

Transforming Our Thinking and Our Will

Their Impact on the Social World

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In these pages I will gather strands that I have followed for about two decades and address what to my mind is a common misunderstanding: whether we can *also* transform our feelings and will or only our thinking. It will focus most of all on the contrast between the transformation of thinking and that of the will, to what we will call “truly thinking” and “truly living” in following the terminology of the Foundation Stone Meditation. While these two terms have often been seen as irreconcilable, the present essay will explore and show their complementarity. Finally, we will look at the social effects of both our transformed thinking and our transformed will.

The Way into the Spiritual World through Thinking, Feeling and Willing

We could quote Rudolf Steiner endlessly to reach the unescapable conclusion that the path to cross the threshold to the spiritual world can only be achieved at present through thinking. Looking at *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* alone the privileged position of thinking as a bridge to spiritual cognition is undisputable and known to all anthroposophists. An example: “But whoever truly manages to experience life within thinking sees that dwelling in mere feelings or contemplating the element of will cannot even be compared with (let alone ranked above) the inner richness and the experience, the inner calmness and mobility in the life of thinking. It is precisely the richness, the inner fullness of experience, that makes its reflection in normal consciousness seem dead and abstract. ... Yet this is only the sharply contoured shadow of the reality of thinking—a reality interwoven with light, dipping down warmly into the phenomena of the world. This dipping down occurs with the power that flows forth in the activity of thinking itself—the power of love in spiritual form.”¹

Again in *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* Steiner rigorously observed the act of thinking and invited us all to do the same in order to reach the conclusion that: “To observe thinking is to live, during the observation, immediately within the weaving of a self-supporting spiritual entity.” And further: “We shall then see, in what appears in consciousness as thinking, not a shadowy copy of reality, but a spiritual essence that sustains itself. Of the spiritual essence we can say that it becomes present to our consciousness

¹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, Chapter 8, The Factors of Life.

through intuition. Intuition is the conscious experience, within what is purely spiritual, of a purely spiritual content.”²

The above small excerpts can be multiplied ad nauseam. Truly, for the modern human being thinking is the only soul force that will lead her across the threshold and into the reality of the spiritual world. All other approaches will fail. This does not mean that Steiner did not *also* offer us ways and means to transform our feelings and our will, even if in this way we cannot cross the threshold. Nor did he say that to try to do so will cause spiritual harm.

After forty years of working and wrestling with spiritual science I have no clear or set answers to anybody who asks me what anthroposophy is for me. I have, however, come up with a way to visualize the whole transformation of the human being that anthroposophy wants to achieve and I derive it from the Foundation Stone Meditation. I will refer to it from the surface into a certain depth.

I can say that spiritual science has allowed me to transform to some degree how I think, how I feel and how I operate. In the terms of the Foundation Stone Meditation something else becomes apparent. If we go from the third stanza backwards to the first one, we know that the goal of spiritual science is to teach us to truly think, truly feel but not truly will, rather “truly live.” This is a sizeable difference and here already it is made clear that we can only go so far in the direction of transforming our will. This is to denote that we are most unconscious in our willing, far more so than we are in our feeling and thinking. We cannot truly will but we can learn to “truly live.” And already we can notice that this “truly living” is a proposition that deserves deeper scrutiny but has received little to this day.

The Foundation Stone Meditation: Truly Thinking, Truly Feeling, Truly Living

Let us now take the Foundation Stone Meditation in the right order and pay attention to the three practices that render possible to truly think, truly feel and truly live. These are the ones that we call spirit recalling (or spirit remembering, re-cognizing,...), spirit sensing (or spirit awareness, mindfulness, presence, meditation, ...) and spirit beholding (or spirit vision, penetration, ...). In what follows, in order to match the translation of the

² Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, Chapter 8, The Factors of Life.

meditation (see Appendix), I will refer to spirit recalling, spirit sensing and spirit beholding, and I will contrast more fully the extremes of spirit recalling and spirit beholding. As to the middle path, not explored here, I have referred to an example of how to transform most of all our feeling life in the meditative work done on the verses of the Calendar of the Soul.³ Of this path Steiner says that "... the human spirit can be experienced in the context of the changing moods of the year from week to week and the soul's weaving can be found in images gained through impressions of the course of the year. *The aim is self-knowledge through feeling.* Through the verses expressing the characteristic mood of the respective week, this '*feeling self knowledge*' can experience the timeless cycle of soul life in relation to time. It needs to be clearly stated that the intention is to create potential for a path of self knowledge." (emphasis added)⁴ Similar things have been said by Karl König in his extensive work with the Calendar.⁵

We can look at the letter of the meditation to dig up more jewels. At the top of each stanza the human soul is addressed and then the realms in which it lives, epitomized by limbs, beat of heart and lung and resting head. In this progression, taken in reverse, we go from the head at rest, to heart and lung inwardly in motion through rhythm, to the limbs outwardly in motion. In a sense we could slightly modify the first stanza and amplify the contrast to read "Human soul, you live within the limbs *in motion*." This would not alter significantly the significance of the meditation, only render the contrasts more obvious. Another element is apparent, which amplifies the differences between the three stanzas; this one follows immediately the call of the practices. We are asked to:

- Practice spirit-recalling in depths of soul
- Practice spirit-sensing in balance of the soul
- Practice spirit-beholding in stillness of thought

³ See Luigi Morelli, *Exploring Themes of the Calendar of the Soul*.

⁴ Rudolf Steiner, *Preface to the First Edition* [of the Calendar of the Soul]" in Rudolf Steiner, *The Anthroposophical Calendar of the Soul*, Translation by Richard Steele.

⁵ The following is Karl König's recognition of the quality of the work done with the Calendar of the Soul: "Each single verse of the Soul Calendar contains not only a spiritual content which can be grasped intellectually but a powerful and substantial emotion, a strong feeling that changes from week to week. It is more important to carry this feeling in its ever-changing form through the year, than to connect oneself with the intellectual content of the verses—though this is necessary to achieve that feeling." (Karl König, *The Calendar of the Soul: A Commentary*, 80–81).

And here once more the previous points are enlarged. The will lives in the depths of the soul, the part of ourselves in which we are most unconscious; feelings live in that part of the soul in which the Christ impulse—the stanza is the only one of the three to mention Christ—has to fend off and find balance between Lucifer and Ahriman. Finally, the practice of spirit-beholding is the one that can be conducted with fuller consciousness because it takes place, not in the depths of soul but in the stillness of thought.

This progression from the unconscious to the more conscious is further restated in a line of the third stanza that has no equivalent in the other two stanzas. The goal of spirit-beholding is to lead us to “free and active willing.” In other words it is only through our power of thinking that we can act in full freedom. An example of this are those that we can call “free deeds” to which Rudolf Steiner points in relation to his biography. Nothing impelled Steiner to take on Karl Julius Schroër’s task of transforming Goetheanism in the direction of spiritual science, or to head the reformed General Anthroposophical Society other than the most complete inner freedom. Both were complete free deeds, sacrificial offerings.

That this “free and active willing” has to be placed in the perspective of the other two stanzas is made clear in the fourth stanza where the deed of Golgotha, the free deed per excellence, is mentioned. The last six lines enclose, magnify and capture the essence and implication of the three preceding stanzas. They read:

That good may become

What from our hearts

We are founding,

What from our heads

We direct,

With focused will.

Here a number of elements are added for our consideration. The meditation is a specific path in imitation of Christ. It is because we adhere to the Christ impulse that in our selves we can harbor both the “simple shepherds’ hearts” and the “wise heads of kings.” And either one of these has a specific function; through the first one we can “found,” through the second one “direct.” This implies a directionality from the heart to the head; in terms of the first stanzas we are going from the first two stanzas, more related to the heart, to the third, related to the head. In spirit recalling we endeavor to acquire a sense for our destiny and this is what we can sense in our

heart, as we will also see further in our explorations. In spirit sensing we are trying to balance in the realm of feeling what pulls us on one hand toward Lucifer and on the other toward Ahriman. Christ lives in the middle and in the realm of the heart. Through our head we can develop sense-free thinking, liberating our thinking from the instrument of the physical brain.

If we now revisit the three stanzas this directionality from heart to head—that we find both in the fourth stanza and in the sequencing of stanzas 1 to 3—explains what we have explored before. Furthermore, this renders explicit why in the third stanza “the light of cosmic being” can direct us to “free and active willing.”

Through the work related to the first two stanzas we have “founded” the prerequisites for the good in our hearts. In other words, we first create the foundations for the good in the first two stanzas and we can direct it to the desired destination in the third stanza. There is a reason for moving from the most unconscious (the will) to the most conscious (thinking) in the first three stanzas!

In a similar way to the above the Sunday rhythm, which forms a culmination of the rhythms sums up the combined effect of the transformation of our will, feeling and thinking and how it affects human becoming and social reality:

Practice spirit-recalling

Practice spirit-sensing

Practice Spirit-beholding

That good may become

What from our hearts we are founding

What from our heads we direct

With focused will.

We can also add the time element of past to future to the above to characterize the direction from the first to the third stanzas. This appears most clearly when we excerpt the lines of the so-called Thursday rhythm.

Your·own·I·¶	Unite·your·own·I·¶	Bestow· the· Light· of·
Comes·into·being·¶	With·the·I·of·the·world·¶	cosmic·being·¶
In·the·I·of·God·¶	And·you·will·truly·feel·¶	On·your·own·I·¶
And·you·will·truly·live·¶	In· human's· soul·	For· free· and· active·
In· Human· world-all·	creating·¶	willing·¶
being·¶	¶	And·you·will·truly·think·¶
¶	¶	In·human·spirit·depths·¶
		-

Here we notice a spiritual progression from humanity's primeval beginnings "in the I of God" to the transition of the time of Golgotha indicated by the "I of the world" affirming humanity's emerging ego, to humanity's future co-creative role rendered possible through the light of cosmic being of the Holy Spirit. We move from "Ex Deo Nascimur" to "In Christo Morimur" and finally to "Per Spiritum Sanctum Reviviscimur."

In a previous work I have characterized the contrast between the three paths in the archetypes of (karmic) exercise, meditation and study.⁶ The more active exercise, related to spirit-recalling stands in contrast to the more contemplative study, related to spirit-beholding. This is not to deny that in study we play a very active part too, but one of a different nature. In the exercise we look back to the content of our experiences—as it relates to ourselves or to people in our lives—thus to the content of our will activity, and bring in it the ordering element of thinking to extract meaning and ultimately insight. In the study we aim at transforming ideas into the content of experience; to transform ideas into ideals. And we know it takes a great exertion of the will to transform associative thinking into a living, sense-free thinking. In between exercise and study we have the experience of meditation in which thinking and willing play an equivalent role: we still all our daily activity and associative thinking and we hold firmly to an idea, not in order to study it directly but to elevate it to the light and let it speak to our soul, to reveal itself. We can move toward meditation from both the side of the exercise and the side of study to enhance each activity.

Spirit beholding aims at transforming the content of anthroposophy from a concept into an object of perception, a concept that we perceive, to use the words of *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. Certainly this applies only to

⁶ Luigi Morelli, *The Foundation Stone Meditation: The Seven Rhythms and the Three Practices; A Call to Integrate and Transform*, available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/fsm-integrate.pdf>

that part of the spiritual world to which we direct our attention after having crossed the threshold and rendered our thinking independent from the instrument of our physical brain. No such thing is possible on the path of spirit recalling. However, something else is possible. I will explore this not from general considerations but from the content of personal experience, augmented by those of other individuals. This is because when we come to the contrast between the two paths we are facing the polarity between “knowledge of the spirit” on one hand and “experience of destiny” on the other, to use Steiner’s words in his *Leading Thoughts*.

In the *Leading Thoughts* Steiner contrasts the two paths of spirit beholding and spirit recalling. The first path is such that the human being can think, “I am forming thoughts about what my senses reveal to me as the world.” The human being can experience himself in his thinking, and therefore become conscious of the self.⁷

In the path of the will one directs one’s own attention to the inner world; then those events emerge into consciousness that belong to our life’s destiny, and in which our human self has flowed along from the point of time in which our memory goes back. In following up the events of his destiny, a man experiences his own existence. The human being who experiences this enhanced memory can tell himself, “I with my own self have experienced something that destiny brought to me.”⁸ This modality in the second path awakens the consciousness that we are not alone in our destiny, and that the world enters into the expression of the personal will. Therefore one goes from experiencing oneself to experiencing the world. This is why from now on we will refer to the “experience of destiny” as it emerges from various approaches and modalities.

