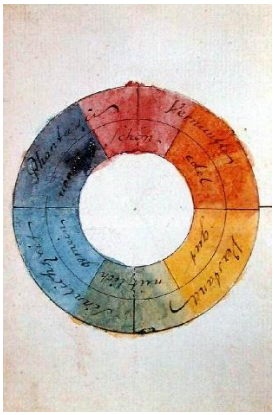
Humour and seriousness accompany us in all activities of normal and meditative life as two creative forces. In their dynamic relationship, they ensure that the inner centre is always established between them, where the inner light of the spirit and the warmth of the soul live.

A painting exercise

I take a white, slightly larger piece of paper and place it upright in front of me. I have the paints and brush on hand. I also put a pot of water in front of me. I look at the white surface of the paper and think of some things in the world that are originally white, namely snow, clouds, milk, bones, chalk, etc. Before I later pick up the other individual colours with the brush, I first think about where these colours can be found in a natural arrangement. I now pick up some of the lemon-yellow colour with the slightly water-wet brush and paint a round spot on the bottom left of the paper. I look at it for a while.

Is something happening around the stain? Do I see another colour that stands out strikingly around the yellow? Next, in the same way, I paint a Prussian blue spot on the bottom right of the paper without it touching the yellow. All the colour spots that I paint at the beginning should – as long as there is space for them – have a white space around them in which I can see and experience the complementary colours that resonate. Now I let new spots appear

over the previously painted spots on both sides, vermilion red on the left and ultramarine blue on the right. I also sometimes paint over the colours that are already on the paper, so that mixtures are created. The shapes that look upwards resemble e.g. thick trunks, struts, or pillars. Shades of orange are then created on the left and a medium blue on the right.



Colour circle (watercolour pen drawing by Goethe, 1809).
Original: Free German Bishopric – Frankfurt Goethe Museum.

When I have now painted the colours on both sides a little outwards and inwards to form half sheets, I create new mixtures from above with the carmine red on both sides – an intermediate red on the left and a blue-violet on the right. Then I create a green field at the very bottom centre using new brush strokes with yellow and blue. Then I paint with more crimson colour in the upper area from the middle to the two half-arches, so that a whole colour circle is created. Around the colour circle I paint with black on the upper half of the paper outside the colour circle up to the edge and with white on the lower half, and do not forget to always clean the brush in the water pot between the colour shots.

In the green field and further up I create the image of a plant with leaves. Allow it to unfold toward the centre of the image. The red blossom of a rose is then allowed to “drop down” as if from a red sky to be caught by the green. Around the rose, I use a little white and a little black, which interlock, to create a light, grey colour that, as it approaches the red, immediately absorbs some of it and becomes a flesh or skin colour. Depending on whether red, white, or black combines with some more yellow or blue, the possibility arises of painting a face over the red flower, e.g. a self-portrait or an illustration of someone close to me leaning down to the rose.

This exercise, which I took over from my teacher, Arne Klingborg (1915 – 2005), is at the same time a simple summary of Goethe’s colour theory as well as the expanded perspectives on glossy colours and image colours that Rudolf Steiner developed in his concept *The Essence of colours*. I leave it to everyone to discover for themselves the diverse questions, thoughts and experiences that can arise from this simple exercise and to learn from Goethe, Steiner, Vassilij Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and Johannes Itten, among others, and read about in their stimulating colour concepts.[8]

Diese Übung, die ich in dieser Art von meinem Lehrer, Arne Klingborg (1915 – 2005), übernommen habe, ist gleichzeitig ein einfaches Resümee aus der Farbenlehre Goethes sowie aus den erweiterten Gesichtspunkten zu Glanzfarben und Bildfarben, die Rudolf Steiner in seinem Konzept Das Wesen der Farben demonstrierte. Ich überlasse es jedem, die vielfältigen Fragen, Gedanken und Erfahrungen, die bei dieser einfachen Übung entstehen können, selbst zu entdecken und bei Goethe, Steiner, Vassilij Kandinsky,

[8] A clear summary of many colour theories, including the anthroposophical view of colours, can be found in:
Narciso Silverstrini und Ernst Peter Fischer: *Farbsysteme in Kunst und Wissenschaft.* DuMont Buchverlag, Köln 1998.

Wall lazure painting

Not everyone has the opportunity to build a house, but who does not know the challenge of painting and designing a newly purchased or rented apartment? If I find an apartment with walls painted matt white, I sit down alone or with my partner and draw up a colour plan. Beforehand, I got an architect's plan or made a drawing of the apartment on a piece of paper with markings for windows, doors, and cardinal directions. I think about what each room should be used for and try out in my fantasy which colour schemes are possible or desirable. I ask questions like these: What colour could a north-facing room have? And which one a room that faces south? Which colour is right for a bedroom and which for a living room? Can the kitchen be painted blue or better yellow? When I have finished my design, I can read, for example, Goethe about what he thought was appropriate for room colours more than two hundred years ago.

On my plan, I paint the entire area of each room in the appropriate colours using watercolour, gouache, or wax paints. Once all the rooms have been given a colour scheme, a draft of the colour scheme for the apartment has been created, which I can then implement on a large scale. I prepare the wall lazure paint with natural colour pigments and a suitable synthetic resin or beeswax binder or with mixed plant colours and water, get large lazure brushes and it is best to work with someone else on large wall surfaces because they have to be painted in their total by lazure painting.

When painting, pay attention to the shapes and patterns created by the brush strokes and arm movements. Flowing mobility in the finishing is recommended because this creates a slight "airiness" in the colour pattern. With several layers – at least three to four should be on top of each other – wonderful wall colours are created that have depth, strength, and mildness in one, even if I changed the colour in the bucket in between. I observe what I experience, once when the colours are still freshly applied and then

when the wall surface is dry. How do the different colours actually affect my mood?

I can modestly create a colour mood catalogue and write down how I have experienced specific colours in other houses. I use adjectives such as: pleasant, intrusive, invigorating, contemplative, inspiring, dark, refreshing, awakening, expanding, suitable, comfortable, peaceful, bright, cheerful, healing, cold, clear, lifeless, chubby, gentle, stinging, still, warm, etc. for characterizing the colour tones.

Detail of a wall painting (1995) by Jostein Sæther
in a yellow and red lazured dining room,
Klockargården, Järna, Sweden.

I remember that in our company – Skilleby Ateljé – in the last century, we once had a project in Sweden for the state football pool company. According to the architect's design, a series of new offices would have various grey lazures. Instead of getting the grey colour in the buckets by directly mixing pigments, we applied several layers of red, blue, yellow, and green tones one after the other

on the walls. The result was special grey nuances that were at the same time warm, measured, calm, sophistically and refreshing. The employees later reported that they continually discovered a variety of pleasant colours on the walls, depending on the weather, time of day or season, and the mood with which they came to work from home.

Exhibition art

In every art form, substantial form and ideal content combine to form a unity that makes a work appear physical. Either an idea "imprint" itself into the material that the artist wants to make visible in the elaboration, or he discovers content in the material he is working on that stimulates his creative fantasy. These two opposite poles – physical and spiritual – can meet and complement each other in a variety of ways and influence the artistic processing to a greater or lesser extent, so that the viewer's soul and spirit is addressed when experiencing the finished work of art.

How a work of art is presented has an influence on the viewer's ability to absorb it. Every style is a form of representation that says something about the artist's concern, especially if he contributes something new to a particular style of art. Every form of expression, every place where a work of art becomes visible or audible, creates an additional atmosphere that is crucial for enjoying art. When I have the opportunity to see the same works of art in different galleries or museums, I pay attention to whether or not the environment has an impact on them. Even when a painted picture is given a new frame, its expressiveness is changed. Exhibition art therefore includes how and in what environment works of art are shown.

During many years, together with an artist colleague, I was given the task of creating works of art, decorative arts, and objects – e.g. books and toys – and to give them the appropriate space in shop

windows, trade fairs and museums. We often used aspects of all arts and newly produced design objects for the specific purpose of the exhibition, and we collaborated with other artists and architects so that the tastes and wishes of the exhibitors could be optimally considered. Holders, supports, borders, frames, shelves, steps, furniture, easels, partition walls, etc. were created. Through decorative painting and surface treatment, they were given a style that was appropriate for the things on display. We were always amazed to see how strong form and colour can be in their creative power and what impact they have. Sometimes completely new sides of a work of art, a picture or a textile could become shown through the support of the inventory.

Treben (tripod), a stool originally designed
by Erik Asmussen (1913 – 1998) for arts and crafts classes
at the Kristofferskolan Waldorf School in Stockholm.

The idea of exhibition art is to be a messenger, a body or garment for the work of art or craft. If a piece of furniture manages to bring the art object into focus, it becomes art itself. The utensils of exhibition art, which are supposed to be secondary in view of the works presented, gain in “image” themselves if they are incon-

spicuous and still manage to emphasize what is on display even more. This paradox of exhibition art points to a law that I found as a principle when meditating. The mediating role of physical objects points to motives that we can get to know in the supernatural.

The essence of the spiritual is "clothed" and "demonstrated" in several levels of higher types of consciousness and is brought closer to us through form- and colour-related manifestations in meditation. That is why I was able to learn a lot from exhibition art and develop certain basic principles for meditative investigation. I learned to distinguish the essential from the irrelevant, so that the "clothing" – i.e. the appearance – is not seen for the entity itself. Or I just realized that the corresponding being shows himself in exactly such a way that, for example, modesty and other virtues are his distinctive character traits.

In spiritual imagination – the first or lower of the three higher forms of consciousness – there is a danger of confusing or puzzling content and form. But a spiritual inspiration – the second of the three higher forms of consciousness – that is intended to capture the essence can also be misleading, if I completely forego the imaginative cover. That is why I recommend training yourself in the world of the senses in the form, colour, sound, and movement tendencies of the arts and also nature, so that you gradually can encounter the independent and different nature of the spiritual and with readiness can identify its real connection.

When I experience spiritual things, I can *orient* myself towards imaginative elements that follow the conditions and laws of the artistic, so that in the inspirational determination I find the spiritual direction associated with it – this active attitude I call the *occidentation*.[9] Afterwards I can come to a realization through spiritual intuition. In the course of further reading, I will show how the

[9] To understand the term "to occident" – see my book: Weisheit wahrnehmen. Page 22f.

contradiction of intentional direction on the one hand and to be unintentional on the other hand is overcome in meditation.

The contemporary arts

The contemporary arts are music, poetry, literature, drama, mime, dance and eurythmy, as well as the so-called seventh art, which is sometimes referred to as social art or healing art. This seventh art form also has to do with culture, pedagogy, and the art of living in general. In three-dimensional arts, the works of art are fixed and motionless in space, so that we can move freely with our own bodies when viewing them. When I listen to and watch contemporary arts, I usually stand or sit still, and what is produced by the arts is in motion.

Muse with kithara on the helikon, Attic lekythos, 440–430 BC. The Muses are patron goddesses of the arts in Greek mythology.

The musicians, on the other hand, move and mainly their arms – when playing the piano and organ also their feet. Parts of the instruments are almost always set in motion to trigger tones or sounds. The actors and dancers move, or requisites and puppets are moved on the stage in front of us. With the spatial arts I take time to classify them, while the time arts take their own time to give me something.

When listening to music, I immerse myself in an inner world. I can even close my eyes without losing anything essential. Music occupies a middle position between the fine arts and the other contemporary arts. Here I am left entirely to my own devices as a listener. More than in the other arts, I encounter myself as a conscious being in music. I am exposed to my individual self and quietly challenged in my soul. Through the music, my soul is called to inner participation beyond mere understanding. It actually has no literary content that needs to be conveyed.

Things are different with vocal music, of course, and opera in particular represents a transitional form to poetry and drama. Music conveys popular and cultural peculiarities, but it usually does not presuppose denominations or cultural affiliation. It is immediately cosmopolitan. Music stimulates one's own soul activity and creativity, so that memories as well as inner images, timbres, motifs, views, and stories emerge in the listener's soul. The drive to create imaginatively comes to life in the soul through music.

Through the three forms of poetry – prose, poetry, and drama – I am initially completely focused on the word, on language. My thoughts, feelings and desires are stimulated by fiction, ideas, stories, monologues, dialogues, conversations, characteristics, courses of action and tragedies, so that I can compare what I have read, heard, and experienced with what my personal life reflects. This might give me the courage to start something new or change or transform something outdated in my life. Humorous things, moods, states of mind, life experiences and questions that move

me, I encounter all of this in literature or poetry. I mature through witnessing, caring, compassion, grief, or identification. For example, the desired effect of the Greek tragedy was to trigger a cleansing process, a catharsis, in the audience.

Types of art that work with movements, positions, postures, gestures, facial expressions, signs, gesticulation, and facial expressions include pantomime, dance, ballet and eurythmy. They can faithfully reproduce works of art of music or poetry with their own artistic elements, translate them, if necessary, interpret them freely or adopt other questions and motifs. Modern expressive dance produces completely new and independent works and puts them on stage using its own artistic means. Eurythmy, which emerged from the first anthroposophy around 1912 and is therefore a really young art form, makes elements of music and poetry visible through movements of the human figure that correspond directly to the spiritual source of the same elements. Eurythmy has the creative power to re-inspire all classical arts and could give birth to new types of art in the future.[10]

I-meeting in music

Occasionally I was able to hear Gunnhild von Kries' new musical instruments and try them out for myself. These are, for example, string instruments that are named with the Finnish term *Tachtivirta* (star stream). These instruments, made by sculptured carving, are either made from a piece of wood, e.g. birch, oak, or linden, or made from wood of two or three different types of wood.[11]

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[10] The so-called *BauLeib art* by Eduardo Jenaro emerged from eurythmy. Online source: http://bauleib-kunst.de/

[11] For her artistic and spiritual science approach, see:
Gunnhild von Kries: *Zeit heilt. Begegnungen mit dem Klang der Zeit.* Oratio Verlag, Schaffhausen 2003.

While playing and listening to these string instruments, which are played with a fiddle bow, I once had a strange higher-self-experience that I had never experienced before. I experienced myself as if I were being carried, and I felt completely safe, but at the same time held upright in a vertical alertness. Afterwards, I wanted to do some meditative research to see if I could discover a karmic background that could have something to do with these musical affinities. In a meditation I again came into the life of the Greek Agamon, the charioteer, that is, into one of my incarnations that I described in my karmic autobiography.[12]

The Greek god Eros with barbitos
(a Greek stringed instrument).
Detail on an Attic amphora, around 470 BC.
Found in Nola, Italy.

I saw a situation from Agamon's youth that I had not known before: The young man is on his way home from Delphi in a ship in the Mediterranean with relatives and local residents. It is a mild, hot afternoon, with almost no wind, and the rowers hold their wooden oars still for a while after rowing for hours. While rowing, people sing along to the rhythm. Now the boaters notice that the wind is increasing. The sails are set quickly. Agamon sings a solo song, accompanying himself on his lyre and imitating the wind with

[12] Jostein Saether: *Living with invisible people.* Page 169ff.

sounds. Gusts of wind inflate the sails and the ship gains momentum as the sailors retract their oars. So, the tired traders arrive in the port of Delphi before dusk.

But the show did not end there. After unloading the sacks of grain, leather goods and silver metal acquired in exchange for wool, wine, and olive oil, which were brought up to the village in ox carts, a festival is celebrated. A highlight of the evening for Agamon is the lyre playing by a group of older musicians, whose solo singer then joins in to describe the moment for the listeners when the wind lifts the sails of a ship. The singer represents the mast with the sail. In the imagination it was clear that for the Greeks a sailing ship is a symbol of the human soul and a mast stretched with a sail reflects man's ability that his *daimon*, the I, can withstand the storms of life and can make use of them.

"We can't change the wind, but we can set the sails differently."[13]

Clothing art

At present there are a number of other arts that have something to do with those already described but are nevertheless independent and have therefore received their own social framework. These include, for example, garden and landscape art, floristry, clothing art and film art. Then there are a number of art crafts and crafts as well as design in general, all of which use artistic and aesthetic means. They all place themselves unaffectedly into the context of the classical arts. Since modernity and postmodernism, we have also been able to count the many types of happenings, actions, installations, graffiti, social sculptures, total works of art, audiovisual, digital, and other technical representations as art phenomena.

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[13] Aristotle (384 – 322 BC), Greek philosopher, student of Plato, teacher of Alexander the Great of Macedon.

When I internally experienced and viewed previous earthly lives, it became quite clear to me that dealing with these modernities helped me to find my way in supernatural regions. I will return to questions of garden and landscape art in subsequent chapters. First, I would like to use the approach described to examine some things about clothing art and film that shed light on characteristic spiritual phenomena. Clothing art is the type of art that is close to us as humans and accompanies us throughout our lives. I found the history of the clothing style, the folk or epochal elements in costume and fashion, the headgear, hats, and shoes really worth paying attention to, when I karmically lived myself into times past and accompanied others in meditation instructions and coaching.

I will tell you later about the interesting connections I once came across with a friend while doing meditative work on the esoteric meaning of the headdress of an Indian leader. The so-called jewel art, the decoration with rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, etc. has an ancient tradition that has been confirmed by archaeological research. Nowadays, interestingly enough, this type of art is experiencing an expansion or renaissance in the western-oriented world with piercing. Another influential and insightful subject is the art of hairdressing, which I consider to be a wonderful art. There is also the art of tattooing.

The art of clothing is indispensable if we consider the most diverse professions, e.g. also thinking about the different uniforms. It also has a connection to the art of dance. Every actor, singer and musician on stage needs them. The materials used in human clothing traditionally come from the mineral, plant, or animal kingdoms. The classic way of making clothing is inextricably linked with interesting professions.

Ethnography documents the diversity of clothing art in earth's culture. What is my relationship with the clothes, fabrics, and colours that I wear or that I like? Which ones do I not want to wear? When I list cotton, linen, silk, wool, felt, fur, leather but also synthetic materials such as viscose, nylon and polyester, I am

simultaneously touching on a cultural development over thousands of years. The importance of colours for clothes is a chapter in itself, which Goethe also discussed in detail in his theory of colours.

It is not just the geographical specificity of certain natural dyes used for dyeing or the local ability to produce synthetic colours that have created a wide variety of fashions in the countries. The differences in mood and the different mental characteristics of the peoples and their customs also shaped them, developed them further and gave rise to a variety of patterns and colours, as the history of clothing documents us. When I look into past lives and retrace my former steps, I discover the importance of dealing with the topic of footwear in advance for karma training. Slippers, sandals, mules, moccasins, clogs, shoes, galoshes, ankle boots, boots, long heels, gun boots, dice boots are just a few names that indicate this meaningful area of the wardrobe.[14]

The Swedish clothing entrepreneur Erik Sohl (1952 - 2016), who worked extensively in China – whom I supported for many years with concepts for logos, brochures, and exhibitions – produced his silk and wool clothing from the view that clothing is the second human skin. The task of clothes is not only to protect us from the outside world, from cold, sun, wind, and rain, but they also give us the opportunity to externalize personal, professional, or cultural information, that is, to represent psychological dispositions through colour and form. In this regard, clothing as a wearable dwelling for the body and for the soul creates a shell for the development of consciousness not only within the current life, but also within the journey from life to life.

Through the art of clothing, the human spirit that develops through reincarnation is given the opportunity on earth to experience something similar to what it went through in spiritual regions

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[14] An attractive book on the subject is:
László Vass & Magda Molnár: *Herrenschuhe handgearbeitet.* Photograph: Georg Valerius. Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft, Köln 1999.

when its spirit form “stripped” itself of karmic features after death and was transformed according to “heavenly” dimensions, and “dressed” and “equipped” it with the contemporary style that belonged to it with its past before a new birth. I can explain this by citing the youth or subculture of punk that emerged in New York and London in the mid-1970s. Some characteristics of punk are demonstrative appearance, rebellious behaviour, and persistence. I see that many of the individualities that express themselves in this alternative scene in rebellion against Western tradition previously lived in Native American cultures and were killed by the whites at the time.

Various items of clothing such as caps, hats, berets, collars, ties, scarves, epaulettes, fasteners, buttons, sleeves, cuffs, stoles, ponchos, vests, aprons, belts, trousers, skirts arose from earth-related, functional as well as cultural occasions. In addition, they emphasize spiritual laws. They are all expressions of various virtues and supernatural organs such as the chakras. The headgear is an expression of the crown and forehead chakras. Scarves and ties point to the throat chakra. In dream interpretation, the belt in a dream symbolizes wisdom, strength, power, justice, loyalty, and truth. In spiritual development, a belt or buckles as attributes or gifts draw attention to good progress.

While I in higher consciousness observed supernatural nature beings, deceased people and spirit beings in their emerging figures and silhouettes with associated attributes, I came across interesting parallels to the art of clothing. It is therefore essential for the spiritual researcher to be well versed in all possible developments in human history in order to reliably recognize the facts and situations of the spiritual worlds. I would like to make it very clear here that it is not a question of directly transferring the nature of the physical world to the spiritual world. If we were so deluded as to imagine the spirit world as what the physical world is, we would fall into error. Nevertheless, Rudolf Steiner once formulated something surprising that might, in some respects, initially make us uncer*tain*:

> "In the real, true sense, spiritual intuition means seeing the sensual in a spiritual way and the spiritual in a sensual way. This seems paradoxical, but it is true."[15]

It is about understanding the sensory world from a heightened perspective because it is a consequence of spiritual effects. And when I then look into the spiritual world, it should be understood from an expanded view of the sensible, from a view that does not limit the physical to atomic vibrations, but rather, for example allows an artistic interpretation that takes a spiritual perspective into account. I discovered that beings of the spiritual world have handed over their orders to people in the course of development. This has happened through events and processes that have led to the fact that what arises in the physical world is far from corresponding to what was in the spiritual origin. However, for the sake of study, getting to know external development and history creates a basis that gives us step-by-step orientation so that we can then adjust ourselves meditatively in an "occidental" way – in the direction of our individual intention – in order to learn to observe something spiritual.

Interestingly, I had a mixed relationship with ties in my life. As a child, I loved to imitate my three maternal uncles when we were on summer vacation with my grandparents in Helgeland, northern Norway. On Sundays – it was an occasion given with humour – every male was only allowed to make himself known for breakfast if he was wearing freshly ironed Sunday clothes with a white shirt and tie and his hair was finely combed with water. As a teenager, I took off my tie completely, with a few exceptions, only to put it back on when I embarked on the adventure of speaking in many European countries for a few years around the turn of the millennium. The alternating use of this Western garment made me realize interesting aspects of realities that existed centuries ago, where I had different connections to the topic of the neck and larynx than

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[15] Rudolf Steiner: *Der pädagogische Wert der Menschenerkenntnis und der Kulturwert der Pädagogik.* GA 310, Dornach 1965. Page 125.

I do today. As a result, there are many things we can do artistically to prepare ourselves for meditative activity.

A playful drama exercise

Edward Burne-Jones (1833 – 1898):
An Angel Playing a Flageolet (1878).

I would like to present a simple exercise that can be developed in many different ways if the fantasy is rich. I had my first encounter with this exercise in London, in a tranquil seminar on the subject of angels led by Ernst Ammons – then a lecturer at Emerson College, Forrest Row, Sussex. There must be at least two persons doing the exercise. If several people come together, the exercise can even be continued. In meditative consciousness I am initially alone with myself. But there is the task of including other spiritual beings so that I can exchange freely with them. We can acquire a basis for the dramaturgy of the supernatural by dealing with experiences from the sensory area of the dramatic. If I e.g. want to get in touch with my guardian angel, it is good to have first thought

about how he relates to me in his task. The following exercise deals with this question in dealing with sensory and mental perceptions.

I stand with my exercise partner in a room where there is enough space to move around. Together with my playmate, I decide who should play the angel and who the human. The “angel” is allowed to have his eyes open; he sees everything that needs to be seen. The “human” is initially “blind” in this angelic world. He closes his eyes. The “angel” accompanies his “human” at the side or from behind, for example by holding a hand on the shoulder of the person accompanying him. Both of them walk through the room, just woven together. The “human” tries to find the direction where he wants to go, the “angel”, on the other hand, has to be careful that the “human” does not bump into furniture or other participants, etc. After a while we switch so that both can have the same experiences so that we can exchange ideas later.

In a variant of the exercise, we allow ourselves to be controlled by a sound instead of touch. The “angel” sings, whistles, or hums a consistent tone that his companion has to follow. In this case, it is best for the “angel” to move backwards in front of the other one, who is still “blind”. After the game we sit down and discuss the questions that came up. How do I feel about being this kind of person? What is the difference between the two variants? What is the big difference between a “human being” and an “angel” in both versions? What can I conclude from my own impressions that could have something to do with the real world of angels? What challenges do humans and angels face that everyone does not have in their world?

I deepened this exercise in seminars and further developed it dramatically, poetically, and musically. So, we divided ourselves into groups of three, four, five people and practiced with the categories of doppelganger, spiritual adversary, Christ, etc., while each classification was played, and we had to practice and discover certain aspects. What some people thought they knew about spiritual beings was confirmed in a humorous way or unexpected insights

emerged that no one had expected would arise from such play. The amount of laughter during such exercises was at least a special educator.

Encounter with wood

One of the wooden figures described below.

Now I'm moving on to another area that I personally not only enjoyed, but also brought immense surprises along the way. One day I had to cut down a number of large trees on the property in Sweden where I lived until the late 1990s. To make the site usable, I also removed the root by digging it up. During these exertions, among other things, it was clear that some of the wooden trunks could serve as material for sculptures. So, I sawed off some trunks about a meter above the beginning of the roots. Before further processing, I turned the wood upside down, so that the roots pointed upwards like branches.

I then formed some interesting wooden sculptures, which gradually revealed figurative elements as I worked on them, so that animal and human-like figures emerged. Continuing this artistic activity with the roots gave me what I described in my first book *Living with invisible people* as the possibility of seeing elemental beings. It was precisely the artistic activity on materials that grew on the spot, which had incorporated the forces of this piece of nature over decades, that brought me to my first experience of elemental beings.

From this I gathered that everything I need to develop spiritual abilities can be found wherever I live or stay for a while. When I walk in the forest or along rivers, I pay attention to broken parts of branches and twigs that I can take with me. By simply working with a knife or a chisel, they can be turned into wonderful figures that can be placed in the home or in the garden. However, if I am not allowed to take or work with the wood I have found, or if I do not want to do so, I can collect wooden materials or stones and lay them out in a new arrangement and see what the small installation looks like on the next hike.

I often created such so-called land art with like-minded people along hiking trails or somewhere in the forest using natural materials found locally. The British sculptor David Nash created his wonderful ash domes and natural sculptures on site based on his lifelong research attitude towards the language of nature and wood. Another British artist is Andy Goldsworthy. It is considered one of the most important representatives of the land art. Through working on sculptures and encountering wood, clay, and stone, I also developed an interest in the healing powers of plants and gemstones. I discovered that they can be viewed in connection with the cosmic star forces, the planets, nature, people, and art.

The multiple human being

In his book *Theosophy*, Rudolf Steiner describes the diverse physical, mental and spiritual nature of humans in a way that allows one to empathize with his descriptions. It is possible not only to read what has been written, but also to experience it while reading with thought. According to him, every area has a three-part division, which, however, due to the special position of the individual I-being, which goes through successive earthly lives, gives the human being a tenfold division in a certain version, as follows: physical body, etheric body, astral body, sentient soul, intellectual or emotional soul, consciousness soul, I, spirit self, life spirit and spiritual man.

The three soul and spirit limbs each occasionally appear as an original effect of the I's work on the three bodies. This I activity occurs in earthly evolution through the many incarnations and also in personal development within a biography. On the one hand, the I-being works on the three bodily members – so to speak, "down" into the soul level. On the other hand, the I-being works – so to speak "upwards" into the spiritual field. These two sides of human beings were given as individual, supernatural raw materials for incarnation. So, we can recognize such an image of humanity, as it appears in Steiner's anthroposophy or in the most diverse currents of modern esotericism, as a divine work of art in which the human being himself works.

In his art lectures, Steiner continued this extensive view of humanity by describing the various arts in a connection, in a dynamic principle of the interaction of two members. It is worth studying these representations from the lectures already mentioned carefully. Here we are only interested in a few points of view that can help to better understand certain aspects that I will take up later.

> "If a person remains stuck in everyday existence, he cannot easily accomplish what we can call: the I [...] diving down into the astral body. What one undertakes by immersing the I into this

> astral world in the right way, so that the immersion is an involvement in the divine world, is precisely the process of initiation. But we are given a picture of this in the events that come to us through musical creations. By dedicating himself to creating or enjoying musical creation, man divests himself of his I. He pushes this I back, but at the same time he hands it over to all the divine-spiritual powers that will work on his astral body when he ascends to Jupiter existence."[16]

In this quote, a connection is made to the term initiation with reference to the musical and the connection between the I, the core of the human being, and the astral or soul body, which I also cite as an auric figure.

The question of the human aura has today become a popular field of work in alternative circles. So, there may already be an inkling that it cannot be by chance that what was achieved in earlier times through great musical works such as the Norwegian *Olaf Åsteson Dream Song*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Richard Warner's *Parsifal* and other operas, The content is also simply about initiations.[17]

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[16] Rudolf Steiner: *Kunst im Lichte der Mysterienweisheit.* GA 275. Dornach 2000. Taschenbuchausgabe (Tb 747). Page 63.

[17] Initiation (Latin: going into) means initiation into the mysteries of being. Every age has its forms of initiation. In the past there were different mysteries: the Hibernian, the Germanic, the Eleusinian, the Samothracian, etc. They were often named after the place where they were cared for, but also after gods. Today the task is to unite what is still fruitful from old mystery currents into a global spirituality, to confirm it through new initiation and to further develop it. The anthroposophical project sees itself as a midwife for the new, modern mysteries. The German performance artist Joseph Beuys expressed that modern mysteries take place everywhere – including at a train station. Seen in this way, initiation is a civilizational matter. The spiritual world also calls someone to receive self-initiation. He then finds the development path that is suitable for him himself. All that is required is the serious determination of one's own free will. Starting with the beginning of Christianity, great progress occurred gradually over the centuries, so that the human soul became ripe for such self-initiation. Those masters who know what the human soul has to go

Anyone who manages to meditatively work through the more intimate spiritual experiences when practicing art will individually experience and recognize the concepts given by Steiner about the extensive human nature. At various points I will repeatedly shed light on aspects of these members of our being, which is why it was necessary to simply list them earlier.

Exercises for experiencing the aura

Friends who get together in working groups can make many observations and exercises to develop clairvoyance. I did exercises in seminars and different groups in which we followed each other with our eyes and looked at the physical body, etheric body, astral body, and I-organization one after the other. Some kept their eyes open throughout the whole event, but others alternately kept them open and closed. The exercise requires concentrated viewing, because it is important that the view is constantly made permeable to supernatural, spiritual viewing. The procedure described here follows the principles that I explained when viewing art.

When observing the physical, I look for all the characteristics and peculiarities of clothing, hair colour, face shape, posture, facial expressions, gestures and walking style that say something about the person in question. I try to formulate a testimony based on the observed motives, for example as is done in the exercise of the life credo – see later. The *what*, the *how*, the *who*, the *where from*, the *effect* can be asked. I can describe my boyfriend or girlfriend like a sculpture, like a work of art.

Then comes the task of describing something that can no longer be seen with physical eyes, but which has had its effects reflected in the physical world. You can ask what lives in the person, how

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through occultly without the intervention of those who set the tone in the external temple or mysteries lead self-initiation from the spiritual world.

the life forces work, who energizes here, what etheric sources they draw from, etc. I look at the upper, middle, and lower figures. What happens in the inner centre when I see it as a tree shape? What is the tribe like? How is the crown? What is the root like?

When I had the opportunity to look at someone while he was sleeping, I was able to compare the observations made while he was awake. Experience has shown that the etheric body of the sleeping person is easier to recognize than that of the awake person because the two "higher" limbs – astral body and I – are essentially outside the two "lower" parts. When looking at the etheric body, I initially limit myself to movements, currents, shapes, darkenings, and light phenomena. In this way, predispositions to an illness or healed illnesses that occurred a long time ago in the current incarnation can be discovered in fine but pronounced designs, lines or patterns that have a similarity to physical crystallization structures.

When exploring the astral body, it is first important to also look at sensations that appear like colours. Ordinary colours are appearances in the physical world. The so-called astral colours appear in a similar way because the energies of the astral have the same effect on us as the colours. However, they are not colours, but spiritual movements on the astral plane that – to put it simply – attack us (red), that withdraw from us (blue) or that behave in a calm manner (green), etc. These can be thoughts, feelings and will impulses of the I-being in question, or it can be the astral outburst of an elemental being or a demon that has "settled down" in the astral body in question.

If the etheric body can be found more or less within the physical skin in adults, the etheric body in children before puberty protrudes far beyond it. The astral body normally extends far beyond the physical body, but it can occur in people who, for example, just lead a modern city life, even be smaller than the body. It does not always appear to be uniform, but rather it can create certain divisions, abnormalities, or divisions within itself due to injuries

experienced. – Much of what relates to the topic of soul or power animals is also seen in the astral body, so that at this stage, for example one can ask: What kind of "animal" is discovered in this person or which soul animals accompany him?

The human I is subject to the process of incarnation and excarnation far more than the astral body. That is why it cannot be clearly understood as a shape or an organism. At the same time, it is active in the middle as a core being, just as it looks after its other three shells from around it as a spatial being. The I as a spatial being can be seen very clearly in toddlers up to the age of three. It also expresses this fact linguistically by referring to itself with its own name and not presenting itself as a self-acting I.

In a more spiritually developed person, the I as a surrounding being becomes very noticeable again, to the point that such an individual can use this aspect of the I as an organ of consciousness if it wants to, for example to protect against danger. In my karma research, I found that Native Americans knew this aspect of the human spirit through shamanic procedures by operating with out-of-body, so-called astral travel.

With normal I-consciousness, this does not mean that the I is effective as a surrounding being, but rather the I is always experienced as something within the body. Out-of-body experiences often seem frightening because you are not used to experiencing yourself as a being in your surroundings. Such different aspects of the I appear to the clairvoyant eye by appearing as complicated light, colour and image connections, as geometric figures or as symbols.

> "The I-body appears to the clairvoyant as a blue hollow ball between the eyes, behind the forehead. When a person begins to work on it, rays emanate from this point."[18]

[18] Rudolf Steiner: *Vor dem Tore der Theosophie.* GA 95. Dornach 1978, Page 149.

"The I-carrier, the fourth member of the human being, is like a kind of oval figure, the origin of which can be traced right into the forebrain. There it is visible to the clairvoyant as a bluish glowing ball. From there flows out in an oval shape, like a space egg, you could say, which plays into people, a kind of blueness. Only when the clairvoyant is able to diminish the influence of the human being's astral body, only then can he perceive the I-carrier."[19]

These two quotes from Steiner show how complicated the supernatural connections still are, so that it can be understood that spiritual motives always have to be characterized from new perspectives. With his term "diminish the influence" (German *abzusuggerieren*) we can imagine it as a matter of gradually seeing the higher level by removing the lower ones from consciousness, otherwise they would stand in the way of the upper one.

I imagine a piece of ice lying in a glass of water. It is visible. If I press it under, it becomes less visible at the same time, but the water rises. This subtle elevation of the water can be compared to the I-carrier, which takes up the space of the escaped air. The little force I use to press down the piece of ice does have some heat potential. In order to "press down" the astral, etheric, and physical body – I need comparatively more heat in order to see myself as a clear "crystal" on the "surface" of the etheric. In daytime consciousness, the I-being is virtually "melted" into the entire organism and is therefore not perceived as an independent being.

Facts that I will deal with in a future book *Miracles of the Soul. Personality Maturation and Transformation of Evil* on the subject of guardian beings, which also include so-called doppelgangers and demons, can be seen in the context of the spiritual level of the I-being. Motifs from past incarnations that are seen spontaneously are also imaginations that I classify as belonging to the I-level. During such a viewing session, we worked as a team and worked

[19] Rudolf Steiner: *Das Prinzip der spirituellen Ökonomie im Zusammenhang mit Wiederverkörperungsfragen. Ein Aspekt der geistigen Führung der Menschheit.* GA 109. Dornach 1979. Page 179.

backwards through the various levels so that additional motifs were identified. Certain aspects that someone did not notice during the first round but someone else noticed were allowed to be communicated.

The phenomenon of the aura becomes an experience in such group work. I have noticed myself that the aura is a complex shape that exhibits both ethereal and I-motifs on the astral plane. The aura should therefore be viewed as neither an etheric nor just an astral expression, but rather it expresses a summary of a person's entire spiritual potential. It is like the table of contents of a book, but unlike the physical, it simultaneously brings the whole thing into view without us having to "turn the page". Compared to the so-called *eurythmy figures* that I describe below, the aura shows *movement* and *feeling* as well as *character*. The aura summarizes the absolute, what a person has developed and achieved so far, but also what he has failed to develop or has not yet been able to develop from all of his potential essential gifts of his individuality.

The sensual-supernatural practice of this kind brings us to even higher levels, e.g. those of the angels, tangible for the inner observation. If we initially engage in such work among friends, the likelihood of someone doing something that would not be justified in the company of people who do not know that he or she has acquired initial clairvoyant abilities is likely to be low. In normal life, it is permissible to temporarily observe other people, but it is certainly inappropriate to stare at them.

Intimacies that became known to me as a spiritual researcher during my explorations are not my private matter, but correspond to a general human task, which I can only share anonymously. In this way, I try to translate many of the confidential matters that I research among people so that they become generally accessible to the global public, when I judge them to be for the good of humanity.

An excursion on Rudolf Steiner's image of the human being

Rudolf Steiner describes the physical body as the sensual appearance of all beings in the known earthly natural kingdoms: the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdoms. Particular emphasis is placed on considering the different physical manifestations of the mineral kingdom compared to the other three kingdoms: minerals do not seem to die; they continually appear dead. Their form has material existence in itself. Their matter can appear both in crystal form and in an amorphous form that has been shattered by external influences. But neither the intact nor the destroyed form of mineral matter changes its state of lifelessness.

We can therefore state that a physical body as such is always lifeless or dead. If it appears to be animated in the other three natural kingdoms mentioned, this indicates that a life-giving element is at work. Such effectiveness is therefore found in all physical bodies from the plant, animal, and human kingdoms. When this effectiveness ceases, only then will the mineral-material laws of the physical bodies of these natural kingdoms come into full force again. But they then act as dissolvers of the material physical form. At this point, man's cognizant look falls on something hidden that can only be seen sensually through its expressions in the physical world. This life-bearing principle is called the etheric body.

The etheric body is a supernatural force organization that directly surrounds and penetrates the physical body, a subtle agent that connects it with the astral body. Plants, animals, and human beings find what is called vital energy in their etheric body. In particular, all physical organs are dynamically maintained and transformed in their shape and form by the flowing forces and movements of the etheric body. This transformation, which occurs parallel to the exchange of substances, is aging.

The astral body is the supernatural, mental element of animals and humans in which consciousness shines. In the astral body, external

influences become conscious as needs, drives and impulses – in short: as sensations. That is why the astral body can also be referred to as the sentient body in addition to the conscious body. While the etheric body has the ability to accommodate memory, the astral body is a vehicle for thinking, feeling and will. Seen in this way, the astral body is the soul of animals and people.

In Steiner's anthroposophy, the sentient soul is the first affiliate of the soul that the individual develops, especially in younger adulthood (21-28). The sentient soul was acquired as a basis for the soul development of all humanity in the cultural epoch of e.g. the Chaldeans, Babylonians, and Egyptians around 3000-700 BC. The sentient soul distinguishes humans from animals. The very first spark of self-consciousness in the psychic element of inwardness initially appears only as a kind of self-feeling or sensation. You experience it in spontaneous feelings of disgust, outbursts of anger and depression – in short: in all emotions that manifest themselves in some way. They arise from external impulses that penetrate the body. When the impulse is over, the animal's associated sensations immediately disappear.

It's different with humans: as these impulses penetrate into our inner being, they are separated from their cause and remain purely psychological as memories of the occasion. In this way, humans gain the ability to strive towards a desired repetition of this occasion by remembering a pleasant occasion, for example from within. This instinctive revisiting of an occasion from memory is a process of the sentient soul.

The intellectual or temper soul is the second member of the soul. While the sentient soul is the manager of memories, the human I can go beyond this mere management and organize the treasure trove of memories in the most diverse ways according to its impulses. To do this, in a certain sense it has to confront this sum of memories within itself in order to be able to look at and organize them. To do this, it must acquire an ability that goes beyond mere remembering. The ego must develop intellect, which is a

combination gift that makes it possible to link memories as contents of knowledge in such a way that they can lead to newer results and experiences than the respective memories would provide on their own.

Abilities such as cunning, decisiveness, sophistication, etc. are developed in the intellectual or temper soul. It is about the ability to form judgments, the type of mental activity through which humans, as cognitive beings, connect their perceptions with concepts. The temper nature of this soul part lies in the warmth of the soul, which is generated by the transformation of non-virtuous habits in the etheric body, so that the human being can fit into a social or moral structure. The intellectual or temper soul was e.g. developed in the cultures of the Greeks and the peoples of the former Roman Empire from around 700 BC. BC until the end of the Middle Ages as a general basis for the soul development of humanity. In individuals, their development usually takes place between the ages of 28 and 35.

For Steiner, the consciousness soul is a third member of the soul, which is particularly developed in middle adulthood (35-42) when people internalize the conscious experiences they have with their physical body and its sensory beings. The consciousness soul is the soul shell in which the human being's independent I can experience and understand itself spiritually. In terms of cultural history or evolutionary history, this soul formation took place for all of humanity from the Renaissance onwards. This soul member serves to overcome self-centeredness. To the extent that this is achieved, the individual gains the basis for objective spiritual research.

The spirit self is the first future limb of the human spiritual being. If a person begins to influence the emotional structures present in his astral body from his I in such a way that the characteristics of these astral properties change, then he seizes the spirit that reigns behind the astral body. For example, the ability to surrender is transformed into the power of sacrifice, secrecy into the power of meditation, courage into the power of redemption, etc. Every

astral physical expression is transformed into a real power through the spiritual work of the I. There are spirit beings beyond the I who oversee this transformation. Therefore, modern esotericism refers to this first human spiritual instance as the spirit self or spirit I. Angels and higher hierarchical beings possess the spirit self as independent holders of their being.

The life spirit is the second future fellow of the human spiritual being. If the I do more work and transforms properties of the etheric body, as it previously did on the astral body, then it unites with the spiritual hidden behind it. Anthroposophy calls this the life spirit. The properties of the etheric body are the temperament of a person or his character traits and habits. Nowadays, hardly anyone manages to transform their character over the course of their life in such a way that nothing of what was originally there can be found again. But just as astral inclinations are transformed into spiritual powers, so habits are transformed into forces of spiritual vitality, into a kind of primal health and healing ability. Archangels and higher hierarchical beings have the life spirit for independent disposal.

For Steiner, the spiritual man is the third future contestant of the human spiritual being. The highest level of activity that the I will learn to achieve is that of transforming physical forces into their hidden spiritual power and spiritual ability. In doing so, the human physical body is transformed into the spiritual man. Powers are acquired, such as master gravity in a spiritual way, yes, what it actually is in its essence, and you learn to mentally see through and influence the atomic material structure. These abilities as a whole represent true alchemy; little more than just the name is known about them. Hierarchical beings above the archangels develop or have the spiritual man as an integrated part of their being.[20]

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[20] For the preparation of this excursion, I would like to thank the author and translator Hergen Nordendorp, who kindly gave me some excerpts

Planet, colour, and shape moods

In this chapter I make an insertion that immediately creates a change. It leads to another area that has to do with the landscape and the observation of nature, but where questions about human nature will continue to accompany us. A certain extraterrestrial, so-called cosmic topic is also touched upon here. The traditional names of the days of the week, as they are called in different languages, pass down an ancient wisdom about a temporal order of the planets. Starting with Saturday, which in pre-Christian cultures marked the beginning of the week, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday (French *mardi*), Wednesday (French *mercredi*), Thursday (French *jeudi*), Friday (French *vendredi*), Saturn, the sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus are the basis of these names. But this is a different order than the one we know in astronomy when we start from Earth.

When Steiner uses e.g. the term "Jupiter existence" in this book *Occult science,* he means a future stage for the entire earth's development from a spiritual point of view, which is named after this planetary order, which is the basis for the naming of the days of the week. In Steiner's cosmology, our existence on Earth therefore appears as a combination of Mars and Mercury. Spiritually speaking, the two are woven together to form a kind of double day of earth evolution. But if I look at the life course of a person in seven-year periods, which is already psychologically interesting, it is traditionally linked, including by Steiner, to the astronomical spatial sequence of the planets. The period from birth to 7 years corresponds to the Moon, from 7 to 14 to Mercury, from 14 to 21 to Venus, from 21 to 42 to the Sun, from 42 to 49 to Mars, from 49 to 56 to Jupiter and from 56 to 63 finally Saturn.[21] Accordingly, the

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from his explanations for the glossary in my book *Einstimmen aufs Karma* (2008).

[21] A nice work on this topic is the following book by Penny McLean: *Das Geheimnis der Schicksalsrhythmen: Wie 7-Jahres-Schritte unser leben bestimmen.* Knaur MensSana, 2010.

life course of man can be understood as a space organism, whereby the three times seven years after 63 can, in my opinion, be thought of as potentially permeated by the planetary forces of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto.

Wive Larson (1925 – 2007): *Arkady.* Bronze sculpture
on the urn grove at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland.

Now there are also other configurations of the planets, e.g. a row in which the Sun, Venus, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Moon stand one after the other. Steiner gave it certain indications of eurythmy and designed meditative texts about so-called planetary moods. When I looked at the visual art works left behind by Steiner, e.g. with the so-called planetary seals or with the base, column, chapter, and architrave forms of the first Goetheanum, I found it instructive to deal with such lists, viewpoints, and insights into the occult side of the planets in order to understand what with these unusual artistic motifs.[22]

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[22] Compare the works of:
Hedwig Erasmy: *Die Eurythmie der «Zwölf Stimmungen» von Rudolf Steiner als Offenbarung kosmischen Schaffens und menschlichen Seins.* Medizinische Sektion am Goetheanum, Dornach 1990.
Carl Cemper: *Der Bau. Studien zur Architektur und Plastik des ersten Goetheanum.* Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 1984.

By the way: The phenomenon of crop circles with their particularly complicated geometric pattern images seems to have awakened a renewed interest in many people for occult connections between the cosmos and the earth.

In old traditions, e.g. by the Celts, the Romans and the Native Americans, the planets behind which they understood spiritual beings and gods were not only associated with the days of the week, but also with colours, precious stones, metals, trees, medicinal plants. The internal physiological organs of people were brought together with the planets within these communities by the enlightened. Rudolf Steiner built on this ancient knowledge when he developed a holistic and cosmological understanding of human nature.

The artistic practice on the external world e.g. when painting can be further deepened. When experiencing the different colours, we can connect so internally with their attributes and qualities that by living into their deeper emanations and design tendencies we come to experiences that are found as states of mind or virtues. It is experiences of tranquillity that support our ethical actions.

The step from this process, which is still artistically comprehensible to everyone, to a meditative process in which we may also close our eyes in order to be more or less completely shielded from the sensory impressions for to only recreate inner colour perceptions internally in our mental experience is not a big but relatively difficult step that has to do with mental will activity. It therefore seems as if only few people actually carry out the exercises that Steiner recommended in the continuation of Goethe's theme of the sensual and moral effect of colours.[23] My experiences with them are those that helped me get my first inklings of supernatural forces around forty years ago.

Hilde Raske: *Das Farbenwort. Rudolf Steiners Malerei und Fensterkunst im ersten Goetheanum.* Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 1983.
[23] Rudolf Steiner: *Das Wesen der Farben.* GA 291. Dornach 1976.

With plastic-sculptural art I take a similar step from observation to inner life by feeling the convexity, the curved outward curvature of the surfaces, and the concavity, the retracted inward bend, and even try to imitate it from the inside of the sculpture, which I feel as if I were inside, disembodied, by feeling the reversed tendencies of form and movement. For this artistic process of empathizing with the form tendencies of a sculpture, I was guided for the first time by the Swedish sculptor and priest of the Christian Community, Wive Larsson. A remarkable bronze sculpture of his can be seen in the park of the Goetheanum. It stands on the urn grove where the ashes of Christian Morgenstern, the popular German poet, Rudolf Steiner, and many others were buried.

As I continue to deepen this inner activity, I take the steps from art contemplation to meditation. Later I'll describe various exercises that exemplify this inner path to imagination, inspiration, and intuition. As a suggestion for the development of such higher types of consciousness, I would like to include a short report from my practice. This inset makes it clear that dealing with planetary motifs is certainly valuable if we want to explore the forms of experience of earlier cultures.

Imagination, inspiration, and intuition

This inset chapter is a meditative example that has to do with planetary effects. It touches on the question of how we can distinguish between different higher types of consciousness. Therefore, I will make a necessary theoretical remark in advance. Normally a meditative situation in which supernatural phenomena are present arises as follows: I experience or perceive differently how I am inside or outside of what is present. First, I notice that something is there. And then – when it comes to imaginations of my own karmic history – I can recognize myself as the person I was back then. Now I have to go in spiritually and try to connect with the person at that time. That means I find my attitude as I

experienced it at that time. I can then follow what is happening from this point of view.

But it is also possible to look at yourself from the outside in this imagination. I move freely. I can even try to experience everything through someone else's soul, just as they experienced me back then. Because this is not something physical, but rather a spiritual level where there are no longer any physical boundaries. I enter into a supernatural activity. But only when I reach the inspirational level can I get deeper into what is happening and really feel myself within what was happening at that time. At first there is no real certainty of knowledge with the spiritual experience, the seeing and the intense feelings. I experience e.g. the pain I experienced back then. In my first book I described a similar situation that is linked to Egypt.[24]

The Gundestrup cauldron.
The richly decorated silver vessel,
thought to date from between 150 BC and 1 BC,
National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen.

As a man named Ray, I, carrying in my arms my beloved wife who is dying from a crocodile bite, run out of the water up to the shore to look for rescue. This happened in the past, but will be exper-

[24] Jostein Saether: *Living with invisible people.* Page 166ff.

ienced again as a terrible experience, as if it is happening in this moment. I experienced this painful situation intensively several times in meditation. I literally relived the pain I once experienced. This deep feeling of being touched is a sign that it is an inspirational consciousness. But even at this stage it is not yet certain whether I was really that person. This shows the intuitive togetherness in an existential ability to integrate with what has been experienced.

