

Dear Incarcerated Individuals,

Welcome to the first edition of the:

Anthroposophical Prison Outreach Newsletter!

This newsletter is designed to connect you with others who are also studying Anthroposophy. In this first edition we have printed an article by Mark Robertson and we are looking for *your* response to the challenges this fellow inmate identifies in his account of his inner search. We are interested how you apply anthroposophical teachings to face such challenges and how spiritual practices have helped you in this regard. In order to keep things focused, you will find a couple of specific questions at the end of the article to which we hope you will respond. In our next newsletter we will print your responses. This Newsletter is meant as open exchange about your own understanding of Steiner's work.

In this springtime we hope that this first edition brings renewal to your search for inner meaning. In Anthroposophy you have found a path to self-development. There are many paths and this is one. When searching it's as easy to get lost on the path of self-development as it is to get lost in a forest. Thus, it helps to have a map, as in the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, and inner guidance to keep you on the path. When you are ready we can provide you with a mentor if you request it.

This newsletter goes to all that are interested in the anthroposophical path of self-development. Though this newsletter is for you we also send it to the other half of our program: those who donate the funds and volunteer their time to make this program happen. There are literally hundreds of people who have sent donations - great and small - directly from the heart to enable us to provide access to the path you now tread. There are many who support you and whose good will is like flowers strewn on your path.

We wish all blessings on your effort.

Kathy Serafin
Editor

A Plea for all Prisoners

A hard and cold unbending place
We send our young to be encased.
Some share in common what's not rare,
Their sprouting lives divorced from care-
And others whose destructive force
Love could not sway from willful course
Yet those too need a lighted way
To cleanse their souls in truth-filled ray,
To recognize what they don't see:
They are among Creator's seed
They learn to bless their history,
Overcome the past and be set free.
Then blessings come, they get a clue.
Destiny calls to right and true.
For the least of these bring this plea.
Doing this helps all blind to see.

Fred Janney

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Rudolf Steiner

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves...Do not seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke

ON THE COVER

The image seen on the cover of this newsletter comes from the Mercury Capitol of the Goetheanum.

Art and Poetry

Child's Lesson

*"Oh to be a child in a sea of grass.
Totally concealed in a greenery mass,
watch clouds in the sky do fanciful things..."*

Look at the dragon float through a ring!
Here comes a grasshopper to join my fun.
He lands on my belly; we enjoy the sun.
He tickles a spot and I laugh out so loud,
that he flies away and chases a cloud.

How soon we forget when we grow old.
Of these simple things we must be told.
We work all day long. We cry and complain.
We're chasing a dream with no time to explain.
We must have it all and we must have it now.
Our god is wealth; to him we will bow.
We die leaving much in the material way.
But nothing as precious as this child at play.

There must be something wrong in the way we go.
For surely we will reap that which we sow.
The wealth we seek right here on Earth.
Is less than we are given directly at birth.
We should be more caring in our wants and deeds.
And this value of timing this gift of life.
Will be given by God and not wealth from strife."

*Dennis Woods
Concoran, CA*



Troy, Huntsville, TX



Don, Huntsville, TX



Michael, Michigan City, IN

How many prisoners do you know, who write poems, draw pictures, paint or CREATE some work of art that seems to be an expression of inner-feelings? If you are a prisoner, like I am, then you have probably seen all sorts of artwork ranging in quality from the spectacular to the pitiful.

Although the grade of quality may be the measure of one's artistic talent, it is by no means a measure of the soul-forces that were honestly poured out and into that work, whether it is a poem, a drawing or whatever. When it comes to the use of art to purge the soul of various feelings, to measure the quality of such a work by its "beauty" is a luciferic distraction to the real - behind the scenes - process that is taking place within the creator, Catharsis is a tool to any prisoner in one way, shape or form.