From now on I will turn to various practices of spirit recalling, to show how they form a complement to the path of spirit beholding, which we can take for granted since its paramount importance is not questioned here. We will return to a comparison of the two paths in relation to their impacts on the social world.

The Practice of Spirit Recalling

Spirit recalling relates to everything that has a history; an example is a biography. In the wider sense spirit recalling applies to individuals,

⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, Letter 17 of July 6, 1924, “Understanding of the Spirit and Conscious Experience of Destiny.”

⁸ Ibid.

relationships, groups, organizations and up to folk souls and beyond. History is the ultimate stretch of spirit recalling.

All work done in this sphere addresses the realm of time and the number seven that is central to all evolution, from individual development to history, to cosmic ages. It is not surprising therefore that a lens of understanding is offered into this practice through the seven life processes to which we will turn below. I will start from examples of work done for the benefit of the individual to work addressing the common destiny of groups. All of this is done with the aim of uncovering the larger themes of the path of spirit recalling.

As will appear from the very beginning work done through spirit recalling has an eminently social reach. It addresses the fact that anti-social instincts are rising at the time of the consciousness soul and will do so until the thirtieth century. They are intimately tied with the separation of the individual from his social environment and the strengthening of his individuality.

In what follows we will look at four approaches of spirit recalling. They follow a certain progression. The first is the most archetypal form possible: the exercises that Steiner offered most of all in the year 1912 and then in the years 1918 to 1924. These are what I have called "karmic exercises" which we can practice on our own. Developed directly from Steiner is the approach of Destiny Learning, which is designed to awaken the "destiny sense," the ability to learn from life, and ultimately have a healing impact on the web of destiny. It is practiced with the help of a group, at least in its initial stage.

From these two overlapping approaches we will move to another two paths of transformation of the will. We will start from Peacemaking Circles, an approach originating from restorative justice, which aims at bringing healing to communities whose destiny has been altered by a collective predicament, such as crime, drugs, one kind or another of polarization, etc. Finally, we will look at the path of transformation of Twelve Step, from the impact it has on individual, the groups and the whole of the AA Fellowship. This last step will allow us to encompass impacts at both individual and larger social level.

1) Steiner's Karmic Exercises

In the following pages we will look at exercises that Steiner offered in relation to the themes of biography and karma. Extending from these we will explore a particular way to walk the path of destiny that is the result of the work of Coenraad van Houten and his collaborators. This has received the name of "Destiny Learning."

To help us be more conscious of the themes of our biography Steiner formulated many exercises designed for awakening interest in other people, acquiring objectivity, and increasing our understanding of events in our lives and ultimately the reawakening of memories of previous lives. Most of these exercises were announced in the year 1912, especially in the Neuchatel lectures about Christian Rosenkreutz. After this first, isolated, wave Steiner returned to them in the years 1918 to 1924. The exercises appear in lectures concerned with karma and reincarnation or with the whole of the social question and the threefolding social order. This renders obvious that Steiner saw in them a strengthening of the social impulses, which are very weak in our time.

From the description of Steiner's so-called "archetypal social phenomenon", we are led to understand that in conversation the listener falls asleep to what comes from the speaker. Then the movement reverses and continues to alternate. After falling asleep in the other we need to rescue something from sleep and bring it into our waking consciousness.⁹ At night, in sleep, we find ourselves together in our soul with those with whom we share our lives, but we are not conscious of it. The awakening happens fully only in the life after death, in the so-called "kamaloka" stage. At that time, we will perceive the effects and consequences of our actions as they manifest in the other person. Social processes are thus "death processes," and our consciousness normally resists them.

The assertion of the antisocial impulses will continue for many more centuries. We must therefore exert inner effort in order to know others more consciously. This cannot be done in our feelings. Our current of antipathies and sympathies does not guide us into an understanding of the other any better than our thinking does. In our will, we direct our actions through what we call love, which for the most part is self-love. This self-love is antisocial, and can be transformed only through self-discipline. We could ask "How are we supposed to develop what our natural constitution

⁹ Rudolf Steiner, *Social and Anti-social Forces in the Human Being*, lecture of December 12, 1918.

in the age of the consciousness soul most naturally resists?" To overcome our natural antisocial tendencies in the encounter with others, we must move away from our natural inclination to form concepts about the being of the other, and move toward developing imaginations.¹⁰

Through imaginations, we will acquire a deeper faculty of empathy. No injunctions, pious resolves, or the content of our knowledge, can alter this basic human condition we have inherited with the simple reality of being human beings of the present. The anti-social condition cannot be countered, other than through the conscious desire and deliberate effort to create an imagination of the other human being. This is where Steiner comes to our help with the exercises of spirit recalling.

Steiner did not offer these exercises in the systematic way in which he presented, for example, the exercises in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*. I have called them "karmic exercises" and presented them in various places.¹¹ Through these a whole, coherent direction emerges once we arrange them from the most immediate to the most ambitious or demanding. This review is merely indicative of the broad territory that the exercises allow us to cover. Generally speaking we cover four broad steps.

The first exercise, which predates all the others, is the so-called "rückschau." It is pure review without any qualitative evaluation. It is the archetypal act of recalling. As we know this is done in the reverse order, simply because this is what happens in the night review of our day, or after death at the time of kamaloka. The exercise sets in motion the practice of pure recollection and renders us more conscious of our day. It renders our memory more alive and less brainbound. With time recall of past events becomes more vivid, more spontaneous.

The following steps have something basic in common. They rest on pure observation, in fact enhanced observation. As Steiner praised the Goethean approach in order to create the phenomena-based approach to natural sciences, in a similar fashion he paved a way that enables us to pierce through the veil of destiny. The main difference lies in the fact that Nature is a patient object of observation that most of the time offers us as much time as we need; human beings and human events can only be brought to

¹⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *The Challenge of the Times*, lecture of December 6, 1918, "Social and Antisocial Instincts."

¹¹ For a comprehensive, though far from exhaustive, listing of karmic exercises see *The Journey of Spirit Recollection A Handbook for the Practice of Steiner's Karmic Exercises*, available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/spirit-recollection-journey.pdf>

mind after the fact; they need to be wrested from the stream of forgetfulness. The time factor becomes much more important in the second instance than in the first. We therefore have to turn to recollection.

A second step after the *rückschau* consists in detached observation of ourselves or other people in our lives. It is convenient to separate self-observation from observation of other people, but essentially both have recourse to the same pure phenomenology. When we observe ourselves we can look back for the sake of convenience to a part of our life defined by set boundaries, such as the time we spent within a certain geographical, professional, relational setting. Many other variations are possible. The goal is to look at aspect after aspect of our being, as someone objectively detached from our present self. We look at this person from a distance and gain thus perspective over the difference between our lower ego personality and our higher self. Each part of our past is a milestone that we have overcome and that we can shed, as it were. We can stop identifying our self with how we define our personality, our profession, our achievements, what has happened in our biography, ideas of success and failure, etc.

Looking at another person requires quite a bit of discipline if we want to do so beyond our sympathies and antipathies. For this purpose I have found a rough template useful in which I go from the physical to the etheric (temperament, gestures, liveliness, etc.) to the emotional/astral to the ego with its motives, sense of purpose, etc.¹² If we systematically refrain from attributing judgment and value to the other person's traits we can start evolving an imagination, which renders the person unique and her individuality something that cannot be replicated. This imagination has the possibility to evolve and shine a light on the eternal individuality. Looking at the important people in our lives also deflates our sense of self-importance. We can develop a sense of gratitude for all that they have contributed to our own being. We can even go further in portraying objectively those people whom we have judged negatively, up to the point of perceiving the life-affirming net-result of what we call "negative events." A "negative" contribution may have directed us to important events and people we would not have met otherwise. We can develop a sense of gratitude toward the wise guidance of the spiritual world and lessen attachment to our own self-driven goals.

¹² See *The Journey of Spirit Recollection A Handbook for the Practice of Steiner's Karmic Exercises*, heading Tips and Aids for Individual Work (pp. 9-10), available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/spirit-recollection-journey.pdf>.

At the next step we can achieve something else that is fundamental to the way we live our lives. Concerning the "Lesser Karma Exercise" Steiner gave us the example of the man who walks under the roof's eave, e.g., in entering a home, and who is hit by a shingle in the head in doing so. In applying the example to ourselves he then asks us to picture that the "second man" in us went ahead of us and set the shingle loose to make sure it would hit us in the head at the precise moment in which it did. With this thought exercise we come in proximity to the reality of how karma operates in our lives, how, more often than not, we cause challenges to ourselves in order to grow. While it may not always be the case, the idea that we are responsible for what happens in our lives, yields much more personal growth than any blaming, excusing, denying would. Concretely recognizing how we build the woof of our life and taking responsibility for its course, places us in relation to our higher Self through what the Calendar of the Soul calls a "sense of Self." Everything we do from our lower self is directed to what we fathom of our higher self. It's an important step on the way to "truly living."

Incidentally, it is interesting to bring up that it is through these exercises and similar ones that Steiner himself awakened a recognition of the higher being of individuals whose lives he can describe in relation to their karmic evolution in time. Heightened interest and capacity to recognize the uniquely significant details of the biography, offered the concrete bridge from one life to another. The key elements in the recognition of the previous lives of important historical individuals often rested in seemingly trivial details: some physical characteristic, some unique behavior, the way in which the person uses language, the unique discontinuities of the biography, etc.

We will conclude this overview with the so-called "Greater Karma Exercise." Here again we can bring to mind a significant event close to its occurrence and portray it through pure observation over the space of four days and three nights. Over time the event impresses itself from the ego into the astral, the etheric and the physical envelopes. At the last step we experience in a unique state of consciousness the relationship between the event we have called to mind and the image that unfolds over the three nights. We feel more and more part of this living image and we sense that it requires something from us. We also sense that it belongs to us part and parcel. Finally, something is revealed to us in terms of an original karmic event as a root cause of what we live in the present. This is then a concrete spiritual experience to which we elevate ourselves through personal effort. In Steiner's words: "And the picture, with which one rose from sleep, becomes objective. What it shows is the event of the previous earth-life, or of some previous earth-life, which had been the cause of the experience

that we shaped into a picture on the first day. By means of this transformation through feeling and through will, one gets the picture of the causal event of a preceding incarnation.”¹³

Rückschau	Slice of life review/Looking at another person	Lesser Karma Exercise	Greater Karma Exercise
Pure review	Developing imaginations of self and others	Taking responsibility for our lives	Perceiving the causes in previous lives

We may have to repeat the exercise a great number of times before reaching such a result. When this happens we momentarily cross the threshold. The nature of the original karmic event is very pointed, circumscribed. When something will appear, it will not be a revelation of a whole previous life, rather just an event. And, more likely than not, this will be a revelation of our shortcomings, an encounter with the Lesser Guardian of the Threshold. This explains why our day consciousness resists such experiences.

It is through this kind of exercise that W. J. Stein gained a living understanding of two previous incarnations, which Steiner confirmed.¹⁴ While the experiences offered him a foothold on something objective, his day consciousness had to fill in all the gaps and flesh out the picture. It is through these experiences, not to mention the depths of his anthroposophical knowledge and commitment that Stein was able to walk into his unique biography and find himself at home among the English soul. He concretely lived the continuity of mission between his previous Portuguese incarnation in the stream of the Order of Christ and the mission of the English people in the economic field. This we could say is the ultimate step of truly living: the conscious reconnection of our karmic being and the pre-birth intentions that further it in the present life. This offers a sense of purpose and lawfulness that elevates truly living to its utmost goal.

Steiner’s exercises are deceptively simple. They are pure phenomenology. By predicating that we need to develop interest in everything and everybody that meets us, we can awaken to a new way of meeting our destiny.

¹³ Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, Volume 2, “Perception of Karma,” lecture of May 9, 1924.

¹⁴ See Luigi Morelli, *The Foundation Stone Meditation: A Call to Integrate and Transform*, heading “Stein the Historian,” pp. 63-64, available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/fsm-integrate.pdf>.

We could call it a Michaelic way, one in which we set in motion the “idea-filled” will, to borrow an expression from Steiner’s *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. When we walk the path of spirit recalling together with the paths of spirit beholding and spirit sensing, we can reach to true freedom, we can live a life with pure love for the deed, without expectation for results. We will be able to perform “freer deeds”—deeds that do not stand under the compulsion of our Double. Disinterested love for the deed and the capacity to perform “freer deeds” forms the bridge to what we will explore next: Destiny Learning.

