

Parzival & the Mystery of the Holy Grail ~ Does it Still Live Today?

By Peter Rennick

Parzival

*In words first worked out
aloud
before they were ever written
down
by an illiterate but wise
singer of tragic love songs
comes the story of Parzival
an eager young man with little
gratitude or good sense
both cursed and blessed
who wandered middle Europe
middle-aged in the Middle
Ages
searching for a magic castle
he had spent one night in
and the strange things he saw
there
now he was older and full of
questions*

Peter Rennick

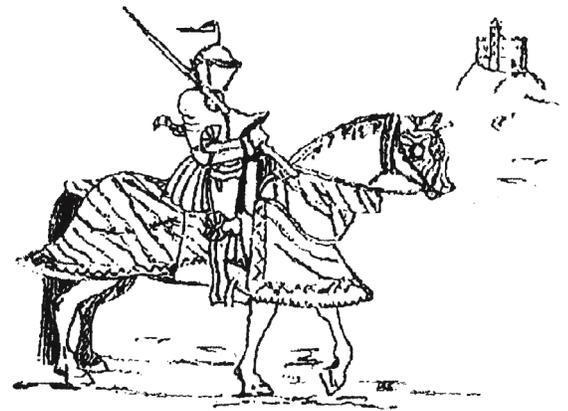
I think it would be an interesting task to try to find contemporary counterparts for all the characters and situations in Wolfram von Eschenbach's long and eventful poem, *Parzival*, and carefully fold them all into a brilliant novel, the way James Joyce took Homer's *Odyssey* and turned it into his amazing *Ulysses*.

But I wonder how one would write the chapter where the 'thing called the Grail' appears; perhaps only in our modern regard for money and the power of money could we today replicate the kind of deep reverence this scene displays. This mood of reverence, of solemn sadness and longing, and a deep seriousness, pervades the sixteen parts of the story of *Parzival*, which seems to be taking place in a world somewhere between this one and the next, a magical space one recognizes from fairy and folk tales, a dream space where sudden transformations, fateful occurrences and symbolic objects collude to create a special world.

A kind of growing suspense about what it all means begins to spark a deep desire in the reader to enter into and to pierce through the strangeness that is occurring on so many levels about what becomes of this young man as a result of his adventures. What are we to make of a story in which the very names of the characters themselves describe that individual's role or function? For example, *Condwiramurs*, which mean 'the one who leads to love,' or *Herzeloyde* – 'heart's sorrow', or *Parzival* himself- 'he who pierces through the vale/veil' or 'pure fool'). Or the way early scenes are mirrored in later scenes following a pivotal experience, e.g., the three scenes before *Parzival's* first meeting with the Grail and the three scenes that follow, which turn out to be the reverse of the first. Or the way the three figures of *Parzival*, *Gawain* and *Fierfis* seem to be the three soul forces of a single individual, resulting in their coming together in the end. Or the way the Grail Castle is mirrored in the Castle of Marvels, and so on. Wolfram's artistry in weaving all these together into a coherent, if not immediately apprehensible whole, amazes and lead us into the unfolding mystery of this sad knight's journey 'through compassion to knowing,' as Wagner put it.

But how are we to understand this carefully constructed series of events unless we first recognize that Wolfram is not just relating a hero's saga of brave conquests and true love? This is something different, a story of an initiation into spiritual awareness, a personal history with universal significance which, like the life of Buddha or Christ, depicts the progress of a soul overcoming serious obstacles and forces and winning through to a victory that can effect a healing transformation not only for those around him in his own time and place, but one that has relevance and efficacy for those modern souls who can perceive that the quest for spiritual vision and human understanding which *Parzival* perseveringly pursues remains a path of initiation open to us now as well.

