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Contemplating The Three Kings
Reconnecting to The Cosmos
What Is Freedom?

From the Editor

When I first frequented farmers' markets, I met a lady farmer who became, for me, one of the wisest, most practical people I ever met. Ask her about a food plant and, if she didn't know immediately, she'd have it researched by the next market and give me the answer. Not only resourceful but also possessed of that slyly wise farmer way of speaking her mind, she gladly took on any topic from politics to ethical agricultural practices. She was the sort of farmer I had known when growing up—smart, compassionate, and free.

To be a farmer is to be free.

A farmer has land. Seeds. Good and bad weather.

A farmer has failures and successes generated by these resources. But a farmer is owned by no one unless he or she has chosen that path.

Currently, in some parts of the world, we are being told that food security and climate change have less to do with industrialization and the long years of corporate abuse of the planet, and more to do with the ways farmers have husbanded their land, especially their cows. "Cow farts" make headlines as people fall into step behind those who have forgotten that the founders of the United States were farmers—brilliant, weighty men of a philosophical bent who wrote as persuasively about politics as they did about

the weather. Where did their confidence come from?

Stewart Lundy addresses the importance of our connection to the cosmos, referencing the grace and ease with which the cow does this naturally and reaffirming that the ancestors once considered the cosmos as the source of extraordinary nourishment. Read "Reconnecting to The Cosmos." He also offers insight into how the preparation plants emulate in microcosm the larger forces generated when the cosmos first formed. Read "As Above, So Below."

John-Scott Legg continues the series initiated in the Fall issue of *Applied Biodynamics* that explores our responses to Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*. Legg's article, "What Is Freedom?," examines how we may answer this question for ourselves.

Finally, we cover the latest developments at JPI, as well as reflections on the Three Kings Preparation and the impulse it sends forth during these Holy Days.

To be a farmer is to defy the dominant story, not only now but also during historical periods preceding this one. No matter the measures crafted by emperors, kings, and politicians seeking control, farmers return again and again, generation after generation, to the land, finding in it and in themselves what is intelligent, resilient, and free.

Mary Maruca

Applied Biodynamics

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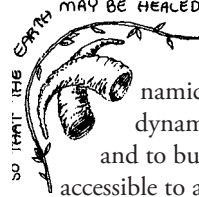
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Front cover: Berries remaining during winter weather are an offering for the birds during this introspective season when the sun's warmth shines through the earth from the other side.

Mission



The mission of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics, Inc. is to heal the Earth through Biodynamic preparations, research and education, and to build a dynamic network so our legacy is accessible to all future generations.

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News From the Farm—A Winter Update

Global shutdowns have forced us to reconsider our relationship with ourselves. Reasons to fear rather than love our neighbors have proliferated. And now that much of the shutdowns are over, we find ourselves without the inertia of our former lives. The malaise in the post-pandemic years shows us how much of our lives were collective habits, not individual initiative. In short, whatever is difficult to return to now was someone else's habit we received, not something born of our own freedom. Our habits of gathering together may have been a familiar inheritance, but now a habit of isolation has set into us that must be overcome through concerted effort of Will forces.

Striving against the weight of collective lethargy, JPI willed itself to lift its limbs and take a step back towards community with our latest workshop. Folks from across the country gathered in our outdoor open-air setting for practical exercises in making these precious biodynamic remedies. Attendees practiced the steps of making preparations out of cow manure in horns (500), quartz silica (501),

yarrow stuffed in buck bladders (502), chamomile in bovine intestines (503), and dandelion in bovine peritoneum (506). There was also a demonstration of making oak bark preparation in cow's skull.

Thousands of horns filled with manure are now buried at JPI, where they will await inner transformation before being shipped across the world to imbue thousands upon thousands of acres with the kind of vitality needed to help sustain life on earth. Practicing biodynamics may seem a thankless task, but when we seek to live simply, in accordance with the principles of nature and the guidance of justice, karma (also referred to as "treasures in heaven") will return to us a hundredfold.

We have an obligation to make the extra effort now to forge new habits, to convene with others in creative ways. If we don't feel the impetus to do so within ourselves, that shows that it is not a habit born from our own freedom. We all enjoy the feeling of spontaneity when a friend invites us to something we enjoy. But the reverse is also true: others enjoy it



View of the JPI farm as winter approaches

when we reach out as well. More than ever, we must forge new connections and practice creating new communities, no matter how much effort that requires.

Habits are not bad in themselves. Habits are often vilified, but good habits are as valuable as bad habits are harmful. Once someone has begun something, we can copy it. As biodynamics is easier to do than to *conceive*, we can all practice biodynamics without fully comprehending its underlying principles. New impulses always begin with an individual taking the lead. It begins with you. What will you bring to the future? What new habits can you help establish now for the future of the Earth?

Statement from the JPI Board

On October 18, 2022, our prep maker of 21 plus years, Larry Mabe, resigned. JPI is now without a master prep maker. That said, we have many years of experience making biodynamic preparations within the JPI family, and we will use that deep knowledge to carry on.

JPI is in a strong position at the farm, on the Board, and with the *Applied Biodynamics* staff. We are preparing to grow more of the biodynamic herbs that we use, expand the types of preparations we offer, and have fencing ready to bring cows onto the farm in due time. Most important, we are preparing to kick off preparation quality research and education programs that give us greater insight into the physical and energetic qualities of the preparations.

There is no doubt that JPI has been through difficult times. As JPI strategizes its path forward and courts new Board members, we look to fulfill heightened aspirations for the future. The path we are on now allows us to grow and transform as we continue to provide the highest quality biodynamic preparations to the biodynamic community. Stay tuned for amazing things in the coming year!

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Oak tree dedicated to Hugh Courtney

Biodynamic Preparations Legend

BD 500—Horn Manure

BD 501—Horn Silica

COMPOST PREPARATIONS

BD 502—Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

BD 503—German Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*)

BD 504—Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)

BD 505—Oak Bark (*Quercus alba*)

BD 506—Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

BD 507—Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)

BD 508—Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

Contemplating the Three Kings

Stewart Lundy

With the arrival of autumn in the northern hemisphere, we focus strongly inward. Leaves fall, their vitality drained. They leave behind colorful signatures of their mineral composition. The sun continues to rise a little lower every day, appearing as if it might slip away forever below the horizon and be lost to us.