2) Destiny Learning

The approach of Destiny Learning is one that has enriched my life and the perception of the forces of destiny in my biography when I did a three month long training in Adult Education in Germany in 2001-2002. It has also strengthened and deepened the commitment to my main life impulses. The approach can best be understood in relation to the seven life processes, which we will review here very briefly. In sequence the seven life processes are breathing, warming, nourishing, secreting, maintaining, growing, and reproducing. There is a process of breathing, of warming, of nourishing, and so forth, for the sense of sight, for hearing, or touch. In fact every life process affects each of the twelve senses.

Step	Life Process	Learning to Learn Process	Destiny Learning Process	
I	Breathing	Observing	Observing an event out of life, finding the gesture	} Destiny Learning I
II	Warming	Relating	Placing single event in biography, finding the symptoms of the being	
III	Nourishing	Digesting, assimilating	Finding the karmic cause and learning task for this life	
IV	Secreting	Individualizing	Acceptance, saying yes to destiny	
V	Maintaining	Exercising, practising	Practising transformation of your Double	} Destiny Learning II
VI	Growing	Growing faculties	Transforming relationships in the network of destiny	
VII	Reproducing	Creating something new	Ordering karma	} Destiny Learning III

Table 2: From *The Threefold Nature of Destiny Learning*
C. van Houten, p. 3.

The first three processes—breathing, warming, nourishing—reach us from the external world. Under the term “secreting” (absonderung) is gathered assimilation, absorption, and excretion. This is also the turning point of individualizing what the organism receives from the external environment. What is taken from the world by the organism is then transformed in the last three, more inner processes: maintenance, growth and reproduction.

The archetype at work in the building of our four bodily sheaths, once freed, works in our soul and spiritual processes. An example: in the work of Coenraad van Houten the seven life processes are shown at work in both Adult Learning—the process of rendering the content of spiritual science

our own—and Destiny Learning. The two together bring forth the ability to address the life questions we brought with us in the present incarnation. These questions can then be further explored in the methodology of Spiritual Research that van Houten developed, also based on the seven life processes.

In order to compare the following three approaches (Destiny Learning I to III) we will look at a simplified, practical view of the seven life processes, such as it has been offered by Otto Scharmer in his *Theory U*. This will also allow us to span dimensions of work, from the individual to the large organizational levels which we will explore later in the essay. Theory U allows to categorize more easily the first four stages of the seven life processes. The first step implies the Open Mind, or looking at facts and or ideas of Self, group, organization. At this stage we form a common picture of the situation, be it individual or collective. The following step involves connection with Self or group at the feeling level. We are transformed in the way we feel in relation to a given issue and in relation to fellow participants, rendering us able to take responsibility and acquire empathy and self-connection. This is what is called the Open Heart. With the first two steps comes the ability to let go of entrenched tendencies of will, the ability to let new impulses unfold, whether personally or collectively. This takes the name of the Open Will. Step 4, which denotes individualizing (“secreting” in the original seven life processes) takes the name of presencing and indicates an opening of our ego to the inspiration of our higher self. It is what we could call a “silent step” because it is mostly discernable inwardly. Having laid these premises we will better be able to characterize Peacemaking Circles and Twelve Step, which were not conceived according to a conscious understanding of the life processes but nevertheless organically reflect the archetype.

The goal of Destiny Learning is a way of addressing how we learn from our relationships and from life events. “it is not a direct application of concepts, ideas or ideals about karma and reincarnation, nor is it a disciplined methodical prescription for the conduct of daily life.”¹⁵ Destiny Learning has been divided in seven steps and these steps have been grouped in three phases. Destiny Learning I covers steps 1 to 4; Destiny Learning II steps 5 and 6 and Destiny Learning III step 7. In its progression Destiny Learning aims at a soul transformation and the acquiring of new faculties and

¹⁵ Coenraad van Houten, *The Threefold Path of Destiny Learning*, 6.

capacities. It ultimately paves the way toward social renewal at the micro-social as well as meso-social levels.

Steps I to IV (Destiny Learning I)

Destiny Learning I is conducted over the space of four or five days. We can in fact envision it as a facilitated and peer-supported version of the Greater Karma Exercise. The experience is accompanied with presentations on the theme of karma and reincarnation, observation exercises, artistic activities and group sharing. In Destiny Learning I we start by educating the activity of our senses. We turn first our attention to a significant event in our biography as clearly and objectively as possible. We bring to mind every possible detail of setting, persons and environment, as well as feelings, sensations, thoughts, will impulses and so forth. We can say that we “breathe in” the event. In terms rendered familiar by Otto Scharmer we can also say that this step involves the Open Mind.

In the second step, we place this event in the flow of our biography. In doing this, we recognize it as something that belongs to us, even when it seems to occur according to random caprices of chance. We relate to it, we warm up to it. We understand that it actually has a place in our biography and has contributed to shaping us into who we are. In fact, in most instances the event forms a cluster with other similar events in our lives, and we can recognize a gesture common to all of them. This is why recurring events, rather than one-of-a-kind, are taken as points of departure for Destiny Learning. From these we can fathom with much higher certainty the hand of destiny. This step of warming up and relating to an event is equivalent to Theory U’s Open Heart phase.

The next step is that of digesting (nourishing), which is finding the causes and the learning task that emerge from this cluster of events. In this step we try to reach the deeper, originating causes in a previous life; we wrestle for self-knowledge. This stage is best supported through conversation, art, and exercises, and through the help of a facilitator. In addition to the earlier question—“What are the deeper causes of events in my destiny?”—there are a couple of questions that go closely in hand with it: “What is this event trying to tell me? What inner forces do I need to develop in order to integrate it into my life?” We have reached the Open Will stage which requires considerable strength to step over a threshold and render possible the transformation of head and heart knowledge into insights.

The next stage of individualizing/accepting our destiny requires a step of determination of the will to reach a complete identification with the event. At this stage it is no longer possible to deny the event or turn away from it. We are willing to confront all the ways in which the double hides from our consciousness; how it is covered up by strong feelings of anger, denial, guilt or others. We will be able to recognize the nature of either Luciferic or Ahrimanic doubles. The first ones promote our love of self and estrange us from our real task. The Ahrimanic doubles harden us and keep us as if imprisoned in the reality of the five senses, in hardbound concepts, and in recurrent patterns of behavior. And, more importantly, behind both we can recognize the "second person in us," who orchestrates the events in our biography. This stage corresponds to what Theory U calls presencing. In looking at this step Coenraad van Houten concludes "The responsibility of shouldering our karma (Step IV) can take place at various levels. In our life of thoughts and ideas it becomes insight, in our inner life it becomes a far-reaching feeling element as the basic mood, in our will it should become incentive for our actions."¹⁶

The next stages of work—the three steps (V to VII) corresponding to Destiny Learning II and III—consist in maintaining/working at transforming our double. Through daily commitment, we learn to recognize the ways through which we limit our freedom in meeting new situations. We can take on the practice of transforming our Double in small increments, with what Destiny Learning calls "freer deeds"—actions we may plan carefully, knowing how much we can reasonably expect of ourselves. In fact, initially we could work at transforming the way in which we think of a person with whom we experience hostility or difficulties. A next step may be confined to not avoiding him, but greeting him, refraining from commenting at the first sentence, and so forth. In so doing, we may notice how the Double reacts in us. At this stage journaling offers support for observation and knowledge of our inner dynamics, and hence supports the ability to affect and transform them.

The goal of steps V to VII (Destiny Learning II and III) is to help us move from a new way of seeing our destiny (DL I) to a new way of relating to people in our karmic network (DL II), to acting for the greater good of those whom our karma touches (DL III). The three larger steps (DL I, DL II, DL III) are used in an iterative fashion as an ever-repeating and deepening

¹⁶ Coenraad van Houten, *Practising Destiny: Principles and Processes in Adult Learning*, 114.

path of knowledge. In fact it is a healthy practice to move back and forth between the steps according to life's demands and challenges. Through all of this we will acquire what we can call a "feeling or karmic sense of truth" or "destiny sense." And according to Steiner this is a sense that uses primarily heart forces, not intellectual interpretation. It is like a "heart-centered listening-into."

Step V (Step 1 of Destiny Learning II)

Steps V, VI and VII can all be worked through in a sevenfold fashion with the help of the seven life processes. The exercises that go with them have been called "looping" to evoke their iterative nature.

The fifth life process is called "maintaining." At the soul level It becomes exercising. We start setting aside time in which we hold converse with our karmic being, the aspect of the Double that concerns us most at the moment. This work can also be done together with an experienced colleague. Doubles can only be transformed with distancing and love. Distancing generates acceptance; love allows their gradual transformation. It is important to be prepared to know that, as soon as we start working on them, they will show greater resistance to change. The Doubles reveal themselves as escape beings, compensation beings, avoidance beings, cover up beings, and many others.

We can either set aside regular time to converse with a particular Double being and/or try to determine its deeds, observe when and how the being shows up in our day, what are the conditions that favor this appearance and how we become aware of it (sense impressions, inner images), etc. It also helps to observe carefully how other people, especially close family and friends, are affected by our Double. Since we are aiming at accepting and transforming this being we will become increasingly more aware of it and start to recognize its significance in our biography.

Step VI (Step 2 of Destiny Learning II)

As we grow in awareness of the forces at play in our destiny so grows our sense of responsibility and desire to perform deeds that will carry healing and harmonizing impulses into the future. We realize that "... unrecognized destiny chained to the past represents the greatest anti-social force. Undigested old karma is an obstacle not only for one's own development but also for the way one relates with other people."¹⁷ In fact the recognition of past destiny events is growing as a natural faculty at present; this emerges

¹⁷ Coenraad van Houten, *Practising Destiny*, 120.

as déjà-vu experiences accompanied by the beholding of inner pictures relating to past events. With these can also come to the surface fears and phobias. For those who don't have these experiences the "destiny sense" can be helped through the deepening of the path of schooling in spiritual science, the practice of aesthetic judgment such as can be cultivated through specific artistic exercises—e.g. form drawing relating to special patterns, looking at organic architecture and sculpture, artistic portrayals of individuals, perceptive biographies, etc.—the apprehension of metamorphosis in the natural realm and in the soul. The study of reincarnation and karma, especially as it is found in the *Karmic Relationships* lecture cycles or in the *Mystery Dramas* is also recommended. Most of all we must develop the ability to observe life events and challenges, and refrain from hasty reactions and responses.

Qualitatively speaking up to step V we are mostly concerned with ourselves and the transformation of our own karma. Now we are entering the more explicitly social dimension of our karma. We endeavor to transform what we could call the "network of love." In fact, in preparation for the second part of Destiny Learning II we create a visual map or aid to visualize the network of our relationships, starting maybe by those who have supported and guided us, but then also those who have hindered us, blocked us or redirected us. In effect, with the previous amount of preparation we should now be able to see beyond the positive and negative labels that our mind places on other individuals. To ease our task we may want to divide the relationships in categories such as people who played important mentor or spiritual roles, the close personal friendships or antagonisms, the long-term family and life-companionships, our professional colleagues, etc. The initial stage of the process corresponds in part to Steiner's exercise of creating an imagination of other human beings, transcending sympathetic and antipathetic judgments.

We should in fact be able to see strengths and weaknesses of others regardless of our common history or our sympathies and antipathies. We can compare the whole of our karmic network to a fabric and be able to recognize the local, beautiful themes of some parts, the places where the fabric is torn, the knots, the holes, the emerging new themes, etc.

We repeat in Step VI something similar to Step V, though characterized by a higher exertion of our moral and artistic judgment, necessary for tackling personal relationships. In effect the extra step required at this point entails a higher empathic capacity for looking at the other person's challenges

without judgment. This requires that I also perceive the working of my Double on the other, before understanding how our common Double manifests in the relationship. The whole becomes a dance, not externally different from a normal relationship, but one in which I remain alert to the working of my Double by practicing “freeing deeds”—one step further than the initial “free deeds”—observing their effect on myself and on the relationship and relating them to how I understand my karmic task. In the process we may realize that the more we let go of the abstract expectations of anticipated results, the more life will guide us to unforeseen possibilities and redirect our personal goals toward simply being available to the present and its emerging opportunities.