Parzival is not so much a warrior and a hero, as a healer, one who comes to recognize his vocation as a healer only after he has witnessed the painful illness suffered by his uncle *Amfortas*, but has failed initially to have the courage to take an interest in it, and out of that interest, to express any curiosity or concern about what was happening to him, and also perhaps why the Grail, which was providing for the needs of everyone else, was not able to heal *Amfortas*. These unasked questions form the moral core of the story which *Parzival* carries in his heart, unconsciously at first, but clearly he is driven to find a way back to the place where they can be asked. He works his way through his own 'illnesses' over many years, forgoing family life and the companionship of Arthur and his knights. His is not the fame and security of the Round Table. And while he pursues his spiritual journey on his own, *Gawain*, his feeling side, more the Arthurian, undergoes a series



Artist: Rosemary Evans-Banks

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If you would like to submit an article for publication please submit by:
August 30
for our next issue

How wonderful to read the many ways in which you find your way to our program of anthroposophical studies! In our initial packet is a questionnaire that new participants send back to us with their first book request. One question we ask is “How did you hear about Anthroposophical Prison Outreach?” Sometimes you respond: *I found your Newsletter on the day-room table, or on a resource list.* However, most of you tell us it is through word of mouth: *‘from a fellow inmate, a good friend, my cellmate, fellow prisoner, the chaplain, or an inmate on the yard.’* Recently we received an especially uplifting response as follows: *“A friend of mine that I have not seen for several years that used to be wild and stayed in trouble. I ran into him again at one of the institutions. I saw a big change in him and in his life so I asked how he got his life back on track.”* We welcome you all on this path with a promise of inner renewal. We are happy to respond to your book requests, correspondence course lessons, and we are always delighted to get your comments and experiences!

In this issue of *Illuminating Anthroposophy* you will find many of your contributions about your studies as well as two articles on *Parzival*, a poem written by Wolfram von Eschenbach and commonly dated to the 13th century. Our featured article written by Paul Gierlach, titled: *Parzival, What Lives in Our Heart*, follows the narration of the story, illustrating the depth and the connection of *Parzival's* adventures, relating them to the arc of our own life's experience.

A second article written by Peter Rennick called *Parzival and the Mystery of the Holy Grail – Does it Still Live Today?* takes Paul's theme and explores how this medieval saga can have a direct relation to the search for meaning in our own lives today. As Rudolf Steiner has helped us to understand, this story is a deeply spiritual metaphor for our individual struggle to acquire both self-knowledge and true compassion for others.

Many of you know from our previous newsletters, that our poetry event: *Enter Light Voices from Prison* was held in Michigan on 12/12/12. Recited by 21 youth poets, your *Poetry and Art Work* was really well received. We are now looking toward the future and we hope you will once again send us your *Poetry and Art Work* for a new poetry event that will take place in different locations around the country. What would you like to say to the youth on the outside through your *Poetry and Art*, perhaps something you have read in your anthroposophical studies has inspired you?...We hope to hear from many of you!

Also this past year, we mentioned our Walk-A-Thon event that was held to support prison outreach. This year we will sponsor another Walk-A-Thon. Many members of the Anthroposophical Society and supporters of this program throughout the country walked, and this year we would like to ask you if one of your family members or friends would also like to help support your studies by walking in this year's Walk-A-Thon Event. If you like this idea let us know their names and contact information and we will send them the information to participate.

If you are moved after reading these articles to read the book *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach yourself, you will be able to borrow it from the APO library. In a powerful way, it connects our outer experiences to our inner journey of metamorphosis and the opportunity of redemption, even if all we possess is hope and faith.

Blessings on your inner work, Kathy Serafin

Meditations

I meditate every day. The universe kind of kept pushing me to learn about my higher self and pay attention to my dreams. *Jasmon, Joliet, IL*

I had a great time soaking up the knowledge in these books. I didn't have a hard time understanding these books. I understood their every meaning. I guess I studied some of these studies in my past life! Rudolf Steiner was a great philosopher. Meditation is the key to transforming thinking, feeling, and willing, then you learn to trust your inner self. Your intuition is the God within you. *Jonathan, Tennessee Colony, TX*

In *Guidance in Esoteric Training*, the main exercise on pg. 31 is truly profound! I can feel my entire body all at once. My awareness is heightened. I can't wait to become more proficient with this meditation exercise. *John, Cross City, FL*

Meditation gives me a peace and then I'm able to deal with the challenges that are before me in my everyday life events. *Valentine, Amarillo, TX*

I really enjoyed the books. Mr. Steiner really goes into detail about focusing and meditation techniques. I use some of the same myself. I like the way he writes. *Jeff, Crawfordville, FL*

Studied the Bible, read it three times, came to believe in a power greater than me. Now I'm learning the art of meditation through a different avenue. I used to meditate on my own as I drew pictures. *Leonard, Salem, OR*

