



It's a pleasure to be here. So what I want to try and do in today's talk is, and this may sound funny, but normalize the idea of enlightenment. So in our culture, enlightenment is not something that we have a really clear or prominent or more common understanding of. And to speak of normalizing something as remarkable as the moment when a human being experiences enlightenment may seem like a strange idea. But for any of you who have given birth or been present in the room of a birth, you can certainly understand that something that is entirely normal that happens every day can at the same time be remarkable and frankly staggering for the people involved.

So in order to normalize the moment of enlightenment, we really have to have quite a bit anthroposophical background. The second thing I want to talk about is the difference between the anthroposophy you can understand and the anthroposophy you can experience. That's important for me today because a great deal of what I'm going to be talking about is anthroposophy that I have some understanding for but can't yet validate with my own personal experience. That doesn't mean I don't have a sense for the feeling of the truthfulness of Anthroposophy, but I think there's a really important distinction to be made between the Anthroposophy you can understand and may have a feeling of truth for, and the Anthroposophy you can actually validate through your own experience. If you keep these two things consciously separate in your mind, it generates a kind of a tension, And that tension is a wholesome thing for somebody who doesn't want to turn Anthroposophy into a set of statements that they understand and can rehearse, but wants Anthroposophy to move deeper into their being and become a voyage of personal discovery.

It's the tension between the Anthroposophy you can experience and the Anthroposophy you can understand that propels you forward and deeper into that journey. In order to understand the sense of enlightenment or the moment of enlightenment and what it means, we really have to start with the understanding that human beings remain in the cauldron of divine creation. We are being created by the hierarchies according to a divine plan. You can think about the plan as beginning in the Trinity, where you can think of God as providing the substance, the being, Christ as providing the purpose and the design, and the Spirit as providing the intelligence or laws by which this whole thing comes into being. And this process, this process by which the hierarchies are developing us is new for all beings.

They've never done this before. It's not like the hierarchy above us was the same thing they're going through the process again. Each hierarchy is substantially different in significant ways from the previous hierarchies. So the spiritual world has never created human beings like we are before. And it's taken an enormous amount of time for the hierarchies to figure out and to learn how to do this.

So we know that Steiner speaks about ancient Saturn, ancient Sun, ancient moon during which time the hierarchies learned how initially to develop what eventually becomes



physicality, what eventually becomes the realm of the elemental or the etheric, and what eventually becomes the soul realm. All of this had to be developed over oceans of time and in this developmental process Rudolf Steiner explains how the various spiritual beings involved themselves also grew and developed through this creative process. So it's important to understand this is new for everybody and there's a great deal at stake. In order to proceed with the divine plan the spiritual world had to in some sense wound itself. This is a concept that's hard to take in But once we have in ancient Saturn the beginning of time, we have certain beings who fall out of step with evolution and essentially become laggards and to some degree are ordered by the highest spiritual beings to work against the trajectory of the rest of the creative process.

So a kind of wounding or tension is woven in to the creation of humanity. And that wounding or tension is essential for us to develop one of the key aspects of the human being, which is freedom. In a very real sense, the hierarchies above us are not free in the sense that we can become free. They are what they are in virtue of their being. They are, you could say, no more free than a rose bush is.

A rose bush halfway through its development can't decide I'd rather be a cactus. It's maybe a silly example, but all of the hierarchies above us do not have the same level of freedom that we do. And creating these conditions of freedom required the spiritual world to create a space in itself where there could be adversarial forces. us. And so our freedom exists in this wounded space.

And to a certain degree, it is our great challenge to the degree that we can participate in the healing of this woundedness. Now, as we come to more and more... Oh, by the way, my wife is a flamenco dancer and she's doing a practice upstairs.

So you might hear something that sounds a bit like a herd of donkeys running by once in a of dancing going on upstairs. So the more that we can understand this developmental process, the better we are to be able to start to cooperate with divine purpose. But one way to understand the developmental process is to go through how that's occurring and where we're at in that process. So we know that in ancient Saturn, the first, you could say effort at physicality was developed. The initial effort to develop the laws of what eventually become, in the earth evolution, physicality.

And we know that after that, in the ancient sun evolution, there was the effort to start to involve living processes in that. And then in the third, ancient moon, conscious processes. And finally, in earth evolution, we have the ego, the I am descending down into the vehicle that is created through the first three evolutions. So you can see this oceans of time and effort required by the spiritual beings as they learn how to create a vehicle that can actually hold an ego. And of course this whole trajectory has to react to the activity of the adversarial beings.

The Luciferic beings step in and pull the human ego deeper into physicality than would have otherwise been the case, and the rest of the creative purposes have to pivot around that



reality and still create a trajectory. And we also know something very special about this process, that the Christ being in addition to being the sort of purpose and architect is the on-site supervisor from time to time. From time to time the Christ being has to descend right down into pivotal moments in human evolution and affect something for the whole process to move forward. And Rudolf Steiner talks about three such interventions prior to Christ coming into the body of Jesus of Nazareth and talks about subsequent ones that happen after the incarnation at the turning point of time. So this incredible process, even though it's following a design, is very alive and real.

And now we've reached a very critical point where you could say human effort is actually essential for the process to continue to a certain degree until the ego was really developed and the ego was working through the development of the soul, we were in a sense, you could say, in our early childhood and our efforts weren't as essential as the efforts of the beings who were creating and caring for us. But we reached a really critical point now where our efforts are actually essential for the process to continue. I'll come back to that in a second, but let's just take a closer look at where we're actually at. So the physical body, in Earth evolution, the physical body is created, the etheric body is created, the astral body is created, and the soul is unfolding. We have the sentient soul, which in a sense joins with the astral body to make the basis of human consciousness in this state of consciousness possible.