This is the evening of the year—or rather the evening of each day is a microcosm of this macrocosmic cycle. How do we know? It is not enough to say something is a microcosm of something else. We must be able to show how a celestial event is analogous to a terrestrial phenomenon, not merely a metaphor.

What we celebrate now at Easter in spring was originally celebrated in autumn as a promise of resurrection. It certainly doesn't *look* like the sun will rise again to our eyes, but the historical original Easter festival celebrating the drowning and resurrection of Adonis was the promise of new life even in the midst of the withering leaves of autumn. An effigy of the god Adonis was assembled and then submerged for three days in whatever body of water was nearby, then raised from the dead on the third day.

Near Christmas, the three stars of Orion's belt (also called *three kings*) point through Sirius towards the position of the rising Sun, an image ripe with implications. We cannot explore them all, but just because we find an astronomical parallel does not contradict terrestrial stories. On the contrary, as above, so below. If we find a gesture in the heavens, it is reasonable to find a corresponding image here on earth.

Traditionally, Imbolc (meaning *in the belly*) is February 1, celebrated as the first day of spring and coinciding with the lambing season. Imbolc celebrated the return of light even during the darkest seasons. It is not without coincidence that after the harshness of winter and the depletion of food stores, Lent is celebrated from March to April. In Orthodox tradition, Lent is entirely vegan. In Catholic tradition, all meat used to be excluded, though that softened to only abstaining from meat on Fridays. If farmers wished to preserve food for the future, they could not eat their lambs, nor should they eat the first eggs the chickens started laying. The liturgy of the year is encoded in these festivals, though some of the meaning has been forgotten.¹

The *conviction* that the Sun will rise again is the fruit of intuitive thought: recognizing the underlying pattern and perceiving inwardly how external appearances do not contradict this inner truth. This is the essence of faith: the conviction that what is not sense-perceptible is nonetheless solidly true. It is not a mere blind *belief* that the Sun rises again,

but an objective *fact* grasped by intuitive thinking. It is not without reason that the ancient Greeks considered the study of astronomy to be a prerequisite to the study of philosophy! Our actions are limited by the strength of our devotion to our convictions, and that devotion will invariably waver if our convictions are unclear. If we do not believe justice exists, we certainly can't strive to bring it to others. Nothing in our empirical experience tells us that we only live once. In fact, everything in Nature declares the opposite: everything that passes away also rises again. Only those completely detached from cycles of nature would declare otherwise. But the principle of reincarnation leads to the concept of development because nothing repeats in quite the same way. A meadow *reincarnates* season after season, each year having experienced a little more of the world and adapting to changes slowly. This endless process of reproduction is the basis of evolution, which few but the most materialistic would contest.

So who are these three kings? If we consider the human organism, we are a threefold being. We have a nervous system centered in the head and spine, a metabolic-limb



So who were these three kings? (Woodcut by Stewart Lundy)



Each of the three kings comes from a different direction (Painting by Lenna Frances Keifer)

system centered in the gut and muscles, and a rhythmic system centered at the heart. It is as if the entire human organism is depicted in the symbol of these three kings who must give of their achievements and surrender what is precious to a greater King.

As we contemplate the three kings, we might note that one comes from the North, one from the East, and one from the South.² It takes little imagination to see the geography of Palestine as a human being, with tributaries feeding into the northernmost lake as the head, the river Jordan as the spinal column (with tributaries flowing inward primarily from the

head and from the east), and the Dead Sea into which everything empties as akin to the belly. The term *Jordan* means to *flow down* or to *descend*, which corresponds rather nicely.

To the west is the Mediterranean Sea, which symbolized chaos and death in the ancient Judaic imagination. Consider how the western side of an island (or a continent) tends to be arid. Disregarding mountains and other features altering climate, the western Americas are generally far more arid than the eastern side of the same continent. Compare western Spain and Portugal to the rest of Europe. Compare Palestine (which is westernmost Asia) to the east. Compare western China

to the rest of the country. Consider also the bone severity of Capela dos Ossos in Spain. Consider the ornate skulls of the indigenous southwestern culture descending down through Mexico. And, not least of all, the mystery of Golgotha (the place of the skull) in Palestine.³ A concrete reason for this is the rotation of the Earth: as our sphere spins, the air moves westward at night. On eastern coasts, humidity moves inland; on western coasts, humidity moves out to sea—a major reason why viticulture is often more auspicious in California than in Virginia.

The flight of the Holy Family to Egypt following the birth of Jesus represents the descent to the metaphysical south, which is not to vilify Egypt but to consider the symbol of the egotistical King Herod ruling in the soul. When the ego rules in the soul, this is Pharaoh in Egypt, Herod in Palestine, or Nero in Rome. The ego-king seeks to kill any possible emergence of a rival king because the ego always demands that it be its own center of gravity. During the rule of the ego-king, the dark allure of the sub-sensible realm dominates Judea (the soul) but the Christ child is preserved, miraculously unharmed.

Within this world, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. So if we cast out the gift of the three kings—a mixture of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—towards the horizon, we should really see the line we project reaching the stars. When we travel to Rome, in the spiritual world, it is as if Rome itself approaches us. Consider that learning is a form of drawing near.⁴

Thus, in our souls, we become whatever we imagine. If we have feral thoughts, then we have a bestial astral form. If we imagine only that which belongs to celestial spheres, our astral form becomes more angelic. No one needs to be clairvoyant to see the habits of astral expressions in the lines of a stranger's face.

Imagine you are fly fishing. You cast your line far, while envisioning that, in the spiritual world, something offers a reciprocal action toward you. Thus, when we spray outward, we anoint the periphery of the farm. Anointing always happens on the outside of an organism, while intending to draw something inward. Outwardly, we spray out precious substances and their forces. Inwardly, our sacrifice draws in beings from the periphery.

If our sacrifice costs us nothing, then the gains are paltry. This is the inner logic of karma, and the idea behind selling one's possessions and giving the proceeds to the poor. The material goods we give away become treasures in heaven. Karmically, all we give away (good and bad!) returns to us in exacting reciprocity.