I am not completely certain, but meditation has a definite calming effect and helps me to focus better during ordinary consciousness. It has also added discipline to my life. *John, Cresson, PA*

I have experienced great relaxation from meditation and understanding, as well as control and a little bit of enlightenment. *Chimieniem, Childress, TX*

When I am done meditating I feel I am new, I got a new start at life. *Jonathan, Maury, NC*

Rudolf Steiner's *Six Basic Exercises* is for better conscious recognition of ourselves, bringing clarity into our relationships with others and the world around us. The six being: *Control of Thinking, Control of Willing, Equanimity in Feeling, Postiveness in Life, Open-mindedness for New Experiences,* and *Balance between the Exercises.* The *Control of Thinking* exercise shows us how to concentrate on our thoughts, on simple objects to begin ordering our thoughts in structured sequences to give the whole purpose inner necessity. It shows us discipline of the mind, focus, clarity, objective certainty as a means to overcome compulsive thoughts. *Santos, Joliet, IL*

Anthroposophy has affected my life by changing my attitude to people. When someone gets me angry, instead of fighting, I go to a corner and meditate. *Alexander, Huntsville, TX*

PARZIVAL – WHAT LIVES IN OUR HEARTS

BY PAUL GIERLACH

Wolfram von Eschenbach's *PARZIVAL* is a Grail Romance. There are knights and ladies, Arthurian quests for noble deeds, times for jousts and places for Chivalry to shine, sites that exist - in so far as they are recognizable (geographical) - and sites that are shrouded in mystery and spiritual atmosphere. There are few Grail questers and many protectors. Magic is real and powerful. Evil is real, and powerful. To this conventional mix, Eschenbach significantly adds the meeting of the 'Heathen' East with the Christian West. There are well over one hundred characters to meet and roughly thirty-one different love stories to enjoy or lament. At the heart of it all is the question: what is the relationship of the Grail to the risen Christ and to the deeds of questing for higher understanding by human beings?

Eschenbach tells us that the journey of Parzival was from dullness to doubt to bliss. The reader can have this experience as well, though not without effort and imagination.

It is possible to read Eschenbach's *PARZIVAL* as an adventure story, one that concerns itself with lofty ideals and intriguing characters, as well as an author who, for some reason, always intrudes into the narrative. What do we learn?

Parzival is destined to be the next Grail King, but the transition is not easy. As a sheltered youth and naïve adolescent he does not know the ways of the world. He blunders his way to the Grail Castle, leaving in his wake, his mother Herzeloide who dies because he left, a ravaged innocent woman named Jeshute, a beaten maiden Cunneware, who laughed when she first saw him, also a Red Knight he murdered, as well as a wise knight and mentor, Gurnemanz, whose advice he took as literal command. As an innocent, Parzival is invited to the Grail Castle. He does not realize that a Grail ceremony is being held so that he will take the necessary step, ask the all-important question of the ailing Grail king, and bring happiness to all in the hall. This is a karmic moment: in spite of the presence of the spear that sheds blood, a soulful, colorful procession of maidens, and the presence of the Grail carried by Repanse de Schoye, Parzival cannot free himself from his mentor's advice to 'ask no questions.' He is ignominiously cast out of the Grail Castle.

Within a short time, his silence condemns him to dishonor in Arthur's court, and leads him to a denunciation of God. With this denunciation, Parzival moves from the sphere of 'dullness' to 'doubt.' He puts his trust in love, especially that of his wife Condwiramurs. After an endless number of knightly combats, and relentless solitary searching for what he lost, he struggles faithfully back to the Grail Castle. Parzival, who has learned to value others, brings his half-brother Fierfiz from the east along with him. He asks the all-important question of the Grail king: 'Brother, what ails thee?' Then the healing begins. Not 'doubt' but now 'bliss' rules his soul.

Interesting enough, Eschenbach cannot tell the adventure story by focusing only on Parzival. He must include the story of Gawain, a true Arthurian knight, who also seeks the Grail. His quest is quite different. Gawain is never solitary; indeed, his journey is a bewildering series of social upheavals and confusions which he, though often the instigator, manages to straighten out over time. He marries Orgeluse the woman who treats him the worst in the entire work. He actually creates encampments of knights to watch jousts that don't happen. In this way he provides a wonderful balance to the trials of Parzival.