Added to that is the intellectual soul, which really emerges in the Greco-Roman period, or is developed in the Greco-Roman period, and is now a common property of all humanity. And then after the intellectual soul, we then have the movement into what's usually referred to as the consciousness soul. And that's the age that we're in now. As I said, we're still in the cauldron of divine creation. We're not a done deed yet and the spiritual world is continuing to develop us and the stage of development that we're in right now is really the unfolding of the consciousness soul.

Now the consciousness soul then gives rise to or makes possible the emergence of spirit self. Eventually in the future in addition to spirit self there will be the creation of life spirit and spirit person or spirit man, spirit human. And then gradually we will drop off the lower bodies that we no longer need. And the dropping away of the physical body that we're currently so dependent on is actually not so far away in time. So this is a very dynamic process that's underway.

So let's take a closer look now at where we're at in the moment. We're at the point where increasingly human beings are developing the consciousness soul and out of the consciousness soul, beginning to have the first glimmerings of spirit self. Now, the moment of enlightenment really represents a kind of culmination of this emergence of the spirit self out of the consciousness soul. And so, this happens when a human being, in a sense, undertakes certain developments through their own efforts. And through their own efforts makes it possible for the spiritual world to help them weave the spirit self.



And one of the challenging parts of this is a kind of, you could say something like a paradox. Our efforts are absolutely essential in order for us to develop out of consciousness soul, the first glimmerings of spirit self. But we actually do the least part. The human effort to develop is essential and yet you could say in a fairly real way, a kind of a poverty compared to the magnificence of grace that helps us actually develop the spiritual self. One very useful way to think about this is using the idea of birth.

So we know that when a child is conceived, they grow for approximately nine months in the mother's womb. And during that period of time, they are developing the organ systems required to live here on the physical, to live here on the earth, and to have a life in a physical body. What we don't have such a keen understanding of right now, anyway, is that we're doing something similar on a higher plane. There is a second set of organ systems that are in development. These are often usually referred to by the term chakras because it's the sort of from the ancient Sanskrit, the last culture that really understood these things with sufficient clarity to have appropriate language for them.

The chakra system is really an organ system at the next level of being. So our physical organs are living physical organs. they're between the physical reality of our body and the etheric body. The next set of organs exists between the etheric and the astral and they can come into being only when a human being has done the work required to make it possible for them to emerge. The kind of work that's required can actually be summarized quite simply by saying you are trying to be a good person in the richest sense of that word.

Each of the chakras depends on the human being developing a set of qualities, which could be understood in the broad sense of the word as trying to be a good person. So whether we know it or not, all of us are on the path towards enlightenment, provided we're trying to be a good person. What anthroposophy can help us understand is a much richer and more refined sense of how to actually support this developmental process. And the further you get into it, the more it becomes clear that although your efforts are essential to the developmental process, you don't actually develop the chakras. It's something that is a developmental process that you can help to make possible, but it ultimately consists a great deal of gift.

So we all know that human beings are caught between, I would say, a certain kind of necessity and a certain kind of freedom. There's a great deal in our lives that is iron necessity determined by the gods in terms of how we're designed. And we can imagine a freedom greater than what we have, but we can't obviously snap our fingers and make that possible, except perhaps in literature and the arts. So you can't at 23 decide, hey, I like being 23, I don't think I'll age any further. Or you can't decide, you know, if you're five foot two, you know what, I think I'd rather be six foot four.

There are all sorts of developmental arcs in human life that we are thrust into and go through whether we like it or not. And these developmental arcs tend to have sort of three dimensions to them. They have a personal dimension, an interpersonal dimension, and a spiritual dimension. So let's take the example of somebody learning how to talk, a child



learning how to talk. There is of course something personal about the child's affinity for language, and that's brought from previous incarnations.

but there's also the environment that they're in and the interpersonal attention. If they're in an environment where they have competent language speakers, it will be easier for them to develop their linguistic capacities. And then there's also the spiritual gift behind the scenes which helps the language unfold in the child. Rudolf Steiner actually talks about the Christ being involved in acquisition of language for every single child. So we go through all of these developmental cycles.

Some of them are like the growth of the child to adult, pretty obvious to see, and the growth from adult into old age, and we all know that there's nothing we can do about that, although we might want to. So we're aware of the fact and we accept the fact that we're part of developmental processes. But there are subtler developmental processes like the sevenfold experience of aging throughout adult life, which if you study it, you can learn about shifts in your being that might not have been obvious to you. There's also processes relating to karma and reincarnation and the role of destiny in your life, which if you study, you can learn more of. But when we go to even a higher level, we're looking at the process of a human being moving through time, through incarnations.

And this is the level where a kind of new birth is what we're headed towards. Through progressive incarnations, provided we're trying to be a good person, we make it possible for the spiritual world to cultivate in us this second set of organ systems. And as the second set of organ systems develop, we head toward the experience of enlightenment, of being born again. That's what the phrase born again actually means to the birth of the higher self. In our current culture, the term born again is often used to refer to a peak experience that somebody might have.

There's nothing wrong with that use of the term, but it's a, you could say more of an analogy. The actual term born again means to achieve enlightenment, means to cross the threshold in a definitive way. It is a very specific moment of birth. And the analogy to physical birth can be really helpful here because we know that as a baby is growing in utero, they are already having all sorts of physical experiences. It's not like physical experience starts for the infant after they're born.