At the level of consciousness of intuition, I experience pain as something that is separate from myself as a present being. This means, I can be a completely calm spirit within and regardless of the painful soul process. I am courageous in myself and have a rock-solid ability to judge. I achieve a certain inner peace with myself. In a "transition" from the imaginative to the intuitive stage, I was able to recognize what this process means for me today. A time arc is created. This soul experience is a kind of spatial experience. Through intuition I experience a transformative power that converts me or leads me to higher ideals, so that I am predisposed to think, feel and act differently in my current life. First, I have the imagination. Then I act and think: "I will." This is a voluntary process. I'm talking about pictures, but that is just the exterior, so to speak, comparable to painting. But it is only imagination when I am actively involved in it, as in acting.

In a further step, I can begin to mentally and emotionally to move into living, so that I feel myself and the other person like a sculpture. I can also compare it with eurythmy. I am, so to speak, in the flow of world feelings, that is, I experience powerful, cosmic soul forces that cannot be derived from myself. At first, they were more worldly thoughts, but now I'm taking them in; I will it, because I feel from the content that is conveyed on the world thought that it belongs to me. This brings me to inspiration.

When it comes to intuition, I notice that intuition has a therapeutic influence. I then notice for myself whether life is fruitful, whether it heals me, whether it can be healing for the world. Or I recognize

that what I do through this will eventually be curing for the world. This characterizes intuition. It is a task, above all, to become aware of the imagination stage, to recognize that it means something important that could be achieved first on the esoteric path. Because it will first serve as a basis for the other two. In my opinion, it is initially not so important to get the certainty of knowledge right away. Some want to be protected immediately and have everything. But it is not certain whether we can get there so quickly. It remains to be assessed individually.

So, the first thing is to develop the level of consciousness that has to do with imagination. It is important that we get inner images or supernatural experiences with identifiable motifs or image elements. Or to put it another way: If the imagination is free of images, which can certainly be the case, but constitutes thinking saturated with will without ideas, then it forms the basis, the link, the medium for inspiration and intuition. – I will now illustrate the three levels of knowledge using a concrete example. One of my clients, here with a synonym called Ed, who has since died, saw something and experienced strong spiritual power, which then immediately became too much for him. In this case, all three stages were passed through very quickly at once.

After some meditations and supernatural sights, Ed entered an incarnation in which he experienced himself in what was gradually becoming apparent as a Celtic initiation process. He saw himself alone in a forest. Ed now noticed how he was dressed and that he had antlers on his head. First of all, this is the pictorial aspect. He found himself drawn to this motif and began to sense what he was doing with these deer antlers. It was initially an imaginative process in which everything was present creatively, so that several things could be listed. It could be that it was a previous life, but he didn't know it at this stage. In any case, Ed was able to describe the situation precisely and experience himself in it.

There was already a bit of inspiration in this experience of being inside what happened because it allowed him to connect with the

person in the forest. We got, so to speak, a kind of description of the physical facts of that time; that was the imagination. At all times there have always been elemental, soulful, spiritual, auric, and cosmic elements. In his imagination, however, Ed "saw" no such thing. He did not feel the spiritual activity "behind" the physical plane. But then he began to sense the spiritual dynamics. This was the transition to inspiration. He began to understand something of the meaning of what was happening. That is, now it was not just something he thought and observed:

"Aha, I was a Celt who was undergoing an initiation process." If the meditation were completed at this stage, he would not have been able to interpret its contents. Only when you have experienced the inspiration, you can begin to make interpretations. At first Ed experienced himself alone in the forest, then he knew that there were other people waiting for him not far away, but he didn't see them because of the trees. This determination is more than just an imagination, because in it everything initially appears in front of you or around you as if visible. In inspiration, on the other hand, additional informative messages appear that do not have to appear imaginative, but they can.

In the meditation we went on, so that Ed should try to describe what he was experiencing in those days. And now he experienced it again and knew immediately: Forces that had to do with a planetary constellation that was current at that time were flowing into him through the antlers. Now he began to talk about this constellation. He noticed how these planetary forces were now beginning to work within him. This resulted in two things – and this is a transition from inspiration to intuition. On the one hand, he noticed what he should actually have achieved at that time, namely an enlivening of the various organs such as the heart, liver, and kidneys through the planetary forces in order to later be able to accomplish very specific things in his social circle. On the other hand, interestingly enough, he began to experience these planetary forces in real life here and now.

In this experience, Ed was not only involved in the imaginative and the inspirational, but he immediately experienced the spiritual-mental process right down to the organic level of the current physical body, and at the same time it was an experience of time for him. He learned something, which in the past thorough karma laws led him to his current life situation as a physician. At this point it would be possible to further research through internal questions what had happened in the past and afterwards, what training he had undergone and so on. Spiritual research could have begun there.

Depiction of Cernunnos (shaman) on the Gundestrup cauldron.

In this case, Ed was just beginning to have an intuition. Today he experienced the power of the former planetary moods and realized that it was too much for him. It hurt; he couldn't stand it for long. He became afraid. He realized that he was equipped differently at that time than he was today. His physical organs today would not be able to withstand these planetary forces at the level of intuition as he had endured them back then as a Celtic clairvoyant. Through this process, Ed was suddenly able to "read" in his current organs what had happened on a planetary level back then – but he could not connect this with his current body.

Because Ed was a practicing Doctor of Medicine, he had real knowledge of physiology and pathology in contemporary life, but the psychological burden was too great to allow the spiritual

powers of intuition to be incorporated into consciousness. When it got to that point, I had to support him in detaching himself from this experience and help him get out of it so that he could free himself from this experience and find his inner peace again. This means that Ed was not yet ready for the intuition of this particular context at this point.

Intuition is therefore a variety in which I understand spiritual activities and effects. The reality of the spiritual as something that powerfully influences the I-consciousness is one of several criteria of intuition. And this should not be the case in the beginning with imaginations about past lives. Otherwise, it will be too much and too powerful if you intuitively recognize and experience yourself as you once were. Therefore, it is good that at the beginning of your first supernatural experiences you stick to the imagination and still maintain a level of good scepticism, which helps you to undertake further exercises and preparations. I'll go back to those in a moment.

Artistic nature observation

On the spiritual path, nature with its paths offers the very best approach to carry out basic exercises and training moments. Similar to how I approach art, I know how to look at and appreciate nature. I can see all of nature as a work of art. When I'm outside, I internally imagine that a divine will to act really underlies the natural connections. We can learn to distinguish between original nature and cultural landscapes designed by humans. This is e.g. in the countries of southern, central, and western Europe no longer so easy to perceive accurately.

In some other countries, for example in the north and east of Europe, there are still virgin forests and spared areas, but more or less across the entire earth we have to consider some human influence in today's nature. Later in the book I show how completely

new insights into human creativity in distant times can be gained from visions that contain Atlantean humanity, the signs of which I can still observe today in old places of worship such as the Celtic initiation place Externsteinen in Germany.

When I take a walk or a hike in a landscape, I try to recognize the characteristics of the different arts. How do I find architectural, sculptural, and picturesque elements in nature? I look at the soils, meadows, hills, valleys, and mountains. Round hills, angular cliffs and sharp mountain peaks sometimes seem like architecturally impressive buildings. I explore how spatial formations appear between basins, slumps, trees, groves, embankments, forests, slopes, hills, rocks, cliffs, and mountains. Through stones, bushes, thickets, trees and groups of trees, sculpture like formations appear in the open air for my creative thinking. The colours of moss, grass, plants, flowers, leaves, tree trunks and rocks begin to reveal a connection to the painting art. They create together with the lighting conditions, the air, the fog, the clouds, the blue sky, and the rainbow an image imagination.

I can discover all such places and phenomena in the great outdoors and experience their different moods. How do I actually experience a clearing that suddenly appears while trekking in the forest? Just as when viewing architectural works of art, I can explore such a natural spot in its details with my artistic sense. What characterizes a place where a spring wells up? What does a small stream that has created a small valley in a beech forest mean to me? How do I experience a fir tree that sits lonely on a ledge? How do I feel about the atmosphere where red sandstone cliffs on the valley slope penetrate green foliage? Or what do bright limestone cliffs look like that shine through the weave of pine trees? What is it like to be surrounded by rounded granite mountains with the sun casting my shadow on the rocky path through clear air?

Animal trails, country paths, hedges, living fences, streams, waterfalls, and rivers that break up the landscape and divide it into parts not only create a complementary dynamic against the horizon, but

they even evoke a kind of silent music that immediately creates connections between the many motives, and it becomes difficult not to start humming, whistling, or singing. Many musical works by Händel, Grieg, Debussy, and other composers received inspiration from specific areas in which the recording artists stayed. Especially when fish in the water, animals at the edge of the forest or in the meadows, birds and insects in the air make themselves noticeable, I will through their movements, sounds, and screams come into the agile element of what many composers, musicians and poets do so fond of, when they want to represent the living things in the world in so many different ways.

After such discoveries of the relationship between nature and art, I also enthusiastically ask about the poetic, epic and dramatic. What makes the landscape poetic? What characteristics must an environment have to be described as dramatic? And what about an epic area? Comparing different areas of the country with these three artistic terms is not only fun, but it opens my eyes to distinctive motifs that I probably wouldn't notice otherwise. What do the different trees do to reinforce these three literary levels in the landscape? Is a birch predominantly poetic or rather prosaic in its shape? Is an oak tree just dramatic and theatrical in its expression? And when, if ever, does a pine tree become poetic and enthusiastic? So, we could go through the different trees to arrive at more or less specific assessments. The Celts knew about such structures in nature, and it is interesting to look at their traditional tree calendar according to artistic maxims.[25]

One summer I was staying in a mountain birch forest nearby our family cottage in Norway, where some trees and undergrowth had grown so thick that I could no longer see the beautiful view of the valley from the hut window. So, I decided to start clearing. Over the course of the hardships of felling a few trees and transporting

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[25] Michael Vescoli: *Der keltische Baumkalender. Über die Menschen, die Zeit und die Bäume.* Kailash, Heinrich Hugendubel Verlag, Kreuzlingen/München 2000.

away bushes and sawn-off branches, I came up with the idea of combining this piece of nature with a miniature family drama à la Henrik Ibsen. The actors were allowed to be the birch trees that were not sacrificed. This is how: the hero, the lover, the players, the rivals, the course of action, the intrigue and the stage design were created. In time for the "premiere", which could be viewed from the parquet of the hut window, there was the reopened panorama as well as the great dramaturgy of the valley, new firewood for the future winter as well as the first dialogues about the stage work in the cottage book, so that later other guests could continue the story in peace around the fire.

The phenomena in nature with the spectacle in the sky sometimes create a stimulating increase. The diverse shapes of the clouds moved by the winds often create magnificent atmospheres when they are alternately broken through by sunlight and shadows and rising and falling floods of light are thrown over the meadows and forests. Many National Romantic artists such as the Norwegian Christian Skredsvig observed the cloud play and reproduced it in wonderful oil paintings. Painters such as Philipp Otto Runge and William Turner also repeatedly painted motifs in which the play of light outside was created in splendid colours. Experiencing nature in different weather and seasons deepens such views.

I knew an artist in Denmark, Hans-Erik Eriksen, who went out to the same place early in the morning every day for a whole year to paint a horizon. What hard work and what patience! He created 365 beautiful small watercolours, which he put together on a wall surface, creating a kind of mosaic. You could look at the individual pictures on the back wall of the stage, but you could also beautifully experience this unique composition of the annual run as a whole from the hall of what was then Søtoftegaard Highschool near Roskilde.

The artistic experience of nature is not acquired over one night, but rather it is about living in rhythms and changes that have to do with the course of the day and year and with the various changes

in life. It's about a subtle interaction, a conversation with the phenomena. As I delved into the art of horticulture and landscape architecture, I was able to detect the multiple manifestations of the outdoors even more clearly. In some countries there are Italian, French, English, Arabic or Japanese style gardens that tell of the efforts of former garden artists. These are systems that people are still trying to maintain and uphold as they were previously created.

I have experienced wonderful gardens and parks in cities like Reykjavik, Trondheim, Bergen, Oslo, Stockholm, Helsinki, Moscow, Oxford, London, Glücksburg, Hamburg, Berlin, Potsdam, Leipzig, Weimar, Kassel, Dortmund, Mainz, Stuttgart, Landau, Zweibrücken, Blieskastel, Saarbrücken, Metz, Rome, Athens, Santiago de Compostela and Lisbon, which still have different styles and finesse with footpaths, stairs, sculptures, pavilions, stones, lakes, ponds, water art, floral splendour and tree stands that are not similar elsewhere. Hermann Hesse gave beautiful descriptions of trees, landscapes, and gardens, which I recommend reading because his artistic and clear approach allows many fruitful perspectives to be adopted and can clear us up for inner work.

Openness and caution

When it comes to people, art, nature, and world phenomena in general, it is all about living things in a broader sense. In order to do justice to them, we must have an open and cautious attitude. Vigilance in sensory observation and trust in the abilities of one's own soul enables attention and prepares us for an experience for which the essence reveals itself from its spiritual principles. This corresponds to the so-called Goetheanistic handling, which goes back to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. His tried and tested method is very suitable for dealing with subjective and objective processes and phenomena in the world of the sensual and the supernatural.

So far, I have pointed out some general rules of conduct, dealing with the tasks of recognizing big connections, finding connections between the basic elements, and getting an overall picture. We can deepen and refine the mental attitudes of openness and caution even further by studying details, paying attention to something special and immersing ourselves in an object over a longer period of time, i.e. over days and weeks. In the art sector it is, for example looking at a picture again and again, constantly getting to know it and questioning its secrets. In the natural world, I spend weeks studying the growth, flowering, and wilting of a plant, I ponder the life of a tree over the course of the year or spend a while every morning in a wordless dialogue with a small gemstone.

This circumspection leads to knowledge of the basic structure and ultimately to awareness of the nature of the components of the world. The relationship with the environment and inner world can develop into a true friendship. When I deal with things, I allow feelings to arise within me that are stimulated by the objects themselves. That's why I first create a quiet immobility in my soul. The silence arises as if by itself when I first linger in pure sensual contemplation and try to avoid superficial and associative ideas. Just as it is important to see and experience the physiological afterimages in the painting exercise, it is also possible to experience meaningful afterimages, moods, or resonances with three-dimensional things, which may initially be more about the form.

A feeling can arise that is realized to be objectively present, as if it were experienced by the object and had been transferred into one's own soul. Accordingly, other colours, shapes, lines, and figures, which initially appear very fine, subtle, and delicate, but still precise, can be transported into one's own consciousness on this objective emotional structure. If a mindful and attentive mental state is cultivated in this viewing process, in which artistic, religious, and scientific attitudes are allowed to participate, sooner or later we will be confronted with spiritual realities and beings.

The eurythmy figures

There is an area in Rudolf Steiner's artistic remains that leads to concrete points of view that are helpful in understanding the objective feelings addressed in more detail so that they can then be considered essential. This refers to the so-called eurythmy figures.

> "Inspired by the sculptor Edith Maryon, the eurythmy figures were created in the early days of eurythmy. Rudolf Steiner sketched the individual vowels and consonants with pencil drawings – not "naturalistic human figures, but not cubically dissected bodies either". Rudolf Steiner specifies three colours for the figures: he calls the basic colour that fills the entire figure *movement*, and the areas that usually form around the figure are called *feeling*, then in certain places the shape, the third colour: the *character*. The three colours characterize three elements that live and must be experienced in the executed sound movement: movement, feeling, character. The drawings with the specified colours serve as a template for the eurythmy figures, which are sawn out of plywood and painted: small, colourful works of art. They are not paintings, nor do they claim to be sculptures, they are pictures. Images that accompany us and can help us on

the way to imaginative looking, on the path that I take with the sound movements."[26]

The images of the eurythmy figures with the three colours and names relate analogously to the vocal and consonant movements present in eurythmy art, which are carried out with the human figure as an artistic expression or therapeutic element. In scenic eurythmy, the artists use coloured clothing, which traditionally, as Steiner intended, comes in two main colours, usually one colour for the dress and another for the veils. In eurythmy, new movements, positions, postures, gestures, etc., which are well known to those who know the subject, must be adopted time and again in order to achieve what, for example, is spoken in a poem as vowels and consonants to make it visible. Due to the technical lighting, the colours worn with the robes also change accordingly, depending on the colour change in the light space due to the specified choreography.

In eurythmy figures, on the other hand, a trinity is always shown, as an expression of something that exists supernatural and therefore cannot be seen by the external eye. If we as art observers can refine our way of looking at the sensual representation of eurythmy to such an extent that we feel the spiritual objectivity of the vowels and consonants in objective feelings, we will be able to see their movement, their feeling and their character in shape and colour imaginatively. We will then see the spiritual world thoughts, world feelings and the world will of the angel hierarchies as imaginative casts in the soul space on the previously indicated emotional structure. The divine world soul of wisdom, usually called Sophia in the wisdom tradition, of which Plato and the ancient Greeks spoke, will emerge as an individual reality. The spiritual and individually different training paths lead to the imaginative area in which wisdom makes itself known to the soul.

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[26] Lasse Wennerschou: *Die Eurythmiefiguren in Bild und Wort neu entdeckt.* Verlag am Goetheanum, Dornach 2001. Page 6.

Movement, feeling and character by the German word "Baum"

Now I would like to deepen the three meaning interpretations given for the eurythmy figures – movement, feeling and character. These qualities of spiritual representation are not only to be found in the sounds of human language, but I can also find such a trinity in all circumstances on the various levels of creation. They correspond e.g. to the human soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing. It is understandable that I have to tune, clean, and cultivate these soul instruments in an appropriate way in order to allow the supernatural nature of things in the sensory world to appear in such a trinitarian expression. When I look at the eurythmy figure B, the following connection emerges. The quotes are taken from the text by the Norwegian eurythmy therapist Lasse Wennerschou.

> "The pure yellow gives the upright figure inner security. The inwardly rounded movement of the arms and feet does not allow the yellow to radiate away, it allows the blue to come in from the surroundings. This encloses the shape with impressive form. The coloured representatives of light and darkness meet – archetypally – yellow and blue. They meet and do not mix into green. The encounter gives the figure character: red in the head, heart, and limbs. – This figure conveys inner unity to us without rejecting the surroundings."[27]

I look at eurythmy figure A and a different connection emerges:

> "The blue-green veil, the feeling, stands out only slightly from the warm green surroundings. The blue is also effective in the red-violet dress. The blue opens up in two directions: green and violet. The whole figure opens downwards, but the bottom is only touched with the tips of the toes. Through touching, arriving, the

[27] Lasse Wennerschou: *Die Eurythmiefiguren in Bild und Wort neu entdeckt.* Verlag am Goetheanum, Dornach 2001. Page 18.

red character appears: in the feet, in the arms, in the head. It is joy that is visible through the red. Joy in the new things that can be received through openness."

Illustration 1: Painted eurythmy figure B

Illustration 2: Painted eurythmy figure A.

Illustration 3: Painted eurythmy figure U.

I now compare these two sounds with two others and form a familiar German word. I discover the complexity of colour and form qualities a word contains. I take the U and the M. The blue shape of the U rests strictly within itself. The feet are together, the arms are stretched parallel downwards and the head is rectangular.

> "Everything at this figure congeals into a rectangle, but a ray of light hits it. From a world outside the blue space, it connects comfortingly with the figure and appears like a transparent stole that gives the body inner funding and support. Feet, arms, and head are animated, she *blushes* in a purple character. An inwardly directed will, germinal power for something new."[28]

With the M a completely different figure appears. The previous ones are all designed frontally, but the M is in profile, facing left, as if – compared to the Western reading from left to right – it was looking back at something that has been.

[28] Wennerschou, Page 10.

Illustration 4: Painted eurythmy figure M.

> "The green movement gives the shape a horizontal dynamic. Head and feet directed forward, the cross curves inwards. Arms in front, but with palms facing back. So, the figure doesn't impose itself, even if it moves forward, it is interest, translated into movement. – The blue feeling – both areas on the heart side! – creates space for what the figure has perceived with interest. The purple character emphasizes the front and back throughout the figure, but does not hold the movement, but allows it to breathe."[29]

I now combine these four sounds into the German word "BAUM" – tree – and look at movement, feeling and character as a whole. Painting the figures for the word, would certainly do much more than just thinking about it, but everyone has to take the necessary time for this. The following terms can be taken from the quotes above about the eurythmy figures to describe the word *Baum*: joy, openness, inner security and closure, uprightness, germination for new things, dynamism, interest, breathing.

The colours of the *movement* of the word *Baum* are yellow, red-violet, blue and green. Based on Goethe's perspectives from his

[29] Wennerschou, Page 40.

colour theory, this colour sound brings a quiet or reserved mood, but at the same time has something harmonious. The *feeling* colours are blue, blue-green, yellow, and blue again. This sound in the arrangement also seems calm at first, but the aloneness of the yellow in relation to the three dark colours creates a contemplative alertness. Finally, warm red, carmine red, purple and violet come together in *character*. This colour tone shows an inner power that is both inspiring and as if it would shed tears of joy.

In this sense, every tree has movement, feeling and character as inner life and design qualities. I assume that when various elemental beings and arboreal creatures animate and care for a tree, they give it the necessary assistance to protect the roots, trunk, bark, branches, leaves, buds, flowers, seeds, and fruits in to give slowness and zeal to the movement, strength and meaning to the feeling and individuality and endurance to the character. In an incomparable way, a tree is a kind of natural work of art that collects movement, feeling and character in such a way that a piece of earth is connected to the sky.

How the German word *Baum* came into being in earlier times, when people could still see the supernatural through inherited, so-called atavistic clairvoyance, still needs to be studied. In Norwegian and Danish, tree is called *tre*, in Swedish *träd*, in Russian *дерево* (*derevo*), all of which can be traced back to the Geramic *trewa* and the Indo-European root word *derew*. Here the substance, the content of a tree is considered, whereby in German the design, the form tendency is described more. The Old High German adjective *derh*, meaning pierced or perforated, refers to this aspect of the wood. An etymological investigation therefore results in expanded perspectives on the object under investigation. The origin of the Word *Baum* comes from Middle High German and Old High German *boum*, Old Norse *baðmr*, Gothic BΛΓMS (*bagms*), but the origin is uncertain.

When recognizing the limbs of the human soul – sentient soul, intellectual or temper soul and consciousness soul – a comparison

with the triad of eurythmy figures can provide an insight. The sentient soul as an internalized habit is a soul garment. With it we move in society. The intellectual soul as education is something hung over it, a draping, a scarf or even a tie. The consciousness soul with the civility is more evident in the way I dress or the way I wear my clothes. Which hat do I go out with? Shoes or boots? Studying the history of costumes from this perspective also provides immense information. For example, modern platform shoes are a typical expression of the conscious soul. They could e.g. not generally be worn at the time the Acropolis was built in Athens or by the Romans.

It is not easy to classify these three types of the soul in normal life. Accordingly, it is understandable that these terms of Steiner's anthroposophy have not found general use – except within the internal anthroposophical ranks. But in the higher types of consciousness, they find a new assignment. When the moving part of the sentient soul becomes calm, it can awaken the readiness of intuition; it gives birth, as it were, to an *intuition soul*. The intellectual soul can hold back and silence everything it knows. Everything I know, including all statements from Steiner and other teachers, must be "erased" before I can individually build an inspiration space in the soul. The emotional soul then gives birth to an *inspirational soul*. Finally, the consciousness soul can exercise the power of judgment to a questioning astonishment, something that stimulates the imagination faculty in a newly born *imagination soul.*

The tree being at Externsteine

Externsteine, Horn-Bad Meinberg, Germany.[30]

To see and experience the ancient mystery site, the Externsteine, I've travelled there many times. Apart from the diverse sensations and impressions of the rocks and rock formations that I kept getting, I once had an experience down in the meadow with a large tree. I looked along the meadow at a good distance from the rocks to observe their "faces". Then suddenly I found a metal spoon in the grass at the root of a tree that someone had probably forgotten while having a picnic. I paused. Thinking about the spoon led me into a state of mind where I soon found myself in an inner conversation with the tree. One of my questions was: What was the main purpose of the Celtic initiation that might have been given here in pre-Christian times?

In contrast to the questioning attitude, a spiritual imagination emerged with an inspirational envelope and intuitive germination. A huge but delicate and soft figure, which seemed much higher than the tree, stood before my inner view. He quickly stretched his

[30] The Externsteine is a distinctive sandstone rock formation located in the Teutoburg Forest, near the town of Horn-Bad Meinberg in the Lippe district of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The formation is a tor consisting of several tall, narrow columns of rock which rise abruptly from the surrounding wooded hills.

very flexible hands and arms around himself in graceful, comprehensible movements, "lengthening" them from bottom to top in order to "cross" them above him and, as it were, throw ribbons of light from his long fingers far out into the distant surroundings. He "spoke", stating like banalities, that the adepts should learn to connect the inner with the outer:

"The community work gave rise to the courage to be alone."

The movement colour of the tree figure was yellow-green, its feeling was light grey, and its character was dark pink. Building on this imagination, I discovered that the three attributes of movement, feeling and character can also be seen as an expression of the time being of the corresponding figure. Movement corresponds to what comes from the past into the present. I use the terms *origin* or *provenance* for this. Feeling expresses the present, the immediate behaviour at the moment. The term *location* fits here. The character points to the future. *Direction* would be an appropriate term. Origin, location, and direction - three concepts that will be taken up below – say something about the nature or individuality of the corresponding figure that presents its three colours.

What do the colours yellow-green, light grey and dark pink of the tree being of the Externsteine say? I offer an interpretation that works with parables, but which does not correspond to any imagination in a higher, spiritual sense, but rather arises from my consciousness soul artistic activity: movement as the origin of trees is yellow-green, i.e. a little more green than yellow. A mood of spring and birch leaves awakens a love of life and being together. There is something related to Venus. A gentle touch from a wise hand on the cheek of youth would evoke a place of spring mysteries of ancient Atlantic culture. The freshness of youth remains in the soul as an aftertaste of this light green colour.

Feeling as a location is light grey here. The image of a path trampled by many feet through an open landscape with the midday sun shining on it emerges from the feeling structure. The light grey is open to all colours, like a shadow that allows the contrasting

colour to appear through coloured light. Its location is not a refuge, not a prison, but rather a shore capable of receiving or sending out many ships. Permeability, openness, and competence arise in my soul resonance as the appropriate virtues.

The character is dark pink. The direction points to both sunset and sunrise, as if the place were high up, giving it the last and first rays of sunshine of a day filled with activity. The mood takes you into a rose garden, or the freshness after a bath and then the feeling of getting clean clothes after a long, dusty journey.

According to this interpretation, the tree being of the Externsteine would be someone who gained experience when young people in ancient times were allowed to leave childhood through holy but joyful celebrations. Such a being would remain loyal to the youth to be with them, even if they were hippies from Woodstock and jazz enthusiasts from Roskilde. It would appear where people share their secrets with each other in the twilight of a café corner, where they combine extreme style with innermost taste out of a festive mood. Perhaps it is now also the case when a spoon is usually raised while eating to feed the person hungry for spirit?

Image meditation as a bridge to spirit experience

Dealing with art builds a mental bridge that leads to spiritual experience. An artistic approach to all sensual phenomena leads me to discover supernatural qualities. In other contexts, by describing the classical seven arts I have shown examples where this “bridge building” can be set up in the soul. There was talk of an emotional structure. I would like to illustrate with a few examples how this education or mode can be created more precisely, so that the nature of the soul practicing of image meditation can be properly understood.

The Sistine Madonna.[31]

I'll look at a very famous painting that hangs in Dresden: *The Sistine Madonna* by Raphael. I haven't had the opportunity to go to Dresden to see the original yet. That's why I was content to use a reproduction as a template. When looking at art, I proceed as described above until I reach the point that I can always recreate the image from memory, even with my eyes closed, without looking at the image additionally. I sit comfortably with my back upright so that my shoulders are relaxed, and I can breathe calmly. Now I revisit the motif by translating it into other art forms.

I try to look at it as a sculpture, that is, to think of it as a three-dimensional design in an architectural space. What do I experience? Or how would it fit into a dramatic performance on a stage? What if there was music and it was sung like in an opera? Regardless of my various feelings and thoughts that arise, I must energetically think of myself as being directly present through such an undertaking. My position moves closer to me as a subject, as if I were viewing it as a separate image from me.

[31] The famous picture – today in the Old Masters Picture Gallery in the Dresden State Art Collections – was painted in 1512/1513 by the Italian painter and architect of the High Renaissance, Raffaello Santi (1483 - 1520).

Such a process is called *visualization* in today's psychological terminology. This term can of course be used if it is considered that not only visual aspects should be effective here, but that aspects that have to do with the contemporary arts must also be involved. Seen in this way, it is not enough to just talk about image meditation; we can also talk about *art meditation*. For the sake of simplicity, I continue to use the term image meditation – in German *Bildmeditation* – in the text because it has been incorporated into my work for years.

In the next phase of modulating engagement with the Madonna motif, I try to find my way around so that I convince myself that I am in an immaterial situation. i.e. I really try to experience myself present in the middle of the motif. The point is that I first try out different human positions in meditation one after the other. I put myself in the roles of the various figures in the picture by trying to act, feel and think from the corresponding spatial position in the formed, imagined context.

I let the triad – movement, feeling and character – described above emerge from living into the figures with their corresponding colours. I can start from the colours in the picture, but I don't have to get "stuck" with them; I can use my inner feeling to create other sounds that also seem relevant to me. From this moving back and forth and finding my way around, I discover that alternating sensations, feelings, or premonitions arise in the different postures and positions.

I gradually or even unexpected spontaneously discover that I am no longer just within my own fantasy structures, but I notice that an atmosphere is emerging in my soul – as something tangible that lives around me, so to speak – where the real supernatural is felt as something real existing. In this situation, it is important not only to have this crucial moment within meditation as an experience, but also to characterize it with normal consciousness after meditating, in order to go again from a state of deepening to a new meditation later.

The atmospheric feeling is the announcement of an awakening of the chakra organs slumbering in the soul, which have been integrated into humans for spiritual perception since the beginning of human development. So, I initially experience the mental organs differently than the sense organs. If I perceive something in the world of the senses as if from a point on the outside, then for the supernatural I must perceive it the other way around, more as if appearing from the surrounding area, which allow the spiritual to work on me in order to then develop the knowledge from an inner will.

If I take a relevant question that has arisen from this investigative way of working into the exercise, the relationship that has been built up to the Madonna motif is created as a transition to another situation in meditation in which I can respond to information. Later I will examine this questioning activity in more detail and add examples of how we can behave when answers appear in the form of symbolic, pictorial, or linguistic imprints.

For the artistic design of the first Goetheanum, Rudolf Steiner created a series of designs, which he himself largely worked on using the plastic and painting techniques. He intended the first Goetheanum building to create a karma view or clairvoyance in visitors, promoted by the artistic forms of the building. The sensual perception should therefore have the function of releasing karmic recollection or imaginations in the viewer.

If I am unbiased and meditatively delve into these Goetheanum motifs, I can assume that there will be an increased possibility of stimulating the experience of past lives. For the painting of the large dome there is e.g. the motif “The Indian Man”, which can also be seen in a repainted copy in today’s Dornach building. As a further example, I will now take up this motif to describe the mode of art or image meditation even more carefully.

The image meditation mode

The Indian man.[32]

The motif in a pastel sketch by Steiner contains a large, serious face in a pink-violet hue. It portrays the so-called divine Manu, who was the inaugurator of the pest-Atlantean culture with its beginning in the post-Atlantean Indian cultural epoch around nine thousand years ago.[33] The serious-looking face is embedded in a background of yellow and orange, with the yellow lying downwards and appearing as green on the neck. The hair is long on the sides and hangs over the shoulders. From his head, seven yellow beams of light stream upwards, illuminating seven smaller faces, all with long beards. I get the impression that his crown chakra is completely open and very effective. The faces above him represent the so-called seven holy Rishis. They are painted in purple on the orange background. Above this, the base area turns into warm red, in which seven yellow stars appear above the Rishis.

When looking at the image and comparing the attributes of the eurythmy figures, I can first examine the triad of background colours one after the other and weigh them up alternately with their *origin*, *location,* and *direction*. It seems to me that the yellow corresponds

[32] A pastel sketch around 1915 by Rudolf Steiner for the ceiling painting in the first Goetheanum. © by Rudolf Steiner estate administration in Dornach, Switzerland. Reproduced with kind permission.
[33] In my book *Weisheit wahrnehmen* (tredition 2014) I gave some descriptions of Manu and his role in past. Present and future mankind evolution.

best to the origin, because the sublime beginning of man as a being of light is considered; Orange with location because humans are active beings who can find out information about everything; and red with direction, because people can be resolutely enthusiastic about the future. Red is a colour that seems to be coming towards you, while blue is moving away from you.

Then it's about getting used to the eight faces. It is interesting that the whole figure cannot be seen here, and that is why I try to get everything that can be felt in the exercise as if it were only from the area of my own face and head. A way of thinking can then be practiced in which all feelings and will impulses be permeated by clarity and light, so that I experience being completely embedded in orange.

As I live into the central figure, I notice how it feels or how it can be experienced that thinking moves differently when I let something emanate from me towards the seven Rishis, who float in a semi-arch above me. And what streams of thought can I receive from below by assuming the seven Rishi positions one after the other? What moral impulses or virtues can I experience by immersing myself in the different views?

Once I have gotten to know the motif from the inside through several meditative approaches, I go further and include things that are not present in the original. For example, I can create a landscape motif from the green area under the chin. For example, I imagine that I am looking south from the high peaks of the Himalayas towards India, which stretches out before me like a sun-drenched land of fertility towards infinity.

If I quest from this meditative position: When and where was I incarnated as an individual in the first cultural epoch and how did the ongoing impulses of the seven holy Rishis and their teacher, Manu, affect my individuality? – then over time I discover that dealing with such a motif from the first Goetheanum is equivalent to a real karma exercise.

I have repeatedly used this motif for myself and with other practitioners as a gateway to karma research into prehistoric periods. In this way, karmic cognitive imaginations of the first post-Atlantean cultural epoch as well as culture and living conditions in Atlantis unfolded before the inner view, which otherwise would hardly have been presented in such majesty.

The mode of image meditation emerges gradually from practice when we involve the qualities of all the arts. The process goes from the object-oriented, sensual view to the subjective, moral view, from being outside the sensory world to being inside the individual soul world. The anthroposophical oriented author Georg Kühlewind (1924 – 2006) speaks of the stimulation of the senses when he describes ways to sensitive perception in one of his exercise books:

> "Attention seems to be a bridge between the attentive subject and the object of attention. Observing closely, I notice that in the moment of intense observation or devotion the attentive person cannot reflect on himself; if he were to do so, attention would shift away from the object and towards himself as another object. In both cases the subject remains hidden, untraceable. It is always there where the intense, possibly undivided attention is. The subject becomes identical with the object of attention. The attentive person is indistinguishable from his attention. As soon as he differentiates himself from the object of attention, he loses it – and is no longer attentive. Focused, however, he is devoted to the object to the point of identity. The measure of identification is the measure of attention. The human self exists in its activity, i.e. in devotion, and has no static being. It is only in doing, in activity, in becoming – "that-becoming". This is what the true self consists of: thinking, feeling, wanting attention. Man as an I-being is where his attention is. If it is with his body sensation, then the I cling to it: this clinging is called "the flesh" in the Bible. If attachment is a permanent state, autonomy, the freedom of attention, is lost. It is shared: especially between the sense of self and the world. The sense of self branches out into many

independent pieces of attention, which together form the psychological subconscious. But it is also distributed between the countless acquired concepts and ideas. The primary task of consciousness training is to restore the autonomy and undividedness of attention."[34]

Viewing art and observing nature according to artistic principles are synonymous with striving to expand consciousness. Through the sovereignty of attention, the I increase the interest in the objective in meditative training so that we experience ourselves differently in the soul when the spirit presents itself, speaks to us or touches us – than if we had not trained the senses in the external world. Spirit will then make a continuing impression on us so that we will no longer be the same as we were before. The moment comes when I become a creator of myself. The researcher in spirit is born from the artistic. A bridge between the sensory world and the spiritual world is then built by us from the elements of creative harmony.

Artificial and spiritual orientation ability

The way in which I outline below, through soul exercises and pictorial, dynamic meditation, the task of how we gain a new consciousness outside of the body "without the flesh" in order to have spiritual experiences, it becomes clear that dealing with art provides a secure basis for meditative work. The artistic is really something that sets us on the path of spiritual viewing. The various arts allow us to develop special properties that we learn to use in extrasensory perception. Yes, the attempts at orientation in the spiritual will always be able to draw back on the experiences in the artistic. Every person is different, and everyone has to discover for themselves which art or arts can best attune you to spiritual work. However, according to spiritual laws, as has already been

[34] Georg Kühlewind: *Die Belehrung der Sinne. Wege zur fühlenden Wahrnehmung.* Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 1990. Page 35f.

indicated in the relationship between the arts and human beings, every type of art corresponds to a level in the supernatural.

There is an important area of research that I can only hint at here. It concerns the question of how certain powers and properties in the seven main chakras can be stimulated and developed through meditative exercises, corresponding to those of the seven classical arts. Just as the arts enable different spheres of experience and use other senses, the chakras will also reveal different spiritual connections when they gradually develop into suprasensory perception organs. It is my experience that architecture, for example, has to do with the crown chakra, sculpture with the forehead chakra, painting with the throat chakra, music with the heart chakra, etc.

So, it is appropriate that after a period of continuous meditative practice, I go back to viewing and practicing art and examine how I can then have different and new experiences based on the perceptions through the chakras. It was remarkable to discover how the language organs as spiritual research organs were positively influenced by viewing painterly art. Externally, I practiced silence when painting, but in meditation this developed into inner speaking and tactful asking of questions. In the supernatural worlds, which normally first emerge through imaginative consciousness, experiences with the fine arts continue to come into consideration.

In the inspirational consciousness the principles of music clearly come into play and in the intuition the essence of the other contemporary arts emerges in knowledge. But the tendencies of all arts already appear in the entire diversity and complex appearance of the "merely" imaginative. It is sometimes pure pleasure to try, from a familiar artistic point of view, to carefully find one's way around supernatural observation and the worlds of experience of the supernatural. In art, the spiritual lives out in physical and sensual forms.

In poetry, the supernatural is reflected as an echo of spiritual truth. The artistic puts us on the path to spiritual vision. Eurythmy encourages people to focus their interest on the spiritual in people in a very contemporary way, because it was created purely from spiritual sources – supported by modern spiritual science. Conversely, I can say that new spiritual research only emerges to the extent that eurythmy continues to develop lively and appropriately. A separate study could be written about this theme.

When I "come up" into the spiritual, the rational in its intellectual form of representation immediately no longer has any meaning. More precisely, as a critical activity of the mind, it must cease to function altogether in meditation. Everything intellectual and the intellectually established ideas and concepts must be transformed into something artistic on the threshold of the spiritual world. Only the virtuosity in thinking remains over there and is able to live on there and can experience spiritual beings – not the thoughts based on physical things.

The initiation principle – the desire to change – as the courage to face the supernatural opens up the possibility for us to progress from the physical plane into the spiritual worlds. What I then experience and knowledge in images and, equivalently, artistic creations, can in turn be expressed in a new way as art and spiritual science, so that the real spiritual experience is experienced by other people as a gift that enriches culture.

In my first book, I pointed out an insightful topic by Rudolf Steiner, which facilitates the emergence of imaginations in meditation, provided I have previously dealt with it in conscious sensory life.[35] It concerns the so-called light-soul process.[36] [2] At that time, I emphasized that practicing living into external colour contexts and

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[35] Jostein Saether: *Living with invisible people. A karmic autobiography*. Page 282f.
[36] Rudolf Steiner: *Die alte Yoga-Kultur und der neu Yoga-Wille*. Lecture at 30.11.1919, in: *Die Sendung Michaels.* GA 194. Dornach 1983. Page 102ff.

pictorial appearances supports certain mental abilities so that imaginative consciousness is "profitably" awakened. According to Steiner, the sensory world that surrounds us is permeated by qualities of light that are spiritually conditioned to help people reconnect with the divine source.

Through the so-called Mystery of Golgotha – the life, death, and resurrection of Christ – these qualities of light were connected to the earth, and they have become increasingly stronger since the beginning of the last century. The newly awakened environmental awareness since the 1950s is just one example of this development. When we come into a great rhythm with our experiences in daylight, where the divine light deeds of the good spiritual beings on our supernatural body beings become conscious during the night, the ability of our own I to become radiant itself is continuously developed. And this self-developed radiance will gradually illuminate the darkness of the spirit, which initially we normally encounter as a meditative reality. But why don't we look into the spiritual world so easily? Why are we not born with clairvoyance? Rudolf Steiner once addressed these questions very pragmatically:

> "This spiritual world is blocked in two directions. Once through external nature. We perceive external nature as a shell of what lies behind it. If you can penetrate this shell, then you are in the spiritual world. But it's the same inside. People perceive their thoughts, feelings, and desires. Behind that lies something else: behind it lies the entire soul nature that goes from incarnation to incarnation."[37]

It is not the case that we are necessarily separated from the spiritual world because of the nature of human beings. But because, since the Renaissance, humanity has, through cultural habits and other circumstances, completely abandoned the habit of forming thoughts other than those that have to do with the physical world,

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[37] Rudolf Steiner: *Die okkulte Bewegung im 19. Jahrhundert und ihre Beziehung zur Weltkultur.* GA 254. Dornach 1969. Page 136.

the inner abilities through which the spiritual world could be recognized are not used. Exercises for penetrating the first shell, the covering of the exterior of nature, have already been given. The next part follows exercises that deal with the disclosure of the second shell, the “veil” of the inside.

2. Biography work

Thinking, moving, and deepening biographical themes is a prerequisite for karmic insights. Only I can decide how much and in what way I do it. Today there are many practices that offer very carefully different ways to process one's own biography. To mention just a few such impulses, I would like to point out the biographical work of Gudrun Burkhart and the learning of fate by Coenrad van Houten (1922 – 2013).[38]

These are two related ways of working that are currently used by many life coaches around the world. In my first book I showed how I worked with the biographical topic myself. As follows, I describe a series of exercises and rather simple meditations that gradually emerged over many years of meditative work with people. They do not follow each other strictly chronologically in structure but can be practiced differently again and again and can therefore be viewed as basic, auxiliary, or secondary exercises.

Other imaginative exercises can be developed out of my examples. I start with precise memory exercises and then move on to playful exercises that have a fictional character. When I examine the facts of life, I notice that I initially believe that I am assuming that there is objective, true connections, but through the work they can reveal themselves in such a way that I discover how, over the years, I have painted over a lot of things in my memory with subjective motives. On the other hand, I notice that something fictitious that

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[38] Gudrun Burkhard: *Schlüsselfragen zur Biographie. Ein Arbeitsbuch.*
Das Leben in die Hand nehmen. Arbeit an der eigenen Biographie.
Das Leben geht weiter. Geistige Kräfte in der Biographie.
All books by: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart.
Coenrad van Houten: *Erwachsenenbildung als Schicksalspraxis. Grundlagen für zeitgemäßes Lernen.* Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 1998.

I think up or create in meditation contains components that appear as true themes or archetypes of my own individuality.

The purpose of these exercises is to give birth in my soul to another person who I am too. This other person in me should become so internally steadfast, plastic, pictural, musical, expressive, flexible, and social that step by step I recognize and overcome all fear and all shyness from the real spiritual down to the depths of my being. – Maria Röschl-Lehrs, the first head of the youth section of the School of Spiritual Science in Dornach, Switzerland, summarized this matter in an essay with the following words:

> "This second human being, who has so far only been consciously cultivated in secluded training centres, is gradually beginning to be experienced by emerging humanity as a whole. It's time to consciously grasp it. Gradually, when I enter the spiritual-scientific training path in exact inner action, I come to be able to lift this second human out of the physical body in moments of pure concentration, to understand the world and the human being with him and through him. Then this does not happen with the abandonment of self-consciousness, but precisely in an I-like manner. Because this second, cloud-like human being is connected to our star-like astral body, the carrier and covering of the I-being."[39]

The inner child – the second human in us

I call the following exercise the *dynamic biography exercise* because two memories are viewed one after the other and interact with each other. To the first memory I add a mood that comes from the second memory. In the second step of the exercise, it is taken into the memory that was first called up by me and I observe whether a change occurs. The first keepsake relates to adult life,

[39] Maria Röschl-Lehrs: *Vom zweiten Menschen in uns.* Philosophisch-Anthroposophischer Verlag. Dornach 1972, Seite 38.

the other to childhood or adolescence. The childhood forces that are present in the soul but are often dormant – today we speak of the "inner child" – are intended to be stimulated in meditation consciousness.

So, ill select the first memory from a couple of years ago. It's about a situation in which I had a specific problem, for example in which I was in a social conflict and perhaps felt treated unfairly by one or more persons. I investigate the events, consider what happened before, how the problem arose and how it developed further. I look at the place, the space or room of the event, what the weather was like, how everyone was dressed. In short, I consider all external circumstances in the full colour of their course.

Then I go back to what was said in my memory and remember the way in which we spoke to each other or perhaps remained silent. I allow the behaviour of those affected to arise, including the feelings that each person had, as far as all of this can be remembered. Feelings were shown externally through gestures and facial expressions that can possibly be remembered.

Now I may find that I will once again experience feelings that may be similar to those I had back then. This need not worry me or prevent me from going through the exercise patiently. However, a distinction must be made between who I am now and who I was then. This conscious distinction helps me not to be overwhelmed by feelings and to maintain a certain distance. Subsequently I let this first memory fade away by taking a short break and then looking for the other memory. So, I don't have to have them selected at the beginning, although that can make the process easier.

When the first situation can be perceived as negative, the second event should be positive, happy, or cheerful. If someone is one of those people who finds it difficult to find happy experiences from their childhood – there are people like that too; I came across many persons who spent their childhood during the Nazi era and the Second World War – then you just look for an event from your

youth or later. A birthday party or an annual celebration are well suited for this.

In the exercise, I now think of dear people, such as my mother or my grandfather, who treated me with a lot of love, or I think of playmates with whom I had wonderful experiences in nature or at school. A relationship with a pet is also suitable. At that time, I was able to experience myself at the centre of what was happening. I visualize the feelings I had back then as a child and now use them to create a mood, an emotional structure that can appear as a "warm light".

With this soul substance of childhood splendour, after a little while I go back to the first memory. As if I were pouring water on flowers, I now "pour" this childhood or youth substance over and into the adult situation. I try to observe the procedural influence and see whether and how the contemporary person's own attitude changes as a result. I consider questions like these: How does the negative memory appear now? Has something changed? Are new, previously unrecognized aspects emerging? Or can I now classify the behaviour of others better?

It has been my experience that some people have had difficulty making two events that were not directly related in time or nature interact in this way. Otherwise, I have often discovered that previously unknown similarities or subliminal threads between childhood and adulthood were suddenly exposed through this process of dynamic constellation. Accordingly, I can treat various adult situations with childhood and youth experiences. I recognize how a healing power emanates from the so-called *inner child* and that I discover a health resort in my memory where "plants" of self-healing and forgiveness bloom. A variant of the exercise is that at the beginning I tune in to the positive childhood situation without first going to the problem situation. In this case, too, the light of childhood brings the opportunity to treat a problem from adult life.

Positive things from the whole biography also give a meditative power to cure problems from childhood. The power of childhood

can be compared to the growth power of a seed. Again and again, the same childhood situation can serve as a "medicine" to soften or heal adult hardenings. This spiritual source of childhood will never run dry, but in turn it will become clear that a creative, enthusiastic being lives in one's own hidden being, which has been waiting, as it were, to become effective. Steiner describes this inner creative being in the following simple way in his book *The Riddles of Philosophy:*

> "How does knowledge penetrate into the essence of things; What can contemplation of things achieve? Such an investigation can be compared with that of the nutritional value of the seed. But one can also look at the mental experience, insofar as this is not deflected outwards, but continues to work in the soul, leading it from one level of existence to another. Then you grasp this mental experience in the driving force implanted in it. One recognizes it as a higher human within man who prepares the other in one life. One will come to the insight that this is the basic impulse of soul experience.
>
> And that knowledge is related to this basic impulse as the use of the seed as food is to the progressive path of this grain, which makes it the germ of a new plant. If one does not take this into account, one lives in the illusion that one can look for the essence of knowledge in the essence of soul experience. This leads one to fall into an error similar to that which would arise if one only chemically examined the seed for its nutritional value and wanted to find the inner essence of the seed in the result of this examination. The spiritual science characterized here seeks to avoid this deception by wanting to reveal the self-own inner essence of the soul's experience, which on its way can also serve the service of knowledge without having its original nature in this contemplating acknowledgement."[40]

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[40] Rudolf Steiner: *Die Rätsel der Philosophie.* GA 18. Page 518f. 4. Auflage 2010.

Meditating verses

Ruhiges
Verweilen an den
Schönheiten des Lebens
Gibt der Seele Kraft des
Fühlens.
Klares Denken an die
Wahrheiten des Daseins
Bringt dem Geiste
Licht des Wollens.

Quietly
lingering in the
beauties of life
gives the soul strength
of feeling.
Clear thinking about
the truths of existence
brings the light of will
to the spirit.

This Verse by Rudolf Steiner accompanies the soul exercises well if it works as an entrance before and exit after a meditation. Dealing with this "truth-saying-word" (German *Wahrspruchwort*) can also result in an independent, accompanying exercise, which I would now like to describe. First, it's best to learn the saying by heart so that I can freely deal with the content of the concept during meditation.[41]

The whole verse has two parts. In each there is a type of subjective procedure, an object of engagement, and an effect arising from the

[41] Rudolf Steiner: *Wahrspruchworte.* GA 40. Dornach 1975. Page 204.

process. The statements are almost always presented in pairs: quietly lingering, beauties of life, strength of feeling, clear thinking, truths of existence and light of will. What does pair mean in this context? The first three pairs are there for the soul, the last three for the spirit in the person. When using the verse meditatively, I certainly noticed the difference between *quietly lingering* and *thinking clearly*.

In this exercise I pause while lingering on a very concrete beauty of life. I can paint everything – from external nature to art and the image of humanity – calmly and with peace of mind before my inner view. I make it clear to myself what I specifically find beautiful and how I can come to see it as beautiful. When did I first discover that something like this was beautiful?

Then I allow the corresponding beauty to evoke the feelings that normally arise from the sensual perception of this beauty. Here too I have to work from memory first. But then I notice that a feeling arises that is as if objectively connected to this beauty, as if it were oozing out of it. However, I step out of the concrete feeling, which can be described in many ways, in order to experience the feeling itself. What does feeling mean? Is it about making the direct heart connection to the environment or inner world noticeable? It is an act of becoming aware of one's ability to behave, like a scale in the soul.