We can immensely enjoy this adventure, just as we can all other Grail romances. We can make many discoveries, and even sense how powerful the women are in this work.

Perhaps it is they who lead us beyond this adventure story to something more significant and satisfying. We might ask ourselves: is Rene Querido justified in suggesting that the women in *Parzival*, as named above, constitute the Eternal Feminine? We cannot be dull and answer this question.

We can, though, take the same next step as *Parzival* when we more deeply lead ourselves into this Romance. We can doubt; or better put, we can free ourselves from it, by exploring the depths of the adventure, by getting to the heart of the journey. How do we do this? The safest way is to follow the plot and see how all the deeds and thoughts and concepts and mysteries and characters (not to mention the impertinent and discriminating author, Eschenbach) create a shimmering fabric of meaning.

Heredity is the principal plot dynamic in *PARZIVAL*. It creates the obvious or hidden relationships among the principal actors, for after a while it is not easy to find a character who is not significantly related to another by blood. Yet this fabric is difficult to deal with.

Let us discover the progressive journey of *Parzival* from "dullness through doubt to bliss" by tracking the horses he rode. Dressed as a fool by Herzeloide, (so he will return to the forest quickly) *Parzival* rides a presentable horse. (Book III) He easily trades it for the Castilian of the Red Knight after he slays him. As Eschenbach tell us, or rather, "as the adventure tells us; "he sat better upon his horse than any painter from Maestricht or Cologne could have painted him." (158) One wonders why?

Before long, the horse is choosing his paths. When *Parzival* is sad at leaving his mentor's castle, the Castilian leads him to another kingdom where he will relieve the siege of his future wife. (Book IV) *Parzival* shows great courage as he leads the horse across the swaying bridge in the face of many foes. (181) We learn that horse and rider traveled in one day a "distance that never takes less than two days." (189)

It is this horse that takes him to the Grail Castle. (Book V) Having missed his opportunity to ask about the illness of the Grail king, *Parzival* is literally booted out of the castle when the drawbridge is abruptly drawn up with him on it. If one takes the time to see in one's imagination *Parzival* suspended in air between castle and ground one can feel quite deeply the soul state of this innocent yet guilty youth. (247) For the first time, "Parzival looked back, intending to ask what this meant." (247) It is too late for questions, though. It comes as no surprise that *Parzival* cannot follow the horses' tracks that led from the Grail Castle. (249) *Parzival* never manages to follow some else's tracks!

On this red horse, *Parzival* stares at three drops of blood in the white snow that remind him of his wife. (283) He himself is captivated; it is the red horse who senses the onrush of a knight who seeks only to protect Arthur from unknown intruders. The horse turns our enchanted lover away from the blood drops; when the *Parzival* sees the onrushing knight, he raises his lance and rushing to combat unseats him. *Parzival* returns to the drops! The horse saves *Parzival* twice by bringing true sight to the situation. (248, 295) But *Parzival* can only wander on this horse.



After a decisive joust he rides the lost horse of Gawan, by name Ingliart, which is of a more elevated lineage than that of the Red Knight. (389) Parzival wins many jousts on this steed. Yet, he needs more.

His destiny changes in Book IX. In seeking to follow the nag-tracks of Cundrie, the Grail messenger who condemned him. He comes across a Grail guardian (Knight Templar) whom he confronts. In jousting, the knight and Parzival tumble into a chasm. Parzival hangs onto a root that is exposed and saves his life. He then rides from there on the defeated Knight's horse. That is to say, Parzival is seated on a Grail horse. The wisdom of this horse is soon evident, for Parzival gives it its bridles and it leads him to the monk Trevrizent who tells him, and the reader, all he needs to know about what lies at the heart of the Romance - the mystery of the Grail - his own lineage, and much more. Parzival never rides another horse. He never needs to, for the Grail horse can and does lead him through his doubt to its relief in bliss.

There are many plot lines that uncover for the reader the journey we've all undertaken. Even in this abbreviated highlighting of these carriers of Parzival, we can become certain of his helplessness, suffering, persistence and eventual success. The right horse at the right time.