Infants are hearing, they're moving, they're experiencing all sorts of physical things that then become further developed after they're born. This is true of somebody developing towards spiritual life, developing towards the moment of enlightenment. There are a whole host of pre-enlightenment experiences that occur that help somebody prepare for the moment of enlightenment. In fact, people tend to maybe underestimate the number of such experiences and the number of years that you might be engaged in such experiences before you get to the point where you have a definite enlightenment before this moment of being born again occurs. And when we think about the moment of being born again, just as with physical birth, birth always represents a kind of separation and a kind of independence and



something like that occurs for the person who goes through enlightenment, somebody who becomes born again, somebody who becomes what they call a child of God.

The experience is one of a kind of separation at the level of the etheric. So the etheric of somebody who's born again in a sense seals itself off from the rest of the etheric realm. Just as the physical baby becomes a physically independent, not completely independent, but to some degree moving towards independence, something similar happens at the etheric level at the moment of enlightenment. So the chakra system, which all gives us access to the spiritual world, has been cultivated and developed. So, the chakra at the top of the head, the one between the eyes, the one in the region of the larynx, the one in the region of the heart and the three below, all of these can be related to the physical body because the etheric is related to the physical body.

That's how we can say where the chakras are. We're not really talking about the physical body, we're talking about what happens between the astral and the etheric when we locate the chakras in those locations. But each of the chakras gives access to the spiritual world in a different way. So just as our eyes and ears give us a different experience of the physical world, what you become aware of through the chakra in the region of the larynx is entirely different than what you become aware of through the chakra in the region of the heart. But these different awarenesses do cohere into a coherent experience, just the way it does for us with our physical essences.

You're probably sitting on a couch or a chair or something like that, so you have physical touch, you're hearing me, you may be seeing me, you may be, you know, having a coffee while you're listening. There's a whole range of physical experiences that become a kind of gestalt and form an aspect of the state of consciousness that we're in right now. Something similar happens, and it happens before the moment of enlightenment, for the the person who's developing their spiritual capacities. And then of course after the moment of enlightenment there's a kind of continued progress of those abilities, but there's a very definite kind of birth-like activity for the person who experiences this. And it's, I guess, a bit poetic, but probably entirely appropriate that somebody who crosses the threshold, who becomes enlightened, is usually referred to then as a child of God.

It is, of course, the most sophisticated amongst us, those who have developed the capacity for truth and truthfulness, those who have developed the greatest capacity for love and reverence. Those have developed really significant skills that are of value to other human beings. These most experienced are the ones who can achieve enlightenment and they start over again then as children of God. And just as there is a helping process for a baby born, there's a helping process for the person who achieves enlightenment. It's different.

It involves the guardian of the threshold, who is part of the process by which the newfound initiate begins to come to understand his experience, and there's other helpers as well. So, you know, this process of being a child of God does involve a kind of a second childhood, where the person then moves into the new life of the initiate following this moment of enlightenment. But now for a lot of us, this may still be far away. Steiner was once asked,



how long does it take if you undertake the meditative path to achieve initiation? And he quoting someone else said, well, it might take eight weeks or eight months or eight decades or eight lifetimes. I certainly feel myself probably on the eight lifetime plan, although we'll see.

So it's a long process, but the process is one that provided we're trying to be a good person, we're all naturally on that process. And this effort to be a good person, to be a better person, to develop ourselves, which is with us throughout our entire lives, is then brought into this sequence of karma and reincarnation. And one of the major aspects of karma and reincarnation is to give us a chance to, first of all, be in different learning environments, but also to make amends and try again. When we pass away and we go up into the spiritual world, there's a process whereby on the one hand, our skills and abilities are turned into faculties. This is the same process that occurs, you know, if you're learning an instrument, you have to sleep in between learning sessions, if you're really going to turn something that you're learning into a faculty.

It is in periods of rest, in a sense, that things can go from efforts to faculties. And what's true on a small scale from day to day is true on a much larger scale from life to life. So gradually over many lives, provided we're trying to be a good person, we're developing more and more faculties. We're becoming more and more inwardly organized, and it is in that state of inward organization that the spiritual creative world can actually shine through our astral, form the chakra system at the level of the astral, and at a certain point when that's intense enough it will imprint itself into the etheric and actually lead to the emergence of spiritual consciousness. This process of the spiritual world shining through our astral, creating the organ structures in the astral and then imprinting them onto the etheric, is all gift.

And yet if we don't get our own errors out of the way, if we don't strive honestly to be the best person that we can be, this gift can't be given. This is how I understand and what Rudolf Steiner explains as what the John the Baptist is talking about when he says, make straight the way of the Lord. We have to do the work on ourselves to get our impediments out of the way so that this fructification process can occur and that we can actually move forward in our development. Now, the actual process of trying to be a good person is different for every human being. We can think about it in a kind of simple way in terms of trying to think as truthfully as we can, to develop as much knowledge as we can, to become as loving and kind and reverential of truth and knowledge and all that is good in the world as we can, and learning how to be of real value to other people.

Learning how to put our ego in the service of truth and love and service, as opposed to our own gratifications. All of this will take us forward. But the actual challenges for each person are quite individual. And one of the things that Rudolf Steiner advocates, as the Buddha did as well, as part of the Eightfold Path, which is required to develop the chakra in the region of the larynx, is a periodic review of your life, the eighth of the eightfold path, where you sit down on the edge of your bed for 20 minutes and ask yourself some honest questions like, how am I screwing this up? What am I doing that could be really detrimental that I could be



fixing and working on? To have a really honest, frank, and not so lofty conversation about your strengths and weaknesses and really take them seriously. building.

This is part of the process of moving towards enlightenment. Now, we are all on the path of the slow and gentle as it can be path of karma and reincarnation. We can't get off that path. You have no choice. Even if you kill yourself, you just end up in a different part of the path.