It is precisely the act of lingering in beauty that stimulates the power of feeling. The fact that feelings can be powerful and carry us away or bring us into powerful emotions is truly something we all experience. The point here is not that a certain subjective feeling should become strong, but rather that a soul force that underlies feeling is found. In this way, more objective feelings, such as virtues that draw and refine themselves as functional soul forces through feeling, can be placed as gold in the soul's scales. Sensations of the soul as objective values, not as subjective sentimentalities, but as educators of virtues, are required in this context.

Working with art organizes a series of virtuous soul qualities that can be rethought and felt in this exercise.

In the exercise I move, look, and examine in depth, with clear thinking, a certain truth that I have discovered in life. The truth can be "simple", like a logical, mathematical formula that I learned in school, or it can be difficult and comprehensive, for example when it has to do with social contexts. But I know exactly why I perceive it as truth, why I once recognized it as irrefutable.

The first time I try this exercise, I may find it more difficult to find a truth than to remember a beauty. With repetition, however, the positive effect occurs that I realize that life and human existence are full of both beauties and truths that provide the desirable vitality for the soul and brightness for the spirit. The difference between soul and spirit can become an epistemological question through repeated practice of this exercise. Some people only discovered when cultivating these concepts meditatively that they previously had no idea what spirit is or how the difference between soul and spirit can be recognized. Is the soul dependent on the body, the physical body or not? Can a soul even be free? If freedom is a spiritual question, how does it relate to the beautiful, true, and good?

In discovering the quality of light that is connected with the knowledge of truth, I deal with the fact of conscience. Many interesting and further questions can arise from this verse exercise: What is the relationship between truth, conscience and will? When do I act out of my conscience? How do I know that I am doing something good and right in accordance with my desire to act freely? If I act out of commitment to a moral code or my ideal, am I always being truthful? What does the light of willing do for the spirit? How do I be faithful and true to this light in the midst of the hustle and bustle of everyday life?

Power of feeling

A further in-depth exercise, which can also lead to meditative excitement or sublimity, adds to what has arisen so far. I dwell quietly and extensively in the power of feeling that I have discovered. I imagine a friend, someone I care about, a colleague, or a relative. It would probably be someone who I know can also appreciate the same beauty. Now I look at us standing together in a room or in a landscape. This could be a fictional situation that does not come from the past but has a certain plausibility. It would be able to take place accordingly.

From the mood that arises in this way, from the power of feeling, I let myself move to a second, perhaps unknown place. I first have to erase or forget the first place, then experience us as if we were in motion, perhaps thinking that we were being carried by a means of transport to get to a new place. Where are we going? Where are we? What does the new environment look like? How are we dressed? Has anything changed at all?

I let my improvisational power play with me and am surprised by all sorts of rarities. By working on feeling, inner mobility arises in the soul as follows. A level of trust appears that I am able to create inner images in the soul that certainly have something to do with archetypes. In a sense, I climb through the entire pinacotheca of ideas, hunches, analogies, parables, symbols, signs, formations, and structures that can even be thought of.

With the freshness of invention, I finally reach the power of feeling because I allow myself all kinds of memories and images to appear in a new, meaningful context. The story that is seen or created in this way is formed between feeling and thinking. Something is forming and I can experience exactly how something is forming. The independent creation becomes the key, the gateway to further meditative work.

Light of will

When I have come to a new place in meditation with the friend, I talk to him and let the conversation come to a decision that next time we will meet in a city, for example to see an exhibition or something else to do there. After a break – perhaps overnight – the continuation comes in the city.

I imagine that we decided to meet at a certain place to drive or walk to the destination, which was in another part of the city. On the way there, I let something surprising happen that wasn't planned or something that couldn't be expected. I let a problem arise, a challenge, such as a car accident, a roadblock, a fire, or something else that challenges my helping hand or willingness to help. I look at how differently we react to the problem and see how I act, what I do to eventually achieve the intended aim after the difficulty. I'll let the story end so that, if possible, we can say goodbye in peace.

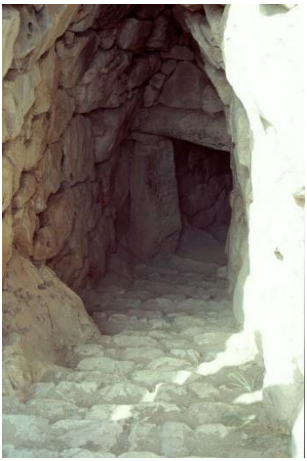
I then examine the source of power behind my action. I look to see if a truth within me has brought forth a light in my will. I experience the character, the colour, the mood, the tendency of this light. I observe the inner phenomenology according to the following questionnaire: How does it radiate? How far does it radiate? Does it have a direction? Does it spread in all directions? Does it reach down? Is it pointed flat towards the ground, or does it reach upward?

Through the questioning attitude, I notice that what I think of as spiritual is present in the environment of this light. Consequently, the presence, the possibility of the spirit to appear, depends on the light of my will. What must this will be like so that the spirit wants to approach me? My character is revealed in my will, which also means direction. So, where do I want to go? What do I want with my future? What do I want with the development of myself? What do I want to do for other living beings and their development? How

can I even help them move forward given the current circumstances?

Character also means way of thinking, attitude, and spirit direction. The truths of existence help me to shape and refine character. And the truths of existence are in direct dialogue with the beauties of life. A circle is drawn, and I am its centre. Life and existence are also me.

The cistern exercise of Mycenae



Entrance to the Mycenae Cistern.
The cistern was built in preclassic times around 1200 BC. BC

In the spring of 1995, I was in Greece with fellow art teachers and art students from Scandinavia to visit and study ancient cultural sites. We also went to Mycenae. This Greek city, whose origins date back to the Neolithic period before 3500 BC, was located on a hill north of the plain of Argos in the Peloponnese. At the very top of the ruins of the old town settlement, some of us "discovered" the old cistern, which was carved deep into the mountain

with stairs. It was once built to make the water supply self-sufficient in case enemies besieged the city. – With a few others I took the opportunity to walk down the many steps to the now dry well. With only one lighter at my disposal, it was quite an adventure to go down there into the dark.

Three years later, during a seminar on reincarnation and karma in Copenhagen, I was asked if I would do a *group meditation* with the participants so that they could have their own experience of the inner experiences I had talked about. After a short pause for thought, I agreed, even though I had no experience with group meditation or anything like that at the time. As I was preparing for the next day in the evening, I remembered the experience with the cistern at Mycenae, and immediately the exercise that I wanted to present to the group of participants was there. Since then, I have tried it again and again, and many people have continued to cultivate it with enthusiasm and success. If I do this exercise together with other people in a seminar group, we can mentally "tension" each other for the exercise. If I practice by myself, I take someone with me in my imagination who I think would like to walk down the stairs with me.

The exercise goes like this: I imagine that I am in a group of people in this place in Mycenae. We want to celebrate a party together. If you haven't been there yet, you can look at photos or imagine a mountain landscape in which you find yourself on a high, bare hill with beige-grey rock, from where you can have a beautiful view. to the wonderful landscape of the Peloponnese characterized by lush or sparse Mediterranean vegetation depending on the season. In the exercise I imagine that it suddenly becomes apparent that there is a lack of water. More water is urgently needed. So, together with someone else, I make myself available to fetch water from the stepwell. I take a lamp with me; my friend takes a vessel or an amphora. I am free in my ideas to design the utensils and props according to time and style in a way that feels good.

Then the descent begins. I lead the way with the light, the other person follows, holding each other's hand, or he or she holds on to my shoulder. The stairs always wind down to the right. It goes down like a spiral. For the first part of the route, we still have daylight that falls downwards and casts various shadows. But soon it sinks, and the light of my lamp seems to increase. After over a hundred steps we finally reach the bottom. The cistern consists of a round deepening in the floor in which the water collects, which flows from a channel in the wall of the small room. After a break we can fill the amphora and start our way up.

Within this framework I can model everything, let it happen and see where my creative imagination takes me. However, I consciously observe, think about, and feel various things along the way: the body and footwear, the equipment, the stairs, the railing, the stone surface, the changes in light from top to bottom and vice versa, the colours, the shadows, the darkness, the quality of the water, the shape of the well, any niches and equipment, etc. During the exercise with others, I was able to find that participants could knowledge themselves as if they were in a different time because the circumstances they experienced, indicated that they were.

It is interesting what different participants spontaneously paid attention to during the exercise. One female participant looked primarily at interpersonal interaction and asked herself the following: How do we help each other? As you ascend into the darkness, who leads the way and who follows? How do we find our rhythm so that we don't spill the water or bump into each other? Yother questions were: How do we deal with uncertainty and fear, feelings of anxiety, etc.? Do we talk to each other, are we silent? To distract ourselves, do we tell ourselves something about our lives, maybe something fun? Is this beneficial or does it disrupt our attention to the path and the water carrier task? The well exercise can be continued as follows:

I imagine a later date. More water still needs to be fetched. Once again, I'm making myself available for this mission with my

comrade from before. It is also possible that someone else can help. We take a smaller jug than before because the lamp, which is already at the bottom, needs to be returned this time. At the entrance, my friend unexpectedly says he's doing it alone: "You can sit here and rest." He descends. I stay back upstairs. So, I just sit there, doing nothing, but maybe thinking. What am I thinking about? What do I remember? Suddenly it becomes clear to me: my friend won't come back. What happened?

I get up and rush down the stairs to find out what happened. He may not be able to get back on his own. Maybe he fell and needs my help. The task now is to bring the lamp, the jug with new water and also the friend – in whatever condition – upstairs. How do I behave? Am I excited? Is my physical heart beating faster? Maybe I'll find him down by the well, sitting quietly in contemplation, because he is staring at the water goddess carved out of alabaster, whom I didn't see the first time, and, forgetting everything around him, worshiping her. Another possibility is that something happened to him, maybe he fell, and I have to rush back upstairs to get help. Many circumstances are possible that could have prevented him from returning. At the end of the story, we return upstairs to the other people who continue to celebrate the festival with us.

The archetype of image meditation

Such exercises, like the one described here at the well of Mycenae, can be done in a wide variety of variations. In its type, the cistern exercise creates an archetype for the mode of image meditation: It is about a task that involves me taking a path with someone. I reach another place, do something useful and make my way home. And I get back to where I started, but then maybe become different. Every extended image meditation can have such or similar factors, including surprises and resistance along the way, and if I get used to meditating in this way, I will achieve what devotion to the spiritual makes possible for us as a task.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866 – 1944): *Improvisation 26*,
1912, Municipal Gallery in the Lenbachhaus, Munich.

> "Our meditations should gradually ensure that we penetrate body-free into the higher worlds and learn to recognize and see there. But it is not just a matter of whether we get to the higher worlds, but *how*; the soul condition in which we enter the higher worlds must be a good, moral one."[42]

These words from Steiner do not directly refer to the exercises that I have just described, but by recognizing this spiritual law, I always make this moral state of mind a condition for myself in my meditative inner work. The image meditation mode means that I gradually notice that I look at myself independently, how I think, feel, and act, both in life and in meditation. As a result, a foundation of character is created on which everything that is subsequently built on it will be securely supported. And an emotional vehicle is created with which I can move around in the inner world. My experience is that such "wheels" are needed to keep the driver on the track. These transmissions are, for example, beauty, truth, goodness, and freedom. But they can also have other names, depending on the design and purpose of the trip.

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[42] Rudolf Steiner: *Aus der Inhalten der esoterischen Stunden.* GA 266/III. Dornach 1998. Page 110.

I see the well as a metaphor for the individual soul being. In a sense, I descend into my own mysterious depths and find a life-giving liquid there that can be brought up into daytime consciousness. The cistern exercise corresponds to an archetype of image meditation in that the suggested steps are individualized in one's own meditation. The specific well from a certain time with certain characteristics helps wonderfully but is also binding because those who have not been there trying to imagine what this well shaft from ancient Greece might have looked like.

For an individualized cistern, other motifs are used. Whether the descent takes place via a stone staircase or something else, whether the descent winds in any direction or not, how the water source is fed in and so on, can always have individual characteristics, depending on the experience and memory of the person concerned. However, this suggested meditation provides the necessary instructions to first grasp the meaning of the exercise and then, in further steps, to turn to a well that one can freely imagine, and which can then be a metaphor for the respective individual soul life.

The real reason why someone else should be taken down with you actually only becomes apparent later, when we learn that in meditation we are never alone, but always have to do with spiritual beings, whose interaction requires an even friendlier attitude than it ever happens in external life. However, I will come back to this topic later. An additional and fruitful exercise is when I try to artistically design my personal archetype of meditation, which I recognize in an individual way. What would it look like, for example, as an architectural model, as a sculpture, as a painting, as a poem? I can also reflect on where in nature I find the qualities that are characteristic for meditative doing.

The island exercise

In the following travel exercise, succeeding the archetype of image meditation, I sketch a different structure in which image components are moved by a soul process. We humans are water creatures. The human physical body consists of 70% water, the brain even 90% and the blood 92%. Scientists find that the entire known universe consists of 90% hydrogen. The Nobel Prize winner, Albert Szent-Gyorgyi (1893 – 1986), declared water to be the mother and matrix of all life. Building on this background, water plays a major role in this exercise.

With my fantasy I create a beautiful, sunny day in my consciousness. I'm sitting in a smaller boat and have just left my home shore. I row or sail on the water. Using a motorboat is of course also permitted. It could be a lake, a river or maybe I'm on the sea or a fjord. My destination is a small, uninhabited island. I can already see it from the distance. It won't be very big, so I can walk around it in about an hour.

I take the questioning stance: How does the light appear over the still surface of the water? Is there a gentle wind blowing that makes small waves? Do I see fish in the depths? I get to the shore of the island and find a place on the beach to dock. If necessary, I have to pull the boat up and possibly tie it up. I inspect what the shore looks like. Is it sand or gravel, stones, or cliffs? I take the things I need for a hike and decide to walk left or right along the bank. Because the weather is so nice and the water is so attractive, I look for a place where I can get into the water, and I step in at least up to my knees if I don't want to swim. How does the water feel? What temperature is it? Is it salt, brackish or fresh water? Do I see anything else? What is the ground like under the water?

The sun makes an object on the lake or ocean floor shine. It's not bigger than I can pick it up. It comes from human culture and was once owned by a human. I take the thing with me, sit down on the bank, and examine it. How big is it? What is its shape? What co-

lours does it have? What is it? If it is just a broken part of a larger item, what was it used for when it was still functioning?

I create a story about what it may have looked like when a particular person was in contact with the object. What kind of person was he or she? How did this person live? What was his or her relationship to the object? How did this person come to lose it? I imagine in great detail how such a past could be told as a novella. I decide what I want to do next with the item if I want to take it with me. Or I'll throw it back into the water.

The discovery then continues to include the inside of the island. When I look for paths and trails, I notice all kinds of plants, trees, and creatures. There are insects, smaller forest animals and birds that breed on the island. Even larger animals can appear here because they occasionally visit the island by swimming.

Then it happens that I meet a certain animal that has also discovered me. It has paused in its actions and a conversation arises between us, like in a fairy tale in which animals can speak. I let the animal talk about itself. What did it just do? How is it doing these days? I can also dare to let it report in my imagination what its mission is in creation and what it does for earth evolution. I ask: Which other beings – plants, animals, people, elemental beings, or other spiritual beings – do you get along well with? Do you also have enemies? After the conversation, I say goodbye to the animal and let it move on in peace.

After the animal encounter, I also continue walking to find a place where I can take a break. What is the landscape like here? Am I in a clearing or in a shady spot under a tree? Can I find water to drink? There may be a spring, a stream, or a waterfall cascading from a rock. How does the water taste? Can I have such an intimate conversation with fresh water as I do with an animal? I ask the relevant questions and then look for something to eat that nature presents to me, e.g. fruits, berries, roots, or nuts. What does the taste say? What vocation does this natural gift have as a food?

After the rest break, I continue to find the highest point on the island. How is the panorama? Can I see my boat from up here? But now it's time to start thinking about the way back. A surprise awaits me at the boat because a second boat has arrived. And there is someone standing next to me, waiting for me, like he wants something from me. How do I react? Do I get scared or experience joy? What does the newcomer look like? Do I already know him? The person came to give me good news. How do I get the notification? Written as a letter, on paper or other material, orally or through a gesture?

Without dealing with the messenger any further, I pull my boat into the water to go home. I say goodbye to him or her and we go our separate ways. On the journey home I enjoy the weather and the movement of the water. Only now am I going to delve deeper into the report. What have I just learned? How does the content affect me, what does the statement mean for me? What does this affirmation say? What does this wisdom mean in my current life situation?

The island exercise represents another archetype of meditation. A meditation is like an island in the waters of everyday life. Contemplation is practiced on familiar objects, adventures, and activities. The element of surprise is built in so that it appears after other events – suggested towards the end. What I cannot know in advance is the content of the message. In an introduction to the exercise, one could ask questions aimed at this, after which hints of an answer could possibly emerge within the components of the passage, similar to when we take a question with us to sleep in the evening and perhaps wake up with an answer in the morning.

The four components of the exercise correspond to the four stages or shells of human nature. Finding the object in the water takes up the level of the physical body that even could point to karmic backgrounds. The encounter with the animal corresponds to the spiritual-astral, the consumption of water and food touches the living-etheric, and the message concerns the human being at

the I-level, who must be physically fully incarnated in order to be healthy and able to act.

The island exercise was created in a session with a client with whom I had worked several times. However, she repeatedly had emotional difficulties in the meditations, where karmic connections were sought, because she was somewhat prejudiced from her studies of Steiner's karma research. So, I resorted to a way of working where I first wanted to use seemingly distracting manoeuvres to create a moment of surprise so that her biases could be worked on. She and others who also did this exercise found that many interesting images and fruitful tips for self-knowledge and karmic clues emerged.

Of course, it makes a difference whether I do the exercise for myself or whether someone guides me, because in the first case I may no longer be able to find the element of surprise because I know that it will come. To get around this crux somewhat, I can repeat the exercise and always practice my astonishment by really trying to experience what simply appears in the exercise on its own, without me imagining it or even thinking about it. So, I practice letting the appearances come out of nowhere.

Impartiality has to be trained, so to speak, by experiencing things that I don't put in but let appear. Both with the object in the water and with the animal, I cannot know in advance what will reveal itself to my soul. Therefore, the mental framework of the exercise only gives the ramen in advance. So, it is about getting into feeling and giving the content of the exercise out of the astonishment of what is being presented.

In my coaching, I observed that someone who did this exercise at the beginning of an exercise path created such images that later reappeared in completely different imaginative contexts and were expanded there. An image meditation practiced in this way therefore takes hold of an imaginative level of consciousness prematurely and allows its truth to appear, even accelerates it. When the latter occurs – that is, when pure imagination occurs – I certainly

pay attention so that I maintain the necessary alertness so that the images are not over-interpreted. Selfishness should not lead us to believe that we have any results from inner contemplation. Since everything I experience must be in harmony with the truth, I must learn to wait and let things come to me and mature on their own.

An occult law says – according to Rudolf Steiner – that only feelings such as total selflessness, objectivity, lack of prejudice and accuracy can promote our spiritual development. This means that I learn to search for the spiritual successfully if I want to help my fellow human beings move forward and, if it is karmically possible and desired, give them healing. In the island exercise, it was interestingly shown by many practitioners that it was precisely such general spiritual laws that were given in individual implementation for the relevant moment of their lives as the content of the second boater's messages. The suspicion is that this imaginary figure hands us something that we experience in a different and clearer way during individuation through the so-called guardians of the threshold to the spiritual world.

The hilltop exercise

The structure of the island exercise allows for further variations with other landforms. Instead of an island, I also look for other destinations. One variant is the following, which I tried out with many individuals and also in a two-year working group with astonishing results and with a lot of enthusiasm: I am on the way up to a mountain peak and examine the different views over the wide landscape. I find different objects along the way and have interesting encounters.

The element of surprise is what or who I find at the top. Afterwards I go back down the same path but stop where something might have happened before in order to reflect repeatedly on the meaning of the incident. During a hike to a mountain peak, various motifs are looked at and the corresponding feelings that may be

noticeable are explored. The world-famous poem by Goethe *Above all peaks is peace* is a suitable inspiration for this exercise:

> Über allen Gipfeln Ist Ruh,
> In allen Wipfeln
> Spürest du
> Kaum einen Hauch;
> Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
> Warte nur, balde
> Ruhest du auch.
>
> Above all peaks there is peace,
> In all the treetops
> Do you feel
> Barely a whisper;
> The birds are mute in the forest.
> Wait on, soon
> You will rest too.

This world-famous and most translated poem by Goethe, whose place of origin in the Thuringian Forest I once visited, can be used again and again if the concern for inner peace is to be articulated. Although it describes natural connections, internal processes and supernatural beings can also be thought of.

At the beginning I imagine that I have already made it a distance to the mountain, and, for example, located in the middle between peak and valley. I look in all directions and consider the cultural and natural conditions. I head onto a path and walk a good bit further until the summit is not far away. I pause again to absorb myself in the view. Compare this perspective with the previous one. What has changed? How much more do I see of the valley bottom, of the sprawling landscape? Or how much less do I see of the valley as the hill curves uphill? What else happens on the hike up? Do I meet other hikers? Do I see animals and birds? Can I find beautiful stones? Has anyone lost something? How do I think about my goal? What will I find up there? Do I have expectations? Have I

become tired? Was it a strain? I try to only include images and ideas that belong to such a hill or mountain context.

Then I reach the mountain top. What does the ground look like up here that I'm standing on and what is the view like? Like in Norway, is there a "varde", that is, a small stone pyramid as a waymark? Or are there other markings or route signs? I'm letting something come to me up here. I'll have a surprise. What am I experiencing? Am I meeting anyone? Is it a human, an animal, a spiritual being? Can I find something? Is there a treasure? I take enough time to get to know the surprise thoroughly and deal with it. This means that I let the situation affect me in such a way that I can "take something" with me when I climb down. I then take the same path that I used up and take breaks at the places where I previously admired the view. Has anything changed in the meantime or am I seeing something new?

A continuation of this exercise is on a second hike to choose a different path on the descent to see where it leads. Maybe I'll get to a village I didn't know and meet someone there who will tell me something or give me something. Combining the summit exercise with the island and well exercises is to create a grotto exercise in which I go underground into a mountain to seek different adventures.

According to this advice, a young woman developed a series of meditations in meditative sessions in which I accompanied her, which she placed into motifs that had a certain correspondence with the novel *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien (1892 - 1973). Critics would claim that she only reproduced content read freely and fantasy based. My view, however, says that in doing so she affected her own karmic motives with astonishing precision. In a first inner journey, she had reached the foothills of the Akashic Records, so to speak. Over the next few years, she developed the independence to experience and view many past lives and to correlate them with the current incarnation.

The guardian angel's gift exercise

Another travel exercise deals with the topic of angels, which has now become a very popular subject for people in all social contexts. Many reports and books have been published about it in the last few decades. It makes sense to have the working hypothesis that spiritual beings exist. They were referred to as angels in the Hebrew and Christian traditions and were classified into different groups and hierarchies.

There are several people in the present who have published personal accounts of angelic encounters and angelic contacts. For me it was always about wanting to have my own spiritual experiences. When they became reality, however, it was based on the consciousness-expanding exercises that I had found by Rudolf Steiner and individualized. I learned the following angel exercise from the art teacher and spiritual scientist Winfried Walther (1951 – 2022) in Norway and further developed it.

At first, I imagine that I received an invitation from my so-called guardian angel. I'm supposed to meet him at an "arranged" meeting point on the other side of a water because he wants to give me a gift. On my birthday or other holiday, I meet up with two friends who I told about this unexpected invitation. They have everything prepared for the trip. I come to the bank of the river, lake, fjord, or strait and see the boat or ship whose sails have already been set on the quay.

This time the destination is the other shore or an island that must be even larger than that of the island exercise. This time I can fully enjoy the journey because the two helpers do everything practical for me with great skill. Again, questions are appropriate in the exercise: How does the crossing go? Do we talk to each other? Are there other boats or ships on the way? How do the two areas of land run, seen from the water? When we get to the other side, where can we tie up?

The helpers ensure that I can enter the country with dry feet. But then they'll stay on the beach to watch over the ship, and they'll wait for me until I come back. Meanwhile, they will prepare a meal and make themselves comfortable. But I immediately find a footpath and soon climb up a slope through deciduous or coniferous forest. What am I experiencing? What do I hear? What is the mood? What's the weather like? Where should I go to find the angel? How do I imagine an angel encounter? What awaits me?

I create a suitable place where an angel could probably be waiting. What place could that be? Will the encounter be outdoors, or do I have to find somewhere to go in? Is it a chapel, a hut, a tent, a grotto? How do I behave before the encounter? Am I confident, cautious or wait-and-see? How do I greet my guardian angel? How do I talk to the angel? What does it look like? Does it have a shape? Robes? Does he have wings? Does it have colours? Does a light radiate from it? Or is it not visible at all? Just noticeable? How do I know that this is a real angel encounter? Or am I just conceiting it?

The further action will certainly follow itself. I receive or find the gift. What is it? Is it an object or do I get to know something? Then I thank the angel, say goodbye, and find my way back to my comrades and the boat. What is happening in the forest this time? Do I observe some animals? While we eat, I might talk about the gift. How do you react? How is returning home? What moves me when I'm back in the boat? How do I say goodbye to these two? How do I feel coming home with an angel's gift?

I also practiced projecting my own manifestations into the initially existing spiritual darkness. Over time, the formations began to shape on their own. I began to feel a creative force surrounding me in meditation. At first, such observations seemed so subtle and quiet that I almost didn't notice them. But as I gradually noticed this kind of participation, I realized that it had been there before. Through this experience I suddenly had a tool to look back at many things that had previously existed incomprehensibly in life and

now appeared in a new context. Discovering this particularly subtle effectiveness of the guardian angel in sensual free thinking led to the further matter of distinguishing spiritual beings from one another.

An extension of this exercise is to delve deeper into the topic of boats and ships. If we go back in history, we find that boats were of much greater importance to people than they are today, and not just for their practical use, mind you, but they were unreservedly loved, revered, and even feared, as such watercraft were considered gifts from the gods appeared, just as the myths and fairytales show. A boat is a shell that carries us on the water and keeps us from sinking. The feeling of being carried is a quality that I need in meditation, as I could easily falter in the body freedom I strive for. Various unknown moods, which can be experienced like unknown waters, currents, and eddies, can and will most likely arise.

The vehicle that I create around myself must be such that it is fundamentally adaptable depending on needs. Steering wheel, rudder, sails and means of self-propulsion for various elements must be okay. In normal life, one of the preparatory measures is that we inspect the vehicle or car before a trip. It should be similar for meditation, otherwise we might get into trouble. If I manage to maintain flexibility, fortitude, and inner peace during these exercise trips, then I have created my own perpetual motion machine, a mental and spiritual self-mover. To report on the many gifts that people have received from their guardian angels in my presence would fill a book of its own. Instead of providing information here, I will mention a single example from myself.

Since I often did this exercise in seminars, I was sometimes allowed to do it myself, even if I didn't accompany the exercise directly by speaking. So, I often received various gifts from my angels. Once I found myself on a small cliff in a mountain pond where I was supposed to meet the angel. He gave me a long, beautifully painted didgeridoo, a wind instrument made of eucalyptus wood

that is native to the Australian aborigines. So, I kept this invisible didgeridoo in my soul for a long time without forgetting him.

At an old town festival in the outer life, I once came across foreign sellers who were offering various musical instruments of the indigenous people. So, I took the opportunity to finally purchase a physical didgeridoo. Playing this special instrument then showed me why the angel had already given me this gift. It revealed certain tones of the deepest sadness that we both can exhibit in our mostly impassable natures. They were sounds that seemed to have eavesdropped on long-forgotten primal pains. Becoming aware of this originality then intensified my interest in the spirituality of the future.

Stone meditation

William Turner (1775 – 1851):
Staffa, Fingal's Cave (1831/32).

Opportunities to meditate I can find anywhere, for example when I'm on a public transport, have to wait in a doctor's office or take a walk during my lunch break. Various questions or things in the sensory world can give clues or reasons for me to meditate. In the following extraordinary exercise, a weakness or one-sided character trait is used as an opportunity to meditate. In life we use all sorts of things that support, carry, or shelter us so

that we can achieve something. They are simply a means to an end, and we use them as a matter of course. For example, I have adopted the habit of carrying gemstones and minerals around in my jacket or trouser pockets. In my childhood there were all sorts of dolls, toys and "secret writings" to be found there. Nowadays they contain at least a handkerchief and a gemstone when I travel.

I therefore pick up a gemstone or a crystal. I look at it carefully and describe it. What is its shape: rounded, angular, crystalline? What is his own weight? How does his temperature feel? Is it smooth, shiny, matte? How do I describe its colour? Is it colourful? How does he affect me? What finer properties can I experience in the stone? The next step is to consider the character flaw I have. What is it that I can't do? When do I repeatedly make mistakes in my own eyes? What would I like to develop or learn? I then "go" in mind to a particular landscape.

I purposefully walk along an inner path with my backpack. In it I carry an object that has a flaw or is defective, such as a tool, a postal scale, a device, a shovel, etc. The object is a symbol of the mental weakness that I have chosen this time. I simply let this object arise that wants to come during practice. If I don't immediately know what I'm bringing with me, I can take a short break. I sit down somewhere, maybe on a bench, and look in my backpack. What is there? Is it a bottomless bucket, which corresponds to the weakness of not completing tasks in life? Is it a broken wall clock that indicates a weak short memory? Or do I have a heavy stone in my backpack, which indicates an inability that creates unnecessary problems for me, while I cannot differentiate?

The idea of this exercise is to find someone who can help me repair, modify or exchange this broken item. He lives in the stone described above! More specifically, in the story the stone is also larger and presumably looks different. What is he like now? To get there, I continue along the path that leads me to a valley where a bridge over a stream leads to accommodation on the other side. Is it a rock, a pile of stones, a hut, a castle? I knock and go in. How

does it feel in there? Am I walking down a hallway? Do I have to climb stairs? How do the colours and light appear? Is it dark? Who is waiting for me? What does the stone look like? Male or female? Is it a craftsman type? Does the someone have a business? How do I talk to him or her?

I tell my matter and see how the stone being can help me. How does it tackle the problem? Can it be done quickly? Do I get a task? Does it give me a condition? Do I have to come back later? If the latter is the case, go back there in a subsequent meditation. I then say thank you and look for the same route back. As I reflect, I compare the experiences with the facts discovered from the analysis of the gemstone in question. This way I will be able to research in three directions at the same time. On the one hand, I practice self-knowledge, on the other hand, I observe nature through the stone and, thirdly, I achieve the allegorical combination of the subjective and the objective in the paranormal world of the imagination. Goethe's sentence in Faust – "Everything that is transitory is just a parable" – becomes self-experience.[43]

It was always astonishing when I did this exercise with people that they came across their own weaknesses, which were clearly visible in the biographical analysis, but which had largely faded into the background in everyday life. Weaknesses such as forgetfulness, laziness, poor self-esteem, and impatience were given a new dimension through the pictorial implementation, which made it possible to "take the bull by the horns" so that a transformation or improvement of the negative characteristics could be tackled. Continuations of this type of stone meditation have shown that with the same weakness, a different stone revealed a different side of the defect or its remediation.

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[43] "Everything that is transitory / Is just a parable; / The inadequate, / This is where it becomes an event; / The indescribable, / Here it is done; / The eternal feminine draws us on high." Faust 2, V, mountain gorges (Chorus Mysticus).

For a while I worked repeatedly with a small *aragonite*. At one point, research arose into an initiation rite practiced in earlier times, which apparently took place in Fingal's Cave on the island of Staffa in Scotland. This island is formed by the hexagonal, crystalline volcanic rock basalt, which I also experienced on the opposite side of Northern Ireland on the so-called Giant's Causeway. I was there in 1981, but not on Staffa. The cave, which is said to have been inhabited by a giant, has attracted, and inspired many artists and poets due to its fabulous natural formations, e.g. Jules Verne.

The sound of the waves in the cave also inspired Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy to write his Hebrides Overture. During the research situation, the aragonite being was asked to show something that could clarify certain karmic backgrounds of Celtic Christianity. So out of nowhere and completely unreservedly came a spiritual visit to Staffa, which revealed complex relationships between a Celtic-Christian initiation and certain riddles of the Golgotha Mystery, which further had to do with certain karmic tasks of the present. Now follows a short note about aragonite so that everyone can feel encouraged to carry out their own experiments:

The vibration of aragonite helps us to organize our material things, especially in our hectic times. It reminds us that we shouldn't own anything if we can't take care of it ourselves. The vibration of aragonite also allows spiritual developments, which can no longer be controlled due to our flood of information, to be organized and thereby grow. It promotes interest and helps to avoid excessive demands. Aragonite promotes concentration and, if desired, can create a high level of spiritual freshness in the room when combined with rock crystal. Today there is a lot of literature on the contemplative and meditative use of stones, minerals, and crystals, which comes from different spiritual approaches.

Tree meditation

The artistic work with trees brings with it an expansion of the spiritual horizon. Here I give another reason why it can be essential to meditate on trees. Thanks to the moral courage of the then young American Julia Butterfly Hill, world opinion woke up at the turn of the millennium and recognized that it was time to find ways to protect specific old trees and forests from political machinations and economic interests in order to preserve them for posterity to rescue.

In this context, it seems to me that it is more than necessary to continue to seek democratic debate and to increasingly set additional protests and signals in the spirit of Gandhi's non-violence, in order not only to stand up for general human rights, but also to engage for the right to exist for all creation.

The exercises described find an extension when I meditatively connect with nature. I will now outline a method of approaching the elemental world in which I can come into contact with a tree being. Because every human individuality has been deeply connected to the mission of the trees since the beginning of earth's evolution, so that one day entering them again with clear consciousness can be part of spiritual practice.

I look for a specific tree that grows in my yard, in a park or in the natural environment where I live. I regularly visit this tree on walks. I watch it throughout the year, in different weather and different times of day. I describe it in a similar way to looking at art. The best thing I can do is draw or paint a picture of it. The tree can be touched in different ways, with the hands, with the feet or with the whole body. I can lie down under the tree, stand up or carefully climb up it if allowed.

Can I empathize with the tree's sphere of life? How far do the roots seem to grow? What do I pay attention to? What is the ground like where it is? Sandy, clay or rocky? What is the flow of liquid to the

tree through groundwater? What other living beings have to do with it? Which animals and birds does it attract? How do I estimate its age? How does it relate to other trees and plants in the immediate vicinity? What has this tree species given to our culture over the millennia through its wood, bark, or fruits?

At home, I can work remembering the tree. I compare myself to a tree. What would I be like as a tree? Where would I want to stand? Would I be similar to a birch tree? Or more like an oak tree? What would my soil and my living environment be like? Would I have been a smaller tree surrounded by others that were larger, or perhaps I would have grown alone on a hill? I look for and determine whether my life forces are limited or excessive, whether I need "tree care", whether the branches and bark need to be cared for. I then enter into meditation and internally visit the selected tree. I think about whether I can bring something with me, similar to when I visited the stone, and how I can behave in the event that I meet an etheric being who has something to do with the tree.

I found further recommended exercises, working methods and tips on how to deal with the diverse spirituality of nature in the books and in the extraordinary artistic work and spiritual research of Marco Pogačnik. He is undoubtedly a brilliant, exemplary representative of a behaviour towards nature and natural beings that could today be considered a benchmark for those who have to do with the living world in relation to economics, caring and protection.

Colour meditation

I recommend reading Rudolf Steiner's information on colour meditations, but even more recommending practicing them in order to experience the colours qualitatively. He shows how the practitioner, when living into the yellow, is transported back to a stage of evolution that dates back to the time before the very first

incarnation.[44] Ich empfehle, Rudolf Steiners Angaben zu Farbmeditationen zu lesen, noch mehr aber, sie zu üben, um somit die Farben qualitativ zu erleben. Er stellt dar, wie der Übende beim Hineinleben in das Gelbe in ein Stadium der Evolution zurückversetzt wird, das noch in die Zeit vor der allerersten Inkarnation fällt.

Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925): *Weaving light.*
Tempera, painted in 1911 for the premiere of the
second mystery drama The Trial of the Soul.

When meditatively dealing with the colours, it gradually becomes clear that they have to do with different levels of the spiritual world, with changing attributes of the divine and with certain moral abilities of the human being. For this reason, it is clear why, in many myths as well as in the Bible, the rainbow was placed in the earth's sky after the so-called deluge as a sign of a renewed covenant between God and people. When I looked at inner images and processes in meditations that included coloured things so that I could say with certainty how the colour appeared, I chose these as the basis for individual in-depth meditations. Once I did meditative research with a client about the living conditions of Atlantis.

We saw a growth master teach young women. During the years of teaching, they were not allowed to look at him at all. The instruct-

[44] A lecture from January 1, 1915, in: Rudolf Steiner: *Das Wesen der Farben.* GA 291. Dornach 1976. Page 96ff.

ting initiate stood outside her field of vision. He stood on the roof of a sukkah made of four growing trees, under which the virgins were taking lessons. It was only at the school-leaving festival that they were allowed to see him for the first time and greet him in the midst of everyone gathered. One thing stood out visibly: the red feather he wore as a necklace. It was striking that he was the only one to wear this honour.[45]

Upon further investigation into where the feather came from, the imaginations pointed to fiery red birds that lived in huge trees. The birds spent their entire lives in these trees because this species of bird did not have the ability to fly. It also emerged that all birds of this species had become extinct in the Atlantic flood. When asked if and how I could encounter the spirit being – the group soul – of this bird species today, an extraordinary answer was given. A serious voice on the level of inspiration announced that whoever wanted to seek it must be permeated in his entire being with the deepest seriousness of existence. And only with such seriousness would he find out where he should go in order to meet the spirit being inwardly, as it were, blushing or humbled.

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[45] In ancient times, when art, religion and science were still a cultural unity, there were many mystery schools all over the world that had their sources in the Atlantean age. There was e.g. the Samothracian, the Eleusinian, the Hibernian, several Egyptian mysteries, etc. The leaders of these mysteries were the masters. These human individualities are continually referred to as such, even when the original mysteries no longer exist. A Master can direct and guide humanity by taking initiatives directly in the earthly realm. As guardians of wisdom and human progress, masters can also directly instruct suitable persons or indirectly stimulate them if they are not currently incarnated or are not in the same place as his students. They are masters of themselves except for the physical body, which they can control. This means that masters have out-of-body perceptions and can use mental abilities. They can accordingly direct the material connections by releasing what lies invisibly in the material world for certain actions. When a master is born, he looks only slightly like his family. Rather, his entire appearance resembles his previous incarnation because he can already work his essential traits into his physical body. Most people will only be able to achieve this freedom in the distant future.

Encountering the spirit of red was in itself an encounter with a being of seriousness. The meditation on the vermilion, flame-red colour that Steiner encouraged his listeners interested in art at the time to do was intended to lead to an inner experience of the so-called *divine wrath*, so that the ability to *pray* would also blossom in the spiritual seeker. Accordingly, the described research into the red feather from Atlantis literally gave a sublime indication in this direction. As an example of the inner process of a simple colour meditation, I would like to describe how it can be done. The basis of the colour meditation is the sensory observation of a specific colour that has already been made.

In the room or outside the window where I am, there are many colours in pictures, on the walls, on objects, on clothes, in nature, in the sky, on houses, etc. I choose a colour of my surroundings that I like and focus the view on that particular colour. I hold my gaze until the corresponding complementary colour appears brightly around it. I can observe this phenomenon several times by turning my gaze to a white surface after fixating. The complementary colour follows, so to speak, because it is a physiological phenomenon of vision that is objective. After this viewing process, I close my eyes and go into the inner space of the soul.

As a second step in the colour experience exercise, I allow my soul space to be completely flooded with the observed colour using my own creative power. When a colour doesn't appear on its own or I have difficulty creating the colour, I imagine myself flying like a bee to a flower that has that colour. I dive in and soak up the sweetness of the colour. I am allowed to take the substance of the colour "home" with me, just as a bee takes the nectar to the hive from which honey is made. As I float inside the colour flower, I try to experience what mood the colour creates in me. What am I experiencing? What moral force might be awakened in me?

Now the third step is to visit my home in meditation, which this time is basically my own biography. I allow one or more episodes in the biography to emerge from the colour encounter, as if the

colour mood itself were drawing on corresponding life motifs. What memories do I come to? What comes to mind when I look back at biographical things from the colour meditation? A continued, meditative use of different colours illuminates and ensigns one's own biography more and more in new ways.

Meditation on dreams

Writing down your own dreams and moving them using Jungian dream interpretation creates a basis for getting to know images, symbols, signs, and events that have an imaginative character. During spiritual practice, dream life changes many times. I started having more and more dreams that surprised me with their clarity, specificity, and drama. Dreams became even more of a gateway to the spiritual when I extracted certain content from them for meditative activity.

I take a place, courses of action or figures from dreams in order to find a starting point for an investigation, a journey, or an encounter in meditation. I take with me as a companion or fellow a dream figure who perhaps does not resemble anyone from everyday life. Then it can turn out that the dream figure is a disguise of an existing spirit being or an individuality living in the otherworldly existence, for which I had no data in the subconscious based on memories, so that it could be qualified in the dream. So, something random, something fantasy-like often arises in a dream. Through the meditative process I overcome the dreamlike and instead acquire the objectivity of the spirit.

A woman had the same dream several times in which a figure appeared that resembled a monk with a grey cap and hood. In her karma work she now took this figure seriously. With him as her imagined traveling companion, she began to literally "wake up" during the next few meditations. It was revealed that this figure presented itself as a deceased person with whom she had lived

together in various events and cultures in several previous lives, which were researched piece by piece. However, in her current life she had not met this person.

The task in an ongoing dream is to become aware that I am dreaming. If this happens, I try to become consciously active in the dream. That is not easy because I usually wake up suddenly and the dream images immediately disappear. When this happens, I go straight to a meditation in which I use these dream images as a basis to tackle other tasks that I also pursue internally during the day. This means that after waking up, meditative engagement with dream motifs may provide clarification about life tasks that lie ahead that day.

It turned out that questions that I asked the spiritual world the previous evening were only answered in a hint or in a "packaged way" in the dream. Only the meditative activity provided full information. Observing your own dream life as you live is amazingly interesting. If someone has embarked on a spiritual exercise path, valuable inspiration and insights can follow here. The anthroposophical karma researcher Heide Oehms gives in her groundbreaking book (Karma Knowledge – Why?) an indication of the direction in which work can be done:

> "Dream observation also offers a source of introspection in this area. However, it is necessary to learn to read the dream language and dream symbolism. As a preliminary stage to conscious imagination, but also as a constant counterpoint to it, it requires working towards individual dream language with the help of general dream interpretation. Everyone has their very own symbolism that they just have to learn to interpret so that the dream can become an educator."[46]

[46] Heide Oehms: *Karma-Erkenntnis – Warum? Innere Entwicklung als Grundlage geistiger Fähigkeiten.* Verlag Urachhaus. Stuttgart 1999.

The writings of Anton Kimpfler provide further information on dealing with dreams and other inner experiences.[47] A short but informative text by Rudolf Treichler provides ideas on how we can sense what is going on in our daily rhythms in a supernatural way.[48]

Poetry meditation

As I showed earlier with Rudolf Steiner's verse, the cultivation of poetry is a good preparation for a higher consciousness. Starting with poems, sayings and mantras, the meditation takes you beyond words and concepts. Here I show a simple variant of dealing with the poetic that works with developments or metamorphoses. I choose a beloved poem by a poet or sit down and write a few verses of my own. With these lines from Hans Carossa (1878 – 1956) I now trace a pleasant, subtle meditation that works similarly in other poems:

> Es gibt kein Ende,
> Nur glühendes Dienen.
> Zerfallend senden
> Wir Strahlen aus.
>
> There is no end,
> only glowing service.
> Decaying we send
> beams out.

First, I read the short poem, preferably out loud, so that I can hear the vowels and consonants and experience in my mouth how the

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[47] Anton Kimpfler: *Was verraten meine Träume?* Verlag am Goetheanum. Dornach 2000.
[48] Rudolf Treichler: Schlafen und Wachen. Vom rhythmischen Leben des Ich. Studien und Versuche 22. Verlag Freies Geistesleben. Stuttgart 1985.

tongue and lips plasticize the sounds of the poem against the teeth and palate. I can do it several times and then read silently again. When I read, I first try to find my subjective interpretation before I try to understand what the poet meant, what might have motivated him to write it that way. In order not to immediately get into an intellectual process, I take a memory-based or pictorial route. I stay factual and very specific and remember if and when I experienced *no end*. I think of long trips and hikes that also made me very tired. I try to recognize what is permanent, what is constant, what continues in my life. I think about the legacy of generations in my veins. How did my maternal grandfather live? Do I have any similarities with him? I consider old traditions and ways of life that continue to dominate my entire life.

I look out the window into the distance. My gaze goes to the horizon, to the blue sky, to space. Is there no end? When have I experienced something *glowing*? What was glowing? When does the glow occur in a fire process? How does birch wood glow, how differently does a pine root glow? What was before and what comes after? And the *serving*? In what way did I once serve? Who have I served? Was there a reward? Have I been disappointed when there was no recognition? How can the glowing be connected to servanthood? I revive the variants of service. What is the difference between obeying and assisting? Do I know people who have these skills? What characterizes an animal, a human, a spiritual being that has such abilities to help? How do angels serve?

"There is no end, only glowing service." What activity, quality or virtue is meant by this? Who is served? What can I do about it? What keeps going on? Why does this work not cause burnout syndrome? "Decaying we send beams out." When, where and how did I experience something falling apart? What collapsed? Did I experience a house fire or bombardment and war? What wilting and dying have I seen in nature? What did plant life look like and what came next? Was I there when a person died? Do I know the aesthetics of a deceased person's face? Have I ever seen a death mask?

I remember letters, postcards, or emails that I sent. Who have I sent love letters to? What did I aim for or intend with this? Has my voice been broadcast? What kind of visible and invisible rays have I experienced? Did I receive X-ray irradiation? Where was I when the Chernobyl nuclear disaster occurred on April 26, 1986? Where was I when the Fukushima nuclear disaster occurred on March 11, 2011? What do I associate when someone says that I have a good charisma? How do I describe that people have different auric luminosities?

"There is no end, only glowing service. Decaying we send beams out." I try to meditate "I" first instead of "we". What inner attitude do I reach when I try to create this state in a soulful, pictorial, and imaginative way? Then I allow the "we". Which other people would I count as my we? Which individualities and spiritual beings should be considered? I trace the path of such a ray. What light quality, colour nuance and substance do our beam have? How does it feel to be an ember that radiates enthusiasm? How would it feel to be sun-like or star-like if I gave away pure love, comprehensive wisdom, or self-determining freedom?

I send the beam out in a direction intended to hit a specific location on Earth in the present. Where does the beam go? Does it hit the earth, a plant, an animal, a person, a house, a car? What animal is it or what mark of car? Abide with the thing, object, or being that received the ray. How might the beam be experienced? What does this beam do in the corresponding form? I do something similar if I have previously determined the target of the beam. Where and to whom do we send our rays? What do I think is the most important concept in Carossa's poem?

I try to put emphasis on different terms and places in the inner activity. What do I understand and what do I do about "decaying" or falling apart? How can I continue a meditative activity while constantly falling apart, perishing and letting go? What part of my being must appear or act so that I do not lose my consciousness? What force in disintegration overwhelms me when I fall asleep in

meditation? But I can also consciously practice falling asleep and waking up. How do I do that? It is also quite possible to examine such a poem mentally before the meditation process, as I describe it in the life credo in the next exercise. In this way I prepare several levels of interpretation so that the concentration is focused in one direction during meditation. The orientation intended for occidentation is taking place.

The life credo

Under the guidance of Karl-Heinz Finke, I took part in stimulating seminar work around the turn of the millennium. The following cognitive exercise goes back to him and his teacher Coenraad van Houten.[49] It is best carried out in a working group because then you can listen to and observe each other. But it also makes sense and fun to do it just for yourself.

I choose a life credo, a creed or simply a truth and write a short, clever motto about it, preferably without subordinate clauses, which shows the direction – for example like the famous sentence from the Roman philosopher and orator Cicero:

> "Work creates calluses against grief."

The processing, the cognitive examination of the motto takes place in five steps:

1. *speaking*
2. *interpretation*
3. *how*
4. *where from*
5. and the possible *effect* on the listeners.

[49] Karl-Heinz Finke, health advisor, GGB, initiator since 1998 of the further training in the *Methodology of biographical work* in Germany and *Living-way* in England, India, Australia, and New Zealand.

Saying your own saying can be done three times in a row, preferably in different positions – sitting, standing – in order to find the best expression of the voice and the pose. In the interpretation I should find out which other words would produce the same statement, namely how I could express the same meaning using other concepts.

When it comes to "how", everything that was heard and seen should be presented as evidence in order to determine the character of the voice, the tone of voice, the hand gesture, the emotional charisma, etc. In the question of "where from", origins of different kinds are inquired about. What experiences could a person who says something like that have? In what culture do such statements arise? In what times of humanity were such thoughts formed? The "effect" is about the reaction of the audience. What was the first impression the person made on you when they spoke? Did I find myself immediately in agreement with this? Was I surprised or embarrassed or perhaps even provoked?

This exercise gives rise to further acknowledge exercises that also take place in normal consciousness. I also use meditative exercises, which are then translated into images. The first natural step forward is to ask subsequent questions of the author, the person who was examined in this way. How did she or he experience it himself? How is the feeling after the examination? Additionally, you can analyse a listener's reaction more thoroughly, namely what their reaction to the same questions says about them.

This exercise particularly cultivates the mental element and develops a sense of thinking activity, both in oneself and in others. I have to practice the discipline of listening carefully and phrasing strictly, so that I practice understanding what the other person is saying and not interpreting something into what they said that wasn't actually said. Likewise, with my motto I express exactly what I actually wanted to convey as content. Such group work on language and communication is part of the preparation for the inspirational consciousness, which usually follows the imaginative.

The elaboration of several such life credos can help me to develop the basis for being able to take the right position when I encounter spiritual beings in spiritual regions, which I then have to check to see who they are and where they come from, what they do, what they want and how I could work with them if that is a desired issue.

Artistic thinking

Through artistic activity and cultivation of soul exercises such as those already described, I find that ordinary thinking, adopted feeling, and calculated willing are burdened with various things that must be sorted, classified, and possibly cleared out before the meditative life begins, so that they later don't stand in the way. At the start, we are all more or less shaped by this mental ballast from education, cultural background, and habits.