I find it useful to view everything that happens to me as my own character returning to me through others. Consider

how different you are in each of your relationships. You might almost say you are a different person in each case. If you were to separate out all these aspects of your "I," you would find yourself to be a host of people who each act very differently. You might treat your mother differently than you treat your brother. You might not get along with your neighbor, but you are extremely kind to children and small animals.

If each of these different modes of relating to others were separated out as a distinct personality, you might have a good picture of how karma returns to us—these different personas we adopt return to us as others. The individuals who bring our karma back to us should not be resented since they merely deliver back to us what we brought upon ourselves. Any arrow we fire out into the world is an arrow that returns to us in another life. Any kindness we show another person in this life is a kindness that returns to us, not in this life, but the next. If we wish to be surrounded by people who are generous and understanding, we must offer impartial generosity and understanding to others. If this were easy, everyone would do it. But again, it must be costly for there to be gain. It is our effort that completes this equation. If we simply "follow our bliss" and disregard others, we will tend to find ourselves in a life surrounded by others who ignore our plight and meanwhile follow their own sense of private pleasure. Therefore, the Three Kings preparation is not merely sprayed out to benefit me. Nor is it merely offered for this farm organism. It is for the future—as if we were anointing the farm as a gesture of prayer for the next incarnation of the farm organism, the coming resurrection of the farm. It is a hard awareness to stomach, but every farm we work will one day not be a farm. This event may arrive sooner or later, but change is inevitable. However, the organizing principle of a living farm organism, like an individuality, may one day find a new and more developed form.

Every farm has an expiration date. When a farm is abandoned, the re-wilding period is like the period of death when we are buried in the ground. But new life always arises from such rest, just as we always wake in the morning after we go to sleep. The farm serves an essential role during its birth, a second during its life, and a third during its death.⁵

In biodynamics, when we strive to produce fertility from within the farm, we are sowing seeds for the future, a gesture toward the kind of world in which we wish to live—a world where farms are able to provide for themselves and for the world, where scarcity wars are unnecessary, and where peace may reign supreme. In practical life, this is messier, but it is the motive that matters most. We can never be perfectly self-sufficient—the farm will always depend on the sun and the cosmos, as it should. But we can strive toward relative



The Transfiguration by Raphael

independence as living farm organisms. If the human being were totally self-sufficient, our essence would be that of a rock. In the human soul, this would be a process of depersonalization, which is not something we aspire to in biodynamics.⁶

In Raphael's *Transfiguration*, we see Peter, John, and James with Christ on the mountaintop. Peter is the philosophical *rock* upon which the Church is built, but John, often considered the beloved disciple, is the one whose head rests on Christ's heart at the Last Supper. James, by contrast, is the one who writes "faith without works is dead."⁷ These are, respectively, the head, the heart, and the hand—or thought, feeling, and will.⁸

But it is the *heart* that is dear to Christ. It is to John that Christ's mother is given at the crucifixion. Peter, ever the one jumping to premature conclusions, offers to make three tabernacles. But there is only one tent. Our head must be tempered by the heart, and our hand must follow the dictates of the marriage of the head and heart submitted to love of the truth. These three faculties in us, by analogy, must give up their crowns and kneel to a higher principle.

It is not merely the annual transfiguration of the sun we welcome with the Three Kings preparation, though it does not exclude that. We are preparing for the new life of this year—yes, too—but also for the eventual death of our own bodies and that of the farm. The gifts of the Three Kings are those used in embalming. In India, they also are used in votives offered at the time of special births.

We all have our own center in our heart, but our solar system has its center in the sun and the sun too has an orbit around which it centers. We should remember, as Alan Chadwick reminds us, that the sun has a sun. The sun has an orbit and a source of its own existence, and the center of its orbit also has a source and an orbit of its own. Though a difficult way of phrasing it, one could say that the "Sun's Sun's Sun" is the Christ.⁹ As Meister Eckhart suggests, what good does it do me if the Christ is born in history if the Christ is not born in my own soul?

Notes

- 1) Friday is a day governed by Venus. In her darker aspect, this is the lower animal urges. In her higher aspect, she is Mary. There is an esoteric logic to abstention from fueling animal urges on Fridays by abstaining from meat on this day.
- 2) "One of the Three Kings—*Caspar*—is portrayed as a Moor, an inhabitant of Africa; one as a white man, a European—*Melchior*; and one—*Balthasar*—as an Asiatic; the colour of his skin is that of an inhabitant of India. They bring Myrrh, Gold and Frankincense as offerings to the Child Jesus in Bethlehem."— R. Steiner, *The Festivals and Their Meaning I: Christmas* (30 December 1904, Berlin)
- 3) Perhaps the arrangement had not been planned in this light, but when I first visited JPI's farm, I noticed that a circle of skulls had been arranged on the western side of the barn, which is admirably relevant.
- 4) Upanisad means, roughly, "sitting down near."
- 5) Ex Deo nascimur. In Christo morimur. Per Spiritum Sanctum reviviscimus.
- 6) Valentin Tomberg, *Meditations on the Tarot*
- 7) Martin Luther openly referred to James as the "epistle of straw," expressing his own devaluation of action. He also claimed "We should throw the epistle of James out of this school, for it doesn't amount to much." But the human being is threefold. While works alone are not enough, a good tree will always bear good fruit.
- 8) In the East, these correspond to *jnana* (gnosis), *bhakti* (devotional love), and *karma* (action).
- 9) Alan Chadwick, Fellowship Consecration Festival 02 September 1978—Carmel-in-the-Valley, VA

Reconnecting to the Cosmos (and Resonating with It)

Stewart Lundy

These days, livestock are vilified for the warming of the planet. Those needing to blame point to their gas emissions as a major source of planetary decline. From a biodynamic perspective, the expression of the plant world arises because of the influence of the greater cosmos—both the zodiac and the wandering astral bodies. It may seem self-evident, but energy must flow into the Earth first before energy can leave it. We cannot blame animals for what humanity has done to the planet.