This is part of the grander developmental arc that all human beings are held in. But in this path we have a certain range of freedom to choose between essentially trying to align ourselves with divine purpose or working against it. One of the real mysteries in all of this is that as we learn to align ourselves with divine purpose we become more what we truly can be. And as we work against divine purpose, even though we may be seeming to serve our interests, we actually move away from what we can be. Your progress in moving towards yourself to become your richest self is to align with divine purpose, to learn how to be more truthful, more loving and of greater utility to other people.

The more that you can step in that direction, the more you will become yourself. The more that you spend time thinking what I want, what I need, how I can get my desires for this, that or the other thing filled, the harder it is for you to become what you can be. And there's a very unusual or very profound paradox in the nature of the human ego here. So at a certain point, it's quite common for a human being to say, okay, I get it. Life is a big school.

I'm here to learn. I'm gonna put my back into it. I'm going to try and roll with the gods. I'm gonna see if I can't facilitate this process. And of course, the way you do that is through the anthroposophical path.

There's other paths as well, but this is the one that probably most people on the phone are naturally connected to through their previous incarnations in their time in the spiritual world. The anthroposophical path is in a sense a way of accelerating the developmental process that would otherwise happen over many lifetimes. And the anthroposophical path begins with everyday consciousness. It's entirely appropriate to say the occult doorways are hidden in plain sight. And what the teacher does is show us where in everyday consciousness, there are activities that have a developmental potential.

So just like for a child to learn language, they need to be in the environment and hearing competent language speakers. And then language will quite naturally grow in them. You don't really teach a child language. Language grows, the capacity to speak a language grows in a child in the right facilitating environment. What the anthroposophical path of knowledge does is show you how to create for yourself a facilitating environment that will enable the spiritual world to begin to work upon you.

This is not something to be undertaken lightly. Most of us have a trajectory stretching out over several incarnations, and not all of our challenges are visited upon us in any individual incarnation. When you say to the spiritual world, I'm going to become a meditator, I'm going to try and move this process forward. You are saying to the spiritual world, challenges that might otherwise wait for me for future incarnations, I'm prepared to tackle now. So in



accelerating your development, you're also accelerating your encounter with challenges that might otherwise hide from you for a period of time.

So it is the case that as the meditator develops new strengths and abilities, they also run into new challenges. And so it's very important to take this development of oneself, if one's going to take it in hand, if one's going to take on the anthroposophical path, to do so with a clear knowledge of the fact that in addition to developing strengths and abilities, you are asking for challenges to approach you in the present. Let's talk a little bit about these developmental possibilities, these occult doorways hidden in plain sight. One good example is the experience of growth and decay. You'll find this in Chapter 1 of Knowledge of the Higher Worlds.

If you spend some time looking at something blossoming or becoming, and then reflect on how that makes you feel, and then spend some time on something dying and decaying, and then reflect on how that makes you feel. If you keep doing this, alternating between the phenomenon of growth and blossoming and the phenomenon of death and decay, over time, two very strong inner experiences will emerge. Usually you have to go through a period of time where you're projecting on life and death, and you may have different sort of largely subjective emotional responses, but eventually these will clear and what will start to emerge is a very robust feeling of a kind of expansive warmth around things growing and blossoming and a kind of contraction and coldness around things dying and decaying. And these two experiences will start off very faint, you're not sure that you had an experience and gradually become very strong to the point that you will acknowledge that something new has entered your consciousness, something brand new. That in addition to sight and sound and taste, there is a new, you could say a new activity in your mind that wasn't there before.

And that activity is a kind of pouring yourself out through your heart into a space between you and a living being. And in the space between you and the living being, and beginning to feel the soul warmth or soul coldness that is something you can experience based on the life and death processes in that being. Now, for those of you have seen somebody with a cochlear implant turned on, this is a useful experience. For some people, the inner stirrup and bone in the inner ear doesn't work properly, but it can be fixed by a kind of mechanical device called a cochlear implant, which actually has to be turned on at some point. And when it's turned on, the person who has that implanted will move from feeling or from having a tiny bit of sound to possibly having a lot of sound.

And what invariably happens when they have this experience is they burst into tears, because it's very deeply moving and quite dis, I would say, initially disorienting to have something brand new move into your consciousness. To have a brand new element in your consciousness is an overwhelming experience that takes some time. And as you move on the meditative path, as you do experiences like growth and decay, these things start to happen. You'll start to recognize kinds of thoughts that you didn't have before, kinds of feelings that you didn't have before, and then eventually brand new experiences like the experience of soul warmth and soul coldness in relationship to living and dying processes that are really



quite dramatic. Now all of this is a long way before a person reaches this a moment of enlightenment or initiation.

All of these is our neonatal spiritual experiences. Our higher self is starting to wake up in the context or we are starting to become conscious of our higher self through the development of consciousness soul. We're starting to have the experience of spirit self, but it's fairly dim. And only with repeated practice and repeated effort will it become clear. Now, it would be one thing if the developments of all of this were not interrupted by our unredeemed karma.

But this is exactly what has to happen. Because we're in the process of the anthroposophical meditative path, we in a sense start to distill the organized part of ourself from the unorganized part of ourselves. Stanley uses the example of most people walking around as a shade of green. And then after doing the anthroposophical meditative work for maybe a number of years, they start to distill into the blue and the yellow. What this means is the unredeemed aspects of our karma have more direct access to us.

And these things that might not have asserted themselves until a future incarnation assert themselves now. And so as you develop on the anthroposophical path, your own evil shows up with a greater and greater strength. So at the same time as you're becoming a more competent person, a more insightful person, a more nuanced person, a more sensitive person, you are going to become a tempted person. You're gonna become somebody who's increasingly tempted to do things that if you're honest with yourself, you'll say, yes, that's actually my heart's desire. And then you're up against yourself in a very significant and real way.