Who would claim that the best that he has brought with him from previous incarnations has not been damaged in some way by difficult childhood, adolescence, and adult experiences – which may not have been karmically determined, but nevertheless occurred for other reasons – or even almost lost? Even someone who was initiated into the ancient mysteries in earlier times must, in a modern incarnation, expect to have to go through stressful experiences that make it clear to him that he has to reshape his soul if he wants to come to spiritual knowledge again. The exercises described are such that the soul experiences cleansing, enlightenment, and purification.

However, these processes do not take place automatically, rather I have to observe myself and see how the effect of the inner work unfolds on the ongoing consciousness and daily life. The soul factor that does this individual supervisory work, that has to take on this control function, is undoubtedly thinking. Only I myself can know how far I have trained my thinking so that I can reach such

a point through self-knowledge that my soul will not burden me, deceive me, or lead me astray in the further spiritual process.

The acknowledge imaginations, which Rudolf Steiner called them, arise on the scene of thinking in connection with the previously characterized feeling structure and the individual will light. Thinking can be compared to the canvas and the feeling structure to the ground on which the colour and form designs unfold. If thought is not clean, "bleached" or expanded, shades and spots will appear that do not belong to the imaginative. Now, however, the imaginative facts will be so fine, mobile, and dynamic that the thinking base must also be very lively and animated in order to absorb them. This is about *living thinking* as the basis for clairvoyant viewing of spiritual phenomena.

In order to distinguish this living thinking from other types of thinking, I first practice and approach a wide range of different ways of thinking in the best possible way. There are a number of mental actions for thinking activities that occur in everyday life, such as: to appreciate, cogitate, commemorate, comprehend, consider, contemplate, deliberate, discover, discuss, dwell on, examine, fathom, formulate, imitate, invent, learn, recall, reflect, remember, research, ponder, question, speculate, study, think about, think up, understand, venture etc. What type of thinking do I use to make the difference between these types of thinking listed? Can I find the variety in the series or is there another name for this contrasting activity in my individual thinking?

Is humour part of thinking, feeling, or willing or is our humorous sense based on a mixture of these three soul activities? What is my thinking like when I laugh? What's it like when I cry? If thinking wills itself and is like feeling, but does not allow any thought, feeling or drive, but rests completely within itself without thinking or wanting, then living thinking lies within it as a seed, as a source in one's own I-consciousness. Living thinking resembles the inspiring, free state when an artist, excited by the last brush stroke he has just made, either finishes the work or feels inspired to

continue, because he realizes that he has just done something important. Compared to this, *creative freedom* would be another term for living thinking. Freedom can also be seen as the beloved sister of thought. Autonomous thinking is a state of consciousness in which the freedom to create does not direct me to do something but leaves me free to do nothing. I do the following exercise:

I focus on a thought, idea, or concept, e.g. sitting, talking or chair. I experience my head as a piece of dark, cold, and damp earth. There is a seed in her. This is an image for the content of my attention. The small seed has a power, but it sleeps in its own small reserve of heat. Every now and then I feel my head, the skin, the hair, the face with the ears, the eyes, the nose, etc. I then forget the physiognomic aspect again and experience myself completely as being in the earth. What does the seed do? What does it need to develop its life? It needs water, light, and warmth so that its roots can absorb the minerals from the soil. If my not yet living thinking wants to develop in its seed character: what gives me water, light, and warmth? What is water in my mind? It's simply an individual question. It's exactly the same with light and heat too.

For one person, reading Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* will provide all three components; for another, practicing projective geometry would be more appropriate. And a third person would have to constantly deal with politics. By the way, how am I doing with the parallel concentration on "sitting" during this thought process of comparing seeds? What do I think I need to design my thinking so that it creates a living, dynamic and powerful source of energy that can endure like a tree for a thousand years in all storms and winters, that is, that I have such a healthy and strong one, to be able to develop thinking so that I don't have to hide behind fear and reluctance in meditation because of evil adversary forces?

Living thinking means the ability to talk to everyone – be they people in the sensual world or beings in the supernatural – so that we can both move forward in our development. Instead of the term living, I can also say *artistic*. By developing a way of thinking that

perceives the artistic in an unadulterated way, I can prepare myself to become a spiritual researcher and even a researcher of truth. It is possible that some individuals can develop an imaginative consciousness, a capacity for clairvoyance, without active artistic activity, but in my opinion only those who see themselves as an artist of life, as a creator of new, human realities, will be able to bring this capacity to the point of exploring spiritual realities. Accordingly, I think that something groundbreaking is being created in this way, because artistic thinking frees me from tradition, but does not necessarily make me a "sinner" against all tradition.

A light exercise

Rudolf Steiner provided extremely comprehensive information on meditative work and repeatedly gave new suggestions and concrete exercises. At the end of this second part, I would first like to reproduce one of his exercises in its verbatim form and then characterize and describe the structure of the exercise as I and others have practiced it over the years. The exercise is simple in style. If what you are looking for hopefully comes true, a significant basis will be found for further meditation work that will be indispensable.

> "It is of great importance for the learner, for those developing to a higher level of viewing supremacy and clairvoyance, if they do exercises such as the following: You imagine the room to be dark, without any external light acting on it – be it within the dark of night or by closing the eyes – and then gradually try to penetrate through your own inner strength to the idea of light. If a person can form this idea intensively enough, it will gradually become brighter, and he will then see a light that is not physical light, but a light that he now creates in himself, which he generates through inner strength. And this is a light that will shine through with wisdom, in which the creative wisdom will appear to him. This is what I call astral light. Through meditation, people come to generate light through inner power. This light is a forerunner

of what man will one day see – not with physical eyes, but with finer sense organs. It will become the garment for truly existing spirit beings."[50]

For one of his esoteric scholars, Friedrich Krüger, Steiner gave a saying meditation around 1912, which I link to the light meditation listed above. It goes like this:

> Licht um mich
> Licht erfülle mich
> Licht stärke mich
> Licht befreie mich
> Licht stelle mich
> Auf mich selber
> Ich[51]
>
> Light around me
> Light fill me
> Light strengthens me
> Light frees me
> Light introduces me
> On myself
> I

If it is not enough to dim the physical lighting conditions by turning off the room lights or closing my eyes, I can still tie a cloth around my eyes and head without causing any pressure. I concentrate on an inner world and on the space that is there around me. I then try to take up the darkness and experience it. How does dark actually appear to me? How do I characterize it? I then try to trace memories of nights and dark experiences in my biography. How did I experience it back then? I pay attention again to the moment and the

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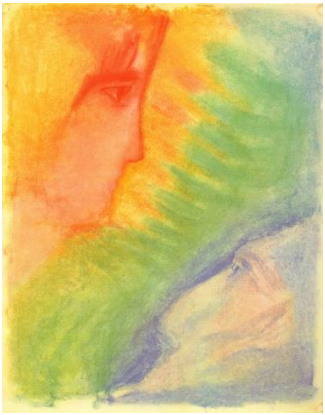
[50] Rudolf Steiner: *Mythen und Zeichen – Okkulte Zeichen und Symbole.* GA 101. Dornach 1987. Page 149.
[51] Rudolf Steiner: *Mantrische Sprüche. Seelenübungen II.* GA 268. Dornach 1999. Page 150.

momentary darkness. Is it all black or are there shades of grey? If it is not similar to coal, then there is some quality of light.



Light and Darkness – Lucifer and Ahriman.
Aquarelle (1923) by Rudolf Steiner.

I then create or try to discover a light source other than myself in the distance. I try out different ideas about what twilight, dawn, stars in the sky or a distant window of light look like. I decide on a certain character of the light, which is then, as if tied to a location, a little way away from me. I let this light illuminate me. I discover what form or shape I take. I then change the location of my consciousness. I walk into the light source created. I see myself as this source of light. I look back at my figure, which has stopped. If it succeeds, it means that in a certain sense I have "divided" myself without losing myself. The resulting light unites us or allows me to move freely between the two points of view. I can experience a back-and-forth flow of light.

The exercise can also be done differently. Instead of looking for the light source outside, I can let the light arise from within, as described in the poetry meditation. In my opinion, the result of this light exercise should be that the own light quality of the astral

body, the star body, is discovered, according to Steiner's mantra saying. This light figure will not be a static light source in further meditative work but will be a changing light that illuminates the darkness of the supernatural, spiritual world, layer by layer, piece by piece, and makes it conscious.

It is also possible and sane to bring both variants together so that I get a form of light around me that, for example, resembles an egg or an oval. As I continued to work with this light exercise, where it made sense to revisit it at regular intervals, I recognized connections that have to do with the human aura. Both in myself and in others, I sometimes received perceptions of light and colour that revealed aspects of divine wisdom. I found out how to perceive the appearance of wisdom through repeated practice. Wisdom is normally grasped in such a way that a certain knowledge is recognized, which is, for example, formulated as a sentence.

But I recognize wisdom as a force, unit, or entity in the midst of the astral light experienced through meditation. When the astral light itself manifested itself as an ordering principle, wisdom appeared as a life-giving principle, as a divine being, imaginatively, inspiringly, and intuitively. Abiding within this life of mind – which in esotericism is referred to as *enlightenment* or the experience of the so-called *Kundalini Fire* – I further discovered that one's ordinary self or I is only a reflection of a great, so-called higher self.[52] But this higher self – individuality – is also just a drop of an even greater self in cosmic world events according to Rudolf Steiner's meditation sentence:

> "When I think, I feel like I am one in the flow of world events."[53]

Everything that is formed in meditation through self-activity, following the exercises and suggestions of this book, is an individual work of art that is created in the astral light. Objective wisdom

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[52] Jostein Saether: *Living with invisible people.* Page 223f.
[53] Rudolf Steiner: *Die Schwelle der geistigen Welt. Aphoristische Betrachtungen.* Dornach 1972. Page 6.

joins this individual to the extent that we learn to respect and follow the laws of the imagination. What we discover as our karma are the signposts in the spiritual road network that we need to observe and research spiritually. Self-experienced wisdom prevents us from "colliding" with someone else on our first trip. It also discourages excessive speed so that we don't end up in a ditch. When thinking and feeling are accompanied by a purified, virtuous will – that one really strives for something true, good, and fair – in the spiritual exercises and in meditation, one is ripe to long for actual research in the spiritual field. The first area that subsequently makes sense and is timely, is to tackle reincarnation and karma.

Memory and conscience

I give recommendations, but no regulations that need to be followed during the course of exercise. The attentive practitioner becomes aware of many necessary measures and the most important spiritual laws. I am not saying that spiritual practice does not need any measures or guidelines that correspond to the spiritual world. Anyone can gain a comprehensive foundation from many spiritual pioneers of the past and present.

As long as the practice is consciously cultivated, the instructions I give are such that you can recognize what is right for you if any problems arise. Nevertheless, I would like to narrow down a few important things that are actually self-evident but could still be overlooked even by advanced practitioners. The *first* has to do with *memory*, which I have mentioned again and again because it is important in many exercises. In everyday life, we naturally value our own ability to remember. It is important to use memories of yesterday, the day before yesterday and all the years back to our earliest childhood to give us certainty about who we are and what we have done, said, and thought.

In everyday life, what we basically mean by memory is that we can simply remember so that important life events are not simply lost

from consciousness. From a spiritual point of view, consistent memory also means that I should only refer to those actions with which I have achieved something in the past. I must not attribute any qualities or merits to myself other than the value that I derive from my own experiences, which I can actually remember, and which arise directly from the current incarnation.

If I gain karmic knowledge through spiritual experience and look at how I worked and acted in previous lives, my current self-esteem should not be influenced, as if I could still do today what I was able to do in the past lives. Even if I gain knowledge of karma, I should consider myself to be nothing other than what I have worked out myself in this incarnation.

The Cypriot mystic and healer Stylianos Atteshlis (1912 – 1995), called Daskalos, who taught and told a lot about karma and past lives, did not think much of guided regression into past lives, because he was very aware of the dangers of such activity. That is why he recommended his students not to force anything in this area, but to wait patiently until the knowledge about past lives would come naturally from their meditative work.

After being blessed with karmic insights many years ago, I noticed that I was undergoing a huge inner change in my mental state. I then even decided to take the extraordinary step of speaking and writing publicly about my previous incarnations because I wanted to use an authentic example to show that I had success using Steiner's karma exercises after exploring them myself.

One consequence of having karmic and spiritual experiences was that many people in my circle of life in those days reacted as if I were attaching greater value to myself, as if I were still considering the actions of historically known past lives for the present still attribute. I felt as if they were claiming that I wanted them to revere me today because of past achievements. I realized that I was walking down a very narrow path with the meditative results in public, where those who were observing me critically were not themselves consciously cultivating spiritual experiences – even if they

were spiritually informed – and were therefore apparently unable to understand my new, inner location.

Why is it important to rely only on the existing incarnation and not to attach any values from previous lives? Karmic awakening causes an expansion of the soul, which means that within meditation we can use the so-called astral body, wide awake, as an organ of experience. The I-performances from previous lives first appear in this experiential space, in the awakened soul, so that there is a danger that the current I-consciousness is too weak to withstand one's own I-effects from the past. The current self, the self-image of it, can be overwhelmed by the old, own I-stream, temporarily drowned in it, or even fall asleep before it.

After the first karmic imaginations and supernatural experiences, one will recognize that it is an inner necessity to strengthen the present self through memory and biographical work and to deal with normal present-day tasks. The memory work on remembera-ble facts from current life consequently creates an encouragement of self-awareness, a cohesion of who I am currently and who I want to become in the future.

The *second* thing that I, as a current human being, must maintain in my spiritual training is the degree of *conscience* that I have acquired in my current day-to-day consciousness. So far, upbringing, social context, traditional social moral codes, and the general culture in which I have lived have supported me and provided the ethical standards for action. Conscience is a kind of voice that tells us, a mental-spiritual scale that shows us where we stand with our own actions in relation to other people and society.

As my personality matures spiritually, it may be that this inner contact partner, this measuring device, falls out of consciousness because new abilities develop that will take the place of conscience in the future, but could initially drive me into premature actions that I myself might consider ethically justified. But other people won't necessarily approve them. So, I could quickly come into

conflict with my existing surroundings because of actions that, generally speaking, perhaps still belong to a future.

But it can also be that the spiritual experiences "light up" me in such a way that I begin – objectively speaking – to carry out immoral actions without even noticing it. If I didn't lie before, I might start lying. If I never stole, I could suddenly steal. The tendency to commit such wrong actions arises because spiritual adversaries, unlike before, begin to seduce us into such actions. But they have every right to do so because as spiritual seekers we have to go through such moral tests. The normal conscience must therefore be maintained, yes, become even more resilient, so that the influence of new, spiritual experiences on normal life can be viewed with the usual ethos. To track and train these two elements of healthy memory and retained conscience, the following two exercises can be practiced in sequence:

I remember how the sunlight changes over a beautiful landscape during the course of a day. I capture how the light illuminates the environment and creates different colours and shadows. I remember a sunrise, the clouds, the fog, a rainbow, the trees at the edge of the forest, houses in the distance, etc. I see myself as an active person through the day and how I go to sleep in the evening. Before that there was sunset. I imagine myself in the constant activity of the sun around the earth during sleep until the next morning. Part of me lies in the bedroom at night, the other part I try to understand in my mind while it is spiritually floating over the world with the sunlight. I experience this expansion of the self in the light. I feel the power of memory in it. I use strengthened memory to look at three specific events from my life – one event in adulthood, one in youth, and one in childhood.

In the other exercise I start within the night experience. That is, I experience myself in the light that illuminates an event on the other side of the earth that I cannot physically witness because my body is in bed. I look and discover that someone there is doing something immoral at the same time. How does it affect my

conscience if I cannot intervene externally if, for example, I see how a child is abused? How do I try to comfort and assist the victim?

In this way I "visit" a series of misdeeds that have actually been committed in the world and that I know from historical records. Feelings of shame, guilt, or discomfort that I may experience can be poured into my conscience in order to look at a certain act in my personal life, which in retrospect must also be unmistakably judged as wrong. If I remain awake to my self-worth in this direction, I will overcome the possible dangers of spiritual development and my achievements can integrate with the beautiful, good and truth of all humanity.

> "When you go through an inner development, you are not immediately a perfect, radiant "sun" in the astral body, surrounded by the "planets" of yourself. First you achieve an incomplete development of the shining, sun-like self, an imperfect solar existence, so to speak. This inner soul cosmos takes place little by little. With this, however, the development of the ordinary self-changes very slowly and step by step into the higher self. When this development has reached a certain point, when the self reaches "higher and higher" until it "accommodates" the higher self, then the possibility arises of looking back to earlier incarnations."[54]

[54] Rudolf Steiner: *Welche Bedeutung hat die okkulte Entwickelung des Menschen für seine Hüllen – physischen Leib, Ätherleib, Astralleib und sein Selbst?* GA 145. Dornach 1976. Page 171f.

3. Building the imaginative hut

A child's building blocks that are simply made of wood can be a lot of fun. "There is an architect in every child," emphasized the total artist and educator Arne Klingborg following a popular exhibition on functionalism and so-called Goetheanist architecture in Stockholm in 1980.[55] He had been my teacher in art training in the 1970s and later a colleague in art education.

The "descending" path of the reincarnating human being through supernatural states of being, through the conditions of pregnancy and birth and finally through a series of different biographical phases of life is characterized by the construction and dismantling processes of a series of coverings, organs, and body parts. The I, which is spiritually supplied between two incarnations, envelops itself in a dwelling place of its existence for the sensory world. In order to live in space and time, it must build a variety of living areas and also be able to move and travel.

Karma research actually builds in meditation with these existential, but usually unconscious "building blocks", which everyone has worked on in many different ways through many incarnations and which are also largely responsible for the construction of these homely enclosures. Rudolf Steiner is the founder of modern karma research. Therefore, future karma research will have to deal with its results from a spiritual perspective. Karma research opens up karmic connections for the researcher himself and opens up ways to recognize fellow human beings in their karmic connections. From the new insights gained in this way, a social problem

[55] Arne Klingborg; Åke Fant: *Leben in der Architektur unserer Zeit: der unvollendete Funktionalismus.* With a foreword by Dennis Sharp. Translated from Swedish by Dorothée Eklund.Verlag Urachhaus, Stuttgart 1985.

environment can be clarified, regardless of whether it lies in the present or in the past. Karma research also opens up perspectives on historical personalities with whom a karma researcher does not have to have a direct karmic relationship.

Latent in human beings are skills from previous embodiments that can now be used as a foundation and building material, even if I don't yet know what everything was like. In the method of karma research that I'm presenting, a number of factors that have been discussed so far come together again. If in the first two parts the emphasis was placed on the sensual in the observation of art and nature, on the soul of the purely artistic and on the imaginatively creative nature of practice, from now on the ideal research character of allowing inner imagery to emerge shall be emphasized.

This means a meditative creation process, which must precede spiritual vision. So, I strive to build a direction of meditation that leads to spiritual research and represents a continuation of art studies. The subjective, which must always prevail in the creation of art, has to give way to the objective law of the imaginative world in investigative meditation. Through the structure of meditative practice, I show how one can achieve an inner penetration and consolidation of what is floating ardently on the ability to feel in order to arrive at objective truth. A main theme of this part goes back to a name for a meditative activity that Rudolf Steiner used: "building a hut".

> "The feeling that the developed human being has towards the things of the spiritual world is different from that which the sensual human being has towards the physical world. The later feels himself to be in a certain place in the sensory world, and the objects he perceives are "outside" him. The spiritually developed human, on the other hand, feels as if he is united with the spiritual object of his perception, as if he were "inside" it. He actually walks from place to place in the spiritual space. That is why he is also called the "wanderer" in the language of occult science. At first, he is nowhere at home. – If he remained with this mere

> wandering, then he would not be able to really determine any object in spiritual space. Just as one determines an object or place in physical space by starting from a certain point, this must also be the case in the other world reached. You have to look for a place somewhere that you first explore very carefully and take spiritual possession of. In this place you have to establish a spiritual home for yourself and then relate everything else to this home. The human living in the physical world also sees everything as the ideas of his physical home bring with it. A Berliner automatically describes London differently than a Parisian. But the spiritual home is different than the physical one. You are born into the later without any action on your part; during your youth you instinctively absorbs a series of ideas from which everything from then on is involuntarily illuminated. But you have formed your own spiritual home with full consciousness. You therefore judges based on it with complete freedom. - This creation of a spiritual home is called "building a hut" in the language of secret science."[56]

Already in my first book I dealt in detail with this inner activity, how I founded a home supernaturally. Here, hut building as an individual soul temple is further discussed and exemplified and some aspects of how they can be used as tools for research in the spiritual field are continued.

> "In ancient times, which predate our history, the temples of the spirit in which the initiates guarded the higher secrets were also externally visible. Today, when our lives have become so unspiritual, they are not present in the world visible to the external eye. But spiritually they are present everywhere; and anyone who seeks can find them."[57]

The exercises and meditations for building a hut are inner preparations and activities in order to search for unparalleled, real

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[56] Rudolf Steiner: *Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse höherer Welten?* GA 10. Dornach 1961. Page 165f.
[57] Ibid. Page 19.

temples of the spirit and to find them on the earth, within the earth sphere and in the cosmos. Each individual is also a temple for the gods, that is, for the angels and the beings of the higher hierarchies, even if you do not know it. These beings reside in the human spaces of thought, memory, and sensory activity as in their legitimate temple complexes. In the most literal sense, all people are beings truly blessed with spirit who are authorized to find again the original home of spiritual individuality from which they were released before the first incarnation.

Inner images and the Akasha chronicle

Odilon Redon (1840 – 1916)): *Evocation*.
Also known as "Head of Christ" or "Inspiration from a mosaic in Ravenna". Pastel, undated.

Nothing is lost in cosmic evolution and human development. When we think, feel and act in life, our actions are reflected in the spiritual substance of our astral body, the carrier of the soul. I cannot do anything without an image of the action being copied in my own astral body. Stylianos Atteshlis, whom I mentioned earlier, became known as Daskalos (Greek for *teacher*). In this

context, he spoke of elementals, of living thought forms that we constantly create.[58]

They are not only used as a benchmark for the Akashic images, but they also lead multiple lives of their own on different, supernatural levels. After all, they have an elemental power that, among other things, the phenomenon of telepathy and the so-called distance healing in e.g. Reiki is based. Every feeling, every thought that the individual sends out is an elemental. They have form and life of their own, independent of who sent them out. The effect of an elemental can be constructive or destructive depending on the type of energy it stores.

In Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, they correspond to those forms of thought and feeling that are living, moving and active realities on the astral plane. They are elemental beings created by man himself that consist of astral substance. But they are also used by other entities as tools for their goals. A love thought is open as a thought form and can allow the voice of a loving person to ring through. But the closed thought form of hate does not allow the divine voice to enter, so it must remain unheard. The thought of love, seen imaginatively, looks like a beautiful flower that opens gently and completely embraces the person to whom the love is intended. If you think a hateful thought, it forms an angular, pointed shape, closed in order to wound someone.

The astral images of the normal course of the day, including the night-time context, are later stored in the etheric body when you fall asleep. The etheric body radiates the newly created images during sleep into the ether sphere of the earth, where they are inscribed and stored in the fine "energy fields" of the Akasha Chronicle through the cooperation of the guardian angel and other beings. There, the images of earthly uniqueness and what we experienced during sleep remain permanently perceptible in the

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[58] Kyriacos C. Markides: *Der Magus von Strovolos. Die faszinierende Welt eines spirituellen Heilers.* Knaur Esoterik. München 1988. Page 51ff.

Akasha records so that a clairvoyant can see them. Everything we have committed as actions over the course of our lives and in previous incarnations can be found in the Akasha. The projects that we go through spiritually between incarnations are also saved.

It is also the case that during sleep, through which the incarnated I is "carried" by the astral body, each of us walks through the area of the Akasha – which, in spatial-spiritual terms, can be thought of between the earth and the orbit of the moon. Then the individual picture gallery of the previous incarnations is being visited. Not only is the last life traversed in this way, but all former pasts are visited by us in their pictorial legacy. In this way, we compare each day we experience while we sleep with our own karmic past and use them to create a correction for the present when we wake up. A meditative activity during the day captures these otherwise unconscious everyday processes and the corrections so that we can consciously integrate them into our lifestyle.

In my experience, the Akashic images are not immobile. They constantly appear like living, substantial images. Things and figures that I spiritually observe move and can even speak. If we were to see a person appear who lived in the past, he could speak in the language of that time – then we would probably not understand him – or he could speak in today's language so that we would understand him. In such a case it is not the existing being of the deceased who communicates in this way, but rather it is an image, an elemental of the personality at that time, which lives on as a spiritual copy. So, we can understand that in the Akasha Archive, where these appearances are found, there are a kind of spiritual clones – a duplication or multiple duplications – of the own self.

It is quite possible that while I am in the midst of Akasha picture contexts, I will judge incorrectly about what I see. In order to avoid mistakes, I collect multiple experiences and impressions without immediately making judgments. The judgment-accurate processing is best achieved if one is not yet in a position to promptly claim true knowledge from a higher level of intuition. First, what

appears automatically or what you notice is registered. We can read the previous incarnations, so to speak, because they are naturally reflected back from our own aura during meditative soul work. But we can be subject to "mistakes" if we derive the classification incorrectly.

Someone can – as unlikely as it sounds – even talk to "Rudolf Steiner", while in reality this individuality would live again today as an incarnated personality. It is also possible that such an Akashic image provides logical information, that real guiding principles or mantras, including extensive lectures, are recorded from "Steiner's" image, but these do not come from the advanced individuality, but rather as freshly produced sentences in continuation of Steiner's personality at the time. The Akash-image is actually something alive and not an adventurous website. Some of the colourful information through so-called channelling, canalising of spirit voices, could – as far as the appearance of a being defined by the medium is concerned – be "falsifications" of this kind, even if the conveyed content itself appears to be true.

It would therefore be an important task for spiritual researchers to obtain clarification in this field. With this note I do not want to create a devaluation of this esoteric activity, but rather to encourage qualitative research on it. By the way, channelling can be understood as a version of the beginning of inspirational consciousness, which could be misleading without corresponding knowledge through imagination and intuition.

If the direct interpretation of things and events in the Akasha is not easy, the translation of what has been seen and deciphered into an intelligible form or language offers a new, usually strenuous task. Even Steiner, paradoxically, experienced it at the beginning of the last century, with some difficulty studying an earlier event in the Akasha Chronicle. Even today, starting karma and spiritual research is usually laborious and time-consuming.

I would allow myself to be helped by drawing on known facts that I experienced externally myself. But sometimes, interestingly

enough, it was easier to research things when I didn't know the same cases from history before. Then there were no templates standing in my way, so to speak. However, if I already know historical processes and have grasped them as possible, but not as complete, representations of historical events, I can compare the events I have seen with them in order to clarify what actually happened. A steadfast continuation of the meditative exercises in the sense in which I have developed them here gives rise to abilities that reduce the irrefutable effort of spiritual research.

Concernability

Before spiritual research, the mental energy reserves must be recovered and strengthened. My soul experiences this strengthening when I focus my thinking power and interest on one and the same content through recurring meditation. Mantras, verses, and sayings that are maintained over a long period of time serve these repetitions.

> "Whatever does not lose value through repetition can only gain through repetition."[59]

This aphorism by the Swiss philosopher Stefan Brotbeck points to the future gain of the unknown, which presupposes the resumption of the known. The art-scientific process of meditation, as I have laid it out here, also serves to strengthen the soul through the same approaches, motifs, and moments again and again. I advocate a circuitous or slow path, without seeking a shortcut to reach the Akasha. Later, when the soul powers are developed, it will be possible, similar to what I experienced for myself and reported in the first book, to conduct karma research in the middle of life. Over

[59] Stefan Brotbeck: *Heute wird nie gewesen sein.* Aphorismen. Futurum, Basel 2011.

time I learned to be able to integrate a higher consciousness into the normal day-to-day consciousness.

Using parables for the well-known contexts of life, it is possible to build a kind of artistic framework that helps you slowly move into spiritual regions. The various thought forms that I suggest that one builds up internally serve as illustrative messengers, as carriers, as vehicles for carefully arriving at true imaginative experiences, which then take the place of the self-imposed motifs and bring spiritual realities to light there. But I'm not saying that the self-created images aren't true. They are real, they are an expression of a higher reality, which does not have to give information about a karmic past like a flash of lightning. At first one is more or less dependent on the physical body, so to speak. You don't dare to let go – you still need the images you created yourself – but gradually the creative forces in the etheric body become so free that the first real imaginations can be grasped out of body in the supernatural environment.

> "Let us assume that a person has a loving heart, and from his loving heart he performs a loving act for another person who needs love, then he gives something to the other person, but he does not become emptier as a result, but rather because he gives the other person an act of love, he receives more, he becomes fuller, and if he performs an act of love a second time, he becomes even fuller, he has even more. The I pour something into other people that makes you fuller. What love is, is something so complicated that no human being should have the arrogance to define love, to easily see through love in its essence. Love is complicated. We perceive it, but no definition can express love. But a symbol, a simple symbol, a glass of water that becomes fuller as it is poured out, gives us the quality of the work of love. Such images are useful for occult development. From them we notice that we are lifted above the usual idea, that if we want to ascend to the spirit, we have to form ideas that are completely opposite to those that are applicable to the world of the senses.

Therefore, you find that the development of such symbolic ideas is an important means of ascending into the spiritual world."[60]

If I later talk about a *spirit island*, for example, it does not have to be assumed that such spirit islands actually exist in a trivial way, but rather this definition comes close to a spiritual reality based on the so-called higher I or self, which becomes almost well illustrated at this level of exploration. Artistically structured preliminary concepts are set up, so that we can deal with higher, as yet unrecognizable realities in a practiced way, which are conceptual bridges that support the spiritual experience. Those are the tools; this is the material of spirit knowledge.

This may seem like a very cumbersome method, but it has proven to be practical, correct, and successful for numerous people for more than two decades. Both for older people with a lot of life experience who nevertheless had a fear of the real spiritual world, as well as for younger people who wanted to climb the spiritual path too hastily, it has proven that the proposed path is an expression of the middle, the balance, which represents harmony. Artistic creation in meditation protects us from drawing too quick conclusions about spiritual experiences and encounters with beings because we learn that everything has to go through processes before a spiritual phenomenon comes to light.

Steiner also worked a lot with symbols, with symbolic ideas as the content of meditation. He particularly pointed out that these self-created meditation motifs should not plagiarize the sensory world, but rather should be created in a free manner in such a way that they point to the different in the spiritual.

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[60] Rudolf Steiner: *Die geistigen Wesenheiten in den Himmelskörpern und Naturreichen.* GA 136. Dornach 1984. Page 59f.

Imaginative knowledge is artistic

Jostein Sæther: *Apparition*.
Egg tempera on plywood (2005).

My approach is that no true spiritual experience is possible without coming into contact with essential beings. It already presupposes a striving for knowledge, and one that is free of egoistic motives. I start with remembering and improvisation because I want to achieve spiritual experience through mediation. The I-will immediately erases the memory images and definitions in thinking. After it fades away, I create a frank soul mood, comparable to renunciation, which gradually promotes the subtle way of perception in the imaginative dimension and enables me to gain knowledge there. It is not the terminology that creates the basis of knowledge, but my attitude, as I make my "naked" soul available to spiritual beings, creates a sphere of experience that makes spiritual knowledge possible. The supernatural image of the higher self supports self-knowledge.

> "We first have the objective knowledge that exists in ordinary life; it is naturalistic. We then come to knowledge through imagination; it is artistic. We then come to knowledge through inspiration; that is moral. And we then come to the knowledge through intuition; it is religious. [...] With supernatural experiences you have perceptions, not ideas, so you have to keep returning to them."[61]

According to Steiner's specification, I behave artistically in meditation until a new ground of knowledge arises without uncertainty, without fear of the inner darkness. I give the mental contents new thought concepts in order to bring them to daytime consciousness, because a true imagination cannot be remembered like sensory perceptions. Ideas and concepts are means of evaluating reality – regardless of its nature. I encounter it again and again and each one differently based on their individual requirements.

Knowledge is always possible when experiencing and thinking come together. It is not something finished, but rather a flowing development. I therefore like to evaluate experiences with others because I come up with new concepts or can form them during the conversation or scrutiny. In other statements, Steiner shows that image and concept are not mutually exclusive but complement each other. Both are actually necessary for the knowledge of higher worlds. Spiritual research also clearly requires spiritual experience – he explains this in his book *The Riddles of Philosophy*:

> "Real spiritual science can only be achieved if the soul, through its own inner work, finds the transition from ordinary consciousness to one with which it *clearly experiences* itself while

[61] Rudolf Steiner: *Neugestaltung des sozialen Organismus.* GA 303. Lecture from December 27, 1921. Dornach 1983. Page 91f.

> standing in the spiritual world. In an inner work that is an increase, not a decrease, of the usual mental life."[62]

In my study of Rudolf Steiner's life work, I initially became a co-recognizer of the spiritual world. By changing my concepts about e.g. the guardian angel to life in my thinking, I repeatedly became an independent spirit recognizer through my own meditative soul work. Steiner once explicitly stated that we can only be led into the spiritual through images and added:

> "And as soon as the images are compressed too much into concepts that are actually only suitable for the physical plan, they no longer contain what they are actually supposed to contain."[63]

The terms we have all come from before the 15th century, according to Steiner 1921. Therefore, only those concepts that are created through a living-mental process, e.g. have been prepared in an exemplary manner through training in thinking or through experiencing art. Steiner speaks of a "consolidation of concepts", which I interpret as meaning that it is about having them as a kind of ground for an imagination-free, flowing thinking that can absorb the otherness in the spiritual:

> "Our memory, our remembrance is sometimes a little better, sometimes a little worse, but we acquire the memory. We have experiences; we remember these experiences later. This is not the case with what we experience in the spiritual worlds. We can experience this in size, in beauty, in significance – once it has been experienced, it is over. And it has to be experienced again if it is to stand before the soul again. It is not memorized in the usual sense of memory. It is only imprinted in the memory when one makes great effort to conceptualize what one sees in the spiritual world, when one sends one's mind over to the spiritual

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[62] Rudolf Steiner: *Die Rätsel der Philosophie*; aus dem Kapitel: *Skizzenhaft dargestellter Ausblick auf eine Anthroposophie* (1914). GA 18. Taschenbuchausgabe. 2. Band. Dornach 1974. Page 251. Emphasis by Steiner.
[63] Rudolf Steiner: *Weltwesen und Ichheit.* GA 169. Dornach 1963. Page 149.

world. This is very difficult. You have to think the same way over there, without your body helping you with this thinking. Therefore, you must have consolidated your concepts beforehand, you must have become a proper logician beforehand."[64]

When it comes to spiritual experience, I put myself in a position where I can let the ideas within me play out like forces fighting against each other – like in a drama of knowledge. I practice becoming able to let concepts and images fight with others so that they lose their one-sidedness. They must become transparent to the imagination, so to speak. I practice learning the habit of describing a thing from one side and describing it from the other side as well. Thinking in the spiritual realm must itself become a sensory organ that passively allows the spiritual environment to flow through it, or it must actively encompass the spiritual phenomena like supple tentacles.

Preparation and mental positioning

Some people love a certain landscape, a piece of nature, it may be maintained as a garden or park in the middle of a city, or it may be in a place far away from civilization. The landscape that these exercise sequences are about also includes natural or created water, such as a well, canal, pond, lake, stream, river, lake, fjord, or the ocean. Surely everyone knows such a landscape from the life of the senses, which can now be selected in order to become a specific place of origin for inner creativity for meditation. Some thought it was good to use a landscape that they had known since they were children. I chose landscapes whose beauty I had experienced from repeated hikes.

So, I take a seat and discuss with myself which landscape and which place is suitable. A beautiful place that I experienced on a

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[64] Rudolf Steiner: *Die geistig-seelischen Grundkräfte der Erziehungskunst.* GA 305. Dornach 1979. Page 84f.

trip to a foreign country as an adult also fulfils the desired function. I choose a place where I have only had affirming experiences. Or it has to be a neutral place in a certain sense. The principle of the dynamic karma meditation mentioned here is that I create a kind of home in my meditative inner world, a care home, a basis, which can also be referred to here with the somewhat humorous term *karma museum* to express that elements are lined up, hung, and set up in it, which I bring back to the present from journeys of discovery into the past.

The dynamic karma meditation, which can sometimes last a longer time, even several hours if necessary and possible, always begins with this inner home, to which I return at the end of each meditation after having carried out a kind of extensive image breathing. The journeys or movements go to inner places and time periods that are not usually known at the beginning. So, I take the necessary precautions, invite travel companions, and arrange stopovers. These are motives and inner activities, all of which I describe in detail below.

In meditation, the most careful mental attitudes are necessary at the various locations, stations and during the different processes and procedures so that the researching self is gradually developed and can find its way freely in all situations without exception. Certain postures may appear in meditation using pictorial vehicles and tools, which means that I will learn to feel supported, but also to act myself, so that the corresponding states that come to me from the imaginative world are experienced in a true situation. However, before I present the entire process of karma meditation with its various locations and actions, I highlight a few more basic aspects and deal with them separately so that the meditation can then be optimally prepared and carried out.

Before and after the karma meditation, I read, speak, or meditate a mantra or saying that is familiar to me. Doing this helps to create distance from everyday things and, after meditation, to properly separate myself from their content and moods. Before I begin, I

sometimes ask protective beings and spirit friends to watch over and support me – or us, if I am accompanying someone – during the meditation.

Not only the untrained person needs this support, but everyone who enters into a meditative consciousness must give up the immediate, usual support of the sensory life. In the normality of daytime consciousness, however, we are protected from the spiritual world anyway according to our karmic circumstances and through supernatural influences. But how much more necessary protection may be when this normality is exceeded! A stimulating incidental exercise, which can be practiced separately, sets the mood for the spirit of devotion, modesty, and classification:

I vividly think that, depending on my level of spiritual development, I find myself in a place in a large crowd of spiritually searching people. What kind of connection do I choose or perhaps appears on its own in my consciousness? Am I standing on a staircase? In one place? At an airport? On a path? In front of a temple? In a cathedral? Which people are in front of me and who are behind me? What does the ground and the whole surrounding area look like? Can I track down someone around me that I know in life? Can I have a conversation with someone or is our attention focused on a certain direction?

I did this important exercise of determining my own mental and spiritual position again and again in the course of further work in order to clarify whether I had changed my position in relation to the first location and those around me. Even if I later classified myself as an advanced learner, it could now happen that I found myself regressed. Having modesty in spiritual matters and finding the correct classification in the relevant supernatural contexts are among the most important qualities in spiritual orientation and research.

Assistance from the deceased

In my first book, *Living with invisible People,* I reported in detail how, after my first imaginations about karmic content, I came into contact with deceased people whom I had known in life. This area can also be practiced in order to develop a receptivity to spiritual things. I will not illustrate this range of tasks with detailed examples here. Nevertheless, I would like to give a kind of school example that can shed light on some other situations. Everyone must now see for themselves whether it is appropriate for them to seek contact in karmic work with people who are between death and a new birth in life. There is no obligation for everyone to do this, but when such contacts are developed, amazing relief is provided for the meditative practices.

A woman I call Alda with a pseudonym investigated with my help an incarnation in the ancient city of Phatis, today Poti on the Black Sea in present-day Georgia. While researching this life as a trade overseer for goods from India, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean, she got the impression that one of the people she saw in the context of this Greco-Roman culture of the 4th century AD was identical to a friend who had died several years before. This woman, here called Corinna, died young, but in the last years of her life she engaged in artistic activities. Alda had a desire to meditatively search for the deceased Corinna. Was it possible and allowed? Alda asked herself these and many other questions, and then she began to go through her memories of Corinna.

In one of our conversations, Alda pointed to a small soapstone block that acted as a bookend on a shelf. Once she had been given it as a gift by Corinna who had actually encouraged her to make a small sculpture by working the soapstone, but Alda had never started it. I got the intuitive impression that it would be good if Alda now began to carve, shape, and grind the stone, before she set off meditatively to look for Corinna. As thought, so done. The result was a beautiful, rounded shape, which, during the creation phase, brought back many wonderful memories for Alda of the

friend she no longer had so present in her memory. After several weeks, Alda felt mature enough to seek out Corinna on a spiritual level.

After articulating her questions and expressing her request for help to her guardian angel, she was accompanied by him to a spiritual realm that was no longer comparable to any earthly landscape, but which nevertheless gave her the feeling of being on a ridge with a beautiful panoramic view. She soon became aware of a figure she recognized as Corinna, who stood there and through movements with her arms and hands somehow produced all the colours and formations that eventually became visible throughout the area. It was as if at this moment she created the spiritual circumference. Like a landscape architect, Corinna stood and created all the beauty that Alda and I viewed.

Alda was granted a short talk and some teaching by her deceased friend who said that she was doing well to prepare for the life to come, because that was what she was doing right now. She also assured that she would help Alda to develop further on the earthly plane according to the spiritual laws.

By Rudolf Steiner we find a number of references and research descriptions about the dead and about life between death and rebirth. I bring here two of his statements which provide an instructive and excellent addition to my example above:

> "It is the dead who live in Devachan, who through the power they have there, themselves work to transform the earth."

The term Devachan is a compound Sanskrit-Tibetan word: Deva is a *god*; chan *country, area,* or *region*. It can be translated as the land of the gods, the kingdom of the gods. It is that level of existence between two incarnations into which the human I-being, the human individuality, enters and experiences the transformation into a new life. The spiritual world or Devachan is a creative world. In it weave the archetypes of form and becoming of all beings who are shaped according to them and who dwell in them. A clairvoyant

who has reached the higher consciousness state of intuition can consciously enter Devachan and interact with the deceased.

> "Just as the people here work on the physical earth, so the dead work on the spiritual archetype of our physical earth. They are the ones who send their energies into this physical world and who take part in the reincarnation. However, there are leaders and higher beings who direct the transformation. And in this realm that is in our midst, the dead work to transform the surface of earth. The people breathe the air here; without air they could not breathe. In a similar way it is with the dead, only that when the air is here, the light works there. In the diffused light the initiate sees the beings of the dead. For the clairvoyant, for example, the plants are surrounded by the spirits of the dead, and when the light transforms the plant and allows it to grow, it is the spirits of the dead who achieve this. We will all in the spiritual world float above the earth and contribute to the life and form of the plants."[65]

> "Now we will understand what kind of influence the spiritual world has on us, if I first mention in a few words how this influence manifests itself to one who is spiritually trained, who is able to receive inspirations from the spiritual world. They appear to him in such a way that he can only bring these inspirations to consciousness, if he can absorb, so to speak, something of the being who wants to inspire him, something of the qualities, something of the life tendency and life direction of this being. If it is a matter of the spiritually trained person developing conscious contacts, not only from the etheric body, but in this immediate way through inspiration with a deceased person, then it is necessary that he carry in his soul even more than what is brought about through interest and sympathy. The spiritually trained person must be able to transform himself, at least for a short time, in such a way that he takes on something of the

[65] I have translated both quotes from: Rudolf Steiner: *Menschheitsentwicklung und Christus-Erkenntnis.* GA 100, Dornach 1981, Page 66.

> habits, of the being-type of the human being with whom he wishes to come into contact. He must be able to live in the person in such a way that he can say to himself: You incorporate its habits so much that you could do what this person could do and could feel, sense and will like it. It is this empathy that matters!"[66]

It was precisely my impression that Alda was able to live into one of Corinna's artistic habits by shaping the small sculpture. Over the course of a few weeks, she carried out the processing of the stone sculpture. This was something that did not suit her own habits, but it enabled her to make room in her soul for the spiritual presence of the deceased. As I followed the whole course of events meditatively, I got imaginations, inspirations and intuitions and could therefore ask more precise questions than Alda herself was able to express. This collaboration around karma research thus brought an example that gave us exemplary insight into the tasks the deceased faces. Some of these realizations can be summarized as follows:

We can seek contact with a deceased person at any time, as long as we do it out of selfless love and do not want to get anything from the deceased for ourselves. They live beyond space and time, and that is why, in our understanding, they are not disturbed when we ask them to communicate with us. If the situation exists that they cannot take care of our concerns directly, because they are in the middle of some specific tasks, higher spiritual beings, certain angels they are connected with, come to entrust them with what we approached them about.

The paradox may even occur, however inconceivable this may sound, that in the earthly world, before the question or request has even been asked, we have already received an answer, which we did not notice, since we have not yet asked. The deceased can and want to be our companions in the spiritual realms, like angels.

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[66] My translation from: Rudolf Steiner: *Die Verbindung zwischen Lebenden und Toten.* GA 168. Dornach 1976. Page 188.

The deceased are able to point to the truth in the search for karmic recognition. However, we must consider where exactly they are in the development after death because certain falsifications will also be able to interfere in the meditation through the contributions of the deceased. It will prove useful to form clear ideas about how the sequence between two incarnations goes and in which contexts the deceased stays, so that different qualities in the communication can be recognised. The book *Blick aufs Karma* by Paul Wormer and Lili Chavannes, which treats the Dutch anthroposophist Ate Koopman's karmic path of practice based on Rudolf Steiner's suggestions, serves in this regard as a good and visible conceptual basis.[67]

Masters and guardians of meditation

Another theme can elevate meditative activity to a sublime issue. It concerns the question of the so-called masters of wisdom, who are always intimately connected to all true meditation. If I have worked my way so far that I have brought certain so-called advanced individualities or masters into my field of interest, I can of course include them in my spiritual work.

I can make it clear to myself where my own attitude and connection with spiritual or karmic streams lie, in which direction I appreciate the actions of previous people and why I want to turn to someone as an invisible helper. Even if we keep trying to shape and create something specific, the right attitude should still consist in the certainty that the spiritual will certainly come to us at the right moment. We didn't have to worry that this moment would never happen. The maturation of the soul creates space for spiritual encounters.

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[67] Paul Wormer, Lili Chavannes, Ate Koopmans: *Blick aufs Karma. Schicksalselemente im Lebenslauf.* Verlag Freies Geistesleben. Stuttgart 2004.

A reference from Rudolf Steiner's early esoteric work before the First World War is appropriate to be mentioned here. At that time, he emphasized that almost every meditation, if it is a real spiritual deepening, is a coming into contact with a master individuality.[68] And in a meditation we will only be able to experience and recognize, says Steiner, what such a pioneer, who is further along in spiritual development than we ourselves, gives us something, shows us and speaks to us. If this idea is cultivated, the thought cannot arise that I have to feel unfree because I would think I have to submit to someone I don't know, but I can practice integrating myself into an invisible hierarchy, a cosmic dance, to place a choir or a queue where everyone has their rightful place, according to the exercise of positioning mentioned previously. In addition to Steiner and the books by Markides, I found a stimulating contribution to the question of the work of the masters, by the American mystic Flower A. Newhouse (1909 – 1994).[69]

A person with a Christian attitude could, through meditation, seek contact with Christ, who Rudolf Steiner called "Lord of Karma". Some religious beliefs allow one to venerate the saints, masters, spirits, and spiritual beings and to imagine them as present, according to the objective motive of such devotion. The method of meditation described here is in no way denominational. Everyone has to achieve their own idea of the spiritual world according to their own level of belief and terminology. For my Christian-Occident attitude, which is based on anthroposophical studies, I prefer the terms taken from it for spiritual beings and facts. In the first book I showed how my karma also has other cultural and religious references, e.g. has inscribed, and incorporated from Greek, Egyptian, Chinese and Indian cultures, which have not disappeared, but which often set the tone in my current "belief configuration".

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[68] Rudolf Steiner: *Aus den Inhalten der esoterischen Schule.* GA 266. Band I. Dornach 1998. Page 251.
[69] Peter Michel: *Die großen Weg-Weiser – Flower A. Newhouse.* Aquamarin Verlag, Grafing 1999.

> "Karma and the Christ are the epitome of all evolution. Karma is the law of cause and effect in the spiritual world; it is the spiral of development. The Christ Power intervenes in the development of this karmic line as a guiding axis. This power is to be found at the bottom of every human soul since the coming of Christ on earth."[70]

Some exceptional publications by Isaiah Ben Aharon and Robert A. Powell also address similar questions in a well-founded and exemplary manner, which can provide those interested with further insight into the actions of Christ in our time.[71] The karma and spiritual researcher Heide Oehms particularly addresses the question of what role systematic spiritual training plays in relation to the fact that so many spiritual and Christ experiences in modern times seem to generally belong to humanity:

> "Spiritual experiences and experiences of Christ are either a consequence of preparation as an aspect of the past or grace as an invitation to a change of heart flowing from the future. Even if you haven't prepared for it in your current life, there must be something in the person that created a connection point from earlier times that is reactivated by the experience that is now occurring. And if it really happened that a person had completely turned away from the spiritual through many incarnations and he was converted to the spirit through a sudden experience, the fruits of this experience would be lost to him again unless he subsequently lost his life redesigned. Spiritual training is necessary in every case, either as preparation in the hope of spiritual experience or as an insight into one's own imperfection after an unforeseen spiritual experience. – Given the way we are today, we must actively work on transforming the parts of our being.

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[70] Rudolf Steiner: *Kosmogonie*. GA 94. Dornach 1979. Page 116.
[71] Jesaiah Ben Aharon: *Das spirituelle Ereignis des 20. Jahrhunderts. Eine Imagination.* Verlag am Goetheanum, Dornach 1994.
Robert A. Powell: *«Das größte Geheimnis unseres Zeitalters.» Gedanken zur Wiederkunft des Christus.* Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1999. Delivery: Urachhaus Verlag, Stuttgart.

Spiritual experiences, including encounters with Christ, have a different character if they are achieved through spiritual training. In this case they are finer and quieter. They mature into a constant experience of the presence of Christ."[72]

The feeling participation in the return conversion

Meditation often creates a more intense involvement in human dramas and events than is usual and possible in normal life. In everyday life, our ability to be aware of our own pain and to empathize with others is sometimes dampened due to a variety of circumstances. Often the strong feelings only come after the event has passed and an overview has been gained.

Anxiety can temporarily hold back and dampen such strong feelings. In my experience, thriving in spiritual experience, on the other hand, creates future problems, e.g. hostility, is already experienced in advance. When meditating and within the sequences of karmic viewing, we must expect that former feelings can be felt so strongly that they would overwhelm us if we were to experience them with similar intensity in normal consciousness. Compare what I told earlier about the medical doctor who experienced a pre-Christian Celtic initiation.

But we will not be negatively shocked here, because everything in the spiritual is constantly permeated by divine world sensations. We are, so to speak, immersed in a higher level of empathy for the hierarchies, so that the experiences that belong to us are now relived with adequate strength. I was always amazed that I experienced such strong impressions while walking back into past lives.