The new step we place in front of ourselves entails the capacity of asking “What ails thee my brother/sister?” Knowing at least in part what ails our soul we can then shift to “What ails both of us?” None of this can be done without developing a higher degree of acceptance for things as they are. At this point we start to overcome the need to justify people and events as good and bad, right and wrong, in order to simply notice what steps are life-affirming and which ones are not. We develop a natural interest in the other person. We may shift with ease to contemplating what are our own shortcomings rather than blaming the other person, the goal that Steiner outlined with the Lesser Karma Exercise.

If freeing deeds are practiced regularly a subconscious karmic memory of past events may start to surface, leading van Houten to assess “The blockages and resistances will become the future new faculties if we penetrate through and transform the phenomena, not avoid them.”¹⁸ We may notice something else. We can now start conversing with our Double, who reluctantly becomes a sort of adviser. He now offers us an understanding of what is possible or not be possible at our present stage of development and within the given karmic context. When we yield to it we will notice that we become better judges of the overall karmic reality, more able to let life unfold, more willing to try freely without attachment to success. At best we lose the fear of failure; rather turn our attention to what we learn from so-called “failure.” We live joyfully and freely in the deed, in the “ideal-filled will,” to use the language of *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*.

Ultimately, we realize that what most moves karmic knots forward is the ability to forgive. This becomes easier to offer when we recognize our co-responsibility in building the fabric of karma. In my life I noticed that forgiving another person may look very similar to forgiving myself for the part

¹⁸ Coenraad van Houten, *The Threefold Path of Destiny Learning*, 36.

I play in co-creating a given situation. This no longer raises the haunting image of the formidable step that the word forgiveness usually conjures up.

From all of the above we can see the social consequences arising from the practice of Step VI. Forgiveness makes this obvious, but we should not underestimate the leap that comes from leaving behind the dualistic mind-set that weighs relationships along self-serving metrics of good and bad, right and wrong. And with the benefit of all the steps we may gain an inner certainty of how the Christ accompanies us in our destiny and how we can see further into the future through an expansion of our inner capacity to trust our destiny, the help of the departed souls close to us and of the spiritual world. This naturally leads us to Step VII which will call a higher degree of resolve in our will.

Step VII (Destiny Learning III)

In looking at this last step of Destiny Learning we can recognize variously overlapping areas of our work. The first lies in realizing where we ourselves have fallen, in this life or in previous ones, and in consequence acting in the present with more discretion and social tact—choosing those outcomes which leave doors open for the future. Even when things have to come to an end, our responses and inner attitude can either create an irreparable break or leave room for healing and a possible continuation.

We can act in such a way that the knots of destiny can be loosened. This requires that we do alone what we would more easily accomplish with others—e.g., let room for the pain that we normally tend to stop from feeling when we give it the form of anger, aggression, guilt or self-destructive tendencies. We can call this “breaking our heart open,” experiencing the pain that can forge an organ of perception, because it is closer to the reality of the experience than all primary, gut feelings. In so doing we bring order into our own and other people’s destinies.

At this point in the practice of Destiny Learning we can come to develop the “new karmic clairvoyance.” “The new clairvoyance looks at the consequences our actions will have for the future. We develop it whenever we wrestle in despair with karmic decisions in hopeless situations.”¹⁹ These are situations that are most often decided through the fight or flight instincts. We must therefore develop a heightened awareness, capacity to tolerate uncertainty, paradox and ambiguity. Along this path dispassionate listeners can help us a great deal if they refrain from offering judgments and solutions but simply help us as amplifying sound chambers. Indeed, each one

¹⁹ Coenraad van Houten, *Practising Destiny*, 125.

of us who wants to walk this path would benefit from a network of support, not to mention offering support herself.

Destiny Learning III would have us walk the first, tentative, steps of a distant future with the very ambitious goal of performing “free deeds.” Coenraad van Houten prefaces this step thus: “So far we have been working on the transformation of our karmic past into the future and thereby developing a sense of karma. Now we should learn to perform deeds that would be good for as many fellow human beings as possible.”²⁰

We are also moving into the area the whole realm of the new “Sun karma,” no longer dictated by previous, unresolved karma. We can express it thus: “For the first time—as Christ has become the Lord of Karma we are able to order our relation network in such a way that we can help carry another’s old karma or take upon ourselves some portion of that karma.”²¹ Destiny Learning III is in fact done with a new aim in mind, the intention of creating new initiatives concerned with the future.

Even the very first steps of DL III lead us to something new, an applied spiritual research, emerging through the discernment of listening to our immediate environment and trying to detect with clarity what are the needs it calls us to fulfill. We can follow this up by taking initiative singly or by starting it with others.

Soon after we can begin to assess the possible impacts of the initiative for self, group and others. This needs to be seen in light of the weaknesses and shortcomings (Doubles) of founder or founders and of the support of the community. What we carry from our previous Destiny Learning experiences up to this point will bear fruit in lessening the impact of the Double(s).

The next steps practically correspond to a “business plan” considering the timing of the initiative, its possible social impacts, the prerequisite steps and requirements as well as contingency plans that envision possible setbacks, etc. Along the way adjustments may have to be made and we may have to let go of one part or another of our goals in conversation with our environment and what our Double shows us is possible or not.

The review of the whole steps of Destiny Learning brings us then to a type of cognition, learning from life, which requires a whole set of faculties

²⁰ Coenraad van Houten, *The Threefold Path of Destiny Learning*, 45.

²¹ Ibid, 46.

different from what we use in the path of schooling for the understanding of spiritual science, though naturally also overlapping to a great degree.

3) Peacemaking Circles

We have progressed in our understanding of what it means to “truly live” through Steiner’s karmic exercises and Coenraad van Houten Destiny Learning—which are primarily geared to the individual. We will now move to a process that operates at the collective level, the so-called “Peacemaking Circles.”

Peacemaking Circles use dialogue processes to increase understanding between different perspectives and to craft effective solutions to long-standing issues of conflict and alienation.²² They have been widely used as a tool for restorative justice and have extended from there into other realms. The Circles provide safe environment for participants to express their point of view and they convene a great variety of stakeholders—even those initially opposed to the Circles—to generate win-win solutions for the benefit of all. Circles have been used in schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, faith communities, businesses, social services, ...

Circle processes’ best matches are situations where harmful behavior emerges together with mixed responsibilities. They are designed to address situations of a continuum of responsibility and guilt with no clearcut victim or offender. An example are crimes among homogeneous groups, neighbors, family members, or classmates. Circles can be very effective in cases of extreme violence such as gang violence. They can take great lengths of time, especially as restorative justice processes in order to resolve legal situations amiably. In juvenile justice Peacemaking Circles can be introduced several months before release of an inmate and last for up to a year after.

A simple example to illustrate the continuum of guilt and responsibility comes from the Circles’ use in the classroom. Not long after the school shootings in Littleton, Colorado, an alienated student had uttered threats in another unidentified school, indicating he wanted to burn the school down. The teacher had recourse to a “Circle of Understanding” bringing together the student in question with his classmates. The students expressed how the threats had impacted them; they also realized how they had ostracized, teased and spread gossip about their classmate. Based on these realizations, resolves were taken by the schoolmates to take positive

²² The following comes from Kay Pranis, Barry Stuart, Mark Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles: From Crime to Community*, as well as the author’s participation in a 2007 workshop conducted by Kay Pranis.

action to reduce the student's marginalization, while the latter wrote a letter of apology and promised specific changes in his behavior.²³

Circles rely on ancient wisdom—particularly the Native American “Medicine Wheel”—revisited and elaborated with new approaches, such as Consensus Decision-Making, or other dialogue tools (storytelling, centerpieces, etc.). They reconcile a number of polarities: structure and openness, order and spontaneity, artistic approaches and analysis, sacred (ceremonies) and profane, ...

The defining aim of Peacemaking Circles is to move from an attribution of sole individual responsibility to the realization of common accountability, the insight that crime or transgression takes place within systemic circumstances. Lastly, Circles move from the intention of simply punishing and getting even, as justice does, to restitution and healing for the perpetrator (most often called “offender”), the victim and the community.

The work of Peacemaking Circles can be visualized as a tree. What it calls the “inner frame” of values, principles, and the teachings of the Medicine Wheel can be compared to its roots. The outer frame, the trunk of the tree, relies on “Circle Keeping” supports. These foster whatever the Circle needs to do. Among them we count the use of a talking piece, the guidelines, the ceremonies and the approach of Consensus Decision-Making. The fruits are seen in the visible results: the weaving of new community relationships, the healing of difficult issues and the restitution done to the community.

Inner and Outer Frames

Let us look at the inner frame, the inner space from which the Circles operate. The Circle's guiding values are, generally speaking, those of respect, honesty, inclusivity, trust, humility, empathy, forgiveness, courage, vulnerability, ... However, each group will place its own particular emphasis on some more than others. It's not unusual to spend hours, even days on this matter for the most protracted Circles, and this is time well spent because the group thus establishes boundaries that it is most likely to support and uphold. The values establish the ‘how’ the way in which the process will proceed.

Circles may be preceded by Circle trainings, especially for issues that entail charged emotions; the trainings will strengthen the outcomes. After that the organizers will come down to the important logistical details, first and

²³ Kay Pranis, *Circle Processes: A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking*, 31-32.

foremost the choice of the particular individuals invited and, broadly speaking, the stakeholders concerned by the issue at hand. The broader this spectrum the more balanced and more comprehensive will be the outcomes. Lastly, the facilitators will look at what kind of sharing they expect, what expectations they may have from each other and how they want to design the parts of the whole. Although the design is broadly-speaking preset, the more specific it becomes for the given situation, the better will be the outcomes.

Circles must be simple to use, transparent and easy for anyone to attend. Involvement is purely voluntary, except for offenders; they choose the process as the lesser of two evils. The only other choice they have is returning to court.

The practitioners refer to the Medicine Wheel to encompass the four dimensions of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. At the physical level are the conversation practices and format plus the role of art (e.g., music, dance, other forms). The mental level encompasses the analysis of the events and accompanying phenomena, the effort to listen and self-reflect. The sharing of deep feelings, from pain, hurt, anger and helplessness and everything in between and the correlated needs form the emotional substratum. The spiritual is met most of all in the surprising moments of consensus in which many participants experience the formation of a sacred space. It is also reinforced by opening and closing ceremonies.

Like other, similar approaches taken from the wide field of so-called "social technology," Circles owe their success to the suspension of the normal kind of conversation.²⁴ They create exceptional circumstances under which exceptional conversations can take place. To this we refer with the term of outer frame.

Circle Keeping supports function "as servants and midwives" to the goals of the Circle. Among these:

- Talking piece: to slow down the conversation and broaden participation
- Guidelines: to enforce the core values
- Facilitation of the Circle: the Consensus Decision-Making format helps move from the presentation of the facts all the way to decision-making and resolution

²⁴ Such are the approaches of Conversation Cafés, World Cafés, Open Space Technology, Appreciative Inquiry, Future Search, Theory U, etc. For an in-depth look at these see Luigi Morelli, *Visions for a Compassionate America*, Chapter 3 and *Accelerating Social Change: Impacting Our World While Transforming Ourselves*, Chapter 3.

- Ceremonies: to highlight a different kind of presence

Circle keepers try to embody the values of a Circle and help create the space for others to take leadership. Being a keeper “is about radically respecting the power of human beings and of Circles to deal with whatever is before them... It's not a position of power; It is a responsibility to others.”²⁵ Keepers have to be good facilitators, know the community, be empathic, humble, and patient. They strive to create an atmosphere that's open, spacious, reflective, respectful and appreciative.

The use of the talking piece is very important. It is usually chosen as an object that has symbolic value for the community. The piece doesn't jump around; it moves one way and guarantees that only one person speaks at a time.

The following, broad six guidelines are essential:

- Respect the talking piece
- Speak from the heart
- Speak with respect
- Listen with respect
- Remain in the circle; keepers help participants by pointing to time limits and breaks
- Honor confidentiality; this may not always be fully possible, however.

As mentioned earlier, guidelines are created through a common process to avoid seeing them as rules. A good additional guideline is the keepers' call for the Circle's support in how they take some decisions; shared leadership is a key ingredient to the Circles' success.

Facilitation of the Circle

The keepers of the Circle will ask questions that encourage storytelling; they promote dialogue through their summaries at the end of rounds, call for breaks. Among other tasks they strive to:

- Balance interests and perspectives.
- Protect the integrity of the process by focusing on the values and reaching agreement on the guidelines at the outset; modeling respectful behavior and humor, speaking to people privately during the breaks, defusing and controlling disruptive behavior.