And this is central to anybody who takes on the meditative path. There's no way around this. It's absolutely essential on the meditative path to run into the evil that exists in you and have to do battle with it. And it's freaking tricky. Let me give you an example.

Say that you're somebody, and I've used this example before. Say you're somebody who likes heist movies, where the person doing the stealing is actually the hero of the film and it is an ingenious how he figures out this and does that and gets away with the gold and there's some moral reason why you should have the gold in the first place etc etc. We all know movies like this there's tons of them. If you're somebody drawn to that kind of movie don't be surprised if after eight years of working on the anthroposophical path every day you suddenly have an opportunity to steal \$200,000. You can figure it out, you're smart enough, you're sensitive enough, you can see exactly how to do it and how to get away with it.

And suddenly you're in the face of a real temptation, because you can absolutely see you develop moral courage, you can absolutely see how you can pull this off. And it's right there for you. And you have to decide what kind of person you're going to be. Anybody who takes the anthroposophic path will run into, that may sound like an overly blown example, but it's not. The farther you get on the path, the more serious the temptations become.



They may be temptations to cheat or to lie or to gain benefit in some way or another. There's a million different forms in which the tempter will approach you. But be assured, if you take the anthroposophical path seriously, if you take your own development seriously, you will get all sorts of temptations lining up. Because it's part of what we're, Part of the process is overcoming our unredeemed karma, making straight the way of the Lord so that the spiritual world can shine through our increasingly organized astrality and do and work and create this wonderful gift of creating the chakra activity that enables us to have a spiritual experience. So the world desperately needs this right now.

the world desperately needs more people to get to the point where they're beginning to have self-conscious spiritual experiences. Not everybody's going to be a spiritual teacher right away. Certainly I'm nowhere near being a spiritual teacher. But what we do need is a global anthroposophical community of people who understand the trajectory of human development and take it on seriously, and then as best as we possibly can, support each other in developing that way. And of course, even in supporting each other, there's challenges.

Well, I had this experience. Well, I had this experience. We can spend all day narcissistically talking about our special experiences. That's not really supporting each other. But there are ways of working together in understanding and in meditation that can actually bring us forward.

So we're just about at an hour. We started a bit late. I'm just wondering whether I should delve into some of these topics in a bit more detail or whether we should stop and ask questions. I think maybe let's see what kind of questions there are. And then maybe the questions will lead into detailing certain parts of what I spoke at a fairly high level.

Sure. Let me just bring up some of the questions, but I hope you will continue. And one of the questions at this point that we've had is, in anthroposophy, the word ego or I or I am is sometimes confusing to new people. You use the word ego in a couple of occasions, and maybe you could just sort of say what you mean, and then when we're encountering the ego as a impediment, which ego do you mean? Yeah, the way Rudolf Steiner explains the human being, the most simply, or one of the most simple, is to talk about a fourfold being, a physical being, a living physical being, a conscious living physical being who has a spirit or an I. The I am is the most essential part of what we are.

It is that aspect of us that goes from life to life. So although my body will be very different in my next life and my astral body or my etheric and astral body will also be somewhat different, it will be the same I am. So I am right now, Robert McKay, but I will be someone else in my next life. And I was somebody else in my previous life. And it is this I am, this capacity for agency, the will in our thinking, the ability to immerse ourselves in feeling and the capacity to direct our actions.

It is this core agency that is the most essential aspect of the human being. but the ego is a double-edged sword. We can put our ego in the service of divine purpose or we can put our



ego in the service of our own needs. And sometimes this ends up in a situation where we can think of the ego as the problem. But in fact, there is no human being without the ego, without the I am, without the agency, without the being who understands, the being who feels and the being who acts.

Without that being, there's nothing here. We would be an animal. Not that this is a bad thing to be an animal, but we are further along than that. And it's the activity of the I am that can remember and think and feel that is essential for the human being's progress. But because we are within the wound of the spiritual world, the I am is exactly what is in the wound.

We can either choose to work forward in alignment with divine purpose, or we can work against our own needs or for our own needs. A good example of this in literature is the ring from the Lord of the Rings, right? Whoever has the ring gradually succumbs to its power. And the ring is really an example of egotism, where my ego now becomes the purpose of the world. Rather than my ego working on behalf of divine purpose, I now elevate my ego to be the purpose of the world. The ring is mine.

I am the purpose of the world. I will become the center of the world. So whenever we do that, we head in the direction that is unfortunately going to be part of humanity's future, which is what's often referred to as the war of all against all, where we're all trying to grab the ring. And we can't survive that way. Just like an orchestra, we have to learn how to play together.

We have to learn how to harmonize our instruments. We have to learn how to put our egos together in service of something beyond the individual. And then we find our egos becoming something remarkable and leading forward in the development. But here too, it's important to say what the ego accomplishes, which is absolutely essential is still the least part. The ego makes straight the way of the Lord so that the spiritual world can actually work upon us.

If it were just up to the human ego, we would get to the edge of the gulf between us and the spiritual world, and we wouldn't be able to cross. It's only when the spiritual world reigns through us that we are given the wings required to sail into new realms of experience. So we just have to keep in mind that although our efforts are absolutely essential, we still do the least part. My father, who was a clergyman, once liked to quote that phrase, is work as if everything depends upon yourself. Pray as if everything depends on God.

That gets it sort of right, actually. So, Charlene, I hope that answers your question that you posted, and if anyone else would like to ask questions, there's a Q & A button for that, and I will be monitoring them. One of the other questions that's related to this, Robert, I hope you don't mind one more on this, has to do with the difference between personality and lower ego. Yeah. Well, so we struggle a little bit with language between the word ego and self, right? Right.