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[72] Heide Oehms: *Karma-Erkenntnis – Warum? Innere Entwicklung als Grundlage geistiger Fähigkeiten.* Verlag Urachhaus. Stuttgart 1999. Page 186.

It was the same when I – or a client – found corresponding places from previous lives that were looked at during a meditation – or a session – and visited them for the first time in this life. Then the emotional life became stronger again. Before someone has a spiritual experience, the spiritual usually appears to them as something very abstract. When you approach karma, which is pure spirit, the abstract is overcome and the spirit becomes powerful, intensively effective in the soul, so that synchronized feelings arise, which can sometimes be positively or negatively charged.

Already at the imagination level I noticed that the way of feeling becomes more refined, but especially with inspiration the will transforms into a feeling force because it is no longer tied to the body and the muscular system. Feeling becomes more and more active through meditative activity and will becomes more and more sensitive. It becomes a participant in inner events, aligning itself with the wisdom and truth of the spiritual world. Of course, this process of transforming mental relationships does not happen by itself, but I have to essentially want to activate my sense of self and constantly observe myself in order to increase my attention in all directions.

This does not mean an appeal to megalomania, but rather it involves an extraordinary task with the associated challenges. When I opened up about previous lives in an unbiased way and identified myself with the imaginative content, it meant an initiation, a transformation back into previous incarnations that was meaningful, redemptive, and renewing in keeping with the current life. It was about a soul intensity of which Rudolf Steiner carefully explained:

> «Let us now look, after we have looked at the metabolic-limb system, at the polar opposite system, at the nerve-sensory system, which is also present in the whole human being, but mainly in the human being head is predisposed, we look at the head of the human being. Through his head, man actually only experiences a reflection of the current external world.

But if one ascends to initiatory science, then one comes back to the earlier earthly lives through imaginative knowledge, its transformation into inspirational knowledge, and then through intuitive knowledge. Then you look into the previous earthly lives, but you then see them in their spiritual form. In the spiritual world, knowledge is also something entirely real. And the person who goes through this with real initiatory knowledge and looks into the previous earthly lives does not feel as if he were there now, just on June 15, 1924, but he becomes present to himself in that course of previous earthly lives. He doesn't just look into it, but he views back at himself in his entire being.

It is not an abstract, cognitive looking into it, it is a retransformation, a oneness, a becoming identical with what one was. Your inner being becomes very alive, very moved, and excited when you return to your previous earthly lives. But by going back, you gain the opportunity to change the perspective of your worldview. What is the point of view of the external worldview that one usually has? The point of view of the external world view that one usually has is the head. You cannot make this head, which you already had in your previous life on earth, the point of view of your world view, it is no longer there, it is gone. You can only make the spiritual that lives in the head the starting point of your worldview.

Initiation therefore consists in the fact that the human being spiritualizes himself by going back to his previous earthly life. And actually, all clairvoyance means, in the best sense of the word, going back to previous lives on earth. To be initiated means not to stop in your current earthly life, but to look at the things of the world with the person you were in your previous earthly life. And as a rule, when you return to your next life on

earth, you make the discovery that the person you were there has actually become a much more perfect person."[73]

On the one hand, the confirming information in this quote made med happy, when I had my own karmic experiences. On the other hand, for me they mean a constant appeal to take karma research so seriously that I constantly examine how the results influence my current attitude to life and how they can be integrated into everyday life.

A landscape as a starting basis

After a preparatory attunement with a mantra, a saying, or a poem for dynamic karma meditation, I internally create a selected landscape in which I stand and move. I allow the enthusiasm in the sound body of the poetic attunement to resonate into the inner nature.

First, I create a location from which I can explore the surrounding area. I pay attention to the ground and check the type of terrain. What does the grass look like, what flowers, plants, bushes, and trees grow here? I start with my own feet and keep looking towards the horizon. It is important to describe all the connections and details of the landscape for myself so that I know what components it has. At the beginning, the sensory reality given by the real, physical appearance may prevail, which I can retrieve from memory.

Gradually, some areas will change as I allow myself, little by little, to create artistic and imaginative restructuring, gardens, and buildings. So first I report for myself – or patiently observe – the various elements that are in the region, the material and condition

[73] Rudolf Steiner in the lecture on June 15, 1924 in Breslau (Polish: Wrocław): *Esoterische Betrachtungen karmischer Zusammenhänge.* Band V. GA 239. Dornach 1963. Page 259 ff.

of the soil, the moisture and the phenomena of water, air, and light conditions. I give myself time to observe the shapes and colours of various objects and creatures. After I notice what flowers, plants and trees grow here, I listen to what animal species live here.

It is necessary to visualize the cardinal points so that I can classify the path of the sun in the landscape. If I cannot determine from memory where east actually is, I try to feel the geographically correct east in the following meditations. At any time, a certain climate prevails in external nature. In meditation I use a specific weather, or I create blue sky, clouds or haze based on a mood. The weather can also change during a meditation. Once I came back from a trip and it had started to snow, without any prior thought that this could happen!

Over time I will be able to understand the different motifs, moods, and contexts of my landscape in such a way that I no longer just live in the superficiality of things, but I begin to sense and get to know certain subtleties and nuances in the motifs and elements. A feeling out of my I-being begins to form.

When this kind meditation is practiced, it will be noticed that more and more is experienced in normal consciousness through the sharpened ability to observe and the finer sensitivity towards nature and the rest of the environment. We discover things that we previously didn't notice or that didn't even interest us. In this way, I can feel the qualities of creation anew in the dynamic interplay between sensory life and meditation and at the same time strengthen and cultivate my soul configuration.

Architecture of the I

When the landscape has become really familiar to me so that I have developed a kind of feeling of home, the next step comes. I "build" or visualise a building – for example a hut. The type of this structure can be quite individual. Some people like to

build a house in such a way that it appears to be embedded in the landscape in question. Others want something larger, like a chapel or a tower.

Johan Fredrik Eckersberg (1822 – 1870):
Romsdalshorn in Rauma (1865).

I let my creative fantasy have free rein so that I can build what my soul needs for its inner activities. I then create an interior space in the house that separates me from the phenomena of nature. Different moods and motifs than the common outside are to be chosen as personal inside. For this building project, I imagine that I will apply for a kind of building permit from the living and elemental beings. I even imagine that they want to support me and help me with the inner work, so that from day to day the building is created in an intangible way through their willingness to help and is further looked after and developed by them.

In the first book I emphasized such elementary helpers in building huts. Many people whom I was able to advise and accompany have had similar experiences in which natural beings helped them. It could even be observed that the physically real place, which was considered a meditative model for the hut, was influenced by meditation and after a while took on a different mood, so that, for example, a significantly larger number of birds chose it as their place

of residence, than was the case before. Even people who knew nothing about meditative care observed this seemingly magical change. Every thought makes itself felt and with careful observation the effects of good thought forms can also be experienced.

Before I start the construction project, I select the property. I'm looking for a building site that is not far from the water. I find it, draw up a construction plan and calculate the size of the hut. It is important to know in which direction the entrance should be. I go there, turn around, think that the hut with the front door is already finished behind me. I look at the landscape again. What do I see in front of me? What is left, what is right? This view will always appear to me after I have finished a meditation, which is why it is important to consciously memorize this view.

I walk around the hut. I decide what material it is made of, how the walls are painted and how the roof is made. I also step away from the hut and look at it from a distance. I watch how it rests in the landscape and how nature absorbs it. Once I have a look at the location of my meditative hut, the question may be justified as to whether the beings in physically real nature were able to absorb something of this inner human I-task? Are there really different flowers growing here now than before and perhaps other birds or species of birds have moved in?

The hut initially only needs one room. Gradually I can expand it. First, I look at what it takes to feel at home there. What material is the floor, walls and inner roof made of? How is space arranged geometrically? Are there windows I can look out of? What are the colours and lighting conditions? What furniture, inventory and art objects do I need?

Perhaps it is appropriate to arrange a corner, niche, or altar so that certain religious or spiritual elements are represented. Candles, precious stones, coloured textiles, and certain clothes to wear when entering awaken feelings and thoughts that are suitable for meditation. Copies from art history, well-known paintings, pictures, and sculptures find their place here, so that viewing such

works of art creates a very specific state of mind that is appropriate when I later invite friends and spiritual beings to communicate with them.

This imaginary hut space corresponds to a primal motif that every person carries within themselves. When circumstances permit, a small child likes to begin to define boundaries so that it can discover itself as a free-standing being in relation to the world. When a child builds a fence around itself with building blocks or hides under a table, a primal event takes place in the child's soul. The self's certainty of being its own being begins to awaken. It wants to separate itself from its environment and create its own area of security, retreat, and protection from which it can courageously discover the world. This clearing the room for the own I is the discovery of what is truly not integrable, which makes it possible to embrace the otherness of the entire world.

If you are unable to freely design a room, you can also adapt your room to a given house. Once a woman in Central Europe settled into a hut that had belonged to a well-known philosopher to whom she later found her karmically connected. A woman from Norway continued to build an existing tree hut in her childhood favourite tree. Another person built a sukkah around a huge oak tree and then discovered through karma research that he once belonged to a Celtic tribe. Such huts, chapels and temples can be built in all kinds of areas of the world.

Someone built a rag tent in Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella National Park in Norway, another built a stone hut in a distant valley in the Himalayas, a third built a chapel on Iona, a fourth built a fisherman's house on Rügen, a fifth built a brick house among ancient ruins in Sicily, and a sixth, a castle in the air on a cloud, so that he could move freely over all areas. Over many years, hundreds of such imaginative huts arose all over the world. Some places were visited by many practitioners in unison, such as Iona, Crete, and the Alps, so that we wondered whether over time they would discover each other in the same place in spiritual consciousness.

The collection of karmic items

I am starting to feel really comfortable at home in my hut. Over many years I built additional new huts as sanctuaries for various research purposes. This created places that I went to again and again, even if I didn't necessarily want to explore further. The location of a hut simply provides peace and serenity for short moments of everyday life if I retreat there internally for just a few minutes. A minute house is created for eternity, so to speak. For example, a teacher may mentally take a student with whom he is having difficulty in class, to let him play in his garden or cottage. And someone who is in a work or relationship crisis may invite a colleague or partner there to have an inner conversation that would be impossible to have in everyday life.

Georg Flegel (1566 – 1638): *Smoking still life in a niche.*
Around 1630. Frankfurt Historical Museum

As the further events on this practice path occur, the hut becomes the inner place where results are processed so that motifs, objects, and symbols from past lives can be saved in a collection of karmic items. Because people are used to accumulating possessions,

which may be questionable from a certain other point of view, the opinion might arise that we should not adopt this approach from the sensory world in meditation.

This proposed path, on the other hand, only takes up this habit from the sensory world insofar as it is about wanting to learn to later transform what has been found imaginatively into pure knowledge of the spiritual. First, however, a variety of experiences must appear in a visual form, with which we learn to deal with meditatively and imaginatively for a while, without relying on immediate sensory perception. The external experiences with existing museums, galleries, art galleries and collections can be valuable in order to furnish the internal space with style, or I choose arrangements that follow a personal, simple style. It is important that I arrange the objects in such a way that they retain their shape, colour, and originality and that I find them properly in their places as I continue to work.

During these varied meditative exercises, which focus on many details and nuances, it is important to repeatedly look at the state of mind so that I do not get lost in unimportant things. Only insofar as I carry out the projects with a serious intention, e.g. from a feeling for beauty and clarity, they have a meaning for inner consideration.

The inner companion

It is a peculiarity of meditation that I work alone in my consciousness and want and can be untouched and separated from external motives. But it could very well be that I have someone with me in the physical space who guides or accompanies me, so to speak, as a coach, or that the other person who is physically present is meditating in a similar way at the same time and we may exchange ideas. But what I do in the actual sense, I always do with my self-consciousness alone. Then why shouldn't I do everything else separately? Why should I even try to do something together in the

context of meditation with someone I care about internally? It may have already become clear in the previous exercises that there is a difference whether I do something in isolation or whether someone is with me during an internal process.

In fact, one of the goals of meditation is to learn to enter into spiritual intercourse with other beings of the spiritual species. I can only get to know an angel by making my self-confidence transparent to him, by allowing him to essentially think within me. The normal urge to fall asleep is also an unconscious need to connect with the spiritual world. Accordingly, I must intentionally let my consciousness fall asleep "in the angel" in order to wake up again in his consciousness. The encounter with a spiritual being of the angelic sphere does not occur "from the outside", as is usually assumed in normal consciousness, but from within his being. In order to practice this incredibly significant paradox, the path initially goes through pictorial, imaginary parables.

I can invite all kinds of travel companions. From the hut I go on all sorts of trips with someone. Once I invite a friend from everyday life, another time a relative and a third time a deceased person. My own guardian angel or another virtue angel accompanies me in meditation. Regardless of who I choose as a companion, I let him become visible internally as best I can. I don't just let the angel be a light but give him a more-dimensional expression and colours – as an image of what I experience in him. As a self-help approach to how the angel might appear, I remember an encounter I had as a child with an older relative, a grandmother, or a grandfather. I felt well accepted and understood by them. I imagine that my relationship with the angel similarly requires an attitude of looking up so that I can sense his turning towards me.

The angel is someone who is facing me, but who accompanies me in such a way that I feel like he is looking past me to look at whatever the next task is for me. Accordingly, whenever I asked him for his involvement or his advice, I noticed again and again that he had already prepared everything, as if he knew what was about to hap-

pen. The angel lives ahead, so to speak, with what is to come, with the future. However, I first have to live in the present. In order to withstand such inner contradictions, I need the flexibility and cheerfulness to accept everything as it seems to be at the moment. My sensual, external body normally makes the guardian angel invisible. The fact that I give myself a supernatural, meditative form makes the angel visible internally.

In a separate exercise, I decide to go on a hike with my travel companion or with my angel from the hut. I ask him to show me something in the surrounding forest, for example. Or I know something special that I would like to show him, such as an old city, a castle, or a museum. What happens now? What do we see? Who do we meet? How do we respond to what may be found or encountered? How do I behave if, for example, the angel "absents" or doesn't appear to me at all?

When I occasionally discussed the topic of angels in seminars, some anthroposophists claimed that it was untimely to turn directly to the guardian angel if we sought knowledge of karma. This view is contradicted by a few points of view on this topic, which I would like to include here. In my opinion, they are completely in accordance with various statements by Rudolf Steiner, but that does not speak against the fact that everyone is free to decide what they do in meditation and what they want to know about angels.[74]

In the course of his cosmic development, the human individual can develop more and more and become a free, creative being who is no longer affected by the motives of other beings. Until we has reached a next level in the cosmic order, we will be guided and

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[74] Compare the following lectures by Rudolf Steiner:
Das Hereinwirken geistiger Wesenheiten in den Menschen. GA 102. Dornach 1974. Page 141f.
Geistige Hierarchien und ihre Widerspiegelung in der physischen Welt. GA 110. Dornach 1981. Page 92f.
Rhythmen im Kosmos und im Menschenwesen. GA 350. Dornach 1962. Page 85f.

directed by an angelic being far into the future and, depending on karmic necessity, in an incarnation, for example be protected from any external dangers. That is why human guardian angels have always been spoken of in religious traditions since ancient times. This idea corresponds entirely to a higher spiritual law.

The angels are such advanced beings who create an agreement between the individual human individualities and the course of the entire earth's evolution until man himself will be at the stage where he can replace the tasks of his guardian angel with self-acquired autonomy. Since recent times it has become more and more the case that the angels have come closer to human souls because they have received approval from higher hierarchical levels to give us their inspirations even more directly than before. According to Steiner, such a relationship between the sensory and the supersensory world, between humans and angels, should become more and more trusted, which is clearly confirmed by the many angelic messages in recent decades.

During life, we can therefore regard this angelic being as a guardian spirit, not because it regulates our karma – other higher beings also do the determinations of karma for us – but because, out of superior vigilance, it preserves a memory from life to life, of which is the evolutionary tendency and direction of the human being assigned to his angel throughout all incarnations. From one life to the next – i.e. in the spiritual phase between death and new birth – the angel also guides the continuity of human individuality from higher consciousness. Therefore, we could actually describe the angel as a memory spirit. So, it makes sense to think that we can at least ask this being concrete questions about our karma if we want to meditatively look into what corresponds to our own past. This memory angel is, so to speak, the closest being from the heavenly regions who accompanies us on the meditative path that leads towards true recollection.

> "The relationships between the sensible and the supersensible worlds are to become more intimate from the present age

onwards. People should learn to perceive the inspirations of the Angeloi,[75] who are mingling more and more with human souls."[76]

So in everyday life, on the one hand, I continue to view this being as a guardian angel, but on the other hand, in my meditation, he appears as a memory being and only gives me protection there insofar as I myself assume a certain degree of autonomy so that he is free out of his second position, if necessary, to protect my or to give me someone else to support me. If I help myself with these facts using declarations from Rudolf Steiner, the following steps result:[77]

1. In meditation I set myself the task of observing something karmic, a being or a process in the spiritual world. In doing so, I withdraw myself from the normal organization between the soul and the physical body. I use consciously chosen memories or self-created images – such as the ones with the landscape and the hut – as preparation, as a bridge to spiritual experience.

2. I enter a state in which the self-induced, meditative content of the soul disappears, so that I feel a transition to a dark state. What my soul has evoked must disappear from the imaginative, the pictorial or the remembered, so that new, imaginative images emerge from the darkness, as if created from nothing.

3. The imaginative images or motifs are much more vivid than, for example in a dream. I then prepare myself to identify with them. So, I completely deleted the first, subjective series of images, but

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[75] Angels (Latin *angelus*, Gothic *aggilus* from ancient Greek ἄγγελος *ángelos* "messenger", "emissary"; translation from Hebrew מלאך mal'ach "messenger") are spiritual beings that are found in the teachings of the monotheistic, Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam were created by God and are subordinate to him. Steiner often used the Greek term "angeloi" (plural) for the identical word "angel".
[76] Rudolf Steiner: *Vergangenheits- und Zukunftsimpulse im sozialen Geschehen.* GA 190. Dornach 1980. Page 53.
[77] Rudolf Steiner: *Okkultes Lesen und okkultes Hören. Wie bekommt man das Sein in die Ideenwelt hinein?* GA 156. Dornach 1987. Page 53ff.

it can still often happen that I don't get anything in their place. But through practice and meditative practice, I've gotten to the point where I'm not afraid of despair. There is no doubt in my mind that I would dissolve into nothingness. I also have the confidence that there will be no feeling of abandonment. I immerse myself in the spiritual environment, as if swimming into nothingness.

4. Afterwards it is like waking up, not from sleep, but from something much more real. At this moment I can say to myself: It wasn't sleep that I was in now! I didn't experience it the way I normally experience the "emptiness" with my subconscious in my sleep. It was totally different. Something happened during the meditative period where I was present and now, I am fully awake again. Certain experiences entered my consciousness that I was not fully aware of, but which I am certain in retrospect: I experienced them.

The spirit-experience is similar to a memory. I remember something that I didn't get through with the everyday self, but that I still went through with what was detached from the self. Afterwards it first comes into consciousness. I experience what I have been guided towards, what I have set myself the task of looking at. When I look back on what happened before, I realize: I lived through something thinking. "Thinking" has a broader meaning here than in everyday life. Given the current state of human evolution, I am not mature enough to experience what goes through in meditation, during which I have to immerse myself in a certain relative consciousness.

I can't think through this or experience it in thought. That is why another being takes over the function of my thinking in the time between going underground and resurfacing. So, I can't think normally during meditation. I can only remember afterwards what a spirit being inside me thought. An angelic being thought of it, Steiner pointed out. If necessary, the guardian angel thinks inside me when I meditate. I know in the meantime I have been intertwined with my angel. He experienced the essential thing for me. And because he experienced this, his consciousness was "lowered".

Accordingly, I wake up and remember with the usual thought-experience what the angel in me just experienced. However, the meditative process in which the angel in me thinks, does not have to be largely completed before memory kicks in to understand what has been spiritually experienced. In "jerky" sequences I can also determine a rather time-consuming event, so that fleeting interruptions to one's own thinking occur while meditating.

The boat

The first words my eldest son spoke in Swedish were: "Blå bil" – *blue car*. The concept of a meditative utensil is illustrated with the term *automobile*, self-movers. Such a vehicle, which can transport both me and my companion in all directions and in all weathers, is initially indispensable in this meditative method. Just like in the Norwegian folk tale "The good helpers," it travels just as well over land as over water. This suggests a basic meditative motif that is and remains wonderful. It's about an extraordinary boat or ship, like those found in fairy tales in many countries. The oriental style of poetry reproduces the same imaginative truth with the flying carpet.

In the anthroposophical terminology of the human being's entity shells, the spirit self, the astral body transformed through I work, most closely imitates this supernatural mobile vehicle. The seven main chakras can also be thought of in a pictorial form. In an imagination in meditation, the appearance of a beach plain or seabed corresponds to the lowest root or base chakra. My ship or boat – it could also be a four-wheeled cart or even a balloon or airship – is part of the equipment of my hut. Its anchorage is at best on the beach and has its own shelter with a quay on the water. It has sails, oars and the necessary equipment required for research excursions. I let the angel, companion or traveling companion steer the boat as captain so that I can calmly survey the surroundings while driving.

In smaller exercises I make various excursions in the near or far surroundings of my current inner region. I also look for places that I don't know. I look at what happens there and who I meet. But after such a trip abroad, I always return to my meditative hut. I greet and say goodbye to those I meet and also to my companion and go back to the hut to stay there for a while. Otherwise, the exit from the image meditation can always be done standing in the landscape surrounding the hut, because this perspective corresponds to the beginning of the dynamic karma meditation.

If I were not familiar with boating, sailing, and life by the sea, it would be easy to inform myself through on-site studies, literature, films, or the Internet, so that knowledge of reality would provide me with meaningful images for meditation. Reading fairy tales, stories and novels that feature ships is also helpful. *The Sharks*, the last novel by the Norwegian writer Jens Bjørneboe (1920 – 1976) and the young adult novels *The Books of Umber* by P. W. Cantanese are beautiful representations in this direction.

The imaginative island

We often go through life unconsciously. To put it simply, we are always running for new experiences. We place the shadowy memories behind us, so to speak, like when we walk towards the sun and cast a shadow behind us. A person with awakened consciousness behaves differently towards his memories. He prefers to place them in front of himself and work with them meditatively, making them transparent to objective memory, to the universal karma that exists "behind". To put it figuratively: All around us, but invisible, the cosmic memory exists, in which our individual karma is also embedded.

Karma is spread out like a sea of light around our spiritual being, in which most people are unconsciously "embedded". Or karma is like an atmosphere of light in which they flutter around without

knowing who carries them. From these comparisons it becomes understandable that in the following karma exercises it is appropriate to move upwards and outwards in a meditatively produced gesture in order to consciously go back into or down into karma.

Arnold Böcklin (1827 – 1901): *The Island of Life* (1888).

> "Why are there stars, why are there clouds? Why is there sun and moon? Why are animals on earth? Why are plants of the earth? Why are stones of the earth? Why are rivers and streams and waterfalls? Why is there a rock and a mountain? Why is everything there that is in the cosmos around us? All this is a provision for the gods to show us the first form of our karma, yes, after we have established our deeds. World is the storehouse of karma on the part of the gods."[78]

According to this quote from Steiner, the world is a karmic saving on the part of the spiritual world that we find at birth. This means that stars, clouds, sun, moon, animals, plants, stones, rivers, streams, waterfalls, rocks, and mountains are only an expression, a parable of what the forces of fate want to show us as our own karma. And what is more, our fellow human beings are our own karma, which we can view as a source of help in order to develop

[78] Rudolf Steiner: *Esoterische Betrachtungen karmischer Zusammenhänge.* 2. Band. From the lecture of June 22, 1924. Dornach 1988. GA 236. Page 267f.

properly. Karma is the work of my past, the palette of my future and here and there both at the same time. When I think like this, I realize that the images I create or receive in meditation are also taken from the same memory. And I do it to essentially get behind the images, to get to the core of karma. And this quintessence is a part of my individuality, which is spread out over the earth within my earthly life, but which has remained invisible until now.

From the imaginative hut it is now possible to obtain a new relationship with the whole earth. Through the inner mobility of traveling to any place, I create new horizons. I not only strive to travel close to the earth's surface, but it also becomes possible to mentally and spiritually "fly away" from the physical body and move away from the earth. Flying, which was already a reality in Atlantean times and was brought about again by the technical means of modern civilization, seems to be a materialization of the possibilities of the human spirit.

Just as with the construction of the hut I am manifesting the starting point for inner journeys on the lower, nature-like earthly level, I am also establishing a further basis for soul-spiritual explorations on a cloud or atmospheric level above. A journey then begins with the angel or travel companion in the boat across the earth, beyond its continents. I experience what it feels like to move in the earth's aura. What colours and configurations do I perceive? What does it look like downwards, in the distance and upwards? I remember maps, star charts and plane journeys that certainly showed me wonderful cloudscapes. How does it feel to be a king of the self in "cloud cuckoo land"?

I set myself the following inner task: I look for a kind of island in the spiritual "ocean" of the earth's aura. I discover it and climb ashore there. How does it look here? What landscape does it remind you of? Here I can no longer assume that I am on earth. For the time being, I am within a creative-imaginative structure that is supposed to provide me with temporary inner security until I develop enough courage and strength to witness the real imaginative

world that is spread out invisibly around me. I walk with the angel over the island ground and scout it out, as I did before down on earth. At least I am aware that it is not I, but the angel who thinks in me.

The archetype of the individuality

On the spirit island I encounter an imaginative representation of my individuality. How come? It is because I can look at my own individuality, my higher self, as if from the outside. I can learn who I am, how I was created. I am a point being in a circumference being. I imagine that I see a structure, a formation, an object that is an image of what occurs on earth as mineral, plant, or artistic elements. In such a moment I sense, experience, or see the most peculiar, wonderful, or simple motifs. For the sake of clarity, I try to avoid imagining animal forms, human figures or images of angels and higher beings as much as possible in this task. It's interesting and a nice challenge to follow which motifs emerge here.

Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval (1885–1972):
Untitled. Listasafn Reykjavíkur.

One I accompanied unexpectedly “found himself” in a cave resembling a druse, filled with violet gemstones. Another saw a spring gushing out of a rock. A third saw herself as a river, a fourth saw a blue flower in a meadow, a fifth a birch tree, a sixth a giant tree in the jungle, etc. One woman experienced herself as a rose gate, another woman as a garden house. Someone recognized himself as an obelisk, someone else as a bridge. In a similar way, a wide variety of images or imaginations emerge that express significant aspects of one’s own individuality.

The woman with the rose gate was able to find her image in countless variations in her current life. Firstly, she is very social in that she always cared for other people. She worked as a librarian in a school library. She was always remembered as being in social contexts in which she was caring for others, be it for her own children or in her work with pensioners. In addition, over the years she managed to support an otherwise unmanageable three-way relationship more and more calmly. The rose gate therefore expresses the ability of an individual to be a pleasant passage for other people.

Similarly, everyone finds their own motive and main theme, so that during the spiritual experience one can know what one is like, how one affects those around them. In another case, a young man experienced that he could not identify with a definable object. He floated and moved within a kind of musical geometry. Another felt presence as a quality of touch between two surfaces, which was difficult to put into words at first, but he himself knew exactly what to think about it.

In a seminar, an older woman said that she had not seen anything during this meditative exercise. She had simply started thinking about a birch tree in her garden. When I asked about it afterwards, she began to tell one of the most wonderful, amusing reflections I had ever heard about the birch tree itself. In retrospect, it was clear to all participants, including herself, that she had found an archetype of her individuality in the birch tree. So, the task is first

to get an experience that can gradually expand, clarify, or change with further visits to the island.

When visiting the spirit island and finding the original image, it is appropriate to identify with the structure so that you can experience what it feels like. A vein of gold, stalagmites in a grotto, a granite rock, a mountain lake, a spring, a stream, a waterfall, a cloud, a warm wind, a forest fire, a candle flame – all this and much more can be experienced as if you yourself are totally identical with this thing or element. You spiritually slip into the flower, stand in the tree, let a friend walk through the gate, and you identify with the substances, basic elements, and properties of the spirit structure. Such parables about man's higher self, which can be experienced as subjective imaginations, are for hierarchical beings the objects of their environment from which they draw so-called world thoughts.

For example, I personally experienced and was able to trace the groundwater in different rock layers around the world. I could also feel the pushing of the hot water out of the darkness of the earth and its being drawn up into the light in the air through a geyser. The temperature of the water, the plasticity, the docility, the dripping, etc. are qualities that I experienced. Another time I was indoors in the persistent long-suffering of a giant icicle slowly forming on a winter sandstone outcropping. This double motif showed the range of water's expressive ability between heat and cold.

The inversion of consciousness

Since there has been a rapprochement between certain interpretations of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy and Ken Wilber's integral philosophy, discussions have taken place about whether or not there exist spiritual beings apart from the human I-individuality. The debates that take place primarily in internet forums require a thorough expansion if Steiner's interpretations are to be understood. There are explanations in his writings that leave some

things open in his lectures on the same topic, since in the books he did not explicitly expand these oral interpretations about the human I to include the aspect of exactly how he proceeded in meditative research. In the lectures he rarely spoke in the first person, but he mostly described his approaches in a general manner and in the third person, which was still common practice at that time. Therefore, it may take some effort to follow all the passages in which he describes the complicated I-being as an activity and being outside of the body-bound point consciousness and its interrelationship with it.

Before I continue the description of the further steps in karma meditation, I would like to present some aspects of the acknowledging I from my perspective, how I experienced certain inner processes. Aspects emerged that Steiner only expressed in lectures, making them more difficult to compare with passages in his writings. The test can therefore only be carried out through self-determined descriptions. Steiner once said that we can only see what he calls the "true self" by looking back into a previous incarnation. At the very end of the special education course, he talks about egoism and how we concentrate our judgments on our own I-being. After explaining something about the astral body and etheric body, he continues:

> "None of them fall into the area of earth consciousness, only the I falls into the area of earth consciousness. But actually, this is only an illusion of the I, because the real I can only be seen by looking back at a previous incarnation. The present is only the emerging and only becomes a reality in the following incarnation. The I is only the baby."[79]

Steiner then describes an imagination that was even painted on the ceiling in the small dome in the first Goetheanum. I wrote about this about 40 years ago in an essay in the Stockholm magazine

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[79] Rudolf Steiner: *Heilpädagogischer Kurs.* GA 317. Dornach 1979. Page 183f.

Antropos, the title could be translated as "The battle for the I". – In anthroposophical history there are very few authors who have viewed the I from this perspective of repeated earthly lives or have described something about it from personal experience. A representation of the connection between Individuality and reincarnation based on scientific thinking can be found in a concise work by Max Hoffmeister, which I read in those days and tried unsuccessfully to have translated into Norwegian.[80]

Today I am of the opinion that much of Steiner's work can only be understood from this expanded first-person I-perspective and its consequences for the understanding of his anthroposophy can be characterized by primarily presenting his own experiences. The positioning that is made from a philosophical and pseudo-anthroposophical perspective usually leads to entrenched positions that have long since become barren and have even led the anthroposophical movement into multiple crises. So, I would now like to give a rough outline of what I think this is about.

In normal consciousness, we usually experience ourselves as a punctual self in the body, from which we observe and understand the environment and its phenomena. As I practiced meditations for several decades, little by little my consciousness gradually became different. Its different way of receiving spiritually experienced things sometimes came slowly or I experienced it in a new way in a surprising moment. A few times, I have even experienced this connection of two or even more types of consciousness into one another at the same time, like jerkily appearing. I then became aware of myself in a new and different way – as if waking up from a mini-sleep. In meditation, you usually don't just look at or experience things from one perspective. I learned to note that other points of view are always conceivable or possible, but that sometimes their consideration could not be realized because the

[80] Max Hoffmeister: *Reinkarnation – Antwort auf das Rätsel des Menschen.* Achberger Verlagsanstalt, 1975.

inherent intentionality of the developing I-being brought about certain experiences.

Once when I entered the imaginative world and saw my individuality visually and its spherical sublime was increasingly experiencing imaginative real in the middle, I realized that twelve different image views of my true I existed at the same time, as in a panorama. They were also found in their different qualities in the course of further meditative work. Just as the sun appears through the twelve constellations and in every astronomical image it gets a different force and illuminates from our earth from twelve different points of view, I recognized the "true I" from twelve different attitudes. I could integrate this twelveness in the existing physical body only apparently, but not essentially. Only by looking at 12 previous lives in the area of the viewing self, did this I-configuration be thought of as connected with earthly phenomena. According to Steiner, this imagination is also congruent with the story of the Gospels of the last sacrament.[81]

The question could arise whether not everyone is fed by such and the same twelve of a true I? Because I went with other people this exercise path and observed their individualities in connection with some of their earlier incarnations, I was able to find that there are a lot of other true self-essence, all of which were imaginative in a different twelveness. I also linked this motif to the topic of initiation fairy tales in my first book.

In my first book I told about 12 past lives as I had seen and relived them in meditative awareness. Until the publication of the book, it was these twelve incarnations that I knew with certainty and could relate my current biography and my karmic and interpersonal connections in relation to. But it was only after the publication of the book that I came across a statement in a lecture by Steiner that seeing 12 of yours past lives corresponds to a spiritual law known

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[81] Rudolf Steiner: *Ursprungsimpulse der Geisteswissenschaft. Christliche Esoterik im Lichte neuer Geisterkenntnis.* GA 96. Dornach 1974. Page 292f.

in the pre-Christian mysteries and which throws an occult light on the understanding of the Last Supper in the Gospels, where Christ sits at the table with his twelve disciples:

> "Throughout pre-Christian antique there were those initiated into the spiritual, in whom the son, Christ, was fervently awakened. This Christ had not penetrated the physical body, but he had awakened in the etheric body. As ethereal people they had become immortal, these initiates. I must describe to you one of the great significant pictures in the mysteries of the Spirit if you wish to understand the mysteries of the Son. I have to describe how the one who lay and slept for three and a half days – that is, was initiated – was surrounded by 12 human figures with whom he, as it were, sat together around a table.
>
> And how must they appear to all who, as initiates, have experienced the experiences of the higher world? 12 of his incarnations had appeared before him like this, 12 of his different bodies, which he himself had undergone. These 12 bodies were nothing but what he carried within himself as different joints in his own body. In occult terms the human body is divided into 12 joints, and these are said to be nothing but the reproduction of 12 incarnations through which man is gradually purified and raised to a higher stage of perfection. So, man felt himself surrounded by the forms through which he himself once passed, and he said to himself:
>
> The form you formerly bore resides in one of your couplings; the second figure lives in another, the third in a third, and so on. They surround you as guests surround the host at a meal. This was a picture set before every soul in the mysteries of the spirit. The one who constituted the conclusion was the Son of Man, who is no longer the son of a family, a tribe, a people, but is the son of all mankind. In fact, the highest perfection among the twelve constituted the thirteenth. And because he was outside his earthly self, he saw himself as the thirteenth. The Easter Supper, which Christ celebrates with the twelve, is meant to be a

> repetition on the physical plane of what those initiated in the spirit have experienced so often on the higher plane."[82]

The classic folk tales correspond to imaginations that the Rosicrucian implemented in pictorial stories after the Middle Ages. In the fairy tales we always find visual references to our development. A fairy tale corresponds to a prenatal panoramic in front, through which the soul views a model for the upcoming life before the conception. It contains the karma, including all exams and tasks that can be understood as part of an inauguration of life, a personal initiation. We learn that by looking back at an earlier incarnation. So, it is obvious that we deal with questions about the I-being of man – the individuality – before we go ahead seeking for the karmic recovery.

> "When imagination begins in the clairvoyant consciousness, when the first impressions emerge from the darkness of spiritual existence, these impressions of their quality are very similar in their entirety what is the content of the soul in us as a memory treasure. Like memory images, but now again like something infinite, the revelations from the spiritual world appear with us when we begin to perceive with the clairvoyant consciousness."[83]

On the one hand, this vocation from Steiner shows how we can get an idea of how the quality of the karmic review is, due to biographical memory work. On the other hand, however, we have to have attention that the spiritual also encounters us with first-time, totally new qualities. Compared to the experience with the physical senses within the body, the spirit experience with supernatural organs in the astral body has something completely extraordinary or

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[82] Summary of listener recordings of twenty lectures held between January 29, 1906 and June 12, 1907 in Berlin, in: Rudolf Steiner: *Ursprungsimpulse der Geisteswissenschaft. Christliche Esoterik im Lichte neuer Geist-Erkenntnis*. GA 96. Page 289f.
[83] Rudolf Steiner: *Inneres Wesen des Menschen und Leben zwischen Tod und neuer Geburt.* GA 153. Dornach 1978. Page 91f.

unusual. What I thought as the ordinary idea of being as my spiritual possession, as we fix an idea with normal awareness, loses its whole meaning. There is nothing existing in the spiritual as in the physical world. In the spiritual reality, everything is becoming and is being in emergence. Steiner characterizes this fact, which is ultimately a spiritual law, as follows:

> „The settling into a spiritual environment is to connect to an everlasting existence. This unrest of becoming in the spiritual outside world stands towards the experience of the interior, which perceives as a resting awareness within the never resting movement in which it is moved. The awakened spiritual consciousness must find itself in this reversal of inner experience towards the consciousness that lives in the body. This allows you to get a real knowledge of a body-free experience. And only such knowledge can include the conditions between death and new birth in its area."[84]

The imaginative impressions, matters and phenomena that I perceive, experience, and view in meditation are never to be fixed as something finished. The spiritual facts can also appear in a different character, depending on the time and nature of the approach. Thus, our traditional terms and names such as "angel", "Michael", "Christ" etc. are only idea prostheses that may lead to the healthy experience of the real spiritual being. In spiritual life, completely different salutations may become adequate. I see this quality of a true imagination again and again as one of the most beautiful and most important, but also the most difficult tasks when we want to receive spiritual experiences and develop spiritual research. Therefore, I must continue to have the openness that what I have experienced and researched so far could prove to be completely irrelevant and incorrect. To let my judgment having hypotheses character helps to not getting stuck on a finished terminology.

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[84] Rudolf Steiner: *Philosophie und Anthroposophie.* GA 35. Dornach 1965. Page 287.

Karma viewing and angel aspects

When I go into meditation and strive to view and acknowledge a karma context, I normally must have gained the serious preparedness to do so. It can be made aware of both before meditation and within the same. In a first row of karma research, the best thing to do is to research social relationships with other individualities that you have got to know as personalities in your current life. So, it makes sense to have previously looked at them through memory and biography work.

It is possible and even desirable that I visually take someone next to me, I invite him or her as a guest in my hut and ask the person to be there as a companion in the ship. I then start trying in which I turn to my angel questioningly or try to see an archetype of this particular friend's individuality on the spirit island.

Albrecht Dürer (1471 – 1528): *Hell fall* (1498).

There could be concerns that it would not be allowed to operate karma research over other people if I didn't ask them before in life.

I don't know a spiritual law that forbids us to do it. Only I should not allow anyone to access it in my project who has no understanding. So, there must be total discretion and classic confidentiality if the karma work doesn't run in friendship circles, where there is the possibility to exchange ideas and to speak openly about everything.

When I started talking about my dealings with Steiner's karma exercises and my previous lives shortly before the turn of the millennium, I still had the illusion that all anthroposophical listeners could be seen as my dear friends. Incidentally, they were also addressed in lectures like that. However, the reality showed that many personalities themselves thought contrary to karma and exchange of meditative content.

It depends on the preparatory biography work on how this first karma research is focused. Either karmic elements are examined that affect you individually: I can track down skills or inability, defects, and weaknesses and other mental or physical peculiarities in order to pursue how they were prepared in an earlier life. But I can also pursue good or difficult relationships to find out what someone has owed to me or how I am obliged. What I look out of a previous life then throws a light on what could be done today. I can realize that certain karmic tasks with the fellow human beings must be compensated for, so that I can still expect me to do something particular for somebody.

At this level of meditation, I make it clear to my angel in the hut that a trip is imminent that may go to the past centuries or reversing thousands of years. At the top of the island of the higher self, I also use a separate decision-making act. Once again in the middle of meditation, I am considering whether I am really ready to endure a karmic truth at that moment of my life. I then convey my decision to my angel. This free act is important so that I give me the courage to convincingly act myself.

Preparations for the karmic look through memories of existing life must be deleted in front of or in the middle of meditation, that

means, brought to a total standstill before I start looking back into a previous life. I capture this necessary decision as an obtaining total consciousness sleep compared to everyday life through my own will. The decision is a free act of the self, which creates the interior that a new, clairvoyant consciousness can rise.

I leave memory content behind me by forgetting them. However, the ability of the memory will continue to work as a subsequent sound so that continuity of self-awareness keep on. I will therefore always know that I am the same, but no signs of life may stand in the way of the karmic recovery. A deliberately brought-up removal of all normal memory notes awakens the higher self – like a phoenix from the ashes. Seen in this way, the other karmic imaginations can also be understood as true communications of your own higher self, which is kept in the lap of the higher hierarchies.

Karmic clairvoyance as an expansion of soul life get them from the timeless. My angel and other helpers and keepers are of course there for me, but only myself in my I-being can carry for responsibility towards what could happen to me because of any phenomenon and knowledge pain. I can always ask questions and do praying beforehand to see how I have to behave within the research process. This also creates moods and feelings that want to be understood as a reminder, warning, or an instruction to caution.

In their position on the angel, many meditators have learned that it seems as if he always knew what to do or what you want to ask soon. This fact should not prevent you from advising yourself with it about all projects. The memory angel lives in an even higher consciousness than most people can achieve at the moment. This fact sometimes appears in the imaginative area so that it is like an omniscient appearance or as uninvolved. But in reality, the guardian angel is always ready to act and is amiable. Over time, I got to know this difference in the spirit and opened up the corresponding form of communication with him and with the current spirit beings.

It could be that your own guardian angel is not the one or the suitable one who has to take over the function of the companion in

karma meditation. If that would be the case, anyone would most likely recognize it and be able to research the reasons for this fact. Rudolf Steiner has also given precise points of view why the karma of all of humanity began to chaotize in the High Middle Ages, with the result that a disharmony in the arcing of the angel was entered.[85]

At the eighth ecumenical council in Constantinople in 869, the Roman church fathers raised a dogma that man consists only of body and soul. Since then, no independence has been given to the individual spirit in the western church. The spirit in man was practically abolished for the general awareness of the West. This not only started a schism in Christianity on earth, which still has its consequences today, but also in the spiritual world, some guardian angels of the people in the following incarnations could no longer put all the experiences into the karma because they have to respect the human freedom, even if someone misjudges his spirit in which his karma is rooted.

In the work with the angel question, we find out whether another angel than our special meditation angel will add. During humanity evolution, everyone stands with several beings from the angels' ranking regulations in an intimately reference. This fact summarizes an old Norwegian evening song that means that "fourteen angels are around the child's bed". So, there should be no obstacle if the own guardian angel from not yet recognized, possibly old, karmic problems would not or could not support meditative work.

Being together with an angel in the imaginative, self-illuminating inner world gradually increased in such a way that I could indulge in it entirely. I dared to record the work of the angel as if he were to give me everything that lived in me as a consciousness. Compared to the art of writing, I appear in karmic clairvoyance, during the imagination, as an occult writer who write down everything

[85] Comparison: Rudolf Steiner: *Esoterische Betrachtungen karmischer Zusammenhänge.* Band III. GA 237. Page 179f.

the angel truly dictates to me.[86] But it is the case that I must first have started the inner letter before the angel handed over something. I discovered this reversal of things as an expression of a spiritual law.

Here I still have to point out that it is never certain that the preparatory memory of topics or people who stand for examination lead to karmic imaginations or motifs in previous lives that have to do with it. Sometimes completely different motifs appeared that were related to people and events from the current one, but they had not been considered at all. Regardless, the biographical preparation is important, since it can turn out later, like several motifs stand together, or it is necessary to work out another motif first to create a basis, so that the karmic background of what is asked can be better traded. In this regard, too, I got to know the cautious attitude of higher beings behind the meditative scenes, who overlook everything more sensibly than myself.

Time as a room experience

So far, I have shown how the practitioner and meditator mostly observed, experienced, and acted as a spatial self while exploring, experiencing, and acting. From now on, however, the task arises to experience more and more as a time self. This means that I do a striking inner step to temporarily put away the figurative self so that I always can accept and go into new shapes in the future situations during meditation and can recognize myself in different designs and conditions, whereby at the same time my own I-being as researcher and viewer still is kept. A contradictory obvious existence is to be created, with the task that, on the one hand, folds apart, but remains uniform at the same time.

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[86] Comparison: Rudolf Steiner: *Wie erwirbt man sich Verständnis für die geistige Welt.* GA 154. Dornach 1973. Page 14.

Evelyn De Morgan (1855 – 1919): *Aurora Triumphans.*

In parallel to my role as present researcher, my I-experience remains uniformly and unbroken also in what I experience again as a past personality of a former incarnation. In accepting the past, I also identify with a future appearance. So, a new, differentiated time personality is gradually blossoming out of the trusted, fixed room. Later, I will treat the serious consequences for everyday life, which this bring. On the spiritual island, I try to overcome the intellectual bound to gravity. That means, it is possible to swap below and above. Instead of thinking about heaven as above and earth underneath, I can both grasp them in the other way around so that the earth appears as a heavenly structure to which I almost look upwards. This means that the island – conversely as described before – shows its surface against the earth. When going back in time, most people are initially more familiar with thinking of the earth as existing beneath them.

Now I imagine it in such a way that it will appear exactly as it once was. In the research moment it is no longer the present earth down there, but I think of an earth as recognizable from a certain time with the events that actually belonged to one of my previous lives. These appearances are now unfolding before my inner observing because I ask for them.

So, I resolve to go there, rush, fly, drive, fall or sink down, because I will initially leave the boat here on the spirit island until I come

back here after the karmic retransformation. The angel accompanies me at my side every step of the way in everything I do next. When I awaken on earth in a past, I then carry out different procedures. It makes sense to build a scene in which I start from the archetype of my individuality by placing myself in a geographical place or an element that corresponds to it.

Awakening from an imaginary sleep

Now I will first describe a procedure that I have used the most with beginners. It has proven to be safe and successful. As you continue to work in karma meditation, the angel is experienced as omnipresent. I imagine him present, but better not as a visible figure in the transformation back into the earthly preworld. If any questions or problems arise, he is there to help me with encouragement and advice.

Evelyn De Morgan (1855 – 1919): *Night and Sleep* (1878).

Down on the past earth it is night. I step into the darkness and experience the silence. A new day is approaching, and the sun will soon rise in the east. I float as pure consciousness, as a spirit, over an undefined landscape. I watch how the birds begin to sing and rejoice at this hour of the morning, even at this time. I follow a

songbird, a pigeon, or a crow as if I were a flying bird myself, hovering towards a settlement, a village or over a city. I stay in this floating, undifferentiated state for a while until I get an orientation about the landscape motifs. I look for the cardinal points again and ask myself questions like the following: How far is it to the next river? Where are the nearest high mountains? Where is an ocean? Where is the nearest historic city? I'll wait quietly until possible answers come closer or crystallize from the surrounding area.

I think that I am one of the people who will soon wake up from their sleep here in this place, in this settlement. I follow a bird that sits down on a roof and, as it were, seek out a person or let my angel show me someone who is sleeping. I think its body may have belonged to me before, so that I can think about this person as myself. I then experience that just as this person opens its eyes in the lying position, I wake up. I orient myself after waking up. Where am I? In a bed, in a hammock, on a chaise longue, on a divan, on a lounger, on the grass? Am I inside or outside? Am I in a dormitory, a room, a hut, a tent, an igloo? Am I alone or with someone?

I give these questions an immediate but undemanding answer and let the next logical event emerge from the answers until a story develops, which I uncover step by step, event by event. If I have initially decided on a certain thread or topic, all the following details and circumstances must arise in a similar way, because in all events there has always been an unexceptional sensual order and a social consequence.

If I get stuck or feel that the thread is lost, or if I get the feeling that I'm just spinning, I go back and pick up another thread that was perhaps there at the starting point or was still experienced as coherent. If possible, within the imaginative event, one should not judge the emerging connections with an active mind, but only in retrospect can I do this sufficiently. I cannot bring about a real understanding of the spirit in any other way than that one phenomenon always points to something else, so I first have to settle into what is present and see what happens next.

When I have followed and mastered this one day, including its various adventures and events, until the evening and when I go to bed again, I go back through all the steps over the spiritual island, the hut and the landscape and thus duly complete my first karma meditation. I will describe in more detail below how the decline from karma viewing takes place with its logical steps.

The tools of the four elements

Another approach to finding a beginning within the karmic retransformation, which I have often used in workshops and in groups, goes as follows: After stationing the boat on the spirit island, visiting the archetype, and then lingered into a calm, empty intermediate state, I tell myself that I am already in the middle of a corresponding karmic situation on earth. The following framework conditions must be addressed in turn, dealing with the four elements earth, water, air, and fire.

First of all, I concern myself with the ground on which I stand. How does he feel? Like grass, sand, gravel, paving, clay, wood, concrete? Am I wearing footwear such as shoes, boots, sandals or am I barefoot? I start to move forward. Is the floor flat or sloping? If it is slanted, do I go down the slope or up? Is there a staircase? Am I inside a building or outside in the nature, in a garden? I then touch something near me with one hand. Maybe I'm wearing something in my hands? What can I feel or touch like this? I spend a few moments thinking about the object and its surface that I touch, how it feels, whether smooth or rough.

I keep moving and experiencing the surroundings. I determine whether I am alone or whether there are other people with me. If there aren't any, I keep walking until I meet someone. Who is it? How can I assess myself so far? How do I look? What clothes am I wearing? Am I female or male? What does the other person look like? Is it a woman or a man? I think about how old I am and what the other person's age is. Then I let the motif of the water emerge.

Maybe something should be drunk? Are water or other drinks needed? Are there any vessels? Is there a stream, a pond, a fountain? Do somebody wash clothes or take a bath? Or am I by the sea? Are there any ships to be seen? What is the weather like? Is the sun shining or is it raining?

Now there is a change in whereabouts. Someone or several people appear from outside in the distance. Maybe they're just animals. Maybe there is danger? Or a message is delivered and causes me to be in the position of having to get to a second location. How do I undertake the hike, the journey, the crossing? Do I have to escape? Is there about running, riding, driving? Am I traveling alone or with someone? How is the air? How long is the voyage? What happens along the way? Maybe I can reach the new place without too dramatic circumstances. Then, I'm being entertained somewhere. Is it a storage area? A village? A town? Am I coming to a restaurant, to strangers or to dear acquaintances? How do I perceive historical features on the clothes and houses?