Anthroposophic prisoners are in a unique position: we can take advantage of our structured environment to cultivate a meditative-contemplative lifestyle, which could rival the most devout "free-world" Anthroposophist. Furthermore, if you are in an administrative segregation (Ad-Seg) cell, then you are essentially living a cloistered life. Either way, use it. A priest happened by my cell one day and told me that he knew men who would love to live like I was living. I told him that was debatable, but I understood what he meant: we're cloistered in Ad Seg. And, there are indeed men and women who would love to have the Freedom of a cloistered lifestyle. That encounter with the priest opened my mind a tad to the possibilities of such a life. Moreover, I realized that keeping an open mind and looking at the worst from its best possible perspective is crucial to a healthy soul-life. Positivity must become the rule of the day; especially if you're surrounded by the darkness and sorrow that generally permeates the air from the bowels of the average penitentiary. To accomplish this mindset though, one must stop falling into the throw of the day and start looking for the potential of being here. We're all mortal, and we're all given a limited set of possibilities in life. We have to play the hand we've been dealt (or, dealt ourselves). If we care about ourselves, about others and about the world—three cares that any Anthroposophist should have—then we will become resolute, and our lives will begin to change for the better. Our lives will become, as the German philosopher Heidegger said, authentic.



Whether you realize these things or not, you still might be purging your soul through art. Art is a wonderful medium, a medium for the soul to express itself. Such cathartic means are necessary for the development, particularly the EARLY development, of a soul's spiritual awakening. If you were like me coming into the Big House, you were probably angry, frustrated, egotistical, or had some other idiosyncrasy about your personality or disposition, which contributed to your past behavior. All human beings have various temperaments, moods, feelings, inclinations, etc., which make up our overall disposition, eccentric or not, and each play a role in who we are today as we wake up and deal with life's limited possibilities. These attributes are rooted in the base of our soul-lives, and from this ground emerges a host of feelings and impulses that are an impetus for our ACTING, that is, such germinal feelings might lead us in this or that direction in life. The more entangled our feelings, the less pure the impetus to our acting; the less pure the impetus, the cloudier the soul; the more unsure; the more muddled the soul-life, the more complicated our disposition, our heart and mind soul. And, eventually, the more stifled our spiritual life. The soul is the spirit's medium, so if you want to return to the spirit, you must transit and negotiate the soul. Thus, catharsis as a means to heal the soul.

Whether you are writing, drawing, painting or what-have-you, you can be purging the soul of complicated feelings, expressing yourself in solitude and sorting out your feelings. Such a path can be encouraging, and, coupled with (contemplative/meditative) withdrawal from ordinary life, the cathartic-artistic path can be conducive to developing the state-of mind needed to acquire supersensible knowledge. If you're interested in the field of spiritual science, a clear, healthy and peaceful state-of mind is a must. Solitude, withdrawal and meditation, in the right balance in proportion to your personal life's needs, clear the way for greater experiences. Daily life can disrupt what the

soul usually accomplishes by concentrating on feelings (*An Outline Of Occult Science*, p. 41). Taking time out of the day to be artistic gives the soul a way to concentrate on feelings. Being creative is a wonderful means to do so. Do it for yourself, forget about winning the prison art-show. Use what you have. The purer you're striving from within, the better spiritual quality your work will have. You'll get better, certainly, but "better" in the artistic-qualitative sense is not what we're focusing on here. There is a hidden result that is by far more impressive than any works of art by the masters such as Renoir, Alfred Lord Temyson, and Michelangelo. That result is the cultivation of dormant soul-potential. While being creative, you are withdrawing from the disruptions of daily life, giving the soul the opportunity to concentrate on feelings and awakening the soul's awareness. This practice is so very important, and it cannot be stressed enough to the aspiring Anthroposophist and to the human being in general, Why? Because if you seek the path to knowledge without cultivating the soul properly, then you can hurt yourself. Any spiritual path should be approached slowly and carefully. Don't believe everything you read, and don't let yourself become secularized. Investigate the truth, for the truth does not fear investigation. Once you know you're on the right path, and you want to achieve certain goals, you must realize that you need a clear mind and a clear soul, for you are taking a HIGHER ROAD. This requires responsibility on the part of the traveler. As you develop an inner meditative mood, you will also need to rise above the norm in the area of morality, scruples and virtue. If you don't you can hurt yourself. I mean your inner self's being. Trust me, I did it to myself. I was practicing meditations, doing all sorts of meditations and living it. I really felt that I was attaining certain heights, I could look at the sky and sense something so grand, it was unbelievable. Even watching the sunrise became a spiritual experience in itself. However, during that time, I wasn't focusing much on my sense of virtue and morality, and I soon discovered that not only was my spiritual consciousness growing and awakening, but also my EGO was growing and getting out of hand. By the time I realized this, it was too late. MY ego-problem became huge and it actually destroyed my progress. Ruined it really, because I lacked a strong foundation. I never properly purged my soul of harsh (past) feelings. I hadn't built on the most important aspect of a cultivated soul-life. I was actually hardened inside. Breaking up those coarsened forces in me took about two years. I then had to "start over" again.