So ego is really, you could say spiritual potentiality. and gradually over time that spiritual potentiality will accrue to itself certain qualities or not. But the qualities really are qualities



of the self. And the further somebody goes in their development, two things happen that is quite remarkable. One is the further people develop, the more alike they become.

and the further they develop, the more unique they become. This is a very interesting paradox. To a certain degree, as people develop, you will find that they have similar reactions in certain situations. So for example, if two people who are developed are walking down the street and they witness a child stumble and fall, they will both have an empathic reaction to the child. But they might actually interact with the child based on their unique creativity very differently.

And so what happens with the spiritual development of human beings is they become more and more capable of collaborating because of certain commonality. And yet at the same time, they become more and more unique in their creative responses to situations. and what this leads us to is to be an orchestra that can play together but everybody has a different instrument and it makes really wonderful sounds. A bit of an analogy but you get the idea. Yeah, terrific.

You want to continue or would you like to take another question? Oh I'll take questions and then you know they'll probably lead me into chatting about things. Pretty much everything that I've talked about at a very high level could in and of itself be an hour-long talk so it doesn't have to be a question you can just say I want to hear more about and I'll talk more about that particular thing. In a way this is sort of my reflection so it's not actually a question coming up on the Q &A but in one of Steiner's lectures he talked about So between the time of Jupiter being formed, not the planet, not the planetary condition, which would mean that during Earth recapitulation, so between Jupiter and Mars, the dynamics that had been directed by the Godhead to become spirits of hindrances became active and this resulted in what's known as the war in heaven and the asteroids and these sort of things. So that gives a different picture than the Ligards. And so, as you probably know, the Ligards from old Saturn are the Azuras from old Sun, is the Aromantic, and from old Moon are the Luciferic.

And it seems that their cosmic planetary condition, their cosmic being, so it respectively the thrones, curiosities, and dynamis wanted to do something with their laggard beings and it seems that they're getting their chance here on earth and it seems unfair to us human beings that we got to take care of all the previous planetary conditions laggard beings. I don't know if you have a comment on that, but... Well, in a very real sense, since ancient Saturn till now, we have been the focus of attention. Even though other spiritual beings have developed, the highest hierarchy, as I understand it, hasn't actually developed since ancient Saturn. The thrones, the cherubim, and the seraphim are are on a path of development that takes longer, you could say, but all the beings below that, the six hierarchies above us have all developed significantly through those three planetary or these those three cosmic ages and now the age of the Earth, but all of it has been around in a sense focusing on our development and simultaneously the development of the beings below us. So we are at this pivot point where you could say our childhood is over and we now have to pick up some of the responsibility for the overall household and contribute.



I don't think we need to think too grandiose about that. The kinds of contributions that human beings can make are not so grand at the moment, but they're real and they're very important. And we are accruing more and more responsibility as we go forward. One of the things that's a useful way to think about this is to recognize that every level of being is dependent on the level of beings below it. So we, in this state of consciousness, we're entirely dependent on the animals and the plant kingdom and the physical kingdom.

There's no human life without those kingdoms operative. But it's useful for us to think, okay, but somehow or another, the angels are dependent on us. What is it that we do that feeds the angels? Well, every time a human being allows themselves or cultivates in themselves a moment of real reverence for truth or knowledge, a real admiration of the skill of a craftsman or the gift of the artist, or the deafness of a teacher in responding to a child, or whatever. Anytime a human being sees something that speaks of knowledge and truth and allows themselves to see it clearly enough that it evokes a feeling of admiration, of reverence, of respect, of homage, of devotion, anything along those lines, those feelings are literally food for the angels. that energizes and enables the angels.

So our role is not so grand that we have to you know march up to Ahriman's door and you know take him by the nose as if we could. When Ahriman comes we're going to be in big challenges because this is a being of enormous power that's headed our way. But it's in our little steps, it's in our little moments, and it's in the day-to-day moment of Trying to be the best human being that you can but collectively we can accumulate merit that will be of value this question from rush a Has to do with do we stay in our constitution with four bodies, so if we want to gain spirit self Does that imply the discarding of our lowest body, our physical, and so on. So we stay fourfold, or is there some other acceleration, or, you know, what's the timeframe for these bodies? It's a complicated question, and partly this goes back to the fact that there is this context that we're all in, where there's a kind of cosmic wind, if you will, blowing forward the evolution of humanity, but there's only ultimately the evolution of the individual. And so there's this overlap between what's happening to us as a great group of spiritual beings and what's happening to the individual.

And it won't be the same for everybody. But at a certain point, when spirit self is well enough to develop, a person really has a second life in the spiritual world. And for them to move around and to be active and do the things they need to do in the spiritual world, their body can be sitting on the couch. And this is hard for people to get our heads around because we think of anything worth doing means you're somehow moving your body around, you know, you're going somewhere, you're talking to somebody, it's all somehow activity at the body. Well, a much higher and more intensive form of activity opens up for the person who has spiritual capacities, but they don't require the physical body to be that much engaged.

So this process will be similar to the process whereby the ego descends into the body. It doesn't happen all at once. It's not like we're in the spiritual world and then all of a sudden we're in a physical body. With a very gradual process whereby the I am descends into the



sheaths and gradually the sheaths form around and hold the I am the way we experience it now. So the departure in a sense will be similar and gradual.

So there will be people who have more life outside the body but still have a body. And then gradually those people won't need to even necessarily entirely incarnate into the body. They'll somewhat like hover over it. And eventually after a period of time, they won't even need to hover over it or won't even need one. But it will be a very gradual and natural process whereby people move from being very engaged in the physical reality to increasingly engaged in the spiritual reality, which will be richer and more impactful for them.