²⁵ Kay Pranis, Barry Stuart, Mark Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles*, 84.

- Regulate the pace: e.g., by using a second talking piece for the keeper as a timekeeping device.
- Maintain focus: asking pointed questions, providing summaries at the beginning of a round.
- Be not only stewards but also participants in the process.

Circle process is iterative; shortcomings can be addressed to reinforce the process in rhythms and cycles. Ample room for silence is an important part of this goal. Reaching consensus leads to the experience of presencing: “the deepest consensus involves creating new worlds where the original problems become less pressing, less relevant—worlds that include everyone and support their highest good equally.”²⁶ In rare instances, under a deadlock the so-called “modified consensus” is used, leading to a workable compromise.

Ceremonies play an important part. They can be fun and light and even serve as ice-breakers. The participants often realize that the Circle itself can be viewed as a sacred ceremony.

We can now look at the Circle format itself. The five phases of the Circle gathering are:

- Opening
- Expression of needs and interests
- Explorations of options
- Building consensus (presencing)
- Closing

Phases 2 to 4 can be iterative.

The opening includes: welcoming participants, opening ceremony, making introductions and check-ins, consenting on the guidelines, sharing a round of storytelling, hearing the keeper’s summary. Storytelling renders information personal; they often include stories of hope, inspiration, healing. Storytelling is crucial; beyond information, it includes the artistic, emotional, esthetic elements.

The aim of phase 2 is to ensure everyone is working from a common base of information. In fact—similarly to other approaches of social technology—problems may seem to get larger and more complex as people speak. All feelings and needs must emerge as fully as possible at this stage.

²⁶ Kay Pranis, Barry Stuart, Mark Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles*, 122.

Exploring options (phase 3) is helped by the double focus of the Circles: the inward focus looking at change at the personal and family levels; the outward focus covering social, economic, racial, political, educational, religious, ethnic, and other collective dynamics that contribute to creating tension and/or crime.

Building consensus corresponds to the stage of presencing. After this it is natural to review points of agreement and disagreement, have a round of reflections on the experience of being in the Circle, and share a closing ceremony. A telling example of a Peacemaking Circle leading to a moment of collective breakthrough is the one involving a certain George, age seventeen, who had been arrested for possession and sale of illegal drug, plus self-destructive behavior (e.g., driving his car off the road). It took the community time to shift their understanding from his destructive behavior to the root cause of not caring for his very own life. This became then the core issue to be addressed. At the end of the process he was asked to offer restitution by attending a twelve-week Hospice training and a ten-day intensive meditation retreat, an unusual sentencing, but no doubt quite useful and growth-inducing.²⁷

In a way that is familiar to people who work with these transformative processes, we can recognize the first four of the seven life processes. The first stage warms up the common space; it's a prelude. Phase 2 offers a foretaste of the Open Mind and Open Heart, most of all through the storytelling. In Phase 3 we are moving once more, but in greater depth from the Open Mind to the Open Heart. The amount of information can create a healthy feeling of overwhelm. People's speaking from the heart creates an atmosphere of convergence.

Phase four brings us to the stage of the Open Will, through which consensus/presencing emerges. After this we move to the steps of decision making (step 5). Steps 6 and 7 are carried out outside of the space of the Circles.

Let us close with an example of the results of Peacemaking Circles in action. A correctional facility normally entails a considerable potential for emotional overload. It was only the more so in one of these facilities after a worker's strike. Internal strife had impacted management, workers and inmates. The

²⁷ Kay Pranis, Barry Stuart, Mark Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles*, 78-79.

administrators decided to call for a Circle process.²⁸ It was decided that two Circles were necessary to defuse the tension and bring healing.

The first Circle took a whole day. It started by reminding the participants of the core values of the institution, placing them at the center of the proceedings. After warming up the space with check-ins and lighthearted questions, the participants were asked to express what they would need to feel safe in their work environment. Next, they were asked to write a confidential "impact statement" in which they were asked to express both how they felt harmed by others and how they felt they could have hurt their colleagues or inmates. The first Circle was concluded by a round in which participants shared their hopes, both for themselves and for the program in the next three months. At this stage part of the participants were grateful for the Circle intervention while others remained skeptic.

The second Circle started with a review of the results of the earlier Circle. The preliminary phases were similar to those of Circle 1. After check-ins the participants were asked to share what had been most stressful for individuals and families at the time of the strike. Ample time was given to this round. After this they were given a chance to share from the impact statements they had written in the previous Circle gathering. This round offered the opportunity for people to take responsibility for their actions, offer apologies and envision steps to address the impact created.

At the closing of the Circle participants took resolves about what they could commit to in order to make the program function in a safe, healthy and effective way moving forward.

²⁸ Kay Pranis, *Circle Processes: A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking*, 20-23.

4) Twelve Step and the AA Fellowship

I have looked at the work of Twelve Step and the larger phenomenon before this essay in a couple of places.²⁹ What I intend to do here is to show on one hand the lived experience of members of AA and on the other the interdependence of the individual on the group, and of individual and group on the AA Fellowship at large. A picture will emerge of the social reach of processes of spirit recalling applied at large levels. This exploration will touch on the interrelationship between 12 Steps (Individual/Recovery), Twelve Traditions (Group/Unity) and Twelve Concepts (Fellowship/Service). It will also look at the false dilemma of the group seen as a dependence for the individual. There can be and need to be group and organizational forms that support the individual and that reach to as many individuals in need as possible without infringing on human freedom. In fact, all the important spiritual or cultural organizations depend on it.

The experience of Alcoholics Anonymous and the AA Fellowship encompasses all that we have explored thus far because it goes from the strictly individual to a large social scale. Steiner's karmic exercises and Destiny Learning work mostly at the personal level. At their culmination they have an impact on social reality. Such were the goals of both Steiner and Coenraad van Houten. Peacemaking Circles operate at a community level; their social goal is stated manifestly from the get-go. They aim at transforming the way in which communities tackle important problems, though they also have a marked and pointed transformational impact on the offenders. With AA we are encompassing both the personal and the social/collective because of the levels and complexity of the organization. This will serve as an optimal example of the overall possible reach of spirit recalling, the path of transformation of the will through thinking.

Twelve Step began as a six-step process in the mind of Bill Wilson, the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous and its greatest inspirator.³⁰ It started with the key realization that alcoholism afflicts body, mind [soul] and spirit, and that only something that addresses the three levels can have a lasting effect and life-altering impact. I personally know of people who have gone

²⁹ See Luigi Morelli, *Revolution of Hope: Spirituality, Cultural Renewal and Social Change*, Chapter 6, heading "Bill Wilson and the Story of AA." This is also available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Bill-Wilson-and-the-Story-of-AA.pdf>. For a larger perspective on the integration of AA groups and AA Fellowship see Luigi Morelli, *Searching for the Spirit of the West: Social Utopias and World Wars—A Hidden History of the USA in the Twentieth Century*, Chapter 9: "America and the True Spirit of the West," also available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/america-and-the-transformation-of-the-will.pdf>.

³⁰ Bill Wilson, *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How More Than One Hundred Men Have Recovered from Alcoholism* (nicknamed The Big Book).

through the twelve steps but in incomplete fashion (e.g., not having offered amends as is done in step 9) and they know that they are more vulnerable to alcohol than those who have completed the steps.

The six steps correspond to what we know of the seven life processes when we keep in mind that the missing step 4, the central one, is in a way the silent step, the one that we have called presencing. Bill Wilson explained that he saw the need to render the process more accessible by breaking down further what were steps 1 to 3 (now steps 1 to 9). On the other side of presencing there are three steps only (10 to 12), the normal tripartition that we would expect from the seven life processes.

The quandary of the approach to the spirit from one so-hardened materialist as an alcoholic is the need to dissolve the armor of the lower ego and this means opening up to the thought experiment that there is something more than our earthly ego. Anonymity is a great protection at this stage. As Harry Tiebaut—medical doctor and early supporter of AA—recognized: “My thesis is that anonymity, thoughtfully preserved, supplies two essential ingredients to that maintenance [of sobriety]. The two ingredients, actually two sides of the same coin, are: first, the preservation of a reduced ego; second, the continued presence of humility or humbleness. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions ...”³¹

Protected with this shield of anonymity the individual can slowly chip at the highly inflated ego. With steps 1 to 3 AA members can contemplate that “we were powerless over alcohol”, make room for “a Power greater than ourselves” and decide to “turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.” We can understand why these are big steps even when broken down. Collectively they set the stage for an Open Mind, a turning around of great importance in healing the spiritual side of the illness.

The following steps highlight another stepping stone into sobriety; the help of the individual’s mentor. With this help the alcoholics can make “a searching and fearless moral inventory” confess to God and to their personal helper “the exact nature of [their] wrongs” accept to “have God remove all these defects of character” and finally asking Him “to remove [their] shortcomings.” The qualitative change undergone in these steps can lead to a new relationship with self. As a recovering individual stated: “Trying my best to exercise the first three Steps stimulated humility, hope, and faith. The Fourth, Fifth and Tenth Steps laid down a pattern of growth

³¹ The AA Grapevine Inc., *Spiritual Awakenings: Journeys of the Spirit from the Pages of the AA Grapevine*, 5.

for honesty with myself. Working with the Sixth and Seventh Steps awakened remnants of moral courage and reestablished sincerity in relating myself to a higher power.”³² The individual at this stage has faced more fully the realms of feelings, what Theory U calls the Open Heart.

We have noticed that steps 4 to 7 are already more challenging than steps 1 to 3. This wise ordering of the AA progression reflects of an organic lawfulness and necessity. We need to first change the orientation of our thinking, then approach the sphere of the heart to finally take action through strong resolve. We approach then the steps 8 and 9 of the Open Will. These in essence add up to writing down “a list of all persons we had harmed” and making “direct amends to such people wherever possible.” This next step can often take a number of years before the ego relinquishes hold of the shield of self-righteousness. Such is the example of Tom A. of Laguna Beach, CA. He writes: “After tenaciously holding on to my self-will until it about drove me insane, I faced the tough amends one by one. I owned up to stealing money via a padded expense account; I admitted character assassination that bordered on libel; I faced the Internal Revenue Service and other creditors. The most difficult part was doing all these things while sober.”³³

To the most difficult step follows in a sense the most rewarding, silent step of presencing, which is not recognized as such in Alcoholics Anonymous. It is a deeply personal turning point or succession of points as the above case leads us to believe. The act of asking for forgiveness in its deep humbleness is a complete reversal from the initial stance of an ego determined to act from a self-centered and self-gratifying will. Here the ego goes through the eye of the needle, through an extreme humbling and letting go. In this turnaround it can experience a powerlessness that is the beginning of true power, a first alignment with a Higher Power, a higher presence. We could say that this is a glimmer of “not I but Christ in me.” Through this silent step we reach the necessary, fuller impact of Twelve Step, which is equivalent to say that sobriety at the physical level will be much harder to maintain unless the alcoholic gets through step 9.

After the fourth, silent, step in the seven life processes follows a mirror image of what preceded the mystery of presencing. The person in recovery goes in reverse through Open Will, Open Heart, Open Mind.

At step 10 the one-time practice that was the looking back upon the life of alcohol addiction needs to become a daily discipline, the step of

³² The AA Grapevine Inc., *Spiritual Awakenings*, 74.

³³ The AA Grapevine Inc., *Spiritual Awakenings*, 132.

"Continu[ing] to take personal inventory," a strengthening of a more selfless will. Every gain acquired so far risks remaining an illusion if it does not sink into the life of daily practice. A man who had overcome addiction describes the result of protracted negligence as a spiritual bottom even worse than the one experienced through alcohol before recovery. In Twelve Step the tenth step is seen as "a way to deal with selfishness, resentment and fear" a way to "ask God to remove them, discuss them with someone, and then make immediate amends to those we have harmed." This can be seen as a form of "spiritual maintenance."