I mention this as a tip. Spiritual development is a reality, and with it comes responsibilities that you must be willing to

accept: the path to knowledge runs through the heart, so nourish the heart-forces, untangle your feelings and take a cognitive approach to meditation. Make thinking your starting point and catharsis a starting mean.

THE FERRYMEN

*We are the ferrymen
To the isles far and wide,
Bridging the gaps
Between space and time.
In soul's consciousness
And in conscious minds,
That perceive what is translated,
And ferry across,
What is sublime.*

Mark Robertson



So, what is your experience?

How do you apply Steiner's teachings about humility and compassion to the pettiness and negativity in your environment?

Have you had an experience of inner peace as a result of doing the practices?

Can anyone say that doing the practices changed your daily thoughts?

Kathy

Editors Note:

A very popular book read so far through our library is Rudolf Steiner's book *How to Know Higher Worlds*, would anyone be interested in writing an article about how you are applying these teachings in your daily life? Let us know.

Editors Note:

Our wish is to share some of the wonderful letters we receive here at APO from you. We include this column as an exchange of letter correspondence. In future Newsletters, responses will also come from other members of the Anthroposophical Society, offering their insights, which are inspired by Anthroposophy.

HERE IS THE BOOK "ROCK BOTTOM", which I borrowed and wish to return. *Thank you very much!* I liked the book most because it seemed to complement the book, "In Place of the Self", which I read earlier this year. Having been a drug addict for so long and trying to educate and train myself to prevent addiction in the future these books have given me a lot of insight that wasn't/isn't available in many other places. I have become very interested in much of the anthroposophical literature available and I appreciate borrowing books from your library.
Sincerely, Ethan from Big Spring, TX

GREETINGS! Thank you for providing "The Great Initiates" to me, a splendid book. I read it three times over. Always had an open mind to the faiths and religions of the world. *The Great Initiates* helped clarify a lot of confusing aspects concerning history and the development of religions the world over. I'm beginning to find answers to my ever-questioning mind. My whole endeavors fueled by my insatiable quest for truth, peace of mind and serenity in a chaotic world I find myself in. I've literally read thousands of books in search of truth, but none of them compare to *The Great Initiates*. I can't thank you enough for your service. *Respectfully Tommy Lee, TX*

UP TO NOW, I have endured many heavy blows of fate. I did not know why. I now have found a path that is bringing me joy and happiness. As for the book itself "How to Know Higher Worlds" I found is to be "Out of this World" and beyond my dreams. I then soon realized its message and goals were reachable if taken religiously, meaning persistence, patience, and with a humble attitude. And as the book is titled it has opened up Higher Worlds to me. Yes even though I acknowledge I am still in my elementary stage, for this book had too much information, some I could not grasp (only with time). I feel very strongly that I must one day purchase it and apply myself with more ardent consistency. Please with your recommendation send me another book one that you believe would further my goal for peace with oneself. *Many thanks and blessings, H. Paul from Amarillo, TX*

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for sending me the two books "Metamorphosis of the Soul Vol 1 & 2. The knowledge contained in them is immense. I understand now that my experiences might be unexplainable to the uninitiated. I would very much appreciate someone to help me study.