So that's a hard thing to wrap our heads around, but eventually being in the physical reality and sitting down to a plate of food will be a fairly mundane thing that you have to do, but hopefully you can do that reasonably quickly so you can get back to what matters in the spiritual plane. I'm being a bit silly, but it's going to be a bit like that. It's interesting the way you put it. I've tried in some of the MISTech study groups When we reach this part, there's one called the destiny of the human body and I've likened it to how today you can get into a car and that car, you've made it your own. It has this relationship like what you're speaking about in the future, you know, to us today.

It's something of your expression And when you're driving it, it's certainly expressing you, but you'll get in it and out of it, depending on your needs. And you're right, he says something about, you'll even experience it as if you're hovering above it. So yeah, now this question from Corolla is talking about anthroposophy today and the fact that we have lots of splinter groups and you were talking about community, is there sort of a hope that as we develop spiritually and develop this community of going into this caring for one another and so on, that we will be able to rebuild our ethno-sophical community? Yeah, it's interesting. If you look at the trajectory of the Christian churches in the Protestant world, for example, you see this continuous split, split, split, split into various subgroups. You see the same thing in Anthropocene, but you also see Anthropocene doing something unusual, which is coming back together.

There's a split in the first Vorstand, and eventually some of them vote some of the rest of them off the island. Then later on, some years later they come back together and the people who were voted off the island are voted back on the island. So this is not an easy thing to reconcile with because as we move forward, one of the things anthroposophy helps you do is develop your ego. But of course that is, as we were saying earlier, the stronger your I am is in the presence of your soul, the more likely you're going to have to deal with the two-sided nature of the I am. And this is essential when it comes to becoming a meditant.

So increasingly, anthroposophists need to, not everybody, but a number of anthroposophists need to take the meditative path really seriously and work at it really hard. And if you do that, you will get to a crossing point pretty quickly where you recognize that although, again, it's another sort of paradox. In a very real way, if you're working to meditate, and you're working for your own self-development. You can't, I can't meditate in a



way that is gonna help Andrew develop or vice versa. It'd be nice if we could, but I could pay Andrew to meditate for me, but it doesn't work that way.

So we're working for our own development, but if we do it only for ourselves, if the desire is I want to become stronger, I want to become wiser, I want to become more courageous, whatever it is, If the meditation is done for a motivation that's more egotistical, you will eventually stop, you'll quit, it's too hard. The meditative path doesn't give enough back in a way that people would feel stimulated by. It might for a little while, but eventually you'll quit. You'll realize that you're meditating three times a week instead of six times a week or what have you. And eventually you'll realize, geez, I haven't meditated in a couple of months.

And there's really only one source of motivation that will sustain a meditative life. That's when you begin to understand that you're meditating, yes, for your own development, but so that you can put yourself in the service of others. In other words, the motivation of love has to enter into your meditation. I sometimes use the example of, you come home from a day of work, you're tired, and somebody says, okay, put on this big backpack of rocks and run up that hill. You'll likely say, I think I'll pass.

I'd rather, you know, watch a Seinfeld episode and have a tea and go to bed. Well, if I say to you, this backpack is full of medicine and there are people up that hill are gonna die if they don't get this medicine. I know it's a very overblown example, but at that point you might summon the will to deliver the medicine, if you really believe that situation was the truth. In a very real way, that is our situation with meditation. We have to understand that we are developing ourselves in order that there can be a community of anthroposophists strong enough and able to cooperate effectively enough to really have a significant impact on the trajectory of world evolution.

So it starts with our individual development. And if we develop individually and find love as the, see the thing about love as a motivation is that it really is the eternal spring. You know, you hear that language in the Bible sometimes and in other religious documents that if you find yourself in relationship to the Christ or to the leading spirit, but you will open up a spring in yourself of eternal life. And this is connected to love because love has this funny, funny reality to it. It's unlike anything else.

The more that you act out of love, the more love you have inside yourself. It's like if you had a glass of water that was half full and it was love and you poured it out so somebody else could have a drink, you'd then have more water in your glass than when you started to pour. So the more that we learn to act out of love, the more potent becomes our commitment and our ability to sustain our meditative practice and to take the actions we need to take in life. And this is something each one of us has to experience. But I can tell you, you will not experience in absence of that part of you that says, I want the ring, right? You have to run into the evil in yourself and it's for real in order to get to the point where you can activate love in yourself.



These are two parts of the same problem. Yeah, they are. So Megumi asks, well, she first says, I feel so isolated and it's so hard to work on meditation by myself. Do you know if there are any meditation communities which are led by spiritual teachers right now in the US? and if there are such, how can I find them? Well, a couple of thoughts. I'm gonna start doing meditation workshops again.

I'll do probably three different time frames in October, November, and maybe just a little bit into December. So I'll send that out to everybody. I'm not a spiritual teacher, but I am a meditator as best I can be and I'm happy to work with other people. So one option is to do a Zoom-based meditation workshop with someone like myself. And there's other meditation teachers in around as well.

If you look for anthroposophical meditation, you'll find other people who lead workshops and give talks. The other thing I would say is if there is an anthroposophical branch in your community, see if you can't find other people connected to the branch in your community. And the other thing I would say is make individual friends. I say this at every opportunity I get. I'm happy to Zoom with anybody about meditation anytime.

Andrew is absolutely free to give my email out to anybody and I'm happy to set up a one-on-one and I have these one-on-one talks with lots of people now and you know we talk maybe once every three months or so and talk about how we're doing with the meditation and how it's going and I'm absolutely thrilled to that with anybody because we really need to overcome our isolation and develop conversations with each other. So people are really appreciating this. Thank you very much, Robert. William writes, thank you for your lucid and accessible talk. Do you have any tips for finding the right motivation or attitude to persist, persist, this is what you're just saying, with exercises regularly.