To the stage of the Open Will follows another step of discipline, this time addressed to the Open Heart, the step of "through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God." To the horizontal dimension of our daily life follows the desire to cultivate a vertical relationship with the Higher Power, in effect embracing prayer and meditation. The will becomes aligned with a heart that is becoming more open to divine presence. How important is this step, even when felt as very demanding, is illustrated by a Londoner who reports "I find one pattern coming up again and again. When all is well, I get complacent. Prayer stops being a priority, I do my tenth step less thoroughly, and going to a meeting becomes a burden. Fortunately, my threshold for self-inflicted pain is low these days, and I return to God as the source of sanity sooner rather than later."³⁴

The alcoholic reaching rock bottom comes to the group in search of another way of looking at his problem and at the world. He comes with an Open Mind to receive the blessing of recovery from others. At the end of the work of the seven life processes he comes to understand that just as he needed others to help him recover, he needs to help others and carry the torch for them, not just for the sake of altruism, but even for his own continued well-being. He becomes a giver. For this reason it is often difficult to tell who is really helping who. A San Francisco man had survived an almost fatal accident after fifteen years of sobriety. In deep pain because of burns he was practically dying. He discovered that in his hospital unit there were alcoholics ready to turn to AA. Offering to listen to them he realized that his own pain and state of mind improved while offering help. A certain individual called Pat was wondering at how a dying man would care to offer him help. Reflecting on the experience the San Francisco man drew the conclusion: "I have seen and talked to Pat since our second meeting, and I do not think he would buy for one minute my conviction that he was the instrument by which God went about saving my life. Pat still maintains it

³⁴ The AA Grapevine Inc., *Spiritual Awakenings*, 77.

was I who twelfth-stepped him!”³⁵ Arriving at the end of the twelve steps means acquiring a new consciousness, enshrining in our mind the realization that we need to work at consolidating a new culture, a whole new way of relating to and working with each other in order to deepen sobriety most of all at the spiritual level, the desire “to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” (12th Step).

This essay is not the place to look in detail at the history and significance of the AA local groups and the larger Fellowship. The reader interested can find this information in print or online.³⁶ Rather, I will just draw some significant connections between individual, recovery group and Fellowship to illustrate that the path to truly living, rendered possible by AA depends not just on the Twelve Steps and the support of other alcoholics. It also hinges on a healthy group—supported in this goal by the Twelve Traditions—and in a healthy Fellowship, whose strength has been built around the Twelve Concepts.³⁷

The Twelve Traditions were a summation of countermeasures to everything that went wrong at the beginnings of AA’s history. They were the hard wrought wisdom of what was necessary in order to build healthy group dynamics, which in turn render the path to recovery possible for the individual. They are wide guidelines with nothing of a coercive nature in them. Of all the twelve we will turn to just two.

We have already touched upon Tradition 12: “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.” This is the keystone of the work of the group in the promotion of the group conscience, in effect the equivalent of the effective working of what Steiner calls the “new group soul,” the inspiration of the archangelic being that can guide the work of a community. And the group conscience is specifically addressed in Tradition 2: “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

Bill Wilson, who wrote down the Twelve Traditions, did so nevertheless under the inspiration of the group conscience. In the process of doing so he wrote: “When a customary way of doing things is definitely proved to

³⁵ The AA Grapevine Inc., *Spiritual Awakenings*, 180.

³⁶ See Morelli, *Searching for the Spirit of the West*, Chapter 9: “America and the True Spirit of the West,” also available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/america-and-the-transformation-of-the-will.pdf>.

³⁷ For a quick overview of Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts see <https://www.aanorthflorida.org/steps.asp>

be best, then the custom forms into a tradition. The greater power is then working through a clear group conscience."³⁸ Because the Traditions are in essence wide guidelines, Wilson and those who followed him could notice that the groups hardly need to resort to exhortations or punishments, such is the quiet strength of the group conscience. And for those who can observe with care it will also appear that each group acquires a certain individuality of its own. Once more in the words of the founder "We are coming to realize that each group, as well as each individual, is a special entity, not quite like any other. Though AA groups are basically the same, each group does have its own special atmosphere, its own peculiar state of development. We believe that every AA group has a conscience."³⁹

What makes the groups particularly effective in integrating the individual to the fabric of the whole is found in the linchpin of Step 12, which predicates the need to offer service to the alcoholic in need. This is done in such a way that the service structure of the group organically connects to the whole of the Fellowship. Within a single group members occupy service roles that form connections to other groups, to treatment facilities, to the collaboration with professionals, to public outreach, to AA's Grapevine (AA's international journal), to the literature or the archives provided by the World Services Board. The group becomes a microcosm of the whole of AA and its interactions with the wider world.

We can now extend our gaze from the group to AA World Services. The early Alcoholic Foundation was a classical board of trustees. The founders Bill Wilson and Bob Smith were the only organic link between the Foundation and the groups across the country. The more groups came to birth the more ineffective was that link. This order of affairs did not lend strength, nor reality to the second Tradition. For this to happen Bill and Bob formally needed to transfer authority and responsibility to the members of AA via the groups.

In foreseeing this necessary step Bill had been willing to face a lot of inner resistance in promoting the idea that the groups should become the consciousness of the Foundation, or rather its functional successor, the General Service Conference. The Conference prototyped and spearheaded the change from 1951 to 1954. The structure that resulted from this change effectively became an integrated pyramid in both directions; for its practical/logistical/legal aspects one in which ultimate authority rests on AA

³⁸ Bill Wilson on the Second Tradition in The AA Grapevine Inc., *Spiritual Awakenings*, 86.

³⁹ Bill Wilson on the Second Tradition in The AA Grapevine Inc., *Spiritual Awakenings*, 86.

World Services in New York. But for most of its important business and for its heart and soul it is a reversed pyramid in which the groups effectively become the consciousness of the General Service Conference. This reality became later enshrined in Concept 2: "The General Service Conference of AA has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs."

With Concept 2 we touch on the next level. What had rendered the General Service Conference transformation possible was an ingenious integration of polarities enshrined in the so-called Twelve Concepts devised by Bill Wilson—partly in synergy with the group consciousness of the Fellowship—partly under a strong personal prophetic intuition. In acting as the "trusted servant" he continued to listen to the fellowship but remained connected to the guiding being of AA when the majority of its members had lost that living connection. Steiner, in supporting Goethe's views, mentions this instance in relation to leaders of nations: "It can happen that the majority of the nation is drawn in the direction that goes against its own nature. According to Goethe, national leaders are then obligated to let themselves be guided by that nature and not by the momentary demand of the majority. They then have to represent the deepest qualities of the nation against the nation."⁴⁰

The Concepts' architecture rests around four important rights: the right of decision giving autonomy to those in positions of responsibility; the right of participation celebrating the role of the groups via their delegates; the right of petition and right of appeal addressing the rights of minorities and individuals. The Twelve Concepts ingeniously encompass and recognize every possible set of polarities: the contrast between group conscience and trusted servant who can initiate processes of change at difficult times; the rights of leadership and rights of groups and individuals, the powers established in tradition and those set by law. Add to these a variety of checks and balances, such as the terms in office, the rotation of responsibilities, advisory groups, integrated and overlapping directorships, etc.

The Concepts elegantly subdue the anti-social impulses still operating in the life of the alcoholic, even once sobered. Bill understood the puzzling achievements of the Conference and its effects on the Fellowship thus: "And strangely enough—and this is the paradox—we have been able to do this because of God's grace working through a sober but still defective people

⁴⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *Nature's Open Secret: Introduction to Goethe's Scientific Writings*, Chapter 10, Knowledge and Action in the Light of Goethe's Ideas, heading "Ethical and Historical Sciences."

who, in his Providence, have been able to bring into being a society seemingly not only sound in principle, but of great beauty and great perfection as a whole.” And further: “The Society itself is beauty and perfection. And it stays that way, despite the fact that we each take our turn in being destructive—in being juvenile and generally acting like hell. Is this not a great gift of Providence?”⁴¹

The next paragraphs offer examples of the Concepts followed with comments. Concept 11 states: “The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.” This has led to the complete integration and interconnection of the two corporations—AA World Services and AA Grapevine—and of the AA World Services with the groups at the General Conference.

To close we can look at Concept 12: “The Conference shall observe the spirit of AA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.”

Such is the latitude of this concept that it led Bill Wilson to comment: “In other words, nobody may lead by force or coercion; no punishments can be meted out; nobody can be thrown out of this Society. A person is a member if he says so. The liberty in this Society is greater than the liberty that we have as citizens of this country. We can't compel the payment of any dues; we can't compel the payment of any fees. I am a member if I say so.”⁴²

Just as each group has its own individual group conscience/new group soul, so does the World Service Conference, the Worldwide Services and the Grapevine. And it is important to point out that it is this inner coherence of the whole that renders possible the efficient rendering of assistance to the alcoholic individual. Just consider that AA counted 1 paid worker for every 98 groups in 1945, 1 for 7000 in the 1960s, up to 1 for 17,000 by 2010.⁴³

⁴¹ Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc., *Our Great Responsibility*, 160.

⁴² The AA Grapevine Inc., *Spiritual Awakenings*, 188.

⁴³ Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., *The AA Service Manual*, 10, 75.

Estimated global membership has gone from around 907,000 in 1980 to 2,138,000 in 2020.⁴⁴

In essence then we have a phenomenon of integration of each part in a whole reflecting all in all the social motto: "The healthy social life is found when, in the mirror of each human soul, the whole community finds its reflection, and when, in the community, the strength of each one is living." We could also call this an extended reciprocity at three levels, even a "circularity": the groups lead strength and direction to the Fellowship; the Fellowship creates those stable structures that sustain the groups, rendering the groups better and better able to serve any alcoholic addict in need who earnestly seeks help from AA.

The wisdom of AA's social architecture transpires from the fact that its organizational structures, its checks and balances, its Concepts have worked in such a way that the Fellowship hardly ever makes the news; there rarely have been major problems, controversies, clashes of personality or splits in eighty years of its existence after its initial growing pains.

In subordinating his pioneer spirit to the group conscience of AA Bill Wilson in effect brought the work of what Steiner calls the "new group souls" to bear upon the AA Fellowship. This is how Steiner describes the possibility of a group to be inspired by its higher being. Referring to the General Anthroposophical Society as a manifestation of a group in which such group soul can take residence, Steiner affirms:

"An emancipated human being possesses his individual soul which is never lost when it has once been attained. But when men find themselves together in voluntary associations they group themselves round centres. The feelings streaming in this way to a centre once more give beings the opportunity of working as a kind of group soul, though in quite a different sense from the early group souls. All the earlier group souls were beings who made man unfree. These new beings, however, are compatible with man's complete freedom and individuality. Indeed, in a certain respect we may say that they support their existence on human harmony; it will lie in the souls of men themselves whether or not they give as many as possible of such higher souls the opportunity of descending to man. The more that men are divided, the fewer lofty souls will descend into the human

⁴⁴ See Estimated Worldwide AA individual and Group Membership: https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/assets/smf-132_en.pdf.

sphere. The more that associations are formed where feelings of fellowship are developed with complete freedom, the more lofty beings will descend and the more rapidly the earthly planet will be spiritualized.”⁴⁵

We can then conclude that the healing of the alcoholic is due in great part not just to the wisdom of the twelve steps but also to the presence and strength of the group soul that permeates the working of the organization. The aliveness and presence of the group soul is rendered tangible in the fact that the ideal of the organization lives not just at its apex but is facilitated at the group level by the individual’s involvement within the whole. The archangelic being’s presence manifests as much at the level of AA World Services as it does in the single, local group.

⁴⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *The Influence of Spiritual Beings upon Man*, lecture of June 1, 1908.

Truly Living in Review

In whatever we do with processes of spirit recalling we bring the soul close to the threshold. On occasion we cross it momentarily, or have a glimpse of the other side, but only because of exceptional circumstances brought about by individual or collective effort. Much of this was covered by the term presencing, which we can recognize as a reverse ritual, a momentary crossing of the threshold.⁴⁶ On occasion all individuals in a group undergoing a "U process" feel in touch with their higher self and with the new group soul, specific to the operating group. They perceive being more of themselves than they usually are; they experience a tangible sense of unity and feel part of a larger field of reality, without losing anything pertaining to their individuality.