Goethe wrote, “Plants live by giving, animals live by taking.” What plants bring into creative expression is a divine marriage of the greater astral powers streaming in from the cosmos, wedded to the etheric potential in the soil. Without there first being a downstream flow of energy from the cosmos to the Earth, neither plant expression nor animal expression could exist here. Every animal, in its own way, is an enclosed astral world in which the planetary powers are at work. The animal, especially the ruminant, simply needs to take up the forces of the Sun as grass, and it is as if the

light from that grass *reflects* back from its inner planetary world as the animal chews its cud. What we have here is the *astralization* of plant material where it is treated to a far more concentrated influence of the organizing effect of the planetary processes. What emerges has not merely been physically chewed, but warmed, fermented, and aged in an elaborate alchemical process. The four stomachs of a cow are like four seasons in a year condensed into a single month.

Alex Podolinsky suggests grass as the closest expression to Goethe’s *Urpflanze* (the primordial plant), as it is almost entirely all leaf. While every plant is a particularized instantiation of the *Urpflanze*, Steiner does say that it is the green in leaves that indicate the workings of the Sun, which places grass in a special relationship. Grass by itself offers virtually no nourishment to human beings because it contains so little of the outer planetary forces. Precious little vital warmth or nourishment from the Saturn and Jupiter processes are to be found in grass. However, when grass moves through the inner astral world of the ruminant, the manure takes on the



The four stomachs of a cow are like four seasons in a year condensed into a single month.



Building a compost pile with cow manure (Photo courtesy of the Pfeiffer Center)

qualities of these nourishing and warming planets. What is brought to the garden as manure (or composted manure) develops a complexity ideally suited to enhancing the nutritive value of crops.

Piling untreated grass trimmings around crops could produce a mild benefit to the soil, but that benefit would come in the form of additional healthy *leafy* growth without much of the ripening or sweetening properties we need to thrive. Maria Thun found that a “vegetarian” compost pile has a tendency to become sour and fails to nourish proper sizing-up of crops. By contrast, mineral salt fertilizers applied to the garden cannot do more than stimulate “agitated watery growth,” which does not even attain healthy leafy growth. It is in manures and composted manures that the influences of the planetary powers can be seen in microcosm.

As the organ system of an animal is a microcosm of the seven major planets, so the manure that emerges has been submitted to these astral effects in a way that plant matter outside of an animal simply has not. If you consider the glandular secretions and the elaborate metabolic processes of an animal, it is easy to see that grass passing through the cow has had a vastly different experience than grass trimmings piled outside the cow around other plants. In the ruminant’s digestive process, grass “shines” into all the planetary organs, which in turn reflect their influence back onto the cud. While the grass only spends about a month inside the cow, by the time it emerges from the four stomachs, it seems almost as if it has spent an entire four seasons under special exposure to planetary influences.

Cattle Take Only What Is Given

So when cattle are vilified for their effect on the environment, it must be remembered that animals only emit what plants first sequester. Climate change is not driven by the vast herds of bison, but by unbalanced human behavior. In the wild, animals only take from nature what nature gives.

However, following an agricultural model, we can extract *more* than nature provides in any given year. As the poet Holderlin says, “Where the danger is, also grows the saving power.”

While it is understandable that humans experience a kind of collective guilt for the exploitation of the Earth, merely re-wilding the Earth is not enough. According to Steiner, it is human management that, counterintuitively, has maintained the fertility of the Earth long beyond what it could have done for itself. The vast forests of the Americas were not accidental outcroppings of edible foods, though the first Europeans believed the plentiful harvests to be had here emerged from nature’s generosity rather than from the hands of those who conscientiously tended and planted the land with edible plants. This bounty is almost all entirely gone now. The timeframe required for Nature to restore it would neither be fast enough for humanity’s needs nor for the needs of the planet.

Scientists like to remind us that topsoil development normally requires a century to produce a fraction of an inch. This is true if we leave nature to her own devices. But if we introduce the stimulating effect of the full range of the depleted planetary potential energies, astounding results like those attained by Alex Podolinsky can be obtained. Though Podolinsky’s results are often quoted, they bear repeating as the centennial of Steiner’s *Agriculture Course* approaches:

In the early days we ran trials. Depleted soil was deep ripped. We sowed the right species and applied 500 and had the well known results. In six years we raised the organic matter levels from 0.9% in the top 4” to approximately 12% and, varyingly, to 2.4% at 40” depth. Ripping exactly the same way, &c, but without 500, the soil biology developed to 20 cm depth, no further. In modern farming the right soil treatment and the Bio-Dynamic preparations must be applied together.¹

It is notable that during these years the radical increase of organic matter, largely due to the planetary potential energies brought to the soil by the biodynamic preparations, improved soil much faster than nature ever does by herself.

Cattle Are Part of the Environment They Occupy

By the same token, the impulse to blame cattle tends to abstract them from their natural habitat. If they are raised in concentrated animal feeding operations, feed must be trucked in from abroad. Also, if cattle are not allowed to roam, manure that normally would be a source of fertility accumulates in toxic amounts. Cattle that graze the way bison used to roam would never give reason for concern about cow farts. Remember, animals only emit what plants have

first sequestered. Yes, cows emit certain gases, but more than half of the sugars produced by plants are sent into the soil where they have a detour of years to decades before returning to the atmosphere.

When cows are estranged from their natural environment, all we can see are their negative effects. Claims of runoff and emissions largely result from large-scale operations. Most of the carbon sequestration in pastureland does not occur in the top six inches of soil, which is where soil tests used to criticize rotational grazing are usually limited. If you want to see the real benefits of rotational grazing, go deeper, as with the soil tests performed by Podolinsky mentioned earlier.

As the Cow, So the Farmer

Cattle tend to be vilified as if they are the main driver of climate change. But if grass is not overgrazed and continues to regrow faster than cows can consume it, the farmer likely sequesters more greenhouse gases than the cows emit. Farmers also are vilified. They are blamed for dead zones in our oceans, though most farmers use as *little* fertilizer as possible. Farming does not have a large profit margin to begin with, so even when conventional farmers apply herbicides and pesticides, they have an economic incentive to minimize application rates.

On the other hand, homeowners tending their lawns have the highest application rates per acre of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers. One of the greatest sources of runoff is mismanaged lawns. This obviously does not have to be the case, but it is much more likely that the owner of a small yard will overapply than a farmer spraying the same substance on a thousand acres.