The term humility springs to my mind. Yeah, so the first thing that I would say is if you're going to take the meditative path seriously, it has to be a rhythmic activity. So it's the same principle in a way because it's a life principle as going to the gym. If I go to the gym and I weight lift for four hours and the next day I can't even hold my own toothbrush and then I don't go to the gym for three months, I don't really develop anything. I just strain myself and then recover from the strain and go back to being the guy I was before.

If you're going to meditate in a way that's gonna have an impact on you, it has to have a rhythm to it. But this is where you have to take this seriously. The moment you establish a rhythm, that rhythm becomes a beacon to the spiritual world. You imagine a great spiritual beings hovering around the circumference of the earth, looking down, every human being is a point of light. One person who starts to meditate that light pulses and the spiritual world sees that pulsing and starts to ray creative forces down toward that individual.

And you'll feel it at a certain point once you start doing a sufficient meditation. And one of the things that will evoke in you is fear. People don't realize this, but a lot of the unconscious reason why people stop meditating is they're frightened of making progress. They're



frightened of actually running into deeper aspects of their personality. And this is really where humility does come in.

We have to have the humility to know that on the meditative path, we will be shown that we're sinners, if you wanna use that language. that we're a mess, if you wanna use that language, that you have to be able to look your unfitness, your evil, your weaknesses full in the face. And it's sobering. I've not talked to anybody who's taken the meditative path seriously who didn't have to at certain points say, wow, I got a lot of work to do. And so knowing that that's coming, you can be prepared for that.

But we then have to summon a kind of courage, right? We have to summon the courage to recognize that when you take on a meditative work, when you undertake to make straight the way of the Lord, when you undertake to address the limitations of your personality, you're doing something not just for yourself, you're doing something for the world. And that's really the only motivation that I think will hold you in the meditative path. And you can think consciously about this. It's 1030 at night. I could either watch some more TV or meditate or just have a tea and go to bed.

And I don't really feel like meditating right now. I'm tired. I don't wanna do this. Go back to the fact that you're not just doing this for yourself, that the world is full of pain and the world needs people to do this work step by step. Every chance that you get to do this work as a meditant, you start to accumulate what will potentially save us in the future.

It's that kind of importance. So take a moment to summon the fact that what you're doing in meditation is of great significance for the world, that it's needed by the world. then there may emerge in your heart a little bit of love. And if you can find a little bit of love, then you'll be able to find the strength to meditate again. It's interesting in German, world and cosmos, I think, are the same word.

And when you say you're doing it for the world, you're also doing it for all those cosmic beings that you mentioned looking down, on this feeding of the angelic realm and all. And I've mentioned to some people, given our work lives or something of this nature, if you have set, let's say, five o'clock for your meditation time every day, and you realize there's no way I'm gonna be at a meditative five o'clock because this meeting's running over and blah, blah, blah. So send it a little note, you know, just like you can text your friends. I'm going to be late. Text the spiritual world.

I'll be late. Absolutely. Mark it. So this person wanted you to, if you could, comment on, in him, life is, life is the light of men, your light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehends it not?" Yeah, so this is the start of the Gospel of John. So the Gospel of John, the first 14 verses, are a very powerful meditation.

Let me just go through them as I normally say them to myself. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This One was in the beginning with God. Through him were all things made, and without him not a thing was made that has been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of humanity.



His light shines into our darkness, and we have not comprehended it. There came a man sent by God, his name was John. This one came to testify of the light that through him all might believe. He was not the light, but came to testify of the light." Sorry, I'm blanking on the next line.

I'll stop there and go back to the part that you were asking about. I think that's why I'm blanking on it, because I'm holding too many thoughts in my head. In the first part, we have the emergence of Christ out of the Trinity. So there's this sense of the Christ being as the Word is both with God and is God. So there's the sense of the unification and the differentiation of the Trinity.

This one was the beginning with God. This is prior to ancient Saturn. And then what we have in the next three sections really is ancient Saturn, ancient sun and ancient moon. So through him were all things made and without him not a thing was made that has been made is really referring to ancient Saturn. This is the birth of substantiality and at the same time the second line isn't simply a regurgitation of the first line.

If you listen to it you'll realize that there's something about the second line that suggests a backward motion. Through him were all things made, and without him not a thing was made that hath been made. There's a funny kind of overlapping, and I believe what John the Gospel writer was referring to here is that this is when time starts and when things start to become backward, right? So it's at ancient Saturn that we have the first beings who start to lag behind and create the conditions of evil. In him was life. We know that in the second cosmic age, we have the emergence of the etheric and the life was the light of the world.

We have consciousness in the third. And in the fourth, we have his light streams into our darkness. That is, we all have our heads in the spiritual world. We all have the capacity to have insight and thought, but we don't really understand where it comes from yet. We're not really aware of ourselves yet as spiritual beings.

So I think what you find in these first 14 verses of the gospel of St. John is a highly compact picture of the origins of the universe, and then moving very directly to the turning point of time. And at the very end of this verse, It's very useful to recognize that he talks about, for those who believed in Christ's name, he gave the power for them to become children of God, born not of the blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of any human decision, but born into the Spirit. So this is, we're talking now about the moment of enlightenment, where a human being is born into the Spirit and becomes a child of God. That is the power that can come to us, this next fructification of our being, this next emergence of our being through our getting to the point where we make straight the way of the Lord and the spiritual world can work upon us and open these magnificent new vistas of consciousness.