I then move on to the motif with the fire. What does it consist of? Do I see a fireplace, an oven, torches, oil lamps, candles? I let the external heat source withdraw and enter other heat or light motifs. Do they have to do with warm clothing, social warmth, a warming conversation? I allow a mood of calm and peace to emerge from the intimacy of warmth. I pause in this happiness for a while.

I then step out of the imaginative sequence of images and gratefully contact the angel again. I'm moving back with him, to the island, the spiritual stopover. I look for my archetype. If it feels right, I ask questions about what happened here, but I live more in the ebb and flow of the feelings I experienced than in new thoughts that might arise. Then the angel takes me back to the hut in the boat that was at the island stand. There I do the necessary follow-up work, which I will describe below, say goodbye to my travel companions, say thank you and linger in the landscape for a while before I end the meditation with a saying or a verse.

The observer consciousness

When we dream, we usually do not have access to normal judgment, which is now the most natural quality of human daytime consciousness. If I enter the spiritual filed in a healthy way through higher types of consciousness, I will never lose my healthy ability to think. If that were the case, there are certainly no imaginations present, but a visionary experience would have occurred that does not have multiple or double consciousness. Then the viewer would have, as it were, merged with what he saw in a single act of experience.

In normal consciousness it is right – as from an entire involvement – to experience everything. In the supernatural, however, it is healthy to exist in several types of consciousness at the same time and to be able to move between them. In order to learn this, it is necessary to first practice different such types separately, then combine them together to achieve double consciousness or triple consciousness. If in the following descriptions the emphasis is on the newly developed types of consciousness, it does not mean that the human mind has been wiped out.

When I enter the supernatural in a healthy way, my original consciousness of daily life follows me like a loyal dog that experiences everything but understands nothing and simply looks out for its owner. Or it's like a horse that I ride. In karma research, yes, in all spiritual research, it makes sense to adopt different types of consciousness, locations, external and internal perspectives, directions and points of view that must not be restricted by normal consciousness. I would particularly like to highlight and characterize three such types of consciousness that are mandatory for spiritual research. I will also describe a fourth type in a later section.

1. Observer consciousness

2. Field consciousness

3. Visitor consciousness

The first resembles imaginative, the second inspirational and the third intuitive absorption of spiritual contents. Seen in this way, they appear in the living thinking of the serene consciousness soul as preliminary stages of these three higher types of consciousness.

In the observer consciousness, habitually, I remain outside the event. I have the opportunity to observe myself in the pictural context as a former person acting and to follow what I do and how I behave from the outside. In this position I can do research well because I can change my viewing position to survey places and events as if I were a bird circling over the place or a fly sitting on the windowsill. I follow what is happening in a similar way to when I look at art or in the theatre and cinema. The difference, however, is that in an imagination I am always adaptable, that I go along and appear invisibly within the event, but without influencing the action. For example, I discover that the imagination is really spread out around me and not just in front of me.

It is always possible to switch between types of consciousness within an exploration in order to strengthen independence. With the observer position, it was easier for me to temporarily withdraw from dramatic and emotional experiences in order to gain new strength while I explored further moments in the other positions. In this state I was able to closely explore details and historical clues such as drawings, patterns, writing, signs, outlines, fabrics, robes, shoes, and physiognomies. I understand this research position to mean that I am currently interwoven with the self as if in a picture event. I sample the content anonymously, so to speak. This refers to what is stated to as observing in the Akasha Chronicle in all esoteric literature.[87]

[87] Compare Rudolf Steiner: *Menschengeschichte im Lichte der Geistesfor-schung.* GA 61. Dornach 1962. Page 271.

The field consciousness

In the field consciousness I am no longer outside the process. I'm now taking part myself; I'm playing along in the events. I get a name, so to speak. This means that it is now also possible to inquire about my own name in the incarnation at that time that is being researched. I can also discover the names of the other people involved. I ask the question, wait a bit, and then feel whether and how an answer reaches me. For example, I may find myself in a conversation with someone who says my name or title. Or I hear my name from outside because someone I haven't noticed until now is calling me; a process that can also be observed. In field consciousness I find myself right in the middle of the action. My current researcher-self lives in the former self or in its personality. I can grasp what my soul was like back then and I can follow the events as I experienced them at that time.

In relation to the observer position, which can certainly be more comprehensive with regard to external things, the field position on the one hand means that I am a little restricted because I only perceive everything from one direction, just as it is in ordinary life case. On the other hand, I experience a closer connection with what is happening, which gives me the opportunity to increase the experience of evidence. In the observer consciousness, on the other hand, there is a danger that I cannot or do not want to identify with what I see and therefore fail to achieve a deeper level of security about it.

If a person has appeared in the pictural course with whom I can somehow identify because I have taken in a variety of views in order to consider an identity or clarify evidence, I try to create a chronological progression of time, perhaps in the sense of an ongoing event spanning several days and weeks, even possibly years, to keep an eye on life at that time. Once I have tried these two positions back and forth in a meditative viewing, I can switch to the third position.

The visitor consciousness

Basically, I am a visitor to everything I encounter in meditation. Accordingly, I am someone who is not completely at home at first but is a guest in these experiences. Thus, the visitor consciousness will first be an increase in what a person committed to the spirit always has to practice. It is undoubtedly permissible and even desirable to climb into all images, formations, figures, and individuals that I encounter in order to experience, sense, and recognize them from within. This means, to put it in Steiner's terms, moving from imagination to inspiration and intuition.

However, we can be clear that the observer consciousness will primarily only contain imaginative and inspirative elements but will not be able to draw on intuition. Intuitiveness will only emerge in the visitor consciousness when I have reached a certain level of maturity in my exercises. The field consciousness, where I am essentially with myself, will be the place where I will probably experience intuitive knowledge for the first time.

For example, if I assume that I, as the personality at the time, am in conversation with someone, I can enter into my counterpart with my consciousness and slip into him. I listen to his soul and perceive what he thinks, feels, and wants. In this way I can not only feel the inner life of people, but also the inner life of animals and all other beings that exist in the world. In this manner, I can now investigate events through the perspective of other people that I was not able to experience myself at that time.

I can link extensive epistemological representations to the meditative approach to several types of consciousness, which would at best support inner security during research. But if I try out how a type of consciousness works through step-by-step investigations, I will develop the certainty of knowledge based on empiricism, which is better than all previous, more theoretical interpretations. What may not convince me at this level of work will at best expand

with continued practice. A calmness without exception is the guideline when practicing the three types of consciousness.

It should also be noted that I can get into situations where I feel as if I am being held back by someone or something, that I feel that I am not yet allowed here. In such situations the liveliness of the spiritual essence becomes apparent. This definitely has to do with intuition; it would be, so to speak, the outside of an intuitive process. If I become in any way flighty, anxious or even pushy, I will immediately be expressly rejected, or my angel will give me a "hint" that I need to be careful or that I have gone astray. A notable example is the following episode, which also contains a basic spiritual truth:

I once explored through observer consciousness a situation in Atlantean times in which a group of women were led home through a forest by a scout after work. After the content-rich explorations I had just completed, a quiet phase of meditation arose where I observed the group from behind as an anonymous present spirit. I wanted to ask one of the women who played the "main role" a specific question about the spiritual world at that time of Atlantis. At that moment her head turned back, and she looked, as it were, from the Atlantean time into my present consciousness. Her expression was so deeply serious that I immediately understood how inappropriate the question was at that moment. Who looked at me through the eyes of the Atlantean woman in this moment of research? Was it an independent spiritual being that is and must be legitimately active in the imaginative world? At this point I will leave these questions open.

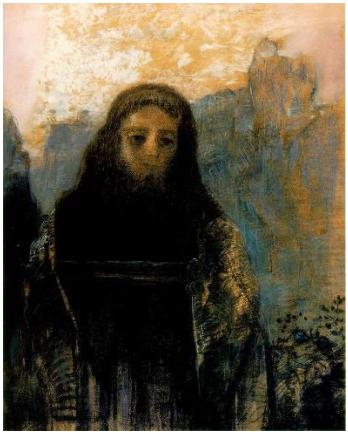
Now back to the methodology of karma meditation: Otherwise, visitor awareness is an advantage if I haven't yet found out whether I myself am one of the people appearing. It is also appropriate if I want to obtain general information about a group or if I want to carry out specific research into relationships between several people. It is also interesting and sometimes necessary to look at yourself through someone else's eyes. Of these three types of

consciousness described, I used two and even all three at the same time when I achieved a certain level of skill. Because it is precisely the property of the human I-being that in its devotion it can not only fix something but is also able to expand over something or over several phenomena in parallel. Practicing point and circumference awareness, to use geometric terms, is part of the craft of spiritual inquiry.

If I want to research the supernatural or karma, then my head logic has to transform itself into a heart logic, just as ordinary memory changes into a different state of soul activity. However, as a spiritual seeker, I do not always have to put myself in a higher state of consciousness – such as those described above – for everyday experiences, so that I do not always need to use the higher soul abilities in everyday life. From the moments of spiritual research, I can return to the ordinary world and of course I will think and have a memory just like before or like other people. As spiritual practitioners, however, we can become able to shift from everyday consciousness to a state of supersensory consciousness and back again without becoming confused.

The Parzival mood

In the spiritual fields we must learn to *ask*. Modern life often leads us away from asking questions. Instead of asking open questions ourselves and waiting for questions from others, the amount of information that we are usually forced to take in in the new communication society leads to people quickly making judgments about everything. It is considered independence that someone can always make their own judgment based on knowledge of the matter. Certainly, we must always be able to judge the external circumstances of life, but when we turn to the spiritual, we should adopt an attitude of humility and reverence, mindful that we ask the right questions at the right time and at the right place.



Odilon Redon (1840 – 1916): *Parzival*.

In external life we immediately find ourselves in the middle of facts that we must judge in order to achieve freedom. The spiritual initially appears in us in such a way that it most likely does not attack us with full force immediately, but rather it announces itself quietly, gently, and slowly. Like the negative pole of a magnet, our ready-made judgments and biases hold back the spiritual because they cling to the physical facts. The questioning attitude, on the other hand, instead acts like an invitation to the legitimate beings of the spiritual world who give one hundred percent attention to the freedom of the individual. A judgment is something finished, that closes rather than opens a conversation. Instead, a question can create a mood, an attitude that opens something, introduces something.

Only everyone can discover for themselves what questions might be at stake in the respective situation. In this context, Rudolf Steiner spoke of the Parzival mood.[88] If there is an inner openness – something like an open vessel, which would correspond to the bowl of the Grail – something is spiritually announced to us, which

[88] Rudolf Steiner: *Aus der Akasha-Forschung.* GA 148. Page 169f.

corresponds to the Grail substance, which would connect with the source forces of one's own soul as an inner experience.[89] At the beginning of any karmic work, the basic attitude would of course be one of questioning. I am an adventurer, a seeker, an explorer, a researcher. So, I have the human right to ask questions all the time. Anything that is uncertain to me, I can research, explore, examine, and I can go closer and sound it out. I am simply allowed to contact the unexplored in any way imaginable, as long as I do not interfere with the phenomenon itself.

At the same time, I practice patience, patience, and even more patience. My persistent composure will ultimately allow the answers to mature. Caution and boldness, which can appear as "companions", are the most important mottos of the spiritual researcher. However, it is not always easy to know when to ask a question and when not to. Should I not ask at first? And then maybe guess in a roundabout way? Or do I ask outright and then possibly be rejected? Do I accept to stand there with a long face without an answer?

A good way to work is to list all questions in advance in normal consciousness in order to temporarily forget them during meditation. I then mentally filled myself with questions. Now I consciously step into the topic of meditation to be explored without having the questions asked in the foreground of my consciousness. But an echo of these questions remains in the feeling. I sent it ahead like an application. Within meditation I am then completely free to experience and explore, but at the same time the certainty

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[89] According to medieval belief, the Holy Grail is the bowl from which Christ served the wine at the Last Supper and with which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood of the Crucified. According to legend, the Grail is endowed with heavenly powers and is guarded and worshiped in an inaccessible area by a chosen guardian, his knights and noblewomen and a worthy community. In the legend of Parzival, the Grail is also the symbol of purity and rejuvenation through Christ. It is said that the Grail bowl once belonged to the Queen of Sheba, but that it was originally inserted as an ornament on the crown of Lucifer, who had fallen from heaven. Rudolf Steiner described his anthroposophy as a science of the Grail.

of the presence of certain puzzles is present in my consciousness as an aura of self-substance around me, which the pleasing spirit beings perceive and examine and into which they, if necessary, are going to imprint their answers so that I can experience them intuitively.

Time and geographic perspectives

Because the imagination gradually develops in its clarity as a flexible, very intertwining, varied phenomenon like "rising," it is possible to "shift" back and forth in time and space. Within the exploration of an incarnation, where initially, for example, after looking at a stretch of adult life, I can go back to adolescence and childhood by focusing on the fact that a certain age is called for. Or I erase an imagination, ask a question, and wait to see what emerges. In this way it is possible to explore an entire incarnation through this approach through a series of meditations.

In trying to get a sense of time, I can let myself stretch like a span between now and then, giving me a sense of how far back the event may have been. It is also possible to set up historical events that I know and when they took place like markers in my consciousness, so that the events relevant to research can be conveniently glimpsed before or after them. In this way I compare the experience with these fixed motifs and can therefore find out when the event in question took place.

Sometimes such questions about time indication are followed by direct answers from the spiritual beings or I see years marked on buildings or in books, such as Anno Domini. It is therefore appropriate, to have learned e.g. Roman numbers beforehand in order to be able to read them. Or I write down inexplicable texts and draw symbols and images that occur in order to subsequently look for them in archaeological discoveries and historical sources.

Geographical studies are equally important. It is important to orient yourself locally and find the cardinal points. This is best done when I follow the movement of the sun. This way I will also know whether I am in the northern or southern hemisphere. Another method is to get high above the ground, orienting myself to a landscape, country, or continent as if I were looking down at a map.

If I go far back in pre-Christian times, I will often no longer have the opportunity to compare the landscapes with their current outlines, because erosion and changes in the sea surface have radically changed the landscape conditions in many places. So instead, I have to work with a searching, permeable feeling that considers knowledge of the development of the earth's surface.

When I took my orientation, similar to the known historical facts in the geographical area, at landmarks that have been known since time immemorial, such as famous mountain peaks, high plateaus, rivers, or cities, I was also able to trace exactly where I was in the past. Another approach was to memorize the landscapes I saw in detail so that I could then search for them later using Google Earth. Thus, in the Azores, Morocco, Mongolia, and China, I found ancient cultural centres that are ignored by modern archaeology, as well as geological formations that corresponded to what was spiritually observed.

Uncovering past lives

During a karmic review there are always opportunities to ask questions about karmic connections to the present. When outstanding and pregnant impressions of other people from back then arose in my imagination, where I had the feeling that they belonged to my karmic circle, I would stop for a moment in the middle of things to ask who they corresponded to in my life today. Such interruptions immediately integrate the general instruction to build up the given imagination again using one's own strength or to let it run again from an earlier point in time.

Either I ask the questions to my angel, who is basically there, or I spread the question in general, as if I were sending the question to someone invisible in the higher hierarchies who I only think about. I wait for the answers undemandingly. Sometimes they only come after the end of a meditation. Other times, surprisingly, I even experience knowledge about a karmic identity on my own, without consciously asking.

When I do such checks based on normal memory during the meditative karma review, I have to be very careful not to confuse anything – in keeping with what was said in the paragraph about the angel above. It may be that at the beginning of a karma work like this I only manage to master the act of looking. Everyone has to see what is right for them. After the meditation, I go through everything again to note the legitimate questions. When I get an overview of a possible previous life by following a life course from birth to death, I recognize various threads that run between then and now.

However, in order to correctly understand today's life karmically, knowledge of just a single previous incarnation is far from sufficient. Rather, it's about being able to relate multiple lives to one another. So, it is necessary to patiently take time and energy to reflect on several "autobiographies" that I have practically acquired in order to be able to follow the karmic connections even more fully. Over time I found a number of such connections that run through the incarnations. I was able to follow them individually and thereby immerse myself in interesting, ever-changing relationships that I have had in different configurations with a range of individuals over a number of lives. It is also possible and certainly always appropriate to take up a question or a problem from current life in order to study a "backwards" development.

Because I got to know my individuality more and more through this "game of patience" as a plumb line and binding agent, I discovered the lives that belong to me in their connections and mutual conditions. Things that didn't seem consistent at the beginning of the

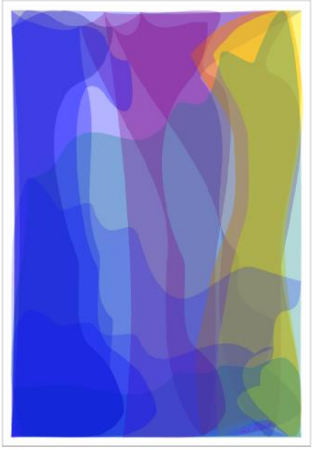
work and that I had to put aside as a result, I was able to reintegrate later after other connections emerged. In my opinion, karma research is a time-consuming work that sometimes has to be handled just as laboriously and conscientiously as in document research or archaeology. As a consolation, it should be noted that I also experienced days and periods in which a whole accumulation of insights emerged almost unexpectedly.

A former death threshold and the excarnation consciousness

The way we once died can also be explored. The circumstances and causes of the moments of death can be examined in detail. The following questions can be asked: Did I once die as a child? In the youth? After a long and successful life? Did I die due to illness or old age? Were other people there when you died? Was my death caused by someone else? Was I killed in battle? What weapon, if any, killed me? Did I once die from an assassination attempt? Who was involved? Such and similar questions lead to a new familiarity in dealing with dying and death.

The circumstances before, during and after the moment of death can accordingly be explored in detail through the different types of consciousness. So, it will be interesting to compare for the first time how things are experienced within a lifetime and to what extent things appear different after death.

I can feel how I separated from the physical body. What did I see or think immediately afterwards? What is past experience and what is my current understanding of this process? How did I look back on the last incarnation? Did I stay with my corpse for a short time or for a long time? How did I experience those who remained behind, who sometimes cared for me and cried over me? Which funeral rituals can I discover? How were they different in the ethnic contexts and cultures where I was incarnated?



Jostein Sæther: *The blue hour.*
Digital aquarelle, 2015.

Pursuing the crossing of a previous death threshold can be compared with the step from field consciousness to observer consciousness. However, the intensity of the feeling of being inside the body, which is present in the field consciousness, remains and increases throughout as one progresses into the world beyond after one's death. So, I describe this consciousness as a fourth type, as *excarnation consciousness*, which experiences purely supernatural facts, and which is no longer based on former earthly conditions because I was no longer incarnated in this state. From this type of consciousness, I continued research into the purely spiritual and was thus able to investigate certain processes between death and new birth.

However, this exploration of the higher spiritual regions cannot easily be continued in the same way as the research of previous lives because we have no terms for the different levels and regions of the spiritual world in the usual sense. It is therefore of great benefit to first study spiritual science – like Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy – or older religious literature about these spiritual states. If someone then works through their own results bit by bit

and continually expands the boundaries of their own knowledge, they will gradually gain a true overview of their former incarnations.

Virtues of life and virtue angels

There are three soul attributes that I can discover in excarnation consciousness. Asking about these virtues immediately provides a lot of information about the life you have just completed. They correspond to the main effort that I was then practicing and developing in thinking, feeling, and acting. The acquisition of these virtues may have been necessary for karmic reasons, or they may have developed during life as achievements that I was allowed to view after death as the fruits of incarnation and, as it were, present as a gift to the spiritual beings who direct human life. The terms that we encountered with the eurythmy figures can be used again here. I associate movement, feeling and character as an interrelated trinity with these three virtues.

A number of characteristics of this kind are taken up and deepened throughout the incarnations: altruism, attention, bravery, calm, caution, chivalry, commitment, compassion, contentment, courage, devotion, dignity enthusiasm, fortitude, frankness, friendliness, gratitude, love of work, willingness, humility, idealism, kindness, loyalty, nobility, perseverance, service, simplicity, solitude, tolerance, patience, obedience, renunciation, selflessness, sensible, serenity, sobriety, tact, tolerance, and unselfishness. The terms listed correspond to actual attitudes that I have researched with clients. Many more such abilities could be found that were effective in connection with previous earth lives.

The triad of characteristics were either addressed one after the other in different phases of life or they always worked together to make certain experiences possible, to endure difficulties or to overcome trials. It sometimes happened that clients immediately became aware of the three duties, or we tried to find them again

in the afterlife panorama of life in a separate meditation. Three life events then emerged that corresponded to these virtues so that we could recognize their earthly impact.

Jostein Sæther: *Encounter in September.*
Digital aquarelle, 2015.

The expansion of consciousness allows phenomena within the sensory world and incarnation – from physical objects to mental formations of the human soul – to gradually become transparent to the efficiency of spiritual beings. In meditation I managed to get a sense that my imaginations were no longer just those that I created alone. I also began to experience that they were actually produced by spirit beings in my mind. The time was then ripe to get in direct contact with them. When I see such life virtues after death, I want to try to think of them as expressions of higher beings. I create something like three colour spaces from the three attitudes. I then ask three angel beings from the spiritual world to join these rooms. I imagine that they are the guardians, the protectors, the overseers of these virtues, that they have always worked for them

and are eternally working on the refinement of people, including me. In this moment I ask myself:

What do the three angels look like in the personal context I first received? What colour qualities do they radiate? What expressions, gestures and postures do they adopt? What attributes might they carry? Can I invest them with the three virtues and equate them with them? I note that in this process the reality of an immediate presence of mind is made anew for me to experience in the midst of the karmic viewing of past experiences. How do I behave? How do I communicate? How do I step back? How do I say thank you? How do I manage to find my way all the way back from meditation? How does such an encounter of beings resonate in everyday life?

Several people whom I made aware of the virtue angels reported that they remained in contact with them. In this way it was possible to detect that special beings come to us from the spiritual world who want to continue to support and encourage us and who want to send us spiritual substance wherever possible. Continuing to practice on this situation allowed me to approach paths that enabled a continuation and deepening of the exploration of the states between two incarnations. From further research I also realized that the virtue angels are intimately connected to the so-called power animals. The virtues associated with the theme of spirit animals can therefore be primary for one or more incarnations.

For example, a man working in the business discovered the hippopotamus as a spirit animal that presents itself in its sphere of life as having certain guardian qualities. In an incarnation in India before the invasion of the English, he ruled with *generosity* over his people from the royal caste. In another life as a police officer in Chicago at the turn of the last century, he was seen as the living *equanimity* of his city. For the current incarnation, the virtue angel of *vigilance* was particularly available to him so that he could be a suitable educator for his children when they became teenagers.

In this somewhat new discovery of the importance of virtues in human development, we must keep in mind that there is nothing absolute in our world. If we strive for something good, the way of the world can turn it into something bad or evil. Therefore, we must always strive from begin and in a contemporary way. The aim must always be to create new, humane forms so that the ideals do not appear dogmatic, intolerant, or fundamentalist against others. Nothing is more harmful to humanity than belief in absolute ideals because they contradict the real development of the world, Rudolf Steiner emphasized. He described a somewhat surprising but logical karma-related bond between virtues and multiple earth lives as follows:

> "Two virtues shine through past incarnations: *wisdom* and *justice*. But *bravery* and *prudence* shine through future incarnations. The time will come when man realizes that he is throwing himself into Ahriman's mouth if he closes himself to justice and wisdom.[90] What was his in previous incarnations, what belonged to the divine world, he will throw to Lucifer through what he accomplished through life's rashness or cowardice.[91] What Lucifer gets a hold of is deprived of our strength to build our bodies in the next life."[92]

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[90] Ahriman (in Avestan language: *Angra Mainyu*) is the king of darkness in the Zoroastrian religion, the evil principle that runs counter to all good and is always in conflict with it. In Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, Ahriman is the being of hardening, of deception, the lord of matter and the dead, who wants to hide man's karma in order to win over his spiritual future seeds.

[91] Lucifer corresponds to the Norse deity Loki, the god of lies and destructive fire. He is beautiful in appearance but evil in heart. In the esoteric tradition, Lucifer is the wise bringer of light, but also the lord of all temptation. He nests himself in the astral body and tries to inhibit the effects of the guardian angel in people during the night. Nevertheless, he is a spiritual power that left many cultural gifts to people. Luciferic beings are those who are influenced by the wisdom of Lucifer. In esoteric Christianity, Lucifer is an antipode of the Holy Spirit.

[92] Rudolf Steiner: *Das Geheimnis des Todes. Wesen und Bedeutung Mitteleuropas und die europäischen Volksgeister.* GA 159. Dornach 1980. Page 24.

The spiritual binoculars

When I am on the spirit island with the angel or spirit friend, either before or after attempting to investigate the past of an incarnation, there is the possibility of requesting a distant viewing. This matter is made easier by a kind of spiritual aid device that I receive from my companion. I simply ask him for the "binoculars". I imagine that I receive it and direct it against the past earth for my inner eye.

When I have examined a first incarnation for the first time in the manner described above and still have the stamina to make an attempt with binoculars, I look in two directions one after the other, e.g. to the east and then to the west by imagining that I recognize these directions in the imaginary way on my right or left side. I think that what I see shows a person who is in an event, in an activity that I immediately recognize what it is. I don't at once look for an image or activity that I see in this way by going there. I take it with me to my hut more as a clue. Later, on another occasion, I can use what I have seen as a starting point for more detailed, meditative investigations.

The first task is to further research everything that was actually seen. The karmic structures cannot be won in one fell swoop. We can only acquire the highest and most important knowledge of life, namely the knowledge of karma, slowly and gradually. That's why we should be careful not to jump to conclusions. We have to let the karmic things get to us. The binocular exercise in particular develops this inner serenity, where the aim is to maintain inner calm after most likely recently experiencing very shocking experiences from a previous life.

The karmic findings

Objects, things, tools, devices, items of clothing, jewellery, weapons, tasks, affairs, events, clues and encounters that are seen in the karmic investigations may be taken with you in a pictorial manner, such as copies or reproductions. At the beginning I have enough to do to orient myself and get along within the whole thing. That is why I can leave this task of taking karmic finds with me to the guard angel at the beginning.

When we return to the hut after such an extensive trip, I ask him if he has taken anything with him from the past incarnation that I can keep in my hut. Sometimes I will know immediately what he has "bagged" because I too would consider it something important during the life I watched. It may also be that it will surprise me because he has retained something that I barely noticed or didn't notice at all. However, the moment it comes to light, it will seem very plausible and sensible to me. If it is not an object, an image or symbol that recreates a characteristic of what happened can be designed to preserve it in the hut.

Once, while researching karma, someone experienced himself as a pianist in the 19th century. The textile covering of a piano was taken with. He also saw himself as a medieval castle lady whose husband was killed as a knight in the Third Crusade. Not his corpse, but his blood-soaked chain mail was brought home to her. It was allowed to serve as a karmic find. Another saw himself as a writing monk in a medieval monastery. A manuscript of magnificent miniature paintings was handed to him. A woman looked at what she had looked like as an Indian chief. The angel took with him his headdress decorated with many feathers. A man saw that once in his male incarnation he was not allowed to marry a noblewoman because of his humble origins. He received a gold ring from his traveling companion as a symbol of his love, which was not lived out in the Middle Ages.

One woman saw herself as a fun-loving but conscientious sawmill owner. A pipe was her karmic find. A man who saw himself as an African nomad received a walking stick. Another discovery was made by someone who, in the fourth century, saw himself as a merchant traveling throughout Europe and even outside of it, who collected all sorts of rarities, materials and other gems in his unique department store in what was then Silesia. The antique stone knife that he had in his collection at that time was allowed to be kept in his meditative hut as a karmic find. In his opinion, he even found the physical knife in the present life until one day he gave it to a newborn.

In a continuous exploration of past lives, I prepare myself in the necessary way to go back into the corresponding story by looking at the karmic finds in the hut, which are artfully displayed in niches, on cushions or on shelves. This allows me to explore further connections, check what has already been researched, or I may have to discover that I was partially on the wrong track.

Devotion and gratitude

We must in the meditative activity not only show an appropriate inner attitude when coming into contact with beings of a human or angelic nature, but we must also respond in the right way to the variety of phenomena of all kinds that no longer relate to sensual things know how to behave. It depends on the great *how*. The meditative work strictly requires that everything I know as style, custom, etiquette, convention, politeness, and consensual action must experience a new meaning within the dealing with spiritual questions, qualities, and beings, because I enter a society or an organism, which I didn't know until know, or with whom I have at least completely forgotten in today's consciousness what appearance is appropriate.

Demeter, Greek goddess of the fertility of the earth,
grain, seeds, and the seasons as well as joy and gratitude.
Drawing based on a wall painting in Pompeii.
Illustration from Meyer's conversation lexicon from 1888.

If I have practiced little humility and gratitude in life, things will not necessarily come easy to me in meditation. That doesn't mean I don't get experiences. I can even experience all sorts of things and the inner images can arise incessantly as if from a stream. I can only be grateful for that; but ingratitude and too strong a sense of self in everyday life cause certain beings to interfere on the spiritual level who have fallen away from the spiritual order.

Respect for the small, the insignificant, the deviant, the teased, in short, recognition of the divine in everything that is rejected in the sensory world – for whatever reasons – interestingly creates protection against tempters on the spiritual level. Christ's dealings with "tax collectors and sinners", often mentioned in the Gospels, indicate that those who strive spiritually should not consider any person to be too low to socialize with them. Devotion and gratitude are always and everywhere in meditation as a mental attitude of exact time signature.

Compared to a commodity, it is a mental and spiritual scale on which the I's presence of mind measures itself against the environment. If the I succeeds in drawing a qualitative balance with the object experienced, it is most likely to fulfil the spiritual law that makes dialogue possible. It would be unseemly and reckless to rush into daring states of mind. If I experience a feeling like shame in meditation, then I am on the right path to spiritual research. This subtle feeling of shame would be the red carpet from which the shoot of devotion and the touch of gratitude are woven, on which I can step or ascend to the spiritual.

When I met Hilda Boadi, a teacher and singer from Ghana, West Africa, in Norway, I learned completely new things about the concept and activity of gratitude. In their language, "thank you" means something like "medauase". The word is pronounced with sweet, almost shy gestures of the hands and a tilt of the upper body. The three syllables *me*, *daua* and *se* are each stressed, and in *daua* there is a short expansion of the first A. I could easily deduce from this that the word *daua* has to do with the ancient concept of divinity *tauwa*, which I found in meditative research on Atlantis, as explained in my first book.

It appears again in the Chinese "Tao" and in the Greek "theos" – for God. This made it immediately noticeable to me that the German "Thank you", the English "thank you" and the Norwegian "takk" contain the "Tauwa", the divine, within them. Expressing gratitude therefore becomes equivalent to giving praise, recognition and affection to a god, a deity. Of course, on the surface this is no longer often experienced when saying thank you.

> "It is the most beautiful way to be guided by your personality from the supernatural if this guidance goes through gratitude, through gratitude towards life. This gratitude is also a path into the spiritual, and it ultimately ends in veneration and love for the life-giving spirit of man. Gratitude gives birth to love. Love, when

it is born of gratitude for life, gives birth to the opening of the heart to the spiritual beings that permeate life."[93]

As Steiner's quote shows, gratitude goes hand in hand with love. Every real process of knowledge is actually also a process of love. Without selfless devotion to the matter, the connections that are being sought will not be revealed. From knowledge of karma, gratitude towards the spiritual world can be released again and from this real love can grow with regard to the situation where I have lived in difficulty or conflict with someone.

How do I deal with karma recognition?

While I am still in the more comprehensive karma meditation, but have just said goodbye to my angel, I sit down in my hut to calmly let everything that has happened take effect again. Here I try out different ways of working: letting something resonate without images, letting images run backwards, focusing on certain views, paying attention to surprising details, clarifying ambiguities, etc. Individual meditations in the hut even only serve to pursue the necessary processing or to take someone with me who I wouldn't otherwise be able to reach directly in everyday life. I save things that remain vague or do not fit into the totality of what has been researched for later. I feel like I'll get on with it eventually. Or I recognize that something wrong or absurd has mixed into my consciousness.

As with art viewing, it is worth taking notes, i.e. keeping a *meditation book*, because the things that are experienced meditatively are not as easily imprinted in the memory as sensory impressions. In everyday consciousness, the etheric body, the carrier of the memory, works parallel to the sensory life and readily reproduces everything for the memory. It may even be right to take notes

[93] Rudolf Steiner: *Esoterische Betrachtungen karmischer Zusammenhänge.* Band V. GA 239. Dornach 1984. Page 224.

during meditation, either continuously or stopping briefly to note or illustrate. I once met a Spanish psychologist who had researched many incarnations on her own. From her pictures of the complicated mental and karmic structures made with coloured pencils, I was able to recognize karmic tendencies that I already knew, but where she herself was unsure and therefore needed confirmation in order to move forward.

In meditation as the inner world, however, the sensory world should be excluded, and the etheric body cannot therefore work as usual. The same life forces that are otherwise responsible for remembering are used for the inner artistic effort. This creates a kind of vacuum that can only be filled through conscious sensory and soul work, e.g. writing, drawing, or painting can be fulfilled afterwards. I will simply forget the spiritual experience, or it will fade away if it is not consciously anchored in life or made fruitful for the social life of other people.

If I have close friends who also do karma research or are otherwise absolutely positively interested in what I do, I can think about what I would like to convey to them. When we research each other karmically, we have the opportunity to confirm what we have researched or to give information that is helpful for our own actions. I shouldn't inform people who I fear won't be able to handle such questions. If they don't have a sense of it, I'm just causing problems for myself and them by confronting them.

So, we have to expect that over time we will gather a lot of knowledge about ourselves and other people, which we can most likely only trust and confide to a few people and which we therefore have to modestly keep to ourselves. After my first stimulating and moving karmic insights about 25 years ago, I myself was too naive in this regard. Apparently, several close people were initially very interested in my karma work, but when I pointed out shared karma to them and later published extensive information – without naming names, of course – they rejected what I had shared or they

soon showed such negative attitudes, that it would probably have been better not to have told them anything.

> "And they kept quiet about what they had seen, and in those days, they told no one about what they had seen."[94]

This sentence from the Gospel of Luke is an archetype for how we best behave after spiritual sights. But secrecy doesn't mean that I should never say anything about it later. After a maturation process, which may be individually long, my "karmic gospel" can be proclaimed. I didn't do anything else with my first book, even though many critics found my intention to be somewhat superior. Continuing work responsibly in the direction described not only changed my personal life and many relationships positively over time, but I was also given new tasks by the spiritual world, which gradually appeared in meditation, which completely changed my external life.

A wonderful example of someone publishing karmic insights is Christiane Sautter's book *Es begann in Atlantis* (It Began in Atlantis).[95] With a poetic style, she tells detailed and dramatic events from many lives, but also situations in the spiritual realm between them. The descriptions of the spiritual sphere, where the last and future lives are interwoven in subtle sequences of transformation, form pearls of beauty through which the loyalty, benevolence and ability of the spiritual world are shown. The book is far from sentimental and self-aggrandizing. This literary document leaves everyone free to classify the reported karmic facts into a scientific order according to karmic laws. What is also extremely interesting is the description of an individual development path that does not run in a straight line, but rather has many deviations, relapses, and detours until the central theme of Christiane Sautter's individuality can be integrated again.

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[94] Gospel according to Luke, 9:36.
[95] Christiane Sautter: *Es begann in Atlantis: Ein Lebensweg durch die Jahrhunderte*. Christa Falk Verlag, 2004.

4. Examples from the karma research

In both art and science, a qualified achievement initially depends on the individual artist or scientist who uses it to create something new. The fact that other people may have been involved in the creation of his product, enjoy his art or benefit from his research does not change this fact. His works and insights are primarily a product of a very individual nature.

For the development of artistic and scientific life, a social exchange between the autonomous creator with his associated experiences and the experiences of others is essential. There is a consensus in artistic and scientific circles that those who take part in a discourse about a particular work or research must themselves have professional competence so that a topic under discussion can be dealt with appropriately.

In the past, however, it was not the same common practice for research discussions to be conducted about the way in which someone came to spiritual knowledge through their own supernatural experiences and soul-spiritual skills, because the participants were even more involved in the spiritual field than in the sensory field in their individual approaches are challenged. Such exchanges and academic research on meditation are just beginning in our days. Some years ago, I became involved in such a study of meditative experiences at a Central European university.

Nevertheless, I believe that new spiritual research can be developed from meditative sources if all stages of searching and finding results are described. It can be described,

1. what was found,
2. how it was found

3. what the discovery caused and
4. why research was carried out.

The circumstances and conditions that were decisive for the emergence of a research result in the spiritual field should be carefully described so that a consensus on current karma and spiritual research can be achieved, which would also make it clear why it is important to exchange ideas and results.

Illusion and truth

Critics once again asked me questions about how security can be created and whether we are on the right path. How do I know the truth regarding karmic images? How can I see that the karmic findings are not subjective projections? How can I be sure that the connections I have published have anything to do with accuracy? How do I know I wasn't wrong? Such and similar questions are certainly justified, but it seems to me that they can dampen the questioner's enthusiasm for developing intellectual research himself or for wanting to support it in others. I knew an academically trained and now deceased anthroposophist in Sweden who had such unconscious fear and conscious caution about the subject of karma that she never opened Steiner's books containing his karma lectures. So, she felt confident that she would never contribute to anything wrong in this field.

I have always emphasized that it is about finding security in yourself. Someone else cannot give you the truth, everyone can only be true and decipher the truth themselves. Your own, unprejudiced self is the measuring device for finding the truth. An inner cosmos can arise from the various findings, so that they keep moving in relation to each other in a transparent connection, so that they are self-supporting and do not need any evidence, completely different from a house of cards, which needs a table as a base and will still collapse due to a small air draft.

The results of others must also be similarly considered in the soul so that they can be fathomed and built up to knowledge. People have repeatedly told me that they cannot verify my karmic information in the first book. This claim is only partially true. If someone really wanted to, it would be entirely possible to check them out. In some cases, the stories given could be weighed against each other in their entirety in order to decipher a factual consensus. Again, what has been entrusted could be explored meditatively, which some friends have sometimes enjoyed doing.

On the one hand, I have to accept everything that arises through the karma practice or in meditation without prejudice and then check the information with each other. On the other hand, I must always want to expand or change and correct the preliminary diagnoses or judgments that I have tried to make through new investigations and questions. Basically, I am not looking for evidence in karma research, but rather I challenge myself to look for results that can lead to new questions and further research.

> "The spiritual stream of spirit will only flourish if we learn to understand the difference between questioning and judging."[96]

Rudolf Steiner once presented the guiding principle of the researcher in the supernatural in such a striking way. Judgments are correctly made when we make an effort to make corrections or correct false interpretations of our own communications, but otherwise we should let the representations of spiritual motives in an unbiased manner affect us and avoid forming opinions on spiritual matters. It is just the case that not only people's I-beings reincarnate, but also the other limbs of human being or parts of them can reincarnate and thus be made available to individualities that these higher bodies themselves did not previously create.

Also, on this question I speak from my own experience regarding previous incarnations. So, we have to pursue such subtleties that

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[96] Rudolf Steiner: *Aus der Akasha-Forschung. Das fünfte Evangelium.* GA 148. Dornach 1980. Page 168.

might come into consideration and not quickly decide something and proclaim it as truth. Reincarnation and karma is and remains a complicated story where general laws and individual exceptions sometimes intersect, but further research must still be carried out and what is discovered in relation to karmic connections should be passed on when the opportunity arises and compared to another research.

One reason why I worked out the evidence of the arts at the beginning is that we can learn to stick with the facts, that we learn to see how physical conditions are properly connected and relate to one another. This habit of fact promotes a disposition for truth in the soul, so that when I no longer look at physical things, I take with me a sense of truth into the spiritual world. Strangely enough, the truth will not rush towards us there. We ourselves have to bring a truthfulness factor, like a magnet, that allows the truth to appear and pushes away fakes. We must first have made ourselves ready for the truth so that it dares to come to us in meditation, because it is a being with which contact can and should be cultivated.

Steiner described truth as a sister of the human soul – which we might admit we have neglected. Daskalos named himself and his colleagues as *truth seekers*. It is therefore important to be fair to one's own soul in all spiritual investigations. If we cultivate it before, during and after the meditative elevation and allow ourselves to be fertilized by the spiritual, we will certainly become "pregnant" with the truth itself as something essential, not externally but meaningfully. Accordingly, in the first book I actually presented something very serious, sublime and at the same time subtle on the subject of the deceased.[97]

During such a spiritual experience I felt detached from myself, from the ordinary self. I was able to sustain myself as a spirit being in a new way because another being sought me out. It was a deep-

[97] Jostein Saether: *Living with invisible people.* Page 220f.

est, most astonishing impression. From this moment on, which occurs in a variety of ways, according to spiritual laws, but always in an individual way, I know what it means to experience oneself within the soul independently of the sensory life of the body. Old secret teachings used the following expression for this experience: As a human being, I have arrived at the gate of death, which then demands a spiritual and emotional rebirth before I can find my way again as a sensory human being.[98] There are several gates to the spiritual world because it is divided into several areas, levels, or spheres of activity. Giving an extended presentation on this topic would go beyond the scope of this book.

The human soul can actually only consist of truth substance. So, if untruths and illusions sneak in despite all the preparations or are allowed to infect the soul, at some point it will become ill or it will then push the untruths down a level so that disturbances can arise in the etheric body. Pride, vanity, insomnia or even paranoia could arise from such subjective errors in judgment. The spiritual researcher wants to develop the willingness to place himself in the light of general truth at any time in order to be examined by other seekers of truth. Our inner honesty must be so strong of character that we are constantly prepared to start everything over again if we found that we have not served the truth. Limitless love of truth shines with golden letters as a motto above the portal of spiritual research.

In open conversations about karmic and spiritual experiences, the truth will be present in person, so to speak, and will express itself from the contents explored. So, we don't have to be afraid of not finding the truth, even where pseudo-truths might have accumulated. On the other hand, they are drawn to the courage to face the truth, and a researcher who is prepared to give up his ideals is not afraid if he comes across something false again. At least he knows,

[98] Compare: Rudolf Steiner: *Inneres Wesen des Menschen und Leben zwischen Tod und neuer Geburt.* GA 153. Dornach 1978. Page 43ff.

once he has recognized something true, that it will work out over time, even if he can't make any sales from it at first.

Additional exercises and karma review

The importance of strengthening thinking, feeling and willing and cultivating overall character development in spiritual training has been emphasized again and again by pioneers of spiritual self-education. For this purpose, Rudolf Steiner worked out the so-called *additional exercises* in his lectures and books.[99] In no way, I question these behavioural measures for self-knowledge and self-strengthening. Everyone must pay attention to how trained or undeveloped oneself is in this regard, so that any necessary addition or expansion of such exercises may need to be made. I would like to show by way of example how additional aspects can be developed from a thought exercise, i.e. from the first of these so-called secondary exercises, so that one's perspective can be sharpened even better during the karma view.

I'm holding a safety pin in my hand. I examine the form, the colour, the material, the function, and the process used to make them, as far as I know. When I look at it, I ask myself the following questions: How big is the safety pin? How long and how wide is it? How is the tip shaped? Is the needle bent at one end with a spiral or does it have a ball reinforcement, in the way it is made especially for eurythmists? What exactly characterizes my safety pin? How does the closure work? Why does metal tension arise and how important is it? I try to keep the questions and my descriptions short.

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[99] Florin Lowndes: *Die Belebung des Herzchakra. Ein Leitfaden zu den Nebenübungen Rudolf Steiners.* Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 2000.
Das Erwecken des Herz-Denkens. Wesen und Leben des sinnlichkeitsfreien Denkens in der Darstellung Rudolf Steiners. Umriss einer Methodik. Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 2002.

How can I formulate the idea of the safety pin? What is the underlying meaning, its essence?

Then I put it away and enter a meditative state. I internally describe the process of observation that I have previously gone through. Not from memory, but as if I were repeating the same process – but now purely mentally – I ask the same questions and summarize similar formulations. But I will now dwell in detail on the idea side or the essence of immersion. I then create a transition devoid of thoughts and motives and transfer my consciousness to another point in time in the past. I imagine that I am somewhere in a pre-Christian time. All ideas that I associate with a safety pin examined in this way must now immediately be silent. No thoughts from modern times fit here. From the extract of the idea, from the power of the recognized nature of the safety pin, I create a situation that shows something similar on a different level.

An experienced meditator did this exercise and got the following imagination: He found himself present in a gathering of people in an area of hills and large oak trees. He got a feeling of two Celtic tribes who, after a long battle, had just made a peace alliance through a wedding. He saw the two chiefs, the groom from one tribe and the bride from the other tribe. He saw how the people were dressed and he experienced the atmosphere of unity that this celebration created. The sensual contemplation of the safety pin brought the imaginative contemplation of the marriage.

Perhaps our chosen object and marriage meet on a higher level? In this way it can become clear to us that all possible objects, circumstances, and situations in the sensory world, which I look at precisely according to their sensory appearance and possible function in order to find the idea, can reveal certain karmic or spiritual situations, depending on how the intention of the meditative posture is controlled. The thought exercise accordingly creates a starting point, a kind of springboard into something else that is essentially related to it. But we do not need to fall into the idea that thinking in the spiritual world should be the same as thinking in the

physical. The spiritual practitioner comes into the position – as described earlier – of transforming the entire state of the soul. So, in meditation we can make an internal effort. We can learn to think differently about the spiritual than we are used to thinking about the external sensory world. We can only explore karma, if we truly objectively put the will into thinking so that thinking becomes an action like any other action, e.g. walking up stairs to the second floor with heavy shopping bags or riding a bike in mountainous terrain.

Authentic imaginations

My trials with anthroposophical oriented meditation and karma exercises over decades were always based on the impressions and experiences from the practical activities. I have always sought precise ideas about reincarnation and karma. I pursued the ideal that emerged from this in order to cultivate concrete questions and problems relating to current biography – often in connection with nature or with social and historical questions as the basis for practice. As I practiced, it became clear to me that any attempt to exclude sensory life for a while is an adventurous experiment. However, when carried out individually, this empiricism is able to satisfy the requirements that I as a spiritual practitioner must undergo in order to remain unbiased and non-dogmatic in a continued work process. Therefore, any result that may come about through expanded consciousness can be supplemented and extended using this procedure, and if necessary modified or corrected. In this way, the progress I have achieved, which I can initially attribute to myself, becomes the basis for further experiments and investigation.

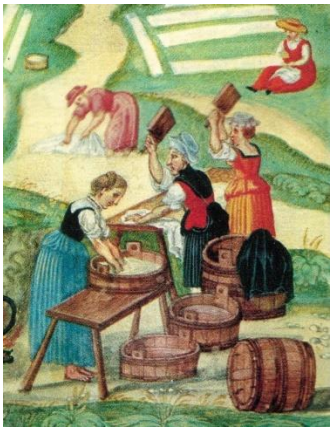
In order to guarantee the scientific character of supernatural practice, I looked back at my path, my methodology and the circumstances of the cognitive process and characterized it from ever new perspectives. Furthermore, I could not shy away from

sharing it so that other researchers could understand or verify the result, something that has been done through many essays, interviews, and books. Lectures, seminars, and dialogues happened. After I had certain imaginative experiences several years ago and finally began a wide range of work with people, I learned that the personal report in particular was able to appeal to some of my listeners or readers in such a way that they could overcame a kind of fear of the spiritual world, or a lack of self-confidence.

Not just a general reference to spiritual facts or laws, but my direct individual engagement with it – translated into language – often created the necessary basis for others to do something concrete with it. The difficulty and the task, however, lies in interpreting, commenting on and characterizing what has been spiritual experienced and researched using familiar or new images, representations, and terms in such a way that we can in turn reach a general understanding about it.

It happened to me that karma research and the investigation of spiritual facts did not only bring about substantial knowledge. The insights as a result of the meditative activity also had such an affirming and shaping effect on my soul that I practically became a different person in front of myself. In particular, it is important to carry out spiritual work in such a way that it can fit into a social context. A wisdom researcher, like any other scientist, wants his efforts and results to be noticed and objectively examined by colleagues. Therefore, he strives for every helpful contact in order to find exchange and comparison. When his findings, which may have cost him a lot of effort, are criticized by supposedly knowledgeable critics, he has to protect his work because he has to assume that it is under a spiritual star. I would like to use an example to illustrate one of my research approaches and my method, which is based on defined tasks and concrete situations. In this particular case it is about the karma effect between two individualities, whose traces I searched backwards in mainly two previous lives.

Karma effect between two individualities



The big washing festival in front of the city.
Miniature painting from Splendor Solis
(alchemical manuscript, Nuremberg, 1531, detail).

The following example from my meditative research goes back to the years before the first book was published. I have used it again in public lectures and essays and bring it here again because it contains certain general references to karma research. In the 1970s I worked for three years in special education and social therapy in Norway. In a home for young people and adults in need of spiritual care, I had, among other things: dealing with a younger man, not yet an adult at that time, who had suffered from so-called cerebral palsy since birth, a disability that also severely impaired his ability to move and walk.

A few years later, after I no longer worked there, I heard of his unexpected death. Several people who looked after him on the day of his death told me exactly the circumstances of the tragic incident. After a swimming lesson that took place every other week, he hadn't shown up to shower with the whole group. Nobody missed him at first. He was a good swimmer and so independent that he always managed to get out of the pool on his own. He was

finally found drowned in the water. Only a few minutes had passed since he had last been seen swimming. An immediate attempt at resuscitation was useless.

Over a decade later, when I began to examine fateful motives from this circle of people in karma exercises and had been particularly concerned with this young man for a few weeks, to whom I give the pseudonym Gregor, a deceased colleague, Åslaug Nysæther (1920 – 1980), appeared within my meditation and gave a surprising clue as to how I might proceed with the karmic research into Gregor's illness and death. The deceased expressed that another boy, here called Rolf, who also lived in the home in those days but later changed his place of residence, should be included in the research, without whom I would not be able to make any progress.

If Gregor was more of a social guy who liked to listen to stories, then Rolf often withdrew to be alone and pursue craft hobbies. While Gregor was a kind of hothead, Rolf was restless and had a short temper. Åslaug had been a co-founder of the institute, and she had the skill to be able to deal with the two youngsters in the weaving chamber in a spiritually appropriate manner. I now followed her advice and two strands of imagination emerged in a meditation. I will first report the content I saw in the present tense in order to immediately reflect the circumstances observed, and then I will explain in more detail how the images came into being and their relationship to the present in order to give an insight into the methodological process in this case.