A picture and this poem (*My spirit is like a flower, exuding warmth, joy and love. My soul wants to follow its own desires, needless of the power from above. My physical body is at odds between the two. A moments rest, quiet contemplation, I somehow find the strength to pull through*) are an attempt to interpret a dream I had. I used to dream and very seldom made the effort to contemplate or recollect them. I realize now my dreams are as real as I am and my ability to understand them has made the difference in my being able to understand myself. Sometimes in my reflection I allow myself to dwell on the pre-incarcerated years. In some instance I see where my future at times hinges on being able to make one quick decision, something I did not have the capacity to do because I was allowing myself to be lead by the mind instead of the spirit. I know now that the mind will only lead me to sense-pleasure, things that are tangible and fleeting. Gaining knowledge of my spiritual being has given me confidence in myself, something I never had before. Again, thank you, take care, hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely, Eddie Lee, California Correctional Institution

Dear Eddie Lee,

The insight shown is a deep truth indeed. Steiner leads us to meditation and spiritual practices that utilize the senses such as the growth and decay exercise in *How to Know Higher Worlds*. Contentment and spiritual growth come from the inner journey. A mentor will be writing to you very soon. *Blessings, Kathy*

Review of the Day

BY EILEEN BRISTOL

RUDOLF STEINER emphasized the importance of this daily exercise. In Chapter 5 of *Outline of Esoteric Science* he describes it thus: "...every evening when the day's work is done, the pupil lets pass before his mind's eye pictures of the day's experiences, watching himself go through them. This will mean that he is looking at himself as he is in daily life – from without. To begin with, let him take small sections of the day. That will give him practice; and he will find that he grows more and more skillful in this looking backward (Ruckshau), until at last he is able to picture the whole day through in quite a short span of time. This beholding of our experiences in backward direction has a special value for spiritual training; it helps us disengage our thinking from its accustomed habit of holding on to the outer, material and sense-perceptible events. When we think backwards we picture the events correctly, but we are no longer sustained by the obvious external sequence...It is accordingly good also to review other things in backward order – a play, for example, a story, a melody, and so on."

An excellent article by Maria St. Goar in the fall 1991 Newsletter of the Anthroposophical Society in America contains an extract from a letter written by Rudolf Steiner to Alfred Meebold offering this description:

"In the evening one has to carry out a review of what was experienced during the day. In doing so one has to place the experiences before one's soul as if one were a completely uninvolved observer of them and of one-self. Moreover, everything is to be called up in one's mind in sculptured, vivid pictorial form, as a tableau, as imaginations. In so doing, remorse must be avoided. Beginning with the last event of the evening, one goes backwards to the first event in the morning."

One way to begin working with this exercise is to cover most of the day in larger pictures, that is, picture yourself undressing and getting ready for bed, then picture the activity before that, perhaps talking with your cellmate, reading in a chair, then before that showering, etc., etc. Then take one portion of the day, perhaps writing a letter for which, you attempt to picture the details, for instance picture going through all the motions backward. Begin by picking the letter up off the table, removing the stamp, putting the stamp back where you got it, unseal and open the envelope, remove the folded letter, unfold it and so on. Insert this detailed portion into the collection of broader pictures. Eventually you will be able to expand the portion of the day you can review in detail and the detailed picturing can begin to flow on its own.

It is like watching a video of yourself backwards. Think how easy that is and how much effort it takes to picture it yourself! You can see this is like "working out" for your mental and soul capacities.

You can practice this exercise also during the course of the day during times we are waiting in line, etc. Steiner repeatedly emphasized the importance of this exercise to his pupils. He said it helps us to loosen our thinking from the physical brain and lift it into the etheric. In his lectures on *The Evolution of Consciousness*, Lecture 1, he describes this exercise as a good preparation for spiritualizing our capacity for love into a cognitional force because it helps us to free ourselves from dependence on external things.