Once that crossing has eventually taken place, we return to our daily consciousness. The Greater Karma exercise or Destiny Learning present us not only with an experience of presencing, but with a real spiritual experience, that of a breakthrough on the other side of the threshold, a recall of an event and/or aspect of a previous lifetime. It is a discrete spiritual experience, not a permanent crossing of the threshold. The same was hoped for by Steiner when he offered other, similar karmic exercises.⁴⁷

While something may, and presumably has, changed in our soul on the heel of these kinds of experiences, we have not yet gained a permanent foothold on the other side of the threshold. And this is true no matter how many times or how many years we practice these particular, individual or group

⁴⁶ "While the well-known pole in religious worship lies in the fact that through word and action, entities of the supersensible worlds are brought down to the physical plane, the other pole is a 'reverse' cultus, which can arise when one rises up to the supersensible worlds in anthroposophical working groups through a common effort of knowledge. When a group of people come together to experience what can be revealed from the supersensible world through anthroposophy, then this experience in a group of people is something different from the lonely experience. If this is experienced in the right spirit, it means a process of awakening in the other person's soul and a rising to spiritual community: If this consciousness is present and such groups arise in the Anthroposophical Society, then in this, if I may say, at the other pole of the cultus, there is something community-building in the most eminent sense present and from this, this 'specifically anthroposophical community-building' could arise (The History and Content of the Esoteric School 1904–1914 (GA 265), Dornach, March 3, 1923, https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA265/English/SOL2025/00_Introduction.html).

⁴⁷ An example of it is the so-called "Saturn/Sun/Moon Exercise" found in *Karmic Relationships*, volume 2, lecture of May 4, 1924. Steiner indicates that at the end of the exercise "Then the image or picture of the man comes to meet me again from the cosmos. But it is not the man in his present incarnation; it is the man in one of his preceding incarnations or in several previous incarnations."

methods. Through our will we simply cannot gain a permanent foothold on the other side of existence.

I will put into words what I have come to experience and eventually bring to my help others who speak of similar experiences. When a group goes through significant common experiences we could say that the people are brought together close to the threshold and find a healthy relationship toward it.

In the work of Twelve Step the right relationship to the threshold is visible most of all in the changed tenor of life. The alcoholic individual who does not turn to AA in time will eventually die, crossing the threshold prematurely. Yes, AA can permanently keep him safely on this side of the threshold, but only with an energetic application of the will. Much will depend in fact, from Step 10 onward, upon the practice of looking back on the events of our day and on taking up the practice of prayer and meditation. It is at this step that many people I know have found anthroposophy and/or taken up other steps that can further their spiritual progress. AA itself cannot direct them beyond spirit recalling to an integration of the three practices we announced at the beginning of this essay.

Another, interwoven, common dimension of the work lies in anticipating kamaloka experiences. We gain a glimpse of what normally lies on the other side of the threshold. We step into "death experiences" that our daily consciousness normally resists. The presence of group support in the examples given makes the steps easier, but that can happen even without it. We can take up Steiner's karma exercises or parts of the work of Destiny Learning fully on our own.

In AA's steps 8 and 9 we gain a feeling understanding of how our actions have caused harm to people around us because we make a list of our shortcomings and most of all because we ask forgiveness. We are confronted with the people we have hurt and can't help but notice that many of the present feelings have undergone little transformation from the time of the original events. It's as if we were brought back in time to the moment of occurrence of the painful events. Likewise in DL II we anticipate kamaloka by developing empathy toward the other person and his Double, in great part because we've been able to see our own Double with acceptance.

Truly living presents us in germ an image of a future stage of humanity. At present anything that is done in this domain presents but partial, incomplete facets of a whole. However, a beginning is needed in modern times if nothing else to stem the anti-social forces, more importantly in order to create viable seeds for the future.

Spirit Recalling and Social Renewal

Just as we find a false dilemma in relation to whether we can transform our thinking as well as transforming our will, so do we find another one in positing that only with the transformation of our thinking are we able to have a definite impact on social reality. Here, once more, it is possible to argue for a both/and where an either/or is most often posited. The either/or predicates something like "change at the social level can only be achieved through the paradigm of a new thinking." When thinking frees itself from the physical brain along the way described in *The Philosophy of Freedom*, we attain the realm of moral imagination in which "One experiences pure spirit by observing, by actually observing how moral forces flow into sense-free thinking."⁴⁸ The influx of these living forces replaces the moral constructs that we would otherwise elaborate in following a path of thinking such as that of natural science. We no longer need to think these ideas as analogies to the natural world; we can receive living moral imaginations from within, because we attain freedom in the experience of sense-free thinking, "an inner activity that can become a deed in the external world, something entirely capable of flowing over into the social life."⁴⁹ Following this completely coherent conclusion anthroposophists can predicate a complete withdrawal from social activism, not as a kind of washing of hands, but as the recognition that the ultimate fountainhead of social change, lies not in political activism but in the co-creative deeds of the truly free individual.

Here, I will argue that a perfectly coherent thinking can become one-sided. On the other side of this way of seeing social impact in the world lies everything we have explored above. Another example could be added in everything that Bernard Lievegoed promoted through the avenue of NPI (Dutch for Institute for Organizational Development) and later offshoots. Here too we mostly find the application of the seven life processes in conversation, deliberation, matters of decision-making and governance.⁵⁰

Co-Creation along the Paths of Spirit Recalling and Spirit Beholding

Along both paths we have explored we can speak of co-creation. However, the same term covers different nuances of meaning. Along the path of spirit

⁴⁸ Rudolf Steiner, *The Boundaries of Natural Science*, lecture of September 30, 1920.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ See for example Bernard Lievegoed, *The Developing Organization or Towards the 21st Century: Doing the Good*.

beholding we are referring to individual co-creation; along the path of spirit recollection it is collective (social) co-creation.

In social co-creation—as in the examples of Peacemaking Circles or at the level of the AA Fellowship—this takes place through the reverse ritual and the moment of presencing, the collective ascent to the realm of the new group soul and the resulting inspiration it offers to the group. This is what gives us the feeling of collectively meeting our destiny, though each one of us in a different way. What any given individual senses is only a one-sided aspect of it. In such instances we no longer live in the physical flow of time, but in the “Now,” in what the first stanza of the Foundation Stone calls the “ocean being of the spirit,” which is to say the etheric. In all instances explored in this essay this is an experience that we can reproduce with individual/collective discipline. In the etheric we encounter a sense of time different from clock time, psychological time. We feel at times a suspension of physical time.

In the instance of spirit beholding co-creation comes from achieving imaginative consciousness. Sense-free thinking and the knowledge we achieve from it is different from “expert knowledge.” It is not a repetition but a new creation, a contribution to the wisdom and advancement of the world. In imagination concept and percept are no longer separate and the individual becomes an active part of the experience of knowledge. Knowing moves from original participation humanity had before the Fall, to the state of individuation/separation, to the attainment of conscious participation, which will be more widespread in the future. The individual who has attained the stage of imagination and beyond can operate through the higher self (Manas) through which the ego doesn’t feel separate from other egos and therefore feels no need to oppose them. In truly thinking we experience “an inner activity that can become a deed in the external world, something entirely capable of flowing over into the social life.”⁵¹

Truly Thinking and Truly Living Complementing Each Other in the Social Field

By espousing an exclusively either/or stance we risk pitting against each other two perfectly coherent approaches to social renewal. Individuals who have fully attained the experience of freedom in their thinking truly become leavens of change. They literally pour spiritual forces for cultural and social

⁵¹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Boundaries of Natural Science*, lecture of September 30, 1920.

renewal into the fabric of society. At the rate at which this transformation takes place at present we should resign ourselves to see the impact of social change only in a relatively distant future.

The change that we have seen through approaches like Destiny Learning and Peacemaking Circles is more time-bound, less long-lasting but more immediate. The difference lies in the fact that in everything we have called spirit recalling the individuals cultivate a “right relationship” toward the threshold to the spiritual world, without crossing it, other than occasionally. This right relationship allows us to have reverse ritual experiences—experiences of presencing—through which our higher selves are sustained and the anti-social instincts of our lower selves kept at bay. The results are more immediate but, by the same token, must be constantly renewed and supported to ensure lasting effects.

The approach to social renewal takes on a special stamp on the path of spirit recalling in all of its manifestations; it becomes what Coenraad van Houten calls a “reordering of karma.” This is closely connected with the kamaloka experience. When a Twelve Stepper seeks to confront those he has hurt and ask for forgiveness, he offers that resolution which would only come through the experiencing of the stage of kamaloka. Forgiveness, when it takes place, means accelerating that process which would only take place in a succeeding lifetime when the souls in question meet again, motivated by the desire to compensate. Thus the recovering alcoholic has an effect not only on himself but on the fabric of his karmic relationships. Destiny Learning steps VI and VII address consciously aspects of this reordering of karma. The offender in a Peacemaking Circle places order in her karma when she reintegrates the social fabric of her community and offers restitution.

Finally, processes of spirit recalling serve as tools for transforming the prevalent anti-social instincts of our time. The development of individuality that modern humanity undergoes at present requires a healthy standing on our own, a turning away from the supports of race, nationality, social norms, blood and family ties. And in this way we are served by our antisocial instincts, which are more active in day consciousness than our social instincts. They push us to develop independence and self-reliance. The more deliberate social approaches act in such a way that they hold back the anti-social instincts. AA addresses the personal level primarily but touches also at a much larger level as we have seen. Its twelve steps and social architecture hold the lower self at bay. They serve an eminently social role.

Peacemaking Circles are devised in such a way that the individual can show his better self. He can leave his lower self at the door, so to speak, just for the duration of the Circles. In the same way many approaches of so-called social technology—Consensus Decision-Making, Appreciative Inquiry, World Café, Conversation Cafés, Future Search, Theory U and many others—act as “training wheels” on our way to becoming more social.⁵² They allow truly social developments to take place because they establish exceptional contexts and conversation settings. The recourse to this kind of external help will still be necessary for quite some time in human development since anti-social instincts will still play an important developmental role in the foreseeable future.

The subduing of the anti-social instincts is accomplished in the AA Fellowship not just at the individual level and through the seven life processes. It is also accomplished in ways that anticipate the evolutionary social future and its larger impulses. It announces in fact the rebirth of the Freemasonic impulse, as we will see shortly.

All of the above is part of what is meant by Steiner’s expression of “truly living.” On this we can expand both based on my personal experience and those of others whom I have worked or interfaced with over the years. Truly living means being able to present a new side of ourselves to difficult situations, being able to act without the weight of the impressions, feelings and baggage of the past. It is a distant goal, but one that can be intuited and experienced to some degree, at least more often than not.

Our life can come to embody the content of an exercise that Steiner recommended in order to receive Inspiration.⁵³ In the exercise in question Steiner asks us to bring to mind the challenging situation we are going to face with as much detail as possible, as if it were present in the moment. To this image we bring forth our inner response with as much vividness as possible. This exercise, when carried out regularly, allows us to defuse the greatest part of the anxiety we carry into any given situation. When the moment of response and action comes, if we have fully prepared ourselves, the anxiety of the situation will be considerably lower. This is what makes it possible for the spiritual world to send us the inspiration of what the moment requires. In a relaxed state of mind, instead of worry we will be more likely to receive inspirations. This state of mind can become second

⁵² See for example Luigi Morelli, *Accelerating Social Change*, Chapter 3: Multi-Stakeholder Logic, in which the examples of Consensus Decision Making, World Café and Future Search are explored in depth.

⁵³ Rudolf Steiner, *The Stages of Higher Knowledge*, chapter III.

nature if we gain a state of continuous self-connection at the level of feelings and will.

Truly living then means being able to live out of the ever-present moment with confidence in the help of the spiritual world. It echoes fully the words of one of Steiner's Michaelic verses: "We must eradicate from the soul all fear and terror of what comes toward us out of the future. We must acquire serenity in all feelings and sensations about the future. ... To live out of pure trust in the ever present help of the spiritual world." When that is the case we will be able to be truly present to the people and situations that meet us regularly. We will be able to offer a calming presence to those around us. Most of all we will be able to see our shortcomings with equanimity and without guilt, nothing more than regret, when necessary, and the desire to do better in the future.

Truly living also means overcoming the generalizing, rule-setting, legalistic perspective, duty-bound shadows of the intellectual soul, which cannot serve the individual to differentiate himself from family, grouping, and cultural milieu. It leads as well to the transformation of the egotistic, fragmented perspective of the consciousness soul and helps us incarnate in its positive sides: the circumstantial, concrete, evidence-driven, autonomous stance of the fully independent individual.

Over time the path of spirit recalling connects us with the stream of our incarnations, either through strong feelings, through exceptional experiences that life can spontaneously offer us, but most of all through those experiences that we have conquered for ourselves. We offered one such example in the life of W. J. Stein. When we start gaining a strong feeling for our karmic being and the karmic streams we belong to, then our research questions stem from life itself. They forward both our own individual mission and that of our karmic groupings.