I am present in the observer consciousness in a simple room with a hard-packed earth floor in which a man works alone. I realize that I am only in a viewing position, which means that I myself was not physically there at that moment. The room is a kind of kitchen. To the right of the room, against the wall, is a brick stove on which there is a large pot with handles and boiling water. The man, whom I will simply refer to as Georgio, appears tall and strong. In him I see an incarnation of Gregor. He is wearing an apron and pants, but no shirt, so his strong arms are visible. He is about to lift the

cauldron. He wants to go out to the yard with the hot water to continue his work there. On the left side of the room, opposite the stove, is the wooden door that leads to the outside.

It becomes clear to me that the room is part of a larger estate owned by an Italian nobleman and judge named Acerbus Morena, who was then an incarnation of Åslaug. I also recognize that I myself know this place near Lodi in Lombardy well from my own life at that time. Certainly, I arrived there some time after the event itself. The moment Georgio lifts the cauldron, a smaller man, whom I call Rinaldo, runs in through the open door, talking and gesturing with his arms. I know, it's the later Rolf. Big Georgio notices him and stands with his legs apart next to the stove in my line of sight.

Little Rinaldo seems noticeably agitated, runs over to the former and gives Georgio a message that he thinks Georgio should definitely know. But Georgio wants to finish his work, also because the water container is quite heavy to carry. He gets annoyed and turns to the door. Some hot water spills out of the pot, some of which hits little Rinaldo. He involuntarily makes a hand movement upwards, with which he hits the other person's forearm. This means, Georgio can no longer hold the kettle. It slips from his grasp and the boiling water pours over Rinaldo, causing him to suffer terrible burns.

After seeing this event, the imagination ends, but some information about the further process still emerges. Rinaldo receives severe burns to his face and body, leaving him severely disabled for life and only being able to continue his work as a farmer with difficulty. For Georgio, the accident causes him to begin trying to control his pride in order to later reconcile with the injured man. There is a hint that Georgio then takes care of the maintenance and care of his friend in this life. During a pause in meditation, I asked myself whether the event I had seen, which I backdated to the 12th century, could have had a previous karmic impetus. This question led to further imaginary images:

I observe again as a spiritually present person. What I see could be Roman times. In an open landscape, a small river babbles towards me on the right. Further to the left is a village or small town, but it cannot be seen from my vantage point. From there, a chubby, middle-aged woman, here called Romila, came to the river to do her laundry. I recognize Rolf in her. The laundry basket is next to the kneeling woman. She moves a piece of laundry back and forth in the fresh, cold water. I have the impression that Romila really appreciates coming here alone, to do this important work in peace for a while, and also to be able to pursue her own feelings undisturbed – something that is difficult for her to succeed with so much activity at home.

Then a younger, thin woman approaches from the left with her laundry basket – here called Gaia. It is clear to me that Gregor corresponds to her. It is again obvious that the two know each other because the younger woman shouts greeting to the older woman. Because of the rushing water and her immersion in what she is doing, Romila doesn't hear the neighbour's voice. At first, she doesn't notice that Gaia has come. The younger one puts down her basket and slaps the older one on the left shoulder with her palm. Romila turns around in surprise, tries to stand up, but loses her balance and falls into the water, gesticulating wildly. The water stream is strong. Romila is unable to stay afloat by swimming – perhaps she couldn't swim either. She drowns without Gaia being able to save her. Gaia runs back to the village to excitedly report the accident. What is expressed in the last sentence did not appear as a pictorial imagination, but rather as a knowing impression in the sound of the sequence of images. Here is a graphic of the two individualities through three incarnations:

Roman period	*Middle Ages*	*Present*
Gaia	Georgio	Gregor
Romila	Rinaldo	Rolf

Accompaniments of imaginative recognition

A number of questions can be asked in this case, and further characterizations of the research process and its background can be given. I'll take out some of them so that the facts of such karma research become understandable. In 1975 I met Åslaug and Rolf. About a year later, Gregor came to taken care of in the institute. My work with the two teenagers lasted until 1978. Two years later Åslaug died and Gregor passed away in the mid-80s.

In the autumn of 1996, I carried out the research that led to the imaginations described. In the intervening years there were always projects in the institute that had to do with colour design, which I managed. That is why I had to deal with the coworkers and disabled people there repeatedly. This gave me an opportunity to develop a meditative approach to work from these relationships. The experiences with people in special education and social therapy were essential for this. In this way, the eye for special features in human coexistence was sharpened accordingly.

These experiences gave rise to a number of questions that were later taken up again: What earlier events led to the relationships between the people being cared for and their caretakers? What conditions bring people with such disabilities together? What karmic conditions underlie this particular illness of cerebral spasm? What is karmic about hysteria? What is the karma that makes some people always want to be alone, while others fear loneliness?

My former harmonious relationship with Åslaug created the creative basis for the later meditative activity. I felt it was fitting to both explore our shared karma and seek out Åslaug in her current spiritual presence. So, before I started researching the two people I cared for, I came to, among other things, results from the 12th century that affected both of us, which I described in the first book. Now it is certainly justified to ask: How could I know that she was the deceased who announced herself to me in meditation and gave me the hint for further research? Why did I experience the figures

I saw as belonging to the two teens? What criteria are there for identification to even occur? How is it possible to identify temporal dates and geographical locations?

Just as I had discovered in my artistic work as a painter that an image is gradually formed through a stream of continuous, vivid steps, I noticed that in meditation I could also rely on the processual emergence of sensations and images. This means that the path in karma practice or karma meditation starts from known, sensory facts that can be remembered in a summarized overview, and it goes through perceptions and feelings.

This meditative participation leads to precise and often extremely clear, pictorial creations in the imaginations, which carry an aura of information around them that I constantly question through my thinking. A basic trust in the I's ability to orient and reflect in all directions during meditation attracts intuitive information. The ability of the I to allow itself to be touched courageously and directly by all contents, circumstances and beings that appear and to want to connect with them brings the I to the level of consciousness of intuition. The individual ability to integrate in meditation provides evidence for the identification of impressions.

Aslaug's inspiration to include Rolf, however, did not appear through any imaginative image. Instead, a voice-like inner impression sounded in the thought process of my soul just as firmly as I had experienced how Åslaug handled a loom in life. The big Georgio with the kettle stood at the fireplace with a determination that I had seen in Gregor when he got back up, grumbling, after a fall on the gravel path. I also found the joy of the gaunt Gaia when she saw the older washerwoman in the way Gregor always made his presence known in the circle of others, cheering happily. The little farmer Rinaldo with the important news was clearly filled with an enthusiasm that corresponded to Rolf's desire to work, and the ability to immerse herself in her own thoughts by Romila corresponded to Rolf's ambitions at work.

Imaginations like these had a wealth of data, the inner reference of which can only be described with great effort. That is, I felt that inspiration and intuition were already contained within it. In order to decipher it, however, the researching I had to awaken. I have sometimes had the impression that if my faculties were more developed, I would be able to continually absorb a wealth of additional clues. Many hints in the events remembered and seen have certain external similarities, but other motifs do not match at all in their appearance.

The imaginative characters in this example did not have much in common externally with the actual persons. If I only wanted to identify things through externally striking features, I would almost be lost here. Only through the fact that an inner evidentiary process, which manifests itself musically, poetically, or atmospherically – i.e. invisibly but still precisely recognizable – through the purely imaginative image space, do I come to be able to allow an identification in a thinking way. This means that the stage of inspiration following imagination is announced here, although both stages can also penetrate each other. A qualitatively identical element appears in the individual incarnations of an individuality in different external forms and designs. A recognition of the individuality hidden therein, which, as it were, dresses itself differently, can take place if the researcher practices being able to separate such a quality from the appearance of the imaginative perception and in this way to detect the basic qualitative formation of the image.

It is important to examine the various representations of the incarnations of an individuality in the current of time for the factors that underlie them in common, i.e. for those qualities that then make it possible to see in an inspirational way that a consistent nature of being is expressed through an imaginative appearance. This is a cognitive process on an inspirational level that the I, researching in meditative contemplation, can achieve at the same time as perceiving an imagination. But it is also possible that something that was initially only experienced imaginatively is then fur-

ther penetrated into normal consciousness in such a way that an inspiring insight – like an oasis in the desert – can be found.

What is astonishingly consistent in this example is the motif of water, which appears here as a qualitative element and even appears in the incarnations of various individualities. In today's incarnation there is a swimming pool, and the institute is located on beach property on a fjord. Gregor drowned. At that time, the boiling water caused the burns to little Rinaldo and in another incarnation, chubby Romila died in the river. In his disability, Gregor showed signs similar to those that were the consequences of the burning that the other individuality suffered in the Middle Ages because of his actions. This time Gregor drowned. In Roman times, he became guilty because the other person drowned.

It seems as if the two individuals and their carer have a special affinity for the water element. For example, Åslaug loved watercolour painting and practiced it as a hobby. How would water have manifested itself in her past incarnations? Finally, what is the relationship of the researcher himself to this element? Such questions accompany the investigation and make karma research an exciting activity. A side effect of imaginative viewing, which later reveals it as being realistic, is often that the images and information cause amazement. At first, I am completely surprised that exactly such a connection unfolds before my inner observation.

But at the same time as being amazed, there can be a clear insight into the reality of the process and the feeling that I want to connect with the essence of what I see in a genuine sense of empathy. Meditation is perceived as an activity that have a good effect on the individuality that is being researched about. This process touches on your own conscience, so that the desire arises to use the knowledge that can be gained from what you have seen in everyday life in such a way that something fruitful can develop from it. This deeply moral or virtuous mental approach to the results of meditation is the starting point for advancing into intuition consciousness.

Perspectives of karma research

As I continued to study Gregor's individuality, I found evidence of an incarnation between the Middle Ages and the present day, which complemented his almost aristocratic appearance with a historical background. One effect of trying to understand this individuality was that I asked myself what he wanted to acquire in this last incarnation through his illness and through his life experiences resulting from it?

Such karmic results gave me the conviction that today every person comes into life with such an attitude that equips the soul with a longing to want to recognize the karmic background. So, I asked myself, what did it mean for Gregor to live in a community in which his karma was not initially examined in such a way that concrete results occurred during his lifetime. In retrospect, I got the impression that he had made his illness even more explicit to his carers than was perhaps necessary, as if he wanted to clearly show what had led to everything. The open question remains: What effect would concrete karmic images and insights such as those described above have for educational and therapeutic services if karma research was seriously part of the agenda in a working group with people being cared for?

Another effect of the connections I saw was that my eye for strange connections between people in life became sharper, that I became more attentive to certain biographical connections, so that I developed a willingness to engage in constant observations in order to find out about myself or the relevant people, to encourage them, when I found them open to spiritual things, to deal with questions about destiny. Such conversations sometimes lead to an opening to new things or an overcoming of old, restrictive ideas about life or about reincarnation and karma.

At the same time, however, I had to exercise restraint so that people who did not know how to deal with such concrete examples would not be exposed to unnecessary stress. One of the most

important effects of karma research for me and for many people who followed my way of working was that a direct relationship developed with the essence of the spiritual. Deep-seated fears and the fear of the power of the spiritual world and the clarity of the truth could be addressed in a new way. A child's unreservedness and innate honesty were acquired anew at the individual I-level by crossing the barriers of birth and death in their own thinking.

The doubts about the authenticity of inner images, which are sometimes discussed in anthroposophical magazines and panel discussions, can only be overcome if one seriously approaches one's own imaginative experiences. The age-old image dispute seems to want to continue here and there. Because thinking in terms and ideas is often seen as an irreconcilable contradiction to a methodology that aims to train people to deal with imaginative images. And fears and worries often arise that this could just be a so-called atavistic clairvoyance – i.e. clairvoyance inherited through the family stream.

It would be far beyond the scope of what is presented here to even begin to address these supposedly mutually exclusive opposites. However, I would like to express my point of view explicitly that I see clear and disciplined *thinking* in living concepts and ideas as a necessary support for creating levels of orientation in the area of pictorial and imaginative soul experience in which the I can anchor itself and on which it can find strength.

Exploring an incarnation with blindness

Above, I told that a considerable difference can be experienced between knowledge imaginations that go back to a previous life and those that have to do with states between death and new birth. In the comprehensive examinations of hundreds of clients, it also became clear to me that the imaginations that reflected

previous lives on earth could also have very different qualities of clarity and fullness.

If the person in question had suffered in some incarnations in terms of, for example, mental developmental disorders, illnesses, sensory impairments or physical damage, the person in question now had to exert more inner strength in order to extract the classification from the often more delicate or diffuse images. This tendency in researchability became very apparent when, a few years after the millennium shift, I discovered an incarnation of myself that I did not know at the time the first book was published but had assumed that a life could exist in this period of time. In the first book, I wrote about a "missing" incarnation in the time of Charlemagne.

It was precisely in this period between the end of the 8th and the middle of the 9th century that the life of a woman who was born blind unfolded, which in my opinion is similar to the historically well-known personalities of the two emperors, Charlemagne, and Lothar I, as well as being involved in adventures of the Arthurian and Grail streams that are otherwise linked to legends. I noticed for myself that, for example, she had some common experiences with the knight, whom the Grail literature calls Gawain, who had a different name in real life. I first sketch fragments from her adventurous life in order to then explain the peculiarity of these associated imaginations. I refer to her here with the pseudonym Ealain.

The girl's conception occurred after a misdeed by her father, an ambitious Arthurian knight, against her mother, who was the daughter of a Celtic druid. The imaginations about him are similar to what is said about Ither of Gaheviez, the legendary and literary figure who plays a role in Wolfram von Eschenbach's courtly novel *Parzival*. The knight we saw wanted to force a certain secret from her father, which the young woman had hidden in a cave, which I recognized as one of the today famous caves very close to the north coast of Wales. Whilst the virgin refused him the magic formula, he violated and raped her. An unwanted pregnancy occur-

red, and then she hid the unwelcome daughter and gave her to a monk to abandon in the forest.

The Grail is presented on a cloth by Repanse de Schoye.
Image detail from a Parzival manuscript from the 13th century.

The monk ultimately wanted to secretly deliver the child to a Welsh abbey, but before he could complete his anonymous preparations, he hid the diapered child in what he assumed was an empty fox cave at daybreak. But when he returned in the afternoon, the child had disappeared. The foxes had dragged it further inwards. But the monk couldn't have guessed that. Like in a fairy tale, the little one was fed by the foxes and continued to thrive in this first home until it learned to crawl at an early age.

One sunny day, Ealain was discovered in a meadow by the horse of another friar who was passing through from Ireland. So, the girl came to her second home, a remote inn in the same area that was run by a busy woman. She was a widow but had no children and no close relatives to visit her. This monk, however, was almost part

of her inventory because he always used this route between Ireland and the continent and always got pleasant days from her to diversify his busy life. On top of that, he now gave her a daughter, what a gift from God!

After some time, they discovered the girl's blindness, something that did not create difficult problems, as it turned out over time, since the girl was very skilful, sympathetic, and capable of teaching. Ealain was so eager to learn that the monk later took her to a women's monastery for further education. So, she found her way from her hidden childhood in Wales to England, France, Germany and all the way to Sicily. After she stopped her years of apprenticeship in the monastery out of her own wish, her bread and butter became court singing on the one hand, and healing and fortune-telling on the other.

I got the first evidence of this female incarnation in the early Middle Ages in a karma work with someone who revealed herself to be Ealain's mother. Later, I was able to compare my other, independent images of Ealain with the imaginations of over ten other persons whom I accompanied in karmic-meditative practice. Without even telling them about my things beforehand, I was able to keep their attention to things that I already knew from my point of view. Also understood the other way around, I was able to meditatively supplement various aspects that I had first encountered with clients. This confirmed a series of connections and events that took place in the 9th century, allowing me to uncover the special living conditions of Ealain and her contemporaries from many perspectives.

It was very remarkable to accompany Ealain on trips. Through her eyes her eyelids drooped so that she looked as if she were sleepy, and I couldn't see anything. Her hearing and especially her smell were extremely developed, so that the imaginations, which were sometimes imageless at first, developed from them. In addition, she had an inherited clairvoyance, which we must describe as atavistic, since their maternal grandfather was an initiated clair-

voyant and magician. I also got to know this individuality personally in today's female incarnation, because I was also able to do karma work with her. I was also able to get to know Ither's individuality in his current life.

Over the course of Ealain's life, she further developed her clairvoyance into a special gift of foreknowledge, apparently because she healed so many sick people. Even her first years of life showed that a primary theme in life was that she was able to live with animals in a special intimacy. She knew how to ride independently because she was so connected to the horse's activity that she could actually see through its eyes, and also resolving dangers and guessing other people in the landscape before they recognized them. Due to social regulations and precautions, she later rode on the continent, for safety reasons, usually accompanied by one or two squires.

In a scene like the one that follows, the nature of these imaginations struck me as particularly remarkable. At first, it feels like a dark cloud around me. This state of monotony lasts about half a minute before something changes. Then, I realize that impersonating Ealain, I have just woken up from a fleeting sleep. I lean up and notice the support of a tree behind me. The patter of leaves in the wind blowing from the left confirms the natural surroundings. The first mental clue is: "The sun is shining." And immediately afterwards: "Light is God's love." Just afterwards, I hear noises coming from below to the right in front of me, like the rubbing of leather on horse skin, and I hear Ealain's thoughts in the field consciousness: "Hence, my right hand, Dagobert, wants to continue riding." Suddenly there is a soft whimper from my horse, called Prida; his name, which is unmistakable, quickly appears in my intuition.

So far, I don't see anything physical, but the cloud has transformed into a wavy light in many bright colours. From this transparent sea of colours, Prida's white head emerges, surrounded by sunlight,

after she has sniffed me with her mouth. The dear horse's head floats in front of me until I get up and take the reins.

But then the contours of the landscape appear, but not as sharply and materially as I am used to from various imaginations. Here there is only a hint of the most important ingredients, like in a watercolour by William Turner, which illustrates the characteristic features with a few careful brush strokes. Ealain does not see this through her two physical eyes, but through her third eye, which moves through the world like a sailing lighthouse. A typical and interesting situation in Ealain's life is the following: She is traveling with the same squire in Burgundy to a small town where they know their way around from several years of guest performances at festivals in castles.

Dagobert rides ahead, but Ealain also knows the way because she smells plants and herbs growing along the path. Further investigation revealed that it was common at that time for towns and villages that were in close alliance with one another to sow the same herbs along the paths leading to their settlements. Each alliance had a different herb. Thus, e.g. enlightened Knights of Arthur or Grail confidants already know from a distance where they would get to. She hears a dog barking from a considerable distance away from the direction of the small town. The type of growling bark tells her that on the one hand the dog belongs to an innkeeper she knows, but on the other hand it is being kicked by someone with boots. As they approach the place, what is happening over there and what has happened in the area in the last few days emerges before her inner vision.

When they get to the town and the inn, there seems to be peace again. They are greeted warmly by the innkeeper, but when Dagobert asks how things are in the city, he answers so evasively that Ealain notices that not everything is okay. He wants to keep his mouth shut because he is afraid the villains might show up again. Because Ealain knows about the accident, she tells the astonished innkeeper the whole story and other details that he doesn't know.

It happened that a nobleman was expelled from a castle in the district by his father because of criminal acts. Therefore, he had himself promoted as robber captain.

The city in question, from which he had previously collected the guild tax, now occasionally gave him fines, so that he would not set his rapacious legionnaires on them. But that day the city count informed the robber baron that they would no longer compensate him. That's why he went on a rampage and galloped away but intended to reappear with his troops soon. Over time, the case found a fruitful solution, especially since Ealain arranged for the blackmailer to work with a ruler overseas in Cornwall, where he regained his senses and honour.

Karma research with individuals and groups

Never did I count how many people I have accompanied in biography and karma work since the end of the 20th century. For a while, I took notes during sessions and gave them to clients afterwards if they wanted them. For a long time, I also wrote diaries to keep interesting things for myself or to be better prepared for the next meeting. At some point I had so much work with people in consultations and seminars that there wasn't enough time to take detailed notes. Of course, I had to improve my ability to look back so that important research motifs were not lost. In some cases, it also became possible – which of course is always possible – to explore the same things again through renewed meditations and to supplement their circumstances.

It would be quite possible to write many books from all the material from past life memories. Here I will only briefly touch on a few things and then pick out a few examples that might encourage others to start karma research. It is always astonishing that such abundant results have been achieved. It is a great blessing to realize that the spiritual world is so close to you during this work that

you can always find ways to find the right enquiry for the moment with a wide variety of people. Only in a few cases people were disappointed and did not want to continue working. Most of the time they had certain ideas about what results should come, or they had intentions about how the work with me should go. When they were disappointed or felt intimidated, I had to live with their ingratitude.

I have worked on meditation and karma reversion not only with individuals, but also in groups of over 20 participants. In some constellations, people knew each other well or had worked at the same workplace for years. The work here went extremely well. The group then tried to get to the same place in the past, for example. I or someone else picked up a motif that came to mind, and the others tried to place themselves in the situation in question or to find themselves in an adjacent place at the same time. At a certain Camphill institute, we worked like this for nearly ten years to research both the employees' shared karma and to gain clarity in the connection between disease states by some residents in relation to previous lives.

Where we managed to identify ourselves in the previous lives, many familiar historical environments and famous people and their circle from history appeared, but also completely unknown conditions, we had never heard of, we got to study in detail. It also turned out that we could confirm Rudolf Steiner's prophecy that anthroposophists of his time would incarnate again before the end of the 20th century. We come across a number of anthroposophists around Steiner, on the one hand those who came from Russia and on the other hand those who moved to England. Thirdly, there are wood carvers on the first Goetheanum building, fourthly, a handful of young eurythmists and fifthly, a work manager on the double dome building. There is the Austrian and the Russian who become friends over dinner in the barracks and still feel obliged to go to war to die on the Eastern Front. There are also the two friends from the United States who visit Dornach in 1921, and also the Swiss woman who visits Steiner because she wants to entrust him

as a healing artist to her daughter, who has polio. And we saw how the six-year-old girl received several treatments with the new colour therapy from Munich doctor Felix Peipers in wooden chambers built for this purpose.

Well-known names and historical events appear every now and then. How do I behave when previous life motives are linked to names like Ludwig Eifel, Andrej Belyj, Ella Dziubaniuk, Edouard Schüré, Friedrich Nietzsche, Richard Wagner, Ed Grieg, Sophie von Kühn, Diane von Poitiers, Martin Luther, Lothar II and Lucius Brutus – the Caesar-murderer – appear in a flash when none of us had the slightest thought about them before and at the beginning of the research? The scenes seen often correspond exactly to traditional documents – among other things with Cosima Wagner's diaries. Other times, questions remain unanswered, or the results only partially correlate with historical sources.

Then numerous episodes appear under more modest circumstances – but at a time that could be determined down to the year and day because I diagnosed it in between, which were consequently also linked to historical events. I was able to follow many individual fates of indigenous peoples of America in the 19th century. I could study a huge number of interesting lives in the Renaissance period. Then there is the young German playwright who dies prematurely of tuberculosis. There are the agitating farmers and a few wire-pulling nobles in Hungary shortly after the French Revolution, then a handful of peaceful contemporaries of Goethe and Novalis and a number of intriguers who infiltrate the court of Mary Stuart.

There are virgins in the late Middle Ages, Knights Templar, monks, nuns and also so-called witches and undoubtedly innocent dissidents who are persecuted and burned. There is the young count's son who does not accept his inheritance but instead joins the Cathars in the Pyrenees. There is the son of a German Count Palatine who is cursed by his father because he does not want to defend the castle at the crucial moment – but also the sons of the

Norwegian King Magnus Barfuss in the 11th and 12th centuries, who after the early death of their father in a ravine are able to share management tasks between themselves without a power struggle. There is the noblewoman who spends her life as a male doctor in Rome and is only recognized when she can no longer hide her pregnancy. Accordingly, I could continue the list through the centuries and millennia, back to the time before humans first incarnated on Earth.

Many countries and peoples around the globe and all kinds of cultures are therefore represented: Atlanteans, Aborigines, Chinese, Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, Arabs, Celts, Greeks, Jews, Romans, Normans, Laplanders, Eskimos, Lakota, Hopi, Aztecs, Inca etc. There are mystery priests, nomads, city founders, herb dealers, hermits, mistresses, blacksmiths, gypsies, court jesters, popes, shoemakers, farmer's wives, moral criminals, law enforcement officers, saddle makers, musicians, postal workers, scientists, landladies and publicists. Different beliefs, religious customs and philosophical systems appear. People meet in different buildings and in all kinds of places and towns to discuss something, to negotiate, or they live there. There are caves, sukkahs, igloos, wigwams, stone circles, mountain villages, fortresses, towers, hermitages, fishing towns, basilicas, stave churches, monasteries, cathedrals, mosques, farms, educational institutions, sailing ships and automobiles.

City names such as the following appeared conspicuously: Eridu, Baghdad, Mecca, Petra, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Acre, Phasis, Dendera, Memphis, Alexandria, Knossos, Hattusa, Ephesus, Byzantium, Athens, Corinth, Olympia, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Carthage, Roma, Pisa, Venice, Budapest, Prague, Nuremberg, Basel, Strasbourg, Nidaros, Bergen, Bilbao, London, Edinburgh, Reykjavik, Boston, Charleston, Chicago, and New Orleans. But settlements and cities could sometimes be well described – e.g. in the Middle East, East Asia, or South America – without an exact geographical diagnosis being able to be made.

Peoples, groups, and individuals were often in conflict with one another. Peace agreements were sometimes celebrated. At other times, many died in a cruel battle because no agreement had been reached beforehand. Several people with whom I worked continuously over a long period of time developed the ability to confidently explore karmic and other connections. Others, however, wait until they have gained the inner security to recognize their meditative images as true karmic messages. However, below I would like to describe a few examples of how some people developed meditative motives that were linked to current events in their lives in such a way that I determined that they correspond to genuine karmic motives.

On processing of karma from Atlantis

Some who deal only on the surface with the idea of karma believe that we progress from life to life in such a way that in today's life only the karma that is only connected to the last incarnation continues to work. That would mean that the lives further back would be finished. My research and discoveries, as well as the unpublished explorations of others that I know of, show more complex connections between the present and the past. It has been shown time and time again that there are much broader karmic connections between previous incarnations and today than would be assumed.

A past life event is not necessarily exhausted when the direct karmic consequence of a negative action has been dealt with. A single act casts an immense variety of rays of impact – we could speak of *karmic wisdom radii* – into the future and the influence of the forces of fate is connected in an unlimited manner to such a radius. I have collected some meaningful karmic insights for many eras and cultures. As an example, I would like to suggest such a direction that has to do with the theme of Atlantis.

Diane de Poitiers (around 1500 – 1566).
The Fontainebleau School, 1590.

An actress, here called Sinje, saw a phase of life in a distant incarnation in vivid and surprisingly plausible imaginations. Sinje discovered herself as a young woman who, under the guidance of an initiate from the Sun Oracle, received the necessary training to work in the context of the Venus Oracle. After the graduation ceremony, she was picked up on the ridge above the settlement where she grew up by a flying vehicle that was supposed to take her to the Venus Oracle. The boat was led by some men from the Oracle of Mercury whom she did not know. During the journey, which lasted several days, nothing was said and the young woman, here called Sedawa, did not dare to ask the strangers any questions. As a side note, it should be mentioned that during this research I also discovered some subtleties in the control of these ships, which I referred to in the first book with the term *Gamamila*.[100]

[100] I found the name Gamamila through meditative research into the Atlantis culture. It depicts a flying boat with its crew, controlled by telepathy and magical ingenuity. The root word *gama* can be found in English game and in Norwegian *gammel* for old, which originally meant wise. *Mila* means the geographical distance, such as the distance one travelled before taking a break. The name for a palanquin, a carrying chair, in Japanese is *gomi*.

At the new location of her work, Sedawa was entrusted with a job that she had to carry out together with other women. There was a lake not far from the settlement on the other side of a hill. A short distance from the shore there were covered platforms, each woven together from the living leaf crowns of four trees rising from the water, on which each of the women had to carry out their work tasks on their own. Young men who were still candidates for their training brought the women the necessary ropes, other tools and, on certain days, new plant germs. The women and their work tools were rowed to the pedestals in narrow canoes.

The place by the water was a plantation where special fruits were grown that developed seeds with strong vitality. These seeds were then used as fuel for various Atlantean inventions. To start a new planting, the women submerged themselves under water and planted the seeds around the posts. Sedawa and her friends lived during the day on the platforms, which were woven entirely from the branches and foliage of the four tree trunks. They were playing, singing, praying, and dancing. Often several women would meet on a podium to play together, but each would furthermore spend long hours working alone. The special task of the women's diverse activities on the platforms was to create a stronger connection between growth processes and cosmic influences. They were intended to create an ethereal bridge between Earth and the alien planets. This resulted in an increase in the cosmic energies that naturally fall on the earth.

For many years Sedawa continued to carry out this work. Emissaries from the Mercury Oracle came to the plantation at regular intervals to distribute the seed harvest to the many sites on Atlantis. Sedawa got to know some of these men better and a love affair developed with one of them. In this time and place there were strict rules governing the behaviour of men and women towards one another. So, there was no way for Sedawa to have the settlement administration legitimize her connection with her new lover.

Her lover therefore decided to secretly take her with him in his ship.

The further course of the story revealed that Sedawa had to endure a declaration of ostracism, which stated that she was no longer allowed to carry out her former work anywhere. In later incarnations, this individuality often developed a tendency to take on tasks in agriculture, but also in the area of reproduction and in connection with the art of love. In a striking female incarnation during the Renaissance period, Sinje recognized herself as Diana of Poitiers, the mistress of the French king, Henry II, to whom she gave successful advice through her proud and courageous attitude and noble learning. The karmic insights into the Atlantean way of life and other lives helped Sinje to gain a new understanding of the idea of development as humanity progresses.

The guardian of the Vulcano oracle

The previously mentioned Ed wanted to investigate whether there could be karmic reasons for his short temper that sometimes came over him. Dealing with colleagues and patients in the doctor's office, he and they didn't have any problems with each other. In private circles, however, it happened that his choleric and bisexual disposition led to many arguments that he would have preferred not to have. Another reason for this exploration concerned his desire to track down an individuality that he knew and saw in an incarnation in the 19th century but had the feeling that he had not yet encountered in his current life.

Together Ed and I discovered an incarnation of him in Atlantean times. The connections observed concerned a prehistoric culture that I knew well through my research and describe in the first book. I chose the name Jesham for his life at that time. Ed saw himself and his formerly brother, here called Gasham, as two representatives of the Mercury Oracle. The brother was trained to serve

in the sun oracle and he himself was further trained for the tasks in the Volcano Oracle. Sometimes they met to complement each other's pursuits, as Gasham was in charge of the Sun Oracle about certain gains from Jesham's work.

Jesham's workplace was on a man-made island. From the outside, the island looked like a round cliff. But inside the mountain there was a large hall where active work was being done by a group of initiates. In the middle of the hall there was a large cavity in the ground that went down far into the earth's interior. When they looked down, they saw the bright red volcanic molten river surging up and down like a living being. The work on the lava fountain was led by a chief initiate, here called Galasham. Jesham was familiar with the things inside the rock, but he had no authority to work there. His job was to guard the entrance so that no outsiders could enter. No animals or unprepared people were allowed to disturb the mystery of the volcanic site.

A trusting relationship developed between Jesham and Galacham over the years, so that in later years Galacham was often able to travel around to spread his knowledge of fire powers to other places. Every now and then Jesham was even like a hermit all alone on the barren island. He was only given his daily food and drink by servants who came over from the mainland in a boat. This loneliness was not pleasant for Jesham. That's why he soon allowed wandering outcasts on rafts from some oracles or settlements to tell him their stories.

So it happened that one such fellow, here called Darin, returned to the island one night in his paddle boat without being noticed by Jesham. He lay asleep in front of the gate and Darin was able to get inside unnoticed. Like a mosquito diving into the flame, the inexperienced man was so impressed by the fiery splendour of the lava that he threw himself into it as if spellbound. With that, Darin's life ended. At the same time, Galacham experienced the misfortune through his clairvoyance, but he was unable to reverse its consequences. This circumstance was not the only one that occurred in

the Volcano Oracle, but many other tragedies arose due to the careless use of the fire element and the incorrect use of human ego powers, which led to a kind of crossroads between the Volcano Oracle and the Sun Oracle was created.

In Jesham's life this turn happened like this: One day he was standing on a flat land by the sea that was used as an airport. From the north came an aircraft from the Sun Oracle, which brought Gasham, his brother. Another flying vehicle, a Gamamila, from the Oracle of Mercury arrived from the east across the sea, bringing with it one of his old friends, called Shamuradhin, who was to act as a field judge between the brothers. A discussion between the three unfolded in a style that must seem very strange compared to the habits of our time. An approximate transmission would sound something like this:

Shamuradhin:
"Let the needs of the present give you the fruits of the past for the future. A change is occurring that should enable us to let life on earth not getting stuck. Shamuradhin wants to offer you a bridge."

Jesham:
"The forces of the earth have awakened me from my sleep. Jesham has become a different person due to the unlawful death of the outcast. However, Jesham also wants to continue to submit to the law of Galasham."

Gasham:
"Gacham's laws are no longer consistent with the mission of Galasham. The fire of the south burns our faces. Gasham warned his followers and you about the volcanic fire. The heart fire would have had to practice resisting the external fire for a long time in the service of the occult. We see that Galacham can no longer withstand the turmoil of the outcasts."

Shamuradhin:
"Shamuradhin sees the future love affairs of humanity, the deciphering of which cannot yet be mastered. The evil of the present

will only be eliminated when people have learned to manage the heat of the gods within themselves. When the glow from within the human being itself, like a properly guarded volcano, no longer destroys anything, but irrigates soul fields with honey and milk, then Jesham's destruction will be balanced out. Until then, however, we will have to tread different paths on earth."

Gasham:
"Gasham has to move away from his dear brother. Deeds of the gods will allow our paths to cross again."

Jesham:
"Jesham weeps tears that fall like snow to the earth. He will let silent tears fall into the fire-breathing fountain to soothe the pain of the Earth Mother."

In the next moment, as the two flying ships began to hover and Jesham made his way towards Galasham's residence, it began to snow. His bare feet made clear tracks in the freshly fallen snow. In post-Atlantean incarnations, this individuality developed a special talent, on the one hand to work as a magician in order to support other people in their I-development, and on the other hand to work as a fighter for progress within decadent societies. According to my research, he once fought as a knight in King Arthur's Round Table in the 9th century, and another time in the 19th century he explored the ancient mysteries through on-site travel in the Near and Far East. Through the classification into the Atlantean mysteries, the individuality today was able to develop the necessary new serenity towards himself and his immediate karmic circle.

Atlantean time	*Present*
Jesham	Ed
Gasham	Unknown person from Serbia
Galasham	Gabriele
Darin	Douglas
Shamuradhin	Jostein

In subsequent conversations and later flashbacks to this karma work, Ed came to the conclusion that Darin would be his current homosexual friend, Douglas. In Galasham, Ed recognized his current wife, here called Gabriele. He couldn't find Gasham in his immediate surroundings, but a meditative inspiration told him that if he travelled to a certain city in Serbia, he there would be able to meet his former brother in his current incarnation.

The Nordic chief

A businessman and ship captain living in Germany, here called Ben, was in a new relationship with a woman, I'll call her Lisa, with whom he had already been together once, who now told him that she wanted to separate from him again. Ben, however, wanted to be able to continue the relationship and therefore sought to meditatively look for karmic background to this problem. In a long-ago life in pre-Christian times, there was an issue between the two that had impressed a pattern that apparently could not be resolved in any life since.

Outline of a bear. Chauvette Grotto, France.

Ben saw himself in a male person who had a decisive role as leader of the hunting troop within a tribe in southern Norway. I'll call him Borgeir here. The spiritual leadership of the inhabitants was car-

ried out by a priestess, here called Solina, who had received her training in a distant country in the south – today Morocco. Ben recognized this priestess as Lisa. At that time there was something like a companionable connection between the two.

After completing their daily chores and socializing with the other residents, they often met at sunset or sunrise on a rounded cliff from which the view to the south was very beautiful. Then Borgeir told her all sorts of things about hunting and male customs. Solina, for her part, told him about special encounters that she had had during her time in the south, when she received her training and initiation as a priestly tribal leader.

One day, to Borgeir's surprise, Solina reported that she was traveling south again. He then became very sad until she allowed him to go with her, which made him almost beside himself with happiness. On the day of departure, fishermen on the coast took them across the ocean to what is now Jutland, Denmark. Once they reached the mainland, they travelled from place to place for several weeks and were accompanied by scouts, all of whom wore a blue gemstone around their neck that was exactly the same as the one Solina had. There wasn't much spoken between the two of them during the trip. Solina sometimes spoke in a foreign dialect to the people they met. The hunter master saw and listened to everything and learned a lot of new things.

After many days of walking, they came to a place on a plateau now called Taunus – a name that refers to the Atlantean root word *tauwa* for divinity – where, strangely enough, people were standing around some round ships, even though there was no water there. Borgeir watched in amazement as they were all carried by these ships through the air further south. After a good week and several breaks, they reached the destination of the long journey. It

was a settlement in a valley-like deepening in a man-made ridge near the Moroccan Atlas Mountains.[101]

Later investigations that I carried out revealed that an offshoot of the Sun Oracle had been set up here in Atlantean times to guide groups of people who were brought together to emigrate from Atlantis to their new homelands. The two visitors from the far north were well looked after here, but they didn't see much of each other during the visit.

Solina went to her lessons every day and to ceremonies that Borgeir was not allowed to attend. Most of the time he searched the surrounding countryside or stayed in the temple courtyard in case he was to receive any training. Borgeir had imagined that he would also receive an initiation, but nothing of that sort happened. At the farewell party he received a gift that he was allowed to take with him for the northerners. It was a long spear decorated with painted symbols and had a metal pointed head. He was told that a magical power imbued the bear fur attached to it that would bring good luck in hunting.

During the journey home, little was said between the two of them. Solina, whose eyes had become even more beautiful, seemed to be lost in herself. Returning home, Borgeir used the spear for hunting and received much admiration from his comrades as it turned out that the new weapon could kill more prey than ever before. Yes, it was even possible to kill bears without a previous siege using just this spear from a distance, as if the spear made the hunter invisible to the bear. However, Borgeir was unable to renew contact with Solina because she seemed to avoid him for reasons he did not understand.

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[101] Some places there are now called Towourte, Tamtelte and Timzilite, which are located about 40 km southeast of Marrakech. In my first book I named the leading Atlantean Sun Oracle *Xandorra'tauwa,* which means God's Blessing Sun Place.

Sometimes Borgeir sat alone on the round mount and pondered why life had become so different. He couldn't figure out if he had done something wrong, and he didn't dare ask the priestess about it. After a few years, Borgeir gave the magical spear to a younger man because he had once been injured while hunting by a wild boar that had not been completely killed. He walked around more and more sadly, and so that he wouldn't bother anyone, he stayed in the forest away from the colony during this time.

One evening, as Borgeir sat alone on the massif, he decided to leave his hometown entirely. He set out on a journey northward into areas he had never seen before. Exhausted, he took a rest in a remote valley. But he came close to a brown bear with small cubs. Borgeir tried to escape from the frightened animal, but the angry bear managed to tear the tired huntsman apart. Thus, Borgeir ended his personal tragedy in an otherwise joyful age.

Late Atlantean period	*Present*
Borgeir	Ben
Solina	Lisa

These and other motifs from other incarnations that we discovered helped Ben to take a new look at his current life situation in order to find a solution to the questioned relationship. At the time of this research, Lisa – the former priestess – did not have the opportunity to get involved in joint karma work with Ben and me. Even then I felt that it would have been good if she had joined. Many years later, after the relationship between the two of them was long over and I had continued to work with Ben, one day Lisa called unexpectedly. Now she had found the time to make contact in order to consciously look at her karma.

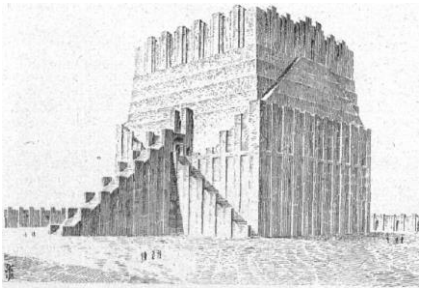
The Babylonian builder

A middle-aged man, here referred to as David, who worked as a financial consultant wanted to investigate some personnel issues at his workplace that were causing some difficulty in his upcoming promotion in the main branch of a bank. Above all, David wanted to examine his relationships with two colleagues, here called Julien and Malcolm. David was unsure whether he could really trust Julien's promised support because they hadn't known each other for long. Malcolm, who ran a subsidiary, had advised David not to accept the promotion because he wanted to bring him over as personnel manager. We discovered the following story in ancient Babylonia, Mesopotamia:

At the beginning of the remembrance, David found himself in the middle of a small group of other men who were carefully moving towards a guarded portal in a large wall. A closer inspection revealed a pompous castle behind the wall. The followers remained at a convenient distance to wait for him until he could complete their shared task alone in the castle. The powerfully built man – called Sedekar here – wore a simple, red coat. But his headband decorated with gold symbols, which also had a ruby, showed that he was of high rank. Because the guards greeted him warmly, it became clear that this was not the first time Sedekar had appeared here.

As he was led into a large hall of the castle, we sensed in advance that this was an attempt at mediation that affected the entire population of the neighbouring river town, where he was the ruling potentate. Sedekar was led before a circle of men sitting on stone chairs. They were all handsomely dressed in long, colourful coats. In the middle sat the ruler of this castle – here called Aktamar. David recognized him as today's Malcolm. Sedekar looked at him, bowed briefly, and handed a servant a scroll that he had hidden in his smock. He handed the list to a gentleman in a blue coat – here called Jerulam – who sat on Aktamar's right hand. David recognized him as Julien today. Aktamar rose, went to Sedekar, and

greeted him by embracing him. It became clear that the two had a lot to do with each other.



Reconstruction of the Babylonian tower Etemenanki.
After Robert Koldewey (1855 – 1925), founder of modern archaeological building research.[102]

After Sedekar gave his report, a passionate conversation ensued in the group. Based on what was spoken – which could be understood intuitively – the picture that emerged was that the Sedekar people were the locals who had lived in this region for thousands of years. Aktamar and Jerulam, on the other hand, belonged to a different tribe that had settled here a few hundred years ago from the north. At first the two peoples had lived in harmony because there was enough land and catch, but Aktamar's grandfather, who had built the castle, imposed suzerainty over the region by force of arms.

Despite some dissenting voices, the ruler continued to entrust Sedekar with the autonomy to carry out his extensive construction projects in the city, which were necessary for his own religious cult. The saying of Jerulam in particular seemed to be crucial for

[102] Etemenanki (Sumerian: É.TEMEN.AN.KI; House of the Foundations of Heaven and Earth) was a ziggurat (tiered temple tower) dedicated to the Babylonian empire god Marduk in the capital Babylon in the 6th century BC.

the positive outcome. Sedekar left the castle with a happy expression and reunited with his escort, who received the news enthusiastically. Over the next few years, we observed Sedekar busy with various construction projects in the city district. Canals were created from the river to the temple. A new altar for the river goddess was to be built.

Sedekar was swiftly a builder, architect, engineer, and stonemason himself. He had thousands of enthusiastic helpers and capable women around him who supported the project. The city culture flourished and there was usually a good relationship with the people of the interior, who were disciplined by the castle. Jerulam, always dressed in blue, came to visit at rhythmic intervals that corresponded to the planets and star constellations, but Sedekar no longer took the time to go to the castle himself. When important matters needed to be negotiated, he sent a messenger. Then Jerulam always appeared, but Aktamar did not.

It seemed like a nuisance had arisen after a few years, but David couldn't figure out why. More and more often, Jerulam was distressed when he arrived for an audience with Sedekar and could do nothing to counteract an interdict. Construction had to stop immediately. Added to this was the surprising fact that Aktamar himself set up his warriors as police everywhere in the city. It did not take many days before a popular uprising was organized under the command of one of Sedekar's subjects.

However, many city residents were immediately put down with violence because they were not used to going on the offensive. The remaining citizens who were not captured, and Sedekar with them, flew downstream from the city at night in boats. They came far away to another area where no people lived before them. The small group of about eighty individuals did not build a new city, but instead found shelter in caves and created small collectives out of mud buildings. Sedekar withdrew into a grotto as a hermit. Some of his children from several connections brought him food and necessities for his humble existence.

Every day he sat at the entrance to the cave and wrote down on parchment everything he had previously learned. Everything that had flowed into architecture from his youth training now emerged in a different form in the manuscripts. What had gone out but had been violently repressed by Aktamar was thus given an unprecedented internalization. Sedekar observed the connections in nature. During the day he examined the birds by the sea, the animals in the bay and the trees in front of his whereabouts. At night he sat for hours and marvelled at the moon, the planets, and the signs of the zodiac.

Sedekar looked at the clouds, the rainbows, and the thunderstorm. He followed the drops of water that fell outside his cave entrance after the rain shower. He investigated why they made small holes in the sand. Gradually he discovered how many colours the various natural phenomena had. He philosophized and thought about what everything meant. Sedekar wrote down a lot of things and made small illustrations and developed new symbols for the things around him. A library was created piecemeal in ceramic amphorae, which was continually expanded by his descendants after his death. In this way, a person who had initially lived in a distinctive urban culture ended his last years in the wisdom of nature.

Babylonian period	*Present*
Sedekar	David
Jerulam	Julien
Aktamar	Malcolm

David was able to deduce a lot from this dramatic karmic story so that he could compare the nature of the people acting in it with the current behaviour of Julien and Malcolm. David discovered that Julien's guarantee of future cooperation was rooted in an ancient friendship that they could now continue to build on. He saw Malcolm' desire to have him at his disposal as a flash in the pan that he should rather avoid.

The Greek doctor

An older woman, here called Pinja, came into contact with a virtue angel who had to do with wisdom while she was delving into the after-death review of her unique Egyptian incarnation. She wanted to pursue this motif more closely and therefore became aware of a following incarnation. Pinja identified herself as a young man who received lessons with other youngsters in a temple context in ancient Greece. The students lived in modest but beautiful barracks behind the Temple of Apollo. In the general instruction, which lasted several years, the main subjects were the practice of various arts and sports, where the aim was to fully understand the human body. For the young gentleman, here called Pedon, who would later become a doctor, the interest was particularly in the cultivation of poetics and in listening to old legends and myths. During the karmic review, it was particularly interesting to see how Pinja tried to recreate some moments of the recitation in ancient Greek. She could almost make out a few words, which nevertheless clearly showed that it would be possible to find a new opening for linguistics in the future if someone increased their talent in this field.

After the discharge ceremony, the young Greek was apprenticed to an old doctor. From him, Pedon learned the practical art of producing medicines from animals, plants and mineral substances found in nature. He learned various methods of healing through substances, but also through life forces that he was able to summon up in his own being in order to use them on patients through conscious activity or meditation. Gradually, the young doctor was allowed to take over the districts that were furthest away from the master's home, because the old man could no longer walk so well because of his sore knees, which were always developing water.

Like all doctors and healing artists of yesteryear and later, Pedon also had his medicine kit. It was a wooden case that had smaller boxes and spaces inside for the medicine jars, knives and implements. It was held together on the outside by leather straps and

could therefore be carried over the shoulder like a backpack. After the teacher had resigned from his office, the old master transferred all of his districts to Pedon, whose sphere of influence expanded over the years because his fame as a skilful surgeon spread to distant regions and islands. The young doctor cared for the old man's knees until he had completely healed him. So, the old therapist was able to have some nice years at the end of his life.

When Pedon was not traveling to visit a patient, he lived at home, where sick people also visited him. After spending time with the other residents of his household, he would retreat to his room or sit behind the house under a tree, where, when the weather was good, he would arrange for the preparation of medicines. Pedon had no wife or children of his own, but he kept a housekeeper, here called Ismene, and over time he acquired several novices. Every evening Pedon practiced his special meditation, which gave him the spiritual strength and knowledge he needed for his vocation.

He sat in a devoted, upright position, sometimes raising his hands. It became clear that he was addressing a spirit being he was seeing. Pedon was flooded by this being, so that a brightness pervaded him during this state. He was therefore able to examine his internal organs and body parts in detail and understand what diseases could arise there and what the right treatment would be. Again and again, the symptoms he had observed in patients surfaced in his memory so that he could simultaneously feel the pain the person concerned had experienced. So, Pedon later tried out in practice whether the advice he had received in meditation remained valid. In this sense, I can see Pedon as an empiricist and belonged to one of the many medical schools in Greece since the 3rd century BC. But because he was initially taught in an Apollo temple, it is logical to think that he lived a few centuries earlier, because Asclepius later took Apollo's place as the god of doctors. The life of the Greek itinerant doctor passed without any major complications or dramatic events. He was spared from going to war or having to work after an earthquake. When asked whether Pedon had really never experienced a crisis, the following scenario emerged:

One day a man named Akelaios came to him suffering from terrible stomach pains. Pedon thought he noticed a stomach infection in the patient, which he did not consider risky. That's why he prescribed him a self-urinary treatment. To do this, Akelaios should avoid sour fruits and berries and absolutely not drink wine during this time. He returned to Pedon after four weeks. The pain hadn't gone away; in fact, it had increased. Pedon next tried various external treatments with packs of herbal pulp on his stomach. These procedures also did not provide any improvement. So, in the end he felt compelled to carry out an operation because he had discovered through the laying on of hands, palpating the patient and in his meditations in the meantime that it was probably a larger tumour that was tormenting the poor person. Pedon carried out the surgical incision at his home. Three of his assistants were at his side. Akelaios was put into a half-sleep state by taking medication so that he could lie completely still.

When Pedon saw the tumour on Akelaios' small intestine, beads of sweat fell from his forehead. He had never seen such a big bump. So, he didn't know whether he would be able to get it away without the patient dying from bleeding. Pedon was at a loss several times as to whether it would be correct to cut it off. He observed its surface carefully, examining how it had grown. His disciples had prepared various preparations that lay in ceramic bowls on a marble table. There wasn't much talking. I got the impression that the way the surgeon worked, the way he moved, told the apprentices what to do. When Pedon took the narrow cutting knife, they knew he had chosen the operation.

So, a mixture of medicinal plants was placed around the bump – these included: mashed seeds of *pomegranate* (Punica granatum) and grated leaves of *yarrow* (Achillea) – lubricated, on the one hand to reduce bleeding, on the other hand to promote the regeneration of the intestinal tissues due to the cut. He then operated on the bump with a few gentle cuts with the knife. He placed it in an empty bowl and received a fine needle made of fish bones with a thread of fish intestine attached, which one of the helpers had

ready. So, he sewed up the wound with the body-friendly seam. He brushed a thin but quickly drying sap over the seam of the intestinal wound, which came from *oak bark* (Quercus) and body excretions from a *hedgehog* and a black-headed *lizard* (Hellenolacerta graeca). He also layered this mixture on the seam of the abdominal wound after the whole operation was done.