Eileen Bristol, Co-Director

If you would like to submit an article for publication please submit by:

August 30 for the October Fall Issue

Poems, Artwork and Letters Welcome.

We may need to edit letters due to size restrictions. Let us know if you prefer that we use your first name only, otherwise we may print your full name.

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Reflections on Meditation Practices

AMONG THE PACKET of materials sent to you there is a pamphlet entitled *Self-Development in the Penitentiary*. These are a set of instructions to guide you on the meditative path advocated by Rudolf Steiner. In their original form he called them the *Six Subsidiary Exercises* and advised that they should be practiced as preliminary steps on the path of meditation. He indicated that these exercises, when practiced daily and diligently over time would build self-confidence and strength of character whether or not the individual was interested in developing a conscious relationship with the spiritual world. Steiner's original instructions for these exercises can be found in the books *How To Know Higher Worlds* and *An Outline of Esoteric Science*. In his original instructions he suggested that individuals should practice the exercises in the order provided for 30 days before advancing to the next step. In this regard, it is suggested that a longer period of practice is advisable until certain mastery and confidence is established in the daily practice of the exercise for "nothing is gained by haste." You are the judge of when it is advisable to move to the next step. This timing requires healthy judgement and common sense on your part, which is enhanced through the practice of the exercises, and the fact that there is no personal guru on the anthroposophical path of meditation.

Fred Janney
Co Director



Letters from You on Meditative Work

Currently, I am practicing exercise #1 (Self-Development in the Penitentiary). Since the beginning of the New Year I have been doing some emotional house cleaning. A lot of "stuff" has been allowed to accumulate over the years during my incarceration. 2003 is the year I hope to be free; if not physically then perhaps free of the emotional burdens I've been carrying for years. I truly and sincerely do want to "transform" my "prison experience" and my life. Today's prisons are more for warehousing than rehabilitation. Therefore if the inmate is to benefit from being incarcerated he must take the initiative to self-betterment. Almond Ray, Nashville North Carolina

I have had a chance to try the meditations and I find them of great benefit. Unfortunately I must meditate at night before sleeping when it is quietest. I am currently using "The Flame and the Void" and the "Rose" for contemplation. And before retiring for the night I use "Retrospection". Funny enough though, the retrospection sometimes goes rather swiftly – due to a quantitative lack of activity. I thought and pondered this and it gave me a good laugh, sometimes there just isn't much to do, so the session is rather quick. Your personal replies always add that "something special" that I always look forward to. Ron, CA

I have just one question regarding the object of observation, is it acceptable for me to change the object I've been observing? The instructions said I could choose "any" object, but does it have to be the same object every time? I'm stuck with the same object (my cup) all month, but after a couple of weeks I think it became more difficult to talk seriously about - e.g. I wondered from saying things (silently) reasonably like "a cup is not always a cup - "It's the brother of the glass". A servant to the pot", etc. There were times when I laughed out loud to such thoughts. Later on in the month I had the desire to change the cup to something more interesting such as my radio or a photograph, but I've stayed with the cup so far. Charles Soledad, CA

You can change the object of observation at your discretion. The choice of object should be made based on your not having any emotional attachment to it. For instance, it should not be a photograph of a loved one. The reason for this is that the energy and attention required to participate in the thought control exercise is generated and sustained by the individual rather than by a personal/emotional relationship between the individual and the object. Fred Janney

Placing yourself in a *holy inner space*
right before you fall asleep every night
can be very helpful over time.

If the verse below resonates with you, try memorizing it and say to yourself each night.



A Meditation for Holiness in Sleep

I go to sleep.

Until I awaken

My soul will be in the spiritual world,

And there will meet the higher being

Who guides me though this earthly life –

Who is ever in the spiritual world,

Who hovers about my head.

My soul will meet the guiding genius of my life.

And when I awaken again

This meeting will have been.

The wings of my genius will have touched my soul.

Rudolf Steiner

ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA

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