This statement isn't intended to blame homeowners. On the contrary, both farmers and homeowners are subject to limitations. Often homeowners add a bit more because "better safe than sorry," whereas a farmer can't afford to apply an extra application per acre. Even conventional farmers are largely limited by economic policies issued by bureaucrats, many of whom have never run a farm, or even a business under the regulations they create. Many farmers would gladly farm differently if it were economically feasible. It is sheer hubris to blame them for policies created by others, allowing the most resource-hungry cities in the world to sit in judgment of the so-called "ignorant" rural farmers compelled by regulations and limited by economics generally created in urban centers of power, to begin with.

This is where biodynamics still has the opportunity to excel. If I were a betting man, I'd wager that biodynamic food likely would excel in any double-blind taste test. Indeed, we don't have to prove the difference in terms of nutrient content *if it all just tastes better*. Were large operations to

implement the full spectrum of biodynamic preparations, combined with proper cover crops, we would begin to see the kind of change in our food system that would make many chronic health problems in the developed world seem to vanish. If the nutritive quality of food were to be improved with the widespread use of biodynamics, people eating the same foods would no longer be eating the *same* foods. Imagine if any one of the mass-produced cookie brands shifted to biodynamic flour! Just this shift would impart cosmic nutrition in the form of a cookie!

Anyone who eats from their garden knows that healthy food doesn't have to taste bad. Indeed, it is *not* that sugar is our enemy—sugars are the basis of life. Rather, our food lacks the full spectrum of planetary forces. *When grains grow in soils lacking connection to the cosmos, it should not surprise us that human beings eating the resulting foods also lack connection to the cosmos.* This estrangement cannot be overcome by reasoned arguments, but only by demonstrating the effectiveness of biodynamics in action and by letting people *experience* the flavor difference offered by fresh, vital food. If we only managed to change *how* things are grown, the souls of individuals across the world would be free to have ideas they never have had before—and free to make decisions they never conceived before.

Biodynamics is about replenishing the forces of fertile human freedom, which strengthens us to set aside the heavy weights of habit and inertia.

Note

1. Alex Podolinsky, *Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Introductory Lectures*, Vol. 2, pg. 15.

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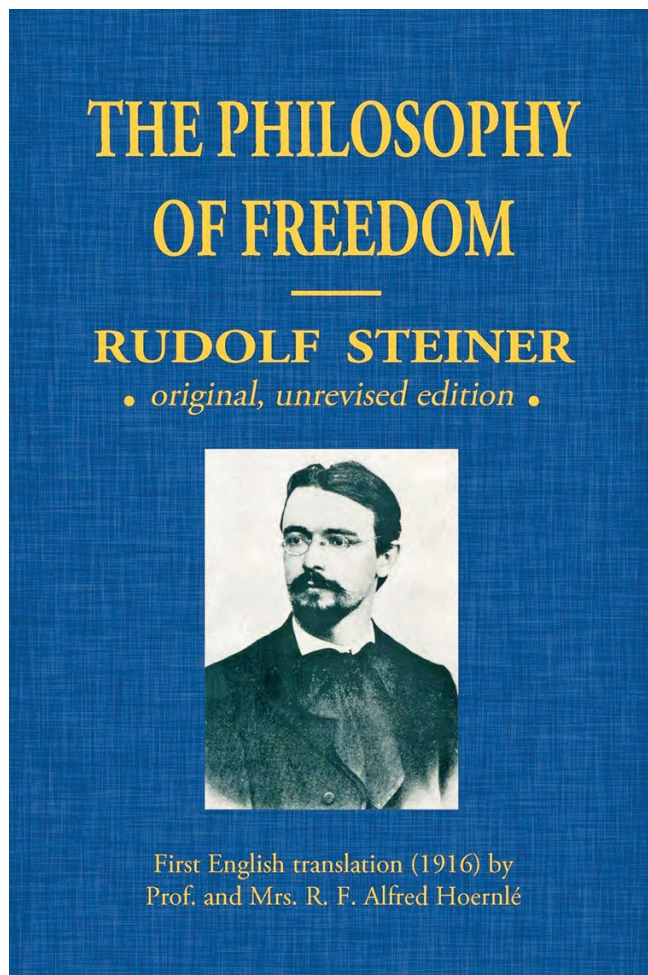
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What is Freedom?

An Introduction to Rudolf Steiner's Ethical Individualism

John-Scott Legg

The great ideals of the human race are not, it turns out, so straightforward as they may have once seemed. That's the way it looks today anyway, and it's been looking that way for quite some time, long before any of us were born. Ideals like Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and *freedom* seem uncomplicated, but in the age of the *consciousness soul* that we've been born into—in other words, the modern or “postmodern” era—everything, every idea, is up for debate, argument, or outright denial. This is not necessarily a bad thing though, because if we persist in the pursuit of knowing, through the sometimes maze-like trials of life and the big-picture destiny of our times, we can reach a deeper foundation, a place of profound insight born of personal experience, more solid than belief, where doubt, confusion, and uncertainty are resolved.



Perhaps surprisingly, this resolution of doubt, confusion, and uncertainty, this recognition of our own capacity to know, comes not through faith (though faith certainly has its place in a healthy soul life) and not through dogma or a rigid belief system, but through openness, independent thinking, and love. This is, in a few of my own words, the core lesson of Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*.¹

Background of the Book

Written in the early 1890s, when Steiner was a young man in his early thirties, the contents of the book are a kind of autobiographical depiction of the author's own path towards knowledge up to that point. It is also a way of understanding the epistemological² foundation, and justification, for the revelatory spiritual research Steiner began writing and lecturing about after the turn into the twentieth century. The original subtitle and “motto” of the book, meant in all seriousness, and in fact accomplished, reveals his purpose and ambition: “*The Basis for a Modern Conception of the World*” and “*Some results of introspection [carried out] according to the methods of natural science.*”

The radical *success* of his accomplishment—the victory of human self-recognition that this work both represents and *is*—has up to now still not been fully, much less widely, grasped. Nevertheless, the work has borne fruit in many ways, most directly in the subsequent accomplishments of Rudolf Steiner—as well as those of his coworkers, colleagues and spiritual relations and heirs—by way of the anthroposophical movement he was enabled to give voice and direction to as a result of having lived through and written down his *Philosophy of Freedom*.