It is then on this path of spirit recalling that we lay a strong foundation both for sensing the uniqueness of our spiritual mission on Earth and to present a mirror for others to do the same. When we establish this foundation in our heart, we have contributed a great deal to what the head can "direct with single purpose."

Impulses for the Future

What has been said so far applies in equal measure to the four examples explored above. In relation to AA something more can be said, which points to future, evolutionary possibilities on the path of transformation of the will.

What AA shows in elegant and effective fashion is a newly resurrected Freemasonic impulse; it fulfills the intentions that lay behind the Templar Order and the building orders of the Middle Ages in completely new ways and forms.

In *The Temple Legend* cycle Steiner speaks of the impulse of the great building orders of the Middle Ages—the builders of cathedrals—and of how it lived and will continue to live in later times. In the lecture he brings together two concepts: anonymity and immortality. The masons of the great cathedrals contributed anonymously to the spiritualization of matter. And this impulse was continued later on: "... the Freemasons' aim is this, as far as possible, to do their work in the world in such a way that it is concealed in the cathedrals, in social institutions and organizations, in charitable foundations. For selfless deeds are the real foundation of immortality—the latter is the reflected image of selfless deeds in the outer world."⁵⁴

Steiner further indicates how service done anonymously has a great importance for the future: "The fact that some particular thing is kept secret is of less importance than keeping one's own share in the work secret. Everyone who keeps his own part secret thereby secures immortality for himself. The rule is therefore clear and unambiguous: as much as you yourself put into the world, that much consciousness the world will give you back."⁵⁵

The building of the cathedrals had great impact at various levels. Here lay a tremendous lasting social impulse due to the financial and technical/artistic effort that lasted years and decades, even before completion of the buildings. From Chartres and the other centers of the gothic cathedrals rayed out cultural impulses for the birth of a new Christianity.

What started as a new sacred architecture led over time to the birth of a new social architecture, the building of "social institutions, organizations and charitable foundations," the new aim of Freemasonry, even though this was only in its infancy, and appeared already in corrupted and later even decadent forms. The spiritualization of matter that took place through art in the Middle Ages, aims at becoming the spiritualization of our relationships through a social architecture promoting the development of individual consciousness through new social impulses. The spiritualized social architecture of AA encompasses a great number of polarities, such

⁵⁴ Rudolf Steiner, *The Temple Legend*, lecture of December 23, 1904

⁵⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *The Temple Legend*, lecture of December 23, 1904.

as the contrast between group conscience and individual initiative, authority and responsibility versus inclusion and participation, powers established in tradition or those set by law.

The building of a wise social architecture will have great consequences for the future. Always in *The Temple Legend* cycles of lectures Steiner leads us to understand that in the future all the beauty and harmony outwardly created by the individual will become the inner landscape of the soul. The social architecture we have manifested and partaken of in one life will be carried within our being in a next one.

We can thus fathom the future-oriented goals of a Freemasonry, whose external empty and decadent forms can be revived. Always in the same lecture Steiner adds: "The secret of secrets is this, therefore: the human being must learn how to keep silence about the paths along which his ego unfolds, and to regard his deeds, not his ego, as the criterion. The real heart of the secret lies in his deeds and the overcoming of the ego through action. The ego must remain concealed within the deed. Elimination of the interest of the ego from the onstreaming flow of karma—this belongs to the first degree." (emphasis added)⁵⁶

In AA the approach to social transformation is enshrined in the dictum "principles above personalities" and in the tradition and practice of anonymity. AA does incredibly effective work because no individual can claim the limelight. Indeed the structure of AA is such that the possibility is precluded. The work done within organizations like the Fellowship of AA forms the first steps, the first degree, of the future, reborn Freemasonry.

Further Considerations

We live at the time of the Consciousness Soul and this means that human beings carry an estrangement from the spirit in which they feel confined to the dimension of the material world and of the physical body. A foothold into the spirit has to be established at great exertion of spiritual striving. Otherwise, our soul feels split between thinking and willing at the expense of the middle element of the heart. This microcosmic contrast also lives culturally between the people of the ego and the people of the consciousness soul: on one hand the German speaking people of Central Europe and the English-speaking people of the West. Anthroposophy had its origin in central Europe where the ego makes use of the intellectual soul to redeem

⁵⁶ Rudolf Steiner, *The Temple Legend*, lecture of December 23, 1904.

thinking. Here only could the path of anthroposophy find a home in continuation, even though in cultural discontinuity, of the fruits that had been sown in German Romantic culture. The path of the transformation of thinking finds a home with more ease in Central Europe than in the West.

Of the West I can speak with confidence only when I refer to North America, and most clearly refer to USA and Canada. Here anthroposophy, to use Steiner's words, is both instinctive but also woody. With the second term he meant that it tends to become more stiff, less flexible and adaptable. Therefore, it tends to fall into forms.

On one hand it is not surprising that we find in the West a spirituality of the will, one that relies on experience—of which we have given two examples—but is timid and tentative when it comes to concepts and worldviews. It is symptomatic of this kind of spirituality that great truths can be uttered at different times because they originate from experience. But even those who utter them may doubt or forget them after a time. What remains most often than not is a definitive change in life orientation, a living desire to live a life of purpose, a desire to "truly live."

On the path of truly thinking we can reach permanent changes in our personality because we gain a foothold on another level of experience, the experience of the supersensible. On the second path, that of experience, the overall results are less permanent. From a distance it may seem that the work of the adversaries is triumphant. This is because the work of the West has to follow the fate of the more prevalent and ubiquitous Ahrimanic forces. Everything that is sown in the fields of Ahriman has to go through death; the seeds may emerge in later generations and even incarnations.

At the level of world spiritual streams this dichotomy is reflected in the occult paths of schooling: in the Center Rosicrucianism, in the West Freemasonry, though we know they are intimately related through their main initiates. The path of Rosicrucianism is completely novel, unprecedented: it has laid sure foundations for a science of the future. Historically, it continued and furthered the work of Scholasticism, the new Aristotelianism. To Thomas Aquinas fell the epochal task of renewing and Christianizing the work of Aristotle and lay the epistemological foundations for the work of modern science. Rosicrucianism took this task further, and in so doing created the conditions for the emergence of anthroposophy. Spiritual Science, we may say, is the rendering public of the Rosicrucian Mysteries, which were cultivated in secret after the Middle Ages. However, it is also more than that.

On the other hand, the Western mind manifests symptomatically in the spirituality of Freemasonry, which dips its roots at least back to the Egyptian Mysteries. It has, however, become decadent. Today we see the fruits of these decadent Mysteries written large over the global stage. It is enough to make us despair that Freemasonry could find a new life and offer new fruits to culture and civilization. The Templars, who laid the foundations for modern Freemasonry, were conscious that their work would die after the order's demise, but that the germs of their efforts would be essential for the genesis of the sixth post-Atlantean epoch, when it would be possible to take them up anew.

The Templars already carried the first seeds of the Manichean impulse for the future. Steiner portrays this long-view attitude in the individuality of the Grand Master of the Templars in one of his Mystery Dramas. Confronted with the ending of the Order which had contributed to Christianize European social reality, the Grand Master confidently trusts that his demise and eventual death will not stop the fruits of the work of the Templars. The impulse will reemerge as surely as a young plant comes forth from the seed of a dying one, only here in a metamorphosed fashion. The Grand Master affirms with courage "In all this hatred which pursues us now I do but see the seed of future love."⁵⁷

So here we have Mysteries of another sort, whose fruits are not visible at present—Mysteries that will be re-enlivened and elaborated anew in future times when the Manichean impulse will ascend. In the meantime Steiner indicates that it is important to create a bridge between Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry, as the streams that most reveal the representative souls of the present epoch: "Our task is to bridge the gulf between the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians. The work is difficult, but it must be done."⁵⁸

The contrast between the German speaking and English speaking souls is described by Steiner in these terms: "In other words, whereas in British regions the instinctive basis for the development of the consciousness soul is present, the German Mid-European must be educated into the consciousness soul if he is to make this active within him in any way. He can achieve this only through education."⁵⁹ This is because the German mid-European soul is at home, or creates meaning from the striving of the

⁵⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *The Soul's Probation*, Scene 8.

⁵⁸ Rudolf Steiner, *The Temple Legend*, lecture of October 23, 1905, "Freemasonry and Human Evolution, II." In the preceding lecture of *The Temple Legend* Steiner states this intention thus: "I have reserved to myself the aim of bringing about a reconciliation between those of the Abel's race and those of the Cain's race." (footnote to the lecture of October 23, 1905, "Freemasonry and Human Evolution, I.")

⁵⁹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Challenge of the Times*, lecture of 8 December 1918.

intellectual/mind soul. It has struggled for meaning and has given the most articulate philosophy of modern times, and from there the foundations for spiritual science. The consciousness soul, on the other hand, has to befriend the death element; it has to know it, experience it. It has to emancipate itself from traditions and dogmas and live in the breakdown of everything old, witness the conditions the American human being faces at present.

The English-speaking people strive for mastery of everything in the physical world, the realm of Ahriman. They pursue it in modern science, technology, political and social forms. In the last two they can create forms that foster the freedom of the individual and safeguard the well-being of the whole. We have recognized this element in the work of the AA Fellowship and in the practice of Peacemaking Circles. These promote settings in which the anti-social instincts are kept at bay. They allow groups to function and even blossom amidst anti-social or life-negating tendencies in the human being.

The contrast and false dilemma that we have seen at the level of the individual soul is reflected at the level of the modern Michaelic community in its most representative folk souls, and beyond these among all Michaelites. Herein lies the crux of the whole matter explored above.

In concluding the New Mysteries inaugurated by Steiner with the laying of the Foundation Stone Meditation, go beyond Rosicrucianism alone. They are a meeting place for all the streams: the Aristotelian and Platonic streams, the Rosicrucian and Master Jesus paths, and the germinating Manichean stream of the future. These formidable impulses bring together and strengthen our capacity to truly think, truly feel and truly live.

Appendix: The Foundation Stone Meditation
(translated by Arvia MacKaye Ege)

Soul of Man!
Thou livest in the limbs,
Which bear thee through the world of space
Into the ocean of spirit being:
Practise *spirit-recalling*
In depths of soul,
Where in empowering
World-Creator-Being
Thine inmost I
In God's own I
Takes being,
And thou shalt truly *live*
In human world-all being.

For the Father-Spirit of the heights reigns
In the depths of the world, begetting being;
Ye Spirits of Strength,
Let out of the heights ring forth
What in the depths finds its echo,
Speaking thus:
Out of the Godhead is created mankind.

This is heard by the Spirits in East, West, North, South;
May human beings hear it!

Soul of Man!
Thou livest in the pulse of heart and lung,
Which leadeth thee through the rhythm of time
Into the feeling of thine own soul being:
Practise *spirit-communing*
In the soul's fine balance
Where the on-surgings,
World-Evolving Deeds
Thine inmost I
With the World's own I
Unite,
And thou shalt truly *feel*
In human soul inner-working.

For the Christ-Will reigns in the spheres encircling us
In the rhythms of the world, shedding grace upon souls;
Ye Spirits of Light,
Let from the East be enkindled
What through the West takes on form.
Speaking thus:
In Christ death becomes life.

This is heard by the Spirits in East, West, North, South;
May human beings hear it!

Soul of Man!
Thou livest in the quiet of the head
Which from out eternal foundations
Lays open before thee the world-all thoughts:
Practise *spirit-beholding*
In thought, stilled through,
Where the eternal aims of the gods
Cosmic-Being's-Light
On thine inmost I
For thy free willing,
Are shedding,
And thou shalt truly *think*
In human spirit foundations.

For the Spirit's World-All Thoughts reign
In the being of the world, light-beseeking.
Ye Spirits of Soul,
Let out of the depths be entreated
What in the heights may be heard,
Speaking thus:
In the Spirit's World-All Thoughts the soul awakens.

This is heard by the Spirits in East, West, North, South;
May human beings hear it!

At the turn of time
Cosmic-Spirit-Light descended
Into earthly stream of being;
Darkling night
Had run its course;
Day-clear light
Streamed within human souls;
Light
That enwarms
The humble shepherds' hearts;
Light
That enlightens
The wise heads of kings.

God-given light,
Christus-Sun,
Enwarm
For us our hearts,
Enlighten
For us our heads,
That good may be
What we
From our hearts do found,
What we
From our heads
Direct with single will.