Akelaios gradually came to himself. His companions, the two sons, who had been waiting expectantly nearby all the time, were instructed to apply these remedies to their father's wound every morning for a week. The scar should not be covered. Akelaios would receive the best convalescence under the open sky day and night and lie under a blossoming fruit tree in the sun. Namely, it was springtime. That same evening Pedon went to a grove of walnut trees that grew below his homestead. Here he buried the tumour deep into the ground. Other waste related to its work had already been buried there. After a few days, Pedon was informed that his patient was doing very well. After a week he walked the five miles to Akelaios to check the wound himself. There was nothing disturbing to notice. After seven weeks, Akelaios himself came to him on foot to give his thanks that he had been healed so well. As a result, the good reputation of the traveling doctor grew even further.

Greece	*Present*
Pedon	Pinja
Akelaios	Alberto
Ismene	Miguel

During the karma meditation, Pinja recognized Akelaios, whom she as Pedon had successfully operated on, as her current husband, Alberto, who had died a few years earlier. This Greek life motif shed a wise light on their long-term marriage, which had not always been amicable. The former housekeeper was later found to be her eldest son, Miguel.

The guest of the Black Panther

In her current situation, a woman was struggling with the question of whether or not she should separate from her husband. Then she was pointed out an incarnation in which she had been the chief of a tribe of the Ingenious people in North America.

The spiritual imaginations that showed a meeting festival between three tribes, at which the chiefs told stories and anecdotes that were related to the feathers in their headdresses, were particularly impressive. Each feather meant something special, because many of these feathers bore witness to the trials and sufferings their ancestors endured in earlier times to achieve their chieftaincy status. It was customary for a chief to either pass this headgear on to his descendants or to give individual feathers from it to other men who had shown bravery and virtue within or outside his tribe. Our chief told the following story, pointing with his right hand to a particular feather on the headdress:

"This is the first feather that I acquired as an initiate. Unuhama, our medicine man, instructed me how to gain the Black Panther's favour. In dream work I had already encountered the beautiful animal in its cave. Then I was faced with the test of looking for it in the sensory world. The teachers led me to the slope of the canyon where the panther would live. I had to climb down the steep stone slope. This was life-threatening because I could slip down through loose stones. If this had happened to me and I had lost consciousness, wild animals and birds of prey would have immediately come to tear me apart. So, I had to move down very slowly.

Finally, I found myself standing on stony ground littered with feathers, bones, and dry roots. Birds were circling above me, and an eagle had also come. Far up the slope I could see my friends standing quietly with their bows drawn. Would they intervene to help me if my life was in danger? I didn't know because I had heard stories about other examinees who had to pay with their lives in such situations. I saw a large eagle feather on the ground in front

of me. I picked it up and put it in my headband. A great calm took possession of my soul and all my fear fled.

Now I began to examine the canyon to look for the entrance to the panther's cave. I found it and sat in front of it in a position of thanksgiving. I turned to our gods and the Great Spirit said to me: "Be welcome here. You yourself are the animal you are looking for. Here is your home, everywhere is your home." Then I went into the cave. Whether I physically met the panther there remains my secret until I appoint my successor. I then went back out and climbed up to my brothers who were watching me. This is how I was able to purchase my first chieftain's feather. This is what I, Wagananka, told his dear brothers and sisters today, whose name means: The Guest of the Black Panther.

After the guest chiefs had told one of their own stories, Wagananka related his second story, which had to do with a feather given to his father. In his youth he was in love with a beautiful maiden, but she died in an accident. In order to indulge his grief in solitude, he paddled around in a canoe on the large lake for several days and nights. One evening the canoeist sat quietly, lost in thought, and at first, he didn't notice that a black bird was circling him in the air. Only when the red thread of the setting sun touched the surface of the water, did he look up and see the wonderful bird, which was as black as his deceased lover's hair. He couldn't understand how it happened, but the bird dropped a feather that spiralled down toward him so he could grab it in his hand. Wagananka ended his second story as follows:

"Since then, he carried with him all the sadness that came his way in life like a black feather in his headdress. Nevertheless, I got it from him to carry."

For the woman in question, these retrospective views contributed to the realization that part of her karmic task in the present is to acquire independence from which she can shape her life according to her own needs, regardless of whether she separate or would continue to live with her husband.

The forced abandonment

William Jackson (1843 – 1942):
A Liverpool Slave Ship.

A woman in her mid-forties was involved in an initiative that had the impulse to set up a facility for people in the last phase of life. In karma work, she looked for affirming backgrounds of fate and new inner strength in order to overcome various social hurdles that stood in the way of the project. She discovered a male incarnation in which she had to live on an island in total isolation from other people after childhood. Back then, the boy often played alone on the shore of a bay on a West African island covered by tropical forest. Once the boy saw several sailing ships that had dropped anchor, but he couldn't classify them as such because he had never seen anything like them before. His people lived in a settlement in a clearing in the jungle on the large island. Strange-looking and cloaked sailors came ashore in small boats. The boy watched from his hiding place in the bushes, listening for something that wasn't normal to happen, but he didn't understand what was happening. He didn't either dare respond to his mother's wailing calls in the distance.

Thus, he continued to hide and waited for some days until things calmed down again. He didn't know that it was Europeans who had captured all of his people as slaves to take them to America. When he dared to walk back to the settlement, he could no longer find his parents. Nobody could be found anymore. The huts were burned down, and ceramics, tools and other everyday utensils lay destroyed everywhere. The boy didn't know what to do here anymore, so he immediately ran back to his bay. There he had enough to eat with fruits and berries. He could drink in a small stream that flowed from a cliff, and to sleep he lay under a sheltering bush, as he had made a habit of doing as a child. Sometimes his mother had picked him up there; he could remember that for a long time.

Many, many years passed without much external change. The gaunt black man, he had grown into, lived in his bay. He walked around the island, always going back to the site of the old settlement to get something, but gradually it became so overgrown with undergrowth that there was no point in crawling there anymore. The man called himself Boa because his mother had called him by that name when he was hiding from the strangers. He slowly forgot most of the words in his language.

He ended up simply naming things around him that he liked: "Boa." Only once did he see such large ships anchored in the gulf for a few days because of a storm. Then he hid again and lay under his bush without moving all day and night. He remained unmolested because no people from the ships came to the island. Even later in his life he never came into contact with people again. He had a good relationship with the animals because he didn't hunt. Many birds stayed near him because he gave them bitter seeds that he did not want to eat.

Boa spent his last years almost exclusively in his bushy dwelling, which had grown into a small sukkah. He was in a slightly manic-depressive mood. At first, he tried all kinds of things to get rid of it because he thought he had been attacked by small ants. However, no swimming, no running, no digging into the sand could help.

The best thing he discovered, was simply sitting quietly in the hut, and looking out at the calm sea. One evening he fell asleep in this position and only woke up again as a deceased person who was able to look back on this strange life.

Based on the experiences in this extraordinary incarnation, this individuality is working in the present to carefully prepare many people for the threshold of death.

The English noble family

Not only have I worked with individual people in this way to explore their karma with them, but I have also worked individually and together with several people who knew each other. In this way, different perspectives on one and the same story could be explored, so that many mutual confirmations emerged. The following dramatic story comes from such a "multi-layered" work. In this case, after the report, I will make a few comments about what mental states I can get when such difficult karma is worked through.

This is initially about three people from the present who are in family and friendship with one another. Instead of the current names and the names they bore in the previous lives we discovered, I invented others; everything else corresponds to the karmic circumstances. Eva and Lotte are sisters. Hilde is a friend of both of them. I carried out karma work with these three women. George did not take part. He also didn't want to know anything about what was being researched because he had no inclination towards spiritual questions. Eva and Georg were married and had children. At the time of the research, the divorce had taken place several years ago and they were able to get along somewhat again because of their children. A fifth person, Judith, is now Georg's new partner. The children of both Eva and Lotte also appeared in the imaginations, but it would go too far to reveal these connections here.

Jan Havickszoon Steen (around 1626 – 1679):
Garden Festival, 1677. Oil on canvas.

One issue that was to be examined had to do with the topic of incest. Lotte had received a tip from a clairvoyant that she had probably been sexually abused by an adult during her childhood. She didn't have any memories about it, but since this tip-off, the two other women also succumbed to a feeling of slight unease when the topic of their sister's father, here called Peter, came up. Eva began to believe that perhaps she too had been abused as a small child. When I heard all of this, but also because I had gotten to know the father earlier, I had to completely keep him away from such suspicions. Instead, it was logical that something karmic in this direction could be sought in order to uncover it. In the following story, Eva karmically matches Eliza, Lotte matches Albert, and Hilde matches Holly. Georg is called Gordon in the past in question. Finally, Judith appears as Johanna. For a clear overview:

Past	*Present*
Eliza	Eva
Gordon, her father	Georg, Eva's ex-husband
Albert, his brother	Lotte, Eva's younger sister
Patricia, Gordon's deceased wife	Peter, father of Eva and Lotte
Holly, Eliza's younger sister	Hilde, friend of Eva and Lotte
Johanna, maid in Gordon's house	Judith, Georg's partner

On a larger country estate in England in the Baroque period, Gordon is a noble lord. Albert is his younger brother. Gordon has two daughters. Eliza is the older one, Holly the younger one. At the time in the sequences viewed, Gordon's wife, Patrizia, have died some years earlier. The two daughters, about nine and five years old, were raised by a maid, Johanna. She had increasingly taken on a leading role in the Gordon's life. It was understandable that after the death of his beloved wife, his emotional life had suffered a break. Albert, who was working as a counsellor in the next town, could hardly encourage his now depressed brother with his jokes. However, Albert came to visit every weekend. The girls looked forward to him because he brought them music and played graceful games with them in the park area. Eliza was a thin, self-confident girl who had a proud temperament like her mother once had. Holly, on the other hand, was chubby and shy and always let Eliza tell her what to do.

The two children played from time to time in a secluded part of the castle where no one had lived since their mother's death. When the father heard this, he became angry. He took the daughters to his office and let them know that they were not allowed to play there at all. Because possessions that had belonged to the mother could be seen in some of the closed rooms, they decided to sneak there again. They were noticed again by Johanna, who told her father. Gordon was now beside himself with fury. Because he knew Eliza was stubborn, he wanted to break her disobedience now. Without planning it, he brought his eldest daughter to his bedroom and tied her to his bed with Johanna's assistance. Holly had to stay outside. In an isolated recollection, Hilda described with severe agony how she had heard her older sister's screams from outside the closed door. But Holly never found out what had happened in there.

After this first misfortune until the great catastrophe, a series of further rapes followed, without the father being able to break Eliza's defiance. Instead, a hatred of him grew within her that she would never be able to get rid of. About three more years passed in this way in this position of the English aristocracy, which was

considered idyllic to the outside world. But it was boiling inside the castle walls. Eliza constantly tried to stay away from her father. Albert learned that all was not well. So, he often appeared at his birthplace – even during the week – to stir people's minds with his entertainment and musicality. Holly took up the musical aspect. But Eliza withdrew more and more into her room with her herbarium.

Many guests lived at the castle in the summer. Both relatives and other visitors enjoyed the hospitality, which was a fact despite the host's gloomy temperament. One day after the big meal in the dining hall, people were having fun outside in the park. A fire was prepared, and the musicians carried their instruments to the pavilion. Some children were playing under the trees, but Eliza had taken Holly and an out-of-town boy to look again in the usually closed part of the castle.

The sun had set and most of the windows were covered by either curtains or shutters. That is why Eliza lit a glass oil lamp. As she entered a dim chamber, she tripped over the edge of a floor rug. She fell to the floor and lost her grip on the lamp, which broke. Oil flowed onto the carpet and was quickly ignited by the lamp fire. Holly and the boy immediately got scared and ran out into the park. Eliza stayed behind. She tried to turn over the carpet to put out the fire. He was far too heavy for her. She got a tablecloth and tried to put out the fire with it, but it was in vain.

The fire quickly expanded and caught the nearest furniture. Then she ran into a guest room where she knew there was a pot of water. The little water was of no use either. So, the fear got to her, and she ran out and told her uncle what had happened. A firefighting service was quickly organized. People in earlier times knew what to do in such an emergency. First, attempts were made to put out the fire that was spreading in the chamber with the only water sprays that were available, then with water-moist bed sheets. While that didn't work, Gordon wanted to pick up some valuables that were behind the burning chamber. With three other

brave men, including Albert, he marched through the flames. The three returned shortly with valuable jewellery and paintings.

Then it was too late for Gordon himself to step back through the chamber, which was in full flames. He opened a window and started throwing things out. So, a lot more could be saved. Most of the valuables on the floor below were also saved. Gordon initially escaped the flames by climbing down a ladder from a French balcony. But then he wanted to go back into the house to make sure that all the doors to the burning part were closed. During these capers, he was struck by the thought that perhaps there was still something that could be brought to safety on the lowest floor. The thought became his fate. The fire had penetrated through the intermediate floor. A burning beam fell and hit him in the back. He barely managed to survive because he was pulled out of the rubble before the entire ceiling collapsed. And if a thunderstorm and downpour hadn't broken out in the evening, an even greater catastrophe would have ensued.

The disaster left Gordon paralyzed from the chest down. For the rest of his life, until his daughters grew up, he had to stay in bed. Johanna cared for him until his death. His brother Albert visited him regularly, as did Holly; but he never saw Eliza again, even when she later lived in the castle and took over the court's affairs over the years. Holly went to the same city where Albert worked for her operetta career.

So, the sisters saw each other less and less and the family's misfortune was never discussed. Gordon recognized a debt to his eldest daughter and therefore did not allow her to be deprived of her inheritance. Over the years, Eliza became a hard, cold-feeling lady who only let very few people get close to her. After her duties, she retreated back to her room to expand her herbarium or read botanical tomes. After her father's death, she immediately cancelled Johanna. The boy who was present on the night of the fire became their new manager after many years.

The strongest karmic knot from this past is tied between Eliza/Eva and Gordon/Georg. There are other lives in between, but the two individualities had – before incarnating – decided to try to live together again in our present. Consequently, through many years of family life together, a composed love developed. But it wasn't strong enough to completely transform the old wounds of abuse and the night of the fire. So, there had to be another separation, which, however, does not have "a burning crossbeam" as a bridge, but rather a camaraderie "of flowery paths" as a connection. Eva still has deep fears about sexuality today.

The problem for Eva, as with Gordon back then as a physical fact, is that she feels internally, as is etherical paralyzed from the chest down. Initially, the karmic recognition of these connections triggered processes of letting go and accepting herself, so that she gradually came better to terms with sexuality. With Georg, the theme is that he entrenches himself in his job, which was also seen as a cause of the separation from Eva. With both of them I see a certain reversal of the situation.

The inability to understand what happened, on the one hand due to Holly's immaturity, and on the other hand due to the secrecy of the cultural environment at in those days, has now caused a mental tendency of restlessness in Hilde, which she can only get under control to some extent through contemplative activity. Albert's loyalty to family and tradition was heartfelt, but in his relationship with his brother he hid an indignation at his tyranny. The result of this personal dependence can now be seen in a karma where she cares for psychologically sensitive people. Opening up the rape scenes was initially shocking for Eva. She was dismayed that her former husband had once been her ignominious father. She was disgusted with herself for being so squeamish in a previous life. However, Eva was happy that she was able to remove her current father from immediate suspicion.

Hilde was shocked when she sat in front of the closed door in the show. At that moment she had to cry for a long time to come to

terms with the stunning realization before we could continue the exploration without tears. She had to swallow hard to accept the truth that, as she now understood, she had basically left her sister alone. These are just a few of the many feelings and insights that have come from karmic exploration like this.

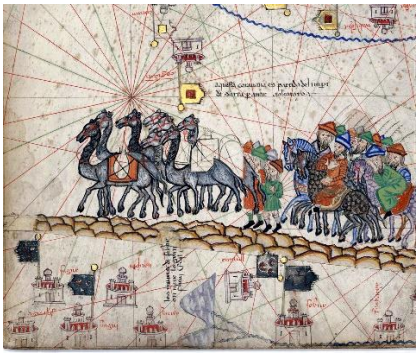
Stoning in the desert

Sometimes I have worked with groups to look for karmic backgrounds for themselves or for others around them who are not able to do this work themselves or want it for themselves, but who otherwise don't refuse the possible results. With five employees of a social-therapeutic facility, karmic findings were researched, both for themselves and for several residents they looked after, which were so significant and interesting that it seems right to me to pass on an example so that others could be inspired to carry out such research in a employment context.

The small group was familiar with the method of building the hut and other intricacies of this meditation. I had worked with them individually over the years as well as together in a group and had made a lot of progress with the topics of doubles, angels, elemental beings, etc. I also worked on such topics openly and happily with the people in need of assistance at this facility through improvisational theatre, so that I was always a popular guest there. In advance of group work, the attunement was made in such a way that everyone in the group had the opportunity to express their most positive assessments of everyone else in the group.

This created a common basis so that everyone not only consciously gained self-confidence but was also able to hear directly which skills the others found important. What was achieved was that everyone felt free to take on a guiding role "at the wheel" during meditation, depending on which motives were being viewed. So, I shouldn't be the only one who should have the opportunity to

tell a story about the people in question. Thus, over several sessions we developed a coordinated approach to “joint” imaginative, inspirative and intuitive review, where everyone could follow a part of the whole or the main sequences. What I might not have seen myself, I could then overhear from the others, so that a burning topicality and continuity in the research was achieved.



Caravan on the silk Road.
From the Catalan Atlas, about 1375.

The person being examined, named here Martin, was described in detail in advance. Everyone brought to the conversation a specific event that they had experienced directly with them. The slightly older Martin had lived at the institute for many years. Outwardly he had no disabilities because he was very useful in many practical things and in the household. He also loved his job as a clothing craftsman. He was very popular with some of his roommates, but unpopular with others because he would sometimes spit his opinions or judgments in your face. As a result, every now and then he managed to get people’s tempers boiling over, and a hothead nearby could completely freak out and cause further trouble.

After the internal transition led by me, someone in the circle told the first image that appeared, which after talking we were able to agree on as an introduction: “The sun is shining over a dry, sandy

landscape." Little by little someone else added something to it, so that a coherent geographical whole was created: the ocean lies to the east. The sandy beach stretches further and further to the south and north. Between the arid interior with gentle hills and rock formations and the beach there is a field of low scrub forest where birds nest and animals can hide. Both the group meditation and the subsequent conversations revealed that it must be a piece of the eastern Sinai Peninsula. The sequel resulted in the following story:

A leopard is described moving silently in the bushes and examining a woman on the beach. After alternating descriptions of the leopard, we realize that it cannot be one of the native animals. The riddle then explains why a group of men from a nearby settlement want to protect the area from the strange animal with spears and sticks. The woman seems to have a different opinion than her fellow villagers because she shows no fear towards the leopard. Gradually it becomes clear what has happened in the last few days.

The woman, here called Shamulla, lives in the small village and she has a special position because of her abilities as a healer. She is popular with most people, but some men in the village with whom she is not tribally related fear Shamulla because there are secret claims that she is a witch. When they all realize that Shamulla is somewhat sociable with the intruder and has even touched the animal without being attacked, the council of elders decides that the animal should be captured and killed. Shamulla has realized the order and runs in advance to warn the leopard.

This brings us back to the first image in this imaginative series, where Shamulla is waiting for the leopard on the beach. – She manages to lure him to her. She pets him and talks to him nicely. Shamulla tries to make it clear to the big cat in her language that she has to disappear because otherwise her people will kill her. But the unique animal doesn't seem to want to leave. However, he lies down in front of her and seems to fall asleep. Shamulla is crouching in front of him when some young men find her. Without

hesitation, they throw their spears into the leopard's side before the other men appear, shouting. Shamulla falls up in fright and tries to slow the men down, but the first elder who rushes up catches her with a sling.

The leopard wasn't killed straight away, it was just injured. Therefore, he soon begins to fight bloodily with the men. And in the next dusty hour they have work to do. Some of them are killed themselves and others are wounded until they manage to kill the proud animal. Afterwards they are angry with Shamulla, and when half of the group dismantle the animal in order to bring the fine fur and meat home, the other half takes Shamulla to a pile of stones in order to quickly carry out her death judgment by stoning.

The leopard belongs to an Arab merchant who is traveling north through the desert with a caravan. For days he has been crossing the caravan route back and forth in search of his precious trained animal. Just as Shamulla's execution takes place, he stands on the next hill with his camel escort and watches everything. He rides into the settlement and soon learns what a terrible accident has happened. Because he realizes that his beloved four-legged friend has brought harm to the population, he mourns with them. He therefore does not demand the leopard skin back, but instead gives the deplorable other gifts from his camel load.

After the research, we discussed this fabulous story and the motives together and we were able to determine that not only Shamulla alias Martin, but many village inhabitants as well as some persons of the caravan were now residents of the facility. The stoning scene became a real symbol of how current events were going. Not to be understood as meaning that Martin is being "stoned" again today, but rather that he himself exudes a self-confident firmness and is usually astonishingly accurate with his formulations. Further studies revealed that he also naturally has a tiger as his spirit animal. This and other karma research in the institute in question helped the employees who knew about it to think differently about themselves and the people they were

looking after than before. They could begin to deal with many of the peculiarities of the clinical picture more calmly than before.

The scissor grinder and his lame brother

Our relationships can fall apart or go into cold phases due to events that sometimes seem unfathomable to us. Can such situations have something to do with previous lives on earth? Rudolf Steiner stated that karmic effects from the past are deeply embedded in our souls. They could be recognized through spiritual observation. I have encountered such after-effects many times in my spiritual training practice. It was shown again and again how important it is to have historical knowledge when karmic images and insights appear.

In his anthroposophy, Steiner brought the basic idea that one's own personal development is promoted by a deepening perspective of spirit history. An attitude to life based on his anthroposophy therefore implies developing in terms of consciousness, authenticity, empathy, and ethics. A significant part of Steiner's work deals with considerations, conversations, and overviews of spiritual history, history of philosophy and general history. This emphasis on historical understanding and awareness of historical developments is linked to the guiding principle that humans, as eternal, spiritual beings, go through many lives on earth during evolution.

The human being disperses and changes in the reincarnation cycle between man and woman within different cultures in successive historical periods. And it gathers together again between lives as a transcendent, unified individuality in the spiritual spheres. Karma is the unifying force that forms a bridge for the individual to other people, beings, and contexts in creation. In the phases of existence between death and new birth, this often complex reorganization between people is not only directed by themselves, but

also various spiritual beings such as angels take part in this weaving, continuous process.

Comprehensive karmic insights and direct memories of past lives lie outside the normal day-to-day consciousness we have today. Despite this normal state of consciousness, karmic insights began to appear in more and more people, especially children. These go beyond the normal premonitions that anyone can have about past lives. This is partly due to the general progression of consciousness development in humanity and partly to a changed organic disposition that some people find in their respective incarnations. Steiner pointed out such development motives in the future.[103] Both the external environment we experience, including human encounters, and the physical constitution with which we are born indicate lingering effects of both a prenatal existence and previous lives. Steiner summarizes this deeper view in his so-called guiding principles:

> "In the sensory perceptions, the sensory world only brings to the surface a part of the being that it hides in its wave depths. When observed spiritually, it shows that in these depths there are the after-effects of what human souls did in times long past."[104]

In the karma lectures from 1924, Steiner gave many concrete examples of reincarnations of famous historical figures. In this context, however, no concrete examples are given of how the karmic aftereffects that lie beneath the surface of consciousness can be recognized through meditative practice and imaginative observation. Therefore, I present an authentic example from my karmic consultation that both illuminates the above principle and also

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[103] See Rudolf Steiner in the lecture of May 1, 1913, in: *Vorstufen zum Mysterium von Golgatha.* GA 152.
[104] Guiding Principle Number 62, July 13, 1924, in: Rudolf Steiner: *Anthroposophische Leitsätze. Der Erkenntnisweg der Anthroposophie.* Das Michael-Mysterium. GA 26.

shows how important it is to have historical knowledge when karmic images and insights into past lives appear.

Similar to the other examples, I've anonymized the content and changed the people in relation to reality without losing the leitmotif. It sketches a woman who I'll give here the pseudonym Erika and her husband, who I'll call Jan. It is also about Jan's adult children from his previous marriage and in particular about one of his daughters, here called Doreen. Erika was also already married and has adult children, but they do not play a significant role in the time period described here. So, it's a typical modern, so-called patchwork family. Both Erika and Jan have completed biographical work and several coach training courses in addition to their extensive anthroposophical professional training. With the help of various in-depth working methods and therapies, they have gained some insight into some of their previous lives on earth.

A scissor grinder at the grindstone.
Woodcut reproduced in: Das Ständebuch von
Jost Amman und Hans Sachs. Frankfurt am Main, 1568.

Over the years, Erika felt that Jan's children somehow accepted her less and less. His grandchildren also keep a clear distance from her and are not impressed by her joking contacts. Jan's children used to live with them at home, but currently they all live in other places. When they come to visit on holidays or birthdays, Erika usually stays in the background and does not participate in the conversations and activities of the other family members since she discovered that none of them want to talk to her in private.

When Doreen separated from her husband, she lived with her children in house of Erika and Jan for a short time. It was natural for Jan to spend a lot of time with his daughter; be it to talk to her about some problems that had arisen from the divorce or to check on the grandchildren while his daughter looked for a new apartment. Erika had previously felt a certain restlessness when Jan spent a lot of time with his children. But when Doreen and her children came to live with them, this feeling expanded into an uneasiness that also paralyzed her relationship with Jan, whom she loved deeply.

At first Jan didn't notice his wife's emotional change. It was only when Erika came home from a stay with relatives and Jan had enjoyed some time alone that he discovered her distant attitude towards him. Erika explained that she needed Jan completely and that "his" family was standing in the way of a continued intimate relationship between the two of them. Jan couldn't accept such a possessive urge. He felt his freedom was restricted. In the conversations with Erika and Jan before we began the meditative examination of their current relationship, both expressed their surprise that their relationship of many years could have reached such a cool phase. Now they wanted to find out if an event in a past life could possibly explain some of what occurred between them.

I sat with Erika and Jan in our meditative efforts. It was mainly Jan and I who observed the imaginative scenes. What each of us felt and saw during the meditative session was told out loud. What Jan didn't clearly perceive, I was able to add and vice versa. In the

subsequent conversation, Erika explained her feelings and inspirations. In the mutual comparison, we agreed on the following story:

Jan feels like a boy in transition to his teenage years. He is in a tavern with a lot of people. He doesn't seek contact with the guests who are eating, drinking, and chatting with one another. Instead, he quickly turns to a young woman behind the counter. She is apparently the wife of the much older innkeeper. Jan realizes that the boy named Ryan wants the woman named Aoife to come home with him immediately. When Aoife realizes that something is wrong with Ryan's older brother, Callum, she doesn't hesitate. She fetches a bag of medicine and rushes ahead with Ryan at her heels, something that tells us she knows where to go.

In the small limestone house down the road in a town in the Scottish countryside where Ryan lives with his older brother Callum and parents, they find him lying in bed wrapped in bloody sheets. Aoife takes care of the injured Callum for a long time. She washes his many scratches and the deep wounds in his stomach and hips and rubs herbal ointments on him. To ease his pain, she gives him a bitter, hot drink that is also said to prevent internal bleeding. During this treatment, Callum falls into a deep sleep that lasts a few days. Aoife considers it clear that his life is no longer in danger.

To find out what caused Callum to be injured, let's focus on the events that preceded it. It turns out that Callum is around five years older than Ryan and that the relationship between the two brothers is very intense. Ryan looks up to his older brother fondly and passionately admires everything he undertakes. Callum used to be a squire to one of the regional princes and was recently knighted by him – a so-called "mormaer, which in medieval Scotland corresponds to the English title "Earl". In a battle with an enemy army, Callum is wounded by an opponent's sword, but he manages to hold on, sitting half-upright on horseback. Despite his commander's orders that he continue the fight, he flees the battlefield in an unnoticed moment. His horse finds its way home. The

desertion thus saves his life. Fortunately, he will not be punished later by any sanctions from the Count.

We realize that Aoife, a medicine expert, has a particularly close relationship with Callum. Before marrying the innkeeper, she had a brief but intense love affair in her youth with Callum. They became friends for life. She cares for him regularly until he recovers. It turns out that Callum will never be able to stand or walk again. The battlefield wound left him paralyzed from the waist down. The years go by. Callum spends a lot of time reading books. By ordering a friendly abbot at a nearby monastery, he gets to browse them outside of the normal regulations in his library. Callum enjoys listening to the stories that are told around in the pub, and he retells them later. Over the years he wrote many of his own chronicles based on free narrative.

Ryan grows up, gets married, starts a family, and becomes a scissor grinder in a local craft business. The craft of the scissor grinder was to sharpen axes, knives and other cutting tools with sharp metal using grinding stones of various shapes and sizes. Rotating, round grindstones also came into use in Scotland at this time. After their parents die, Ryan lives with his wife – who I call Idonea – and children in their old house. And Callum lives with them. It becomes a tradition for Callum to be picked up at regular intervals and wheeled in a cart to the grinding store, where he tells stories and jokes to cheer up the craftsmen during rest breaks when the grinding stones are at rest.

The relationship between the brothers remains close and good-natured, although Ryan ultimately needs more time for work, for his wife and for raising his children. That leaves less time for socializing with Callum. Aoife faithfully visits him and rubs his legs with her ointments. But when her husband suddenly dies, she has to sacrifice more time for her duties at the hostel. So, Callum ends up feeling lonely and abandoned because everyone is becoming more and more preoccupied with their own obligations. Callum's isolation is not good for both his mood and his health. His grief

grows worse day by day, week by week, and month by month. He doesn't want to come to the grinding workshop anymore. One evening, Ryan comes home from work to find his brother dead on the floor next to his bed. He apparently tried to get up on his own, fell over and died alone from the fall, while Idonea and the children were visiting their parents, who lived in a neighbouring village.

In brief, this is the karmic background that I, together with Erika and Jan, accessed through insight discussions and meditative re-transformation. So, Callum shows to be karmically identical to Erika and Jan to Ryan and we realized that Idonea in the story corresponds to Jan's current daughter, Doreen. After some searching, Fiona – a teenage daughter of one of Erika's colleagues – appeared to be the likely match for Aoife in the story. Fiona's relationship with Erika and vice versa is particularly warm.

Past	*Present*
Ryan	Jan
Callum	Erika
Aoife	Fiona
Idonea	Doreen

An immediate effect of our karma work could be observed on both Erika and Jan. Erika felt that something like a fog around her evaporated and that her whole body felt lighter. She felt that it was beneficial to stand up and move her feet and legs. Jan experienced more of an inner liberation, as if the relationship with Erika had become brighter, fresher, and happier. Such after-effects were simply followed by the two of them over a longer period of time to see whether the karma work also had an effect on Doreen, on her children, on Fiona and on others around them, even if they knew nothing about this karma work. However, describing these actually positive effects takes us too far.

Erika's problems in her stepfamily were central to our starting point. Her oppressive isolation from other family members became precarious when Jan spent a lot of time with his daughter and

grandchildren. I got the impression that the dependency that Callum felt for his younger brother Ryan, which was related to his long-term paralysis, cast a shadow over Erika's current soul at the moment when Doreen appeared, essentially standing between Erika and Jan. It was only through the recognition of the karmic connection to late medieval Scotland that the karmic aftermath or consequence began to "colour" everything in a way. This enabled a harmonization of their relationship to begin in the current life.

Such a concrete example from current karma practice seems to fully confirm the claim that Steiner formulated in his guiding principle that the motives of the after-effects are recognized in the depths of the soul, from what the human souls have done together in times long past can through a decidedly modern and meditative way of observing.

Kelso Abbey is a 12th century Scottish monastery built by monks who came from nearby Selkirk Abbey, which was loyal to the Benedictines of Tiron – near Chartres, France. The monastery was built on a piece of land given to the monks by King David I of Scotland. Construction began in 1128 and was completed in 1143. The abbey was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. It quickly became one of the richest and most important monasteries in Scotland, whose wealth was largely due to the large estates in the Scottish region now known as the Scottish Borders.

In the Middle Ages the abbey had a first-class library. The importance of the abbey is evident from the fact that King James III. of Scotland held his coronation ceremony here in 1460. In addition, the abbots of Kelso Abbey were granted the rights to wear a mitre during the 12th and 13th centuries.[105] She placed these rights higher than other Scottish abbots. However, as the monastery was close to the Scottish border with England, it was often damaged by many wars between the two countries. The monastery was largely

[105] Today, mitre is usually understood to mean the liturgical headgear of bishops (cf. the pope's crown), especially as it is used in the Roman Catholic Church.

destroyed in the early 14th century. But the monks later restored and rebuilt it. – It is apparent to me that the monastery we hear about in the karmic story corresponds to Kelso Abbey. So, the town where Callum and Ryan lived was called Kelso – formerly Calkou.

The rise of the town of Kelso is linked to the founding of the monastery in 1128. The name comes from the fact that the first settlements were built on a calcareous outcrop. At that time the village was known as Calkou. A small village already existed before the monastery was completed. But it was only with the arrival of the monks that the place flourished and brought prosperity with it. Many of the monks were skilled craftsmen who helped the local population, so the town grew rapidly during the Middle Ages. The abbey dominated much of Kelso life until the Reformation reached Scotland from the south in 1560. In the years between 1544-1547 Kelso Abbey was badly damaged in the conflict over Mary Stuart. After that the monastery was never rebuilt. After further attacks and damage, the abbey was finally officially abandoned in 1587. The Ker family from Cessford then took over most of their properties, so that from 1600 this family became the actual owners of the town of Kelso.

Karma research with ALS disease

Through the knowledge of karma, on the one hand, we discover the karmic threads that converge from the past to a specific topic in the present. On the other hand, other threads are discovered that continue towards the future. This means that karma is not seen as just a force that sets things in motion one after the other in an unbroken chain. If we compare karmic relationships to the threadwork of a textile in a loom, with a large number of warp threads being passed from the back of the loom to the front, we get a little idea of how complicated karma is. Weft threads are shot through between the warp threads from one side to the other, so

that the warp threads in the finished weave are held together by the weft thread.

To enable this shooting through, part of the warp threads is raised, and the other part is lowered. This creates an opening through which the weft thread can be pulled through. This opening is called the compartment. The thread can be carried out in different ways. The oldest form is the shooter, who carries a spool of thread and is thrown through the compartment with his hand, once from the left and then from the right. The wefts that come with the shooter correspond, so to speak, to our thoughts, feelings, and actions at the moment. Depending on the pattern that we planned in prenatal life together with the spiritual forces of fate, the warp threads are brought in depending on how they are needed at the moment.

This comparison with the loom makes sense to me because I learned in a hand weaving mill for two years in the mid-1970s. I was also born and raised by a river. If we compare a stream of fate, a karmic effect, rather than to a river, its currents, eddies, and busy life, wherever new water comes from the source far above, we see the uninterrupted effects of karma. The karmic that affects our incarnations from the past is not used up, even if we have solved a karmic task. So, karma is a very flexible force that can also be compared to an artist's palette. Karma has a variety of colours that can be used depending on what one desires to create at the moment.

In my karma practice over the years, I have had the opportunity to study a number of specific connections between karma and life in different groups of people. I pursued such karmic backgrounds both alone and with friends and clients. Some of them were able to do further research after our first karma work together. Such results were then revealed. So, we got glimpses of a series of previous incarnations where it became clear how the karmic conditions had evolved from life to life. It is extremely instructive to see the possibilities that later emerged so that an earlier conflict could find a solution. If a human being had hurt another person centuries

or millennia ago, the relationship between perpetrator and victim may require many transformations before they are able to find harmony between each other again. In many cases, through the conciliatory and healing justification of the laws of karma, people and groups of people manage to unravel the complex knots that have arisen over time. In other cases, however, for some individuals today the karmic balance may be such that they still need many future lives to transform their tragic relationships with other people.

With some people I discovered complex connections that could not immediately be classified into the karmic laws and exceptions that I had previously known. So, I started to think that there might be situations in which people are stuck in such karmic blind paths that they can't move forward on their own. Could there even be the unfortunate situation for some that the future – i.e. the part of the earth's evolution that is intended to include human reincarnation – is not enough to be able to properly order their karma because they have gone so wrong that the hurdles and obstacles make normal development impossible? If this were the case, how would the future-oriented beings of the spiritual worlds behave in this karmic emergency? What are human individualities possibly trying to inspire so that the almost impossible and insoluble karmic tangles could still be dissolved? In a series of karmic investigations, I have come into contact with possible answers to such questions and I have seen perspectives from which something can be suggested.

I have also had the opportunity to research the relationship between karma and certain illnesses. In certain cases, I was able to examine general karmic laws that Rudolf Steiner taught in connection with illnesses. However, when tracing stories in past lives that could have something to do with the cause of a particular clinical picture, individual variations often came to light. So, it is my impression that actual karma research not only confirms the general laws, but also offers a comprehensive understanding of how karma works in concrete human life. I was once asked to accompany a disabled woman with advanced ALS, Amyotrophic Lateral Scler-

osis. Wikipedia's description of this disease states, among other things:

> "Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (abbreviation: ALS) is a degenerative disease of the motor nervous system. [...] The cause is unknown. There is progressive and irreversible damage or degeneration of the nerve cells (neurons) responsible for muscle movements. [...] The degeneration leads to increasing muscle weakness (paralysis, paresis), which is accompanied by muscle loss (amyotrophy) [...] and increased muscle tone (spasticity) [...]. The paralysis of the muscles results in, among other things, gait, speech and swallowing disorders, limited coordination and weakness of the arm and hand muscles and thus an increasing limitation in activities of daily life. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis cannot be cured. The focus of therapy is on alleviating symptoms and psychological support. The average survival time is around three to five years. Death often occurs as a result of pneumonia, the development of which is promoted by increasing difficulty swallowing and paralysis of the respiratory muscles."

In the specific case of ALS that I would like to reveal here, it concerns a woman in her late 30s – I will call her here by the pseudonym Isabelle. She got the disease about ten years before and after a few years she lost the ability to speak. She is therefore paralyzed from the chin down. In other words, she only communicates with certain facial gestures and with her eyes. For several years she has been using a special computer equipped with infrared technology so that she can write with her eyes. Her husband – whom I refer to by the pseudonym Markus – used all his strength and resources to ensure that she could be treated at home so that she could live as normal a life as possible with her daughter and with him. Markus was supported by the authorities and various organizations and then they built a house that is fully equipped with the technical requirements of such care at home. Isabelle and Markus tried out a number of alternative treatments and therapies during these years, and so they came to me and my karma coaching through a common friend who worked with psychosomatic energetics and

Pranic-Healing according to Choa Kok Sui (1952 – 2007). Markus is also a trained pranic healer.

I visited the family in their unusual treatment home and lived with them and for several days and experienced what their everyday life was like from morning to evening with the outpatient carers and nurses who are integrated into the entire family life. At breakfast I spoke to Markus and some of the nurses. In a few sessions over the course of the days I did some reversals with Markus and a few of the nurses. Isabelle got the nutrition she needed through a feeding tube.

She stayed in her room on the second floor during the morning, but during the afternoon and evening she was downstairs with us in the living room. After her morning chores, she prepared lunch with a nurse. She wrote out all the meal recipes using the computer. As a dish was finished in the kitchen, it would appear in the bowl and pan for Isabelle to see and smell. Markus told me that she was currently writing a vegetarian cookbook. The salads, vegetable and rice dishes that were served when I was there tasted incomparable. Then I spoke and worked with Isabelle in the presence of Markus. This time I had to work my way forward at an unusually slow and laborious pace, but I could also count on Isabelle's gaze developing more and more hour by hour, which I could follow intuitively. Over the course of several work sequences and a second visit after a few months, we entered into several of Isabelle's previous lives. We found karmic correspondences and backgrounds to many of her relationships within family, circle of friends and those who cared for her.

Just before my first departure she spoke about another incarnation that had come to her while she was resting. And with the life that Markus also found, we discovered a total of six incarnations on the first visit, where it became apparent that several of her closest people could be found in different constellations with her in a constant development. A striking theme repeated throughout the incarnations was that she had strong connections to her current –

now deceased – father and to a certain person, here called Oskar, on the nursing staff. Through karma work, Isabelle found the opportunity to open otherwise closed spaces in her soul. In an email shortly after my first visit Isabelle wrote:

> "Thanks to your great help, I was finally able to unlock a tightly locked door. Thank you. I get to have such wonderful experiences almost every day and learn to trust my intuition."

In some of her previous lives, as it turned out, which Markus and I were able to confirm, both had exploited her. As a woman, she was once the victim of patriarchal abuse of power and male violent tendencies several times. In one situation, she was mutilated to death as a slave by a sheikh because she dropped a jar of his favourite honey on the floor. In another life, where her then-husband and parents were murdered because they were considered heretics, she was forced to become a prostitute for an aristocrat in order to support herself and her children. But he treated her so terribly that she died as a result, and as a consequence her children starved to death because no one else was looking after them in the middle of winter.

We found a karmic background to this perpetrator-victim motif in a matriarchal culture in prehistoric times, where Isabelle, as a priest-queen, was forced to intervene on one of her employees and her henchmen because they were practicing black magic. They were dismissed from their positions and sent into exile with the command not to use their spiritual abilities any further. It turned out that these individuals faced difficulties in dealing with spiritual and religious social services in a balanced manner in future lives. The banished magician continued to appear in Isabelle's incarnations as persons who acted against her in various ways, as indicated above in the two stories as a sheikh and an aristocrat.

Another surprising and interesting perspective on ALS disease itself came from a glimpse into a Polynesian culture thousands of years ago. We followed the lives of a scout or guard – whom I here call Fonogo (Tongan for "the listening one") – on a large island and

his brotherly friend, also a scout, here called Mamato (Tongan for "the watching one"). In accordance with an ancient prophecy of this culture, their compatriots created huge stone sculptures like those we know from Easter Island. The faces of the sculptures were all facing east, indicating that sometime in the future a more indigenous people than themselves would come across the ocean from there. They themselves should take in the newcomers and teach them about their humane culture.

One day the old prophecy came true. A large number of people came in small boats from the eastern mainland – today South America. The newcomers and their leader – here called Jorko – were amazed at what they encountered in their new home. However, they did not immediately learn about all the secrets of the ancient Polynesian culture. For example, the pearl mystery was not initially revealed to them. Fonogo and Mamato had alternately worked as divers with the guardian function. When they dived in the sea to look for pearls among the shells, they had to make telepathic contact with a shark – the guardian of the pearls on a spiritual level – to ask for permission to get pearls. Wearing pearls was not considered a status symbol in this island culture but was part of religious festivals and was prescribed for certain occasions, e.g. for special illnesses. A giant pearl from ancient times – probably from Atlantic times – was kept in a large cave and was carried around in a procession for general display once a year at a major festival.

The formation of pearls occurs in nature under circumstances that are not exactly clear. It was previously assumed that the trigger for the formation of a pearl was a grain of sand that had penetrated the shell. However, this assumption is now mostly scientifically rejected. Today it is assumed that grains of sand do not cause any problems for an animal like the mussel that is adapted to life on the ground. Henry A. Hänni, Professor of Gemmology at the University of Basel, as well as Jochen Schlüter, Director of the Mineralogical Museum at the University of Hamburg, assume that epithelial cells of the mussel are responsible for pearl formation, which parasites

drill in or carry off are caused by other injuries into the deeper mantle tissue of the mussel, where they form a cyst. Calcium carbonate, the building material of the shell, is deposited there and is left layer by layer, which ultimately leads to the pearl.

Isabelle and Markus found themselves in Mamato and Fonogo, the two representatives of the Polynesian pearl culture. And today they are suffering and working out the inside and outside of ALS disease, which can now be understood as a kind of pearl disease. Karmic aspects from the environment are absorbed, internalized, and transformed as something intrinsic. The physical body and the etheric body of the sick person behave as a shell, as a mollusc. The normal mobility of the muscular system is reduced in order to adapt to mental and spiritual activity that eludes the external senses. In this table I show some of the lives and karmic progressions told above:

Prehistory	*Polynesia*	*Middle Ages*	*Renaissance*	*Present*
Priest Queen	Mamato	Woman slave	Deviant woman	Isabelle
	Fonogo		Her son	Markus
Black magician	Jorko	Sheikh	Aristocrat	Oskar

Continued research in the natural and spiritual sciences on shells, pearls, sharks, and ALS sufferers could yield further valuable connections so that those affected by ALS, their relatives and the nursing and medical staff could gain new perspectives on the often despairing everyday life. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis therefore seems to me to be a possibility to dissolve the otherwise almost impossible and insoluble karmic balls. It would be hoped that more and more of the wonderful karmic tapestries that lie behind such cases of illness will become apparent. To do this, however, the ability to reconvert must be exercised by more and more individuals and they must find enough benefactors and supporters.

Epilogue: Is karma something we should be afraid of?

There is no anthroposophy without the idea of reincarnation and karma. In Rudolf Steiner's work, in his books and lecture notes, there is enough evidence that karma and reincarnation are among the most central concepts in his anthroposophy. If I here towards the end of this exercise book take just a few such passages from his written and spoken context and connect them with my own life experiences, I am faced with facts that shed light on many a life mystery. These facts may provide me with assistance if I manage to integrate the truth described therein with my individual situation. I will quote a three such passages and comment on them.

> "In every moment of life, karma represents something like the balance sheet of a businessman. With every action, whether it is good or bad, human being increases his should or his having. Anyone who does not want to admit an act of freedom would be like a businessman who does not want to take the risk of a new business venture and would always keep his business balance sheet at the same level."[106]

Karma is always present. It doesn't stand still, but changes as I go along or don't go along with the movement of fate. I can only know to a limited extent what will result from my actions, since the consequences of my actions also change according to the changes in my environment. Seen in this way, my karma stands in the area of

[106] Rudolf Steiner: *Kosmogonie.* GA 94. Dornach 1979. Page 117.

tension between the past stream of all common traditions and the individual decision for an open future.

> "An individual that has once been active is no longer isolated; it put itself into its actions. And everything that it becomes is from now on linked to what becomes of its actions. This connection of an individual with the results of its actions is the law of karma that governs the entire world. The activity that has become fate is karma."[107]

Karma is also inconceivable if I don't associate it with a self-being. Only a self-existing being, an individuality that relocates a part or a limb of its existence outside of sense-being, can create karma. All other living beings and world phenomena, which through their existence have consequences for other phenomena, are caught up in processes that usually directly produce one or more effects. A karmic effect, on the other hand, can be traced as a held together element over centuries and millennia in changing circumstances through a consciousness related to it.

"If it were not possible to rise above error, we would ultimately have to sink into error. But this is how the benefit of karma came about. Is karma something that we should be afraid of? No! Karma is a power for which we should actually be grateful to the world plans. [...] Karma gives us the blessing that we have to make amends for every mistake, and we have to destroy everything that we have done backwards."

> „Wenn die Möglichkeit nicht gegeben wäre, sich über den Irrtum zu erheben, so müsste der Mensch zuletzt in Irrtum versinken. So aber ist die Wohltat des Karmas eingetreten. Ist Karma irgendetwas, vor dem der Mensch sich fürchten soll? Nein! Karma ist eine Macht, für die der Mensch eigentlich den Weltenplänen dankbar sein sollte. [...] Karma erweist uns die Wohltat, dass wir

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[107] Rudolf Steiner: *Lucifer-Gnosis 1903 bis 1908.* GA 34. Dornach 1960. Page 93.

jeden Irrtum wieder gutmachen müssen, dass wir alles, was wir rückwärts getan haben, wieder vernichten müssen."[108]

Thinking of karma as a blessing from the human-friendly beings of the spiritual world creates new supports for us in self-knowledge. Feeling and experiencing karma as a blessing creates the abundance for monumental projects in world knowledge. Combining karma as a benefit with our own actions gives us the concept of using karma consciousness as an individual and common instrument in society. My own recent errors and those of others, those of the present-day, those in the 20th century and those back in history, can only be "forgotten" or forgiven if we pour them into the "compost" of karma, into a conscious re-melting of erroneous actions, whereby we again look at, tackle, and unpack absolutely everything – possibly only in a concentrated form. Sweeping karma under a carpet of temporary oblivion only creates new errors, creates monoliths of derailed culture and civilisation.

What is the meaning of reincarnation? Why are we born again and again on earth? These incarnations or embodiments of our spiritual human beings only make sense because we actually learn something new and have new experiences in every life on earth. If we look at short periods of time, the renewal is not as noticeable, but if we look at long periods of time and cultural epochs, as Rudolf Steiner described in his research and I have shown above with some examples, then it turns out that the epochs of the earth always show new aspects and possibilities, from whom we can learn something new.

Even if, in a certain incarnation of our earth existence, we neglect, so to speak, to experience what can be learned during this time of earth evolution, then of course we will have a subsequent life. But we will have missed something that we should have brought about and lived through in the previous period. In the following life, we

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[108] Rudolf Steiner, *Geisteswissenschaftliche Menschenkunde*. GA 107. Dornach 1973. Page 246.

therefore fail to use our spiritual energies and abilities in the right way. During an incarnation we can only connect with something new from a similar level of maturity that comes from a previous, concrete engagement.

If we are unable to absorb the new, then we lose something that we actually lack in subsequent incarnations. What we can learn today through anthroposophical and contemporary spirituality that pays attention to the idea of reincarnation, unites with our soul. We will bring this openness to the spiritual back into the next incarnation as a skill of vigilance, ingenuity, and genius. A karmic continuation of a completed action thus becomes a capacity, an ability, but not actual useful information since karma knowledge must be constantly acquired anew.

In the future, all people will be able to look back on previous incarnations. Steiner claimed this over 100 years ago. Through many encounters with people, I have seen that this has already happened on a large scale over the last 50 years. I learned that today we are able to accurately distinguish whether an incarnation being relived came before or after the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

What the individual person instinctively felt in his heart in a previous life, when he read the Gospels himself or heard them read aloud, is then reflected in the coming reincarnation memory through an individualized and specific relationship to the existence of Christ as the "Lord of Karma" and to his relationship with the development of the human I that occurs in each repeated life on earth. Thus, it is no longer unusual when I explain that I remember, can look into and reexperience many of my previous incarnations, and that I therefore can say exactly how they went, how they continued to influence my development up to the present day and also predisposed me to have certain abilities in future lives.