True self-empowerment lies in the unbiased recognition of reality, which includes the recognition of one's own, usually more or less hidden, capacities and potential. What is the essential question that can provoke the soul to begin to seek for a satisfying answer to the hard riddles of human existence? It may well be different, or differently phrased, for each of us, but for Rudolf Steiner the essential question has to do with human freedom.

One could also say that this essential question has to do with what it means to be a human being, which is certainly true, but the human being, properly understood, never merely *is* this or that, is never finished or complete, but is always becoming—maturing, growing (first, in youth, physically, then, in soul, spiritually), unfolding. But in order for

this to happen and keep happening, a grown person has to achieve freedom, which in Steiner's view means having the experience of performing a free action, doing a free deed.

Freedom as an Idea and as an Ideal

I wrote in the first paragraph about what I called great *ideals* of the human race—truth, beauty, goodness, *freedom*, and how in our day and age, which can be referred to as the age of the consciousness soul, these ideals are, necessarily, no longer taken for granted—neither the meaning of the terms themselves, nor their inherent validity. What even is an ideal? Is such a thing, can such a thing, be considered truly real?

According to the predominant worldview of our time, which is not the one that Steiner sought to establish, the answer must be a resounding *No*. In this worldview, beauty and goodness may have some validity but what that means cannot be known because truth itself is unknowable or at best entirely subjective—that is, dependent on the “point of view” of the individual person. This way of looking at the world has been gaining ground since the fifteenth century.

Rudolf Steiner asked the world to take a closer look at this modern worldview, to appreciate what is good about it, but to also notice and question its assumptions, prejudices, and errors. He sought to establish a different way of looking at the world, one built on the very same foundation—the modern consciousness, which is thoroughly influenced by scientific thinking whether or not one is an actual scientist—but placing the individual human being and his capacity to *know* at its center. The *ideas* of goodness, truth, beauty, as ideas require *belief*—in the modern age they can be accepted or rejected, believed in or not—but as ideals they can be *known*. The recognition of the reality—the real possibility—of the free human being is the key Steiner used to unlock the door separating *belief*—which, if it is “required,” leaves us unfree, slaves to the material idea—and *knowing*.

The Road to Freedom

Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* is often deemed a “difficult” book to read, which is true in a way, but it needn't be, and the reasons most usually given miss the mark because they misapprehend his intentions and thus the reason for his sometimes enigmatic style. It's obvious that the book was written at an earlier time and, at that time, Steiner expected that the first ones to read it would be somewhat conversant with the philosophy of the day. But this is not the reason for the perception of difficulty. In fact, the book could be considered a work of philosophy for the “everyman”—a philosophy for non-philosophers—a philosophy, moreover, that overcomes the (modern/post-modern/consciousness

soul era) need for an increasingly complicated, removed-from-reality field of philosophy altogether.

Steiner's two prefaces for the book—one written in 1894, one for the second edition of 1918—give valuable hints and directives. He compares, in the first preface, the work of the philosopher to that of an artist—the philosopher's medium, however, is not charcoal or paint but *thoughts*. His book is thus an attempt to render the self-searching quest to know something of the world in an artistic way, using thoughts as his artistic medium. In doing so, at every step along the way, and unlike many, if not most, authors of any genre of writing, Rudolf Steiner leaves the reader *free*. In working through the book, the reader is left to follow the thoughts, *and to think them* as they follow one from the other in each chapter. We can either do this or not.

Frequently, especially in the first half of the book, Steiner presents the thoughts of other philosophers. Because the thoughts and ideas are, to begin with, merely set out on the page as more or less long quotations, one might be left asking, why? What is Steiner saying here? What does *he* think? Most writers wish to persuade their reader over to their opinion. Steiner wishes, ultimately, to teach his reader to think for himself. Therein lies the perception of difficulty. Between the lines, Steiner is asking for a different sort of participation in his book. This is, of course, entirely consistent with his thesis and the picture of his book as a work of art: the road he takes does not tell us to think for ourselves, but demonstrates how it is done and asks us to follow along.

A Few Basic Observations

The individual human being has access to the world through his perceptions and the concepts needed to order and make sense of the world of his perceptions. Recognizing the reality of our thinking activity as, really, the most real thing we can know, simultaneously confirms this thinking as a spiritual activity. This insight is within anyone's grasp who's willing to make the effort. The widespread belief that the activity of thinking is a material product of the brain completely falls apart when it is thought through. (Read chapter four, slowly, in its entirety, to gain this experience. The reasoning and conclusion is as valid as it was 128 years ago, but don't take my word for it.)

Thinking, that is, spiritual activity, resolves the supposed duality of the world (mind/matter; concept/percept). It's true that the world *is*, in a way, to begin with, divided in two: myself and the world, which is everything else I behold that is not me. By awakening to the true nature of thinking, however, we can come to see that this thinking is the doorway to recognizing the unity of the world, the interconnectedness of all things: the world is one. Human

thinking then, my own thinking, is at least as much a part of the world as anything else.

Through this spiritual activity of thinking we can not only know things about the world, but can know this activity itself—as human beings we are able to think about thinking, in other words. Knowing this, and that the world is one, and that everything is connected, we can set out on a path of knowledge with what is closest to hand—which is our own capacity to recognize truth, through thinking, absent of pre-judgements and independent of received ideas. Starting there, we can reach further and further into the world. There are, in fact, no real “limits” to what we can know.

Insight, Action, and Love

This path of knowing, or call it this recognition and experience of knowing, is universal, is closed to no one, and is identical to a path toward freedom. In the same way that knowledge of the world is achieved through the spiritual activity of thinking, which must be activated, so is freedom not a given but a potentiality. The human being *is* free, but only by doing “it,” only by acting in freedom, by performing a free deed. This is not, however, to be understood as meaning “do whatever thou wilt,” for the will to do something, if it be free, cannot be determined by something other than our own individual recognition of what is to be done, the “right” thing in a given situation.

To *know* truth we must recognize it out of ourselves, not be told it. In much the same way, to act in freedom is to recognize what is to be done, out of ourselves. This emerges from our ability to know (think) as an individual

spiritual (thinking) being. Certain traits that we may have inherited, or impulses, instincts, and drives that we all have and are a part of our generic human nature, when acted upon, whatever they may be, good or bad, do not constitute “free deeds.”

Our ability to think and to know opens up a world of ethical consideration for our fellow man. Our instincts and drives are part of our nature, but they are what is given to us, common to all. In the same way, our ability to think is given, but we must awaken to it in order to stand on firm ground and know the world.

Thus, the possibility of freedom is given but only as a potentiality that must be taken up. A free deed transcends what is merely given, transcends what is generic in us, and arises out of an intuitive recognition of what is right in that moment, not because of law or moral code or emulation of what another has done in a similar situation, but out of human freedom, which is out of love. It's the same thing. The human being can do nothing greater than this. This is ethical individualism.

Notes

- 1) Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* is available in English in several different translations. Besides *The Philosophy of Freedom*, it's also published as *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* and *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*.
- 2.) Epistemological: the study of what knowledge is as opposed to opinion or belief.

John-Scott Legg is the managing director of SteinerBooks.

As Above, So Below: Biodynamics as the Conscious Emulation of the Evolution of the Celestial Spheres

Stewart Lundy

Once upon a time...

Our solar system did not exist as we know it now. Instead, it was an inconceivably large ball of energy. The hand of the Great Spirit set this ancient prototype of our solar system spinning. As it spun, it slowly condensed. This web of super-hot energy gradually contracted into an egg-shaped cloud of glowing gases. If you could have viewed it from deep space, you would have seen a shining oval.

And then this oval ejected a ring. If you had viewed it knowing what you know today, you'd have realized this ring looked a bit like Saturn. But this was a Saturn from

an ancient time. Though it would have looked mostly like a ring of gas, the planet we now call Saturn had been conceived almost as a skin around our nascent Sun. For a long time, a lot happened, but little was externally observable. This was the *first trimester* of our solar system. Our young solar system continued to contract, growing brighter as it did so. Within this brilliant cloud were “currents” that would seem almost like streams of color through clouds. These were the beginnings of other planets, which the seer, Jacob Boehme, saw arising from a cataclysmic event of cosmic proportions. After this event, the Sun from that ancient



Synestia—a hypothesized, rapidly spinning, mass of vaporized rock. Named by Sarah T. Stewart-Mukhopadhyay, the name is a combination of Hestia, Greek goddess of the hearth, and the word syn, meaning together.

time was no longer just gas—it had ignited as if iron had struck a flintstone. Yet even here, currents continued within the contracting sun.

Jupiter and Mars found themselves outside the embrace of our shrinking star. Before this cataclysm, Mars would have been molten—“watery” in a primordial sense—before it was reduced to a solid iron core. From here Jupiter would serve a protective role, encompassing all the nearer planets in its embrace, catching countless asteroids before they could break through to these inner planets. Our solar system had begun to demonstrate externally observable movement. This was its *second trimester*.

The inner currents of our Sun were now much denser. It was as if a smaller sphere rolled within a larger sphere—as if this developing Sun had within itself a Moon. But then this too separated out and became the basis of the inner planets. This ancient idea of an early Moon gave rise to Mercury, Venus, and a prototype of our own Earth. This was the *third trimester* of our solar system.

The separation of Earth from these siblings was also its first independent breath, its physical birth. It took its first breath of the in-streaming substance and energy from all the planets that preceded it.

By this time, Saturn had created a ring around itself, as the Sun had once created Saturn out of itself. But Saturn’s young ring was gaseous and eventually became a real moon. Much later, this moon shattered to become the rings we know now.¹ Not without reason, Saturn is depicted as an old crippled man—his etheric double, his moon, is gone. The many “moons” surrounding Saturn now were not born from itself, but rather are asteroids caught in its gravitational pull.

Consider that the molten Earth underwent a sort of recapitulation of the solar system’s birth, repeating its formation in microcosm. The Earth became a ringlike “synestia” before our Moon departed.² When our Moon separated from the Earth, a subtle umbilical cord was cut. We remain close to our Moon, and she still gives us nourishment, but those old

times are gone when the Moon and Earth were one body. Remember, none of this evolutionary tale is meant to contradict established science, but rather to paint a picture of the evolution of our solar system.

Preparations connect to macrocosm...

Within biodynamics, everything we do reconnects us to the macrocosm. This is why we reach for planetary terms to describe what we see here on Earth. A physical planet called Saturn does not govern physical processes here on Earth in a linear way. Rather, the *same living process* that once formed that planet has now moved down into the sphere of the Earth. Planetary influence is based on a *correspondence* (or harmonic resonance), which is how the planet Saturn influences the use of the biodynamic Valerian preparation. As a plucked string on one guitar causes the corresponding note to sing out from a second guitar, so do astronomical aspects of the planets stimulate a corresponding activity here on Earth. It is the kinship of *inner meaning* that resonates between Saturn and Valerian. Whenever we employ the powers of Valerian, we bring into play the forces that once formed the planet Saturn, regardless of the position of the planet itself.

When we make the preparations, we draw upon these primordial processes that once labored at a massive scale to form the solar system. It is as if something that once built cathedrals now becomes focused on embroidery—even though it occurs at a much smaller scale, it is the same process. Imagine that a construction worker gets too old to lift stones and then, in his retirement, he concerns himself with weaving tapestries—his work may seem different, but no one would question that the same *person* performs both. Likewise, the processes that created the planets also form our inner organs and weave together the subtle forms of plants.

When we use a mesentery to encompass dandelion

blossoms, we should remember that Jupiter is the grand benefic, encompassing all the inner planets the same way that the mesentery encompasses the metabolic *bud* of our bodies. When we make the dandelion preparation, we place a specific process within a corresponding mammalian sheath. As rings of gas once condensed into planets, in a microcosmic manner we encapsulate the plant substance within animal substance—or rather, the etheric within the astral. With biodynamics, we don't merely seek to use dead chemical fertilizers, but rather to *condense* fertility as a microcosm of the evolution of the cosmos itself. When we make biodynamic preparations, we mimic the creative evolution of the solar system.

Our favored Saturnine herb, Valerian, enhances the surrounding ring of warmth around the compost, the latest humble working of that once titanic Saturn. The evolution that made the metabolic pole also gave rise to the head polarity, as Jupiter and Mars were created, respectively. Similarly, as the mesentery protects the gut, the skull protects the brain. Every preparation sheath is an animal membrane that by design *contains* the same process that each respective herb is intended to *influence*.

Stinging Nettles, like the heart, has no prescribed membrane but is the radiating center of our agricultural microcosm.³ Chamomile, which traditionally helps combat



Valerian, the microcosm of the larger macrocosm of Saturn, enhances the ring of warmth around the compost

flatulence and aids assimilation, we place within the same membrane that contains digestion, namely, the intestines. Yarrow, an herb that excels at separating pure fluids from impure fluids, is contained within a bladder.⁴ These two inner metabolic functions correspond with the emergence of the planets Mercury and Venus.

It is on Earth, that sacred compost pile of the solar system, that the universe could stream in its influence and that those forces could be collected, then rayed back to the cosmos. Everything in the cosmos works in huge circles. If we cannot trace a process from its beginning and back to its source, we are not yet thinking holistically. Everything that comes into being also passes out of being. Everything that comes from the Spirit also returns to the Spirit. The alchemist traces the footsteps of the Spirit in Nature.

Preparations draw in new life...

Because of the constant influx of new energy, life on earth is able to evolve. This does not deny the second law of thermodynamics. Quite the contrary. The *total* amount of useful energy within a *closed* system is always decreasing. But since energy always moves from high concentration to low concentration—in the same way that real knowledge can only flow from someone experienced to someone unexperienced—this means that within an *open* system we experience *negative* entropy. Because the Earth receives new energy every year and doesn't send it *all* back, we have the development of rich soil over time and the evolution of ever more complex forms of life. If the Sun were ever to cease being a greater concentration of energy than the Earth, the *Earth* itself would be like an etheric star radiating to the Sun, rather than vice versa.

When we age the preparations, we liberate the herbal qualities from their herbs. The cosmic structure of the herbs abandons their substance as the preparation is reduced to formless anonymity. We should keep in mind that Steiner reminds us that we are spreading *forces*, not substances. What remains within the sheath is not the herb itself—it is unrecognizable even under a microscope!—but all the *qualities* of the herb, liberated in their formlessness so that they can be assimilated as qualities of compost, soil, plants, and human beings.

The oft-quoted hermetic maxim of correspondence must be recalled in full: “As above, so below, *but in a different manner*.” The Jupiter process that formed that planet *looks* radically different here on earth, but, nonetheless, serves a similar function. Obviously no physical Jupiter planet exists on earth, but the same process that *created* Jupiter radiates its forces in the *mesentery*. Outwardly, the planet Jupiter and a cow's mesentery do not resemble each other, but their inner

meaning discloses that they both enclose and protect the entire astral world. Jupiter, as a *planet*, protects the inner planets from harm, and Jupiter, in the form of the *mesentery*, performs an analogous process, protecting the inner metabolic organs.

This is what Steiner means when he says we must “remain within the realm of the living.” We create preparations that emulate the evolution of *life itself* and the creation of the solar system. Each time we treat the soil with new preparations and harvest herbs from that treated soil, an entire planetary system forms, dissolves, and reincarnates, in a manner of speaking. Wherever possible, our preparation herbs should be drawn from soil treated annually with this evolutionary impulse.

Steiner indicates that, at best, mineral fertilizers can only stimulate “agitated watery growth.” As a diet too rich in sodium stimulates water retention, so plants with surplus minerals get bigger, though they require potential energy to grow to their full expression. Plants did not arise from dead salts any more than life arose from dead matter. Dead matter condensed from life just as the physical planets coalesced out of formerly active processes.

On the contrary, plants are a reflection of energy that has flowed into the earth and is streaming back to the cosmos. Mineral deposits, like the planets themselves, are what remain of gigantic processes once active and *alive*. As ash is the leftover of fire, mineral deposits are the remains of formerly living processes. It is not enough to give our plants the ash of other plants, but the contained, carefully concentrated potential energy of those herbs. No amount of minerals alone can restore deep vitality, though obviously plants cannot live without minerals.

Thoughtless agriculture has depleted the soil of its potential planetary energy reserve. If we want our plants to thrive as expressions of kinetic energy streaming back to the cosmos, we must *restore* these potential planetary energies to the soil and create them in a way that mirrors the creation of that potential in the first place. We cannot simply throw herbs around a plant and expect it to have the right effect. We must transform, condense, and collect these potential energies carefully. If we try to extract them too violently, they will be destroyed. The slow alchemy of biodynamics separates out these planetary potential energies without thoughtlessly discharging them. As a young bird must have food prepared by its mother, these planetary processes must be brought into the soil in the right way.

If we want our farm to function like a microcosmic individuality, we should keep in mind the macrocosmic individuality in which we all participate. In this time, the hands of the Spirit may seem to have grown quite small, but their work is no less

significant. In fact, the hands of the Spirit may now seem no bigger than our own.

Notes

- 1) See for a summary of current thinking about the origins of Saturn's rings: <https://www.space.com/10468-saturn-rings-remains-ripped-moon.html>
- 2) Wikipedia defines synestia is a hypothesized, rapidly spinning, mass of vaporized rock. Named by Sarah T. Stewart-Mukhopadhyay, the name was a combination of Hestia, Greek goddess of the hearth, and the word

syn, meaning *together*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synestia#/media/>

- 3) The late Devon Strong used the pericardium for a sheath for nettles, drawing on the image that Steiner gave that nettles belong growing "around the human heart."
- 4) Steiner speaks of how the names *Mercury* and *Venus* were switched, historically, and that what we call *Mercury* is an esoteric *Venus*, and what we call *Venus* today is an esoteric *Mercury*.

Historic Zinniker Farm Seeks New Lead Farmer

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“...the working of Chaos appears wherever animal excrements occur. The New Year’s crop springs from the ploughed land, after manure has been put into it — manure which lends the land fertility and causes the crop to spring and thrive. What has happened in such a case? What was the manure, to begin with? The manure, too, was perhaps at one time a beautiful, marvelously-formed plant, an entity in the world that had also once been formed out of the Chaos. ...The process we here have before us on its lowest level will enable us to rise to an understanding of the word ‘chaos’ with respect to higher realms. Cosmos cannot work alone. Everything in the Cosmos has grown from causes, from things that went before — not only all physical things, but intellectual and moral teachings, too, arise from causes that were planted once before.

Rudolf Steiner, *On Chaos and Cosmos* (https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/ChaCos_index.html)



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