Yet, that is not bliss. True, as readers we can come to understand the Romance. That is to say, we can place the characters and concepts and symbols etc. within the framework of the story and plot in order to cognize a recognizable Grail mystery. The end result is a tapestry more rich and interesting than most other Grail romances. Yet, that is not bliss... Bliss for Parzival is a meeting; he stands in the presence of the mystery of the Grail and asks about the well-being of the 'other,' and begins to heal. He begins to exist for all others. Not just for Conwiramurs, his wife, or the other aspects of the Eternal Feminine. He and his half-brother are somehow a whole.

I put it to you that as readers we can experience this bliss as well. We must first believe that there is more to a literary

work than meaning; that indeed, a meeting is more spiritual than a meaning, which is conceptual. We must then discover who can lead us as readers beyond the adventure of dullness and the conceptualizing-journey of doubt to an experience of bliss.

Wolfram von Eschenbach is no ordinary author. Some readers intensely dislike him. Why? He has a habit of intruding into any narrative that he himself finds interesting. The reader is thus distracted from her own involvement. In fact, PARZIVAL seems to be an opportunity for the author to have an ongoing conversation with himself! Or, better put, his Self and he seems to enjoy posing perplexing metaphors way too much! Who really understands the first sixty lines of Book I?

Yet, we would be wise to thank this author. For it is when we realize that he inserts himself with equal abandon into the story, the plot, the concepts and ideas while becoming an interesting character in his own romance, that we as readers can begin to see Parzival differently. Literally. Being conscious of all the activity in the romance, we can and must create an imagination that exists legitimately in all its living presence. PARZIVAL is Parzival. It can and must hover in space before us.

Then, we recognize *this spirit-informed* Grail tale as a triumph of the spirit over the earthly. We take hold of our human condition: our shame as fallen human beings. We are being worthily redeemed, first by Christ, then by one who as a chosen Grail king was not a God, but a human being. One like ourselves.

We find that it is not a sense of relief that floods over us, but rather Gratitude. We don't think about being grateful, in fact it is hard to follow the inner light of it when using one's head. Gratitude is not just one more thought we can enjoy without commitment. No. We experience it in our hearts. And we are changed. We begin our own journey of redemption through heart-thinking, and this is found first in our concern for others.

~ So What's Your Experience? ~

We welcome your comments on previous newsletter articles

Artistic Feeling and Meditation (Issue 18)

The art meditation on different colors, I found it relaxing. I've started to realize my conditions. Now it's easier to fix them. I share with my family about meditation and how the mind works. I've developed good behavior, good study and meditation habits, and feel more unity with mankind. Gary, Crawfordville, FL

Our Labor with Isis, An Exercise in Practicing the Virtues (Issue 17)

When I received this newsletter, the first article, *Our Labor with Isis*, caught my attention. This article changed the way I see the stars. I have a vague idea about how astrology has a relationship with human beings, so to speak. This article helped me to validate what I read in the other books about astrology. So I restarted my spiritual relationship with the stars. Now when I go outside in recreation I start to contemplate the stars and to meditate on my spiritual relationship with them in both directions; from me to them, and from them to me. The second thing which I did was to write the twelve virtues of the zodiac signs on

my calendar for each month, to use as one of my meditation practices for that month. Doing this was my striving each day. With humble heart I wish to hear the whispering of the stars every month, to teach me their wisdom and to guide my actions in the right way every day. Eric, Palestine, TX

Sleep and Dreams and How to Develop Them (Issue 16)

In *Illuminating Anthroposophy* (Fall 2011), there was a technique for transforming dreams. It relates to a book I once read entitled *Lucid Dreaming*. This has opened me up to a different experience. Sometimes when on the 'yard' I observe nature, the birds, the grass, the greens, the sky, and I 'glide'. Artic, Grady, AR

Awakening Reverence through Eurythmy (Issue 10)

The eurythmy article was awesome, although I do intend to practice more when I won't be so self-conscious. The artistic exercises reveal much about me to me. I do go back and review them, but I'll admit I haven't taken full advantage of the powerful tool this newsletter represents. Harold, Lubbock, TX

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1923 Geddes,
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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Insights

I want to thank you for having an outreach program for those of us that are currently imprisoned. It is so crucial for a group like this to exist to offer an alternative to all the fiction novels a lot of people tend to read while incarcerated. These stories of murder, drugs, rape, etc. cause nothing to change in the hearts of man. The more people who learn to look inward however, leads to dramatic spiritual growth. I want so much to see this change on a massive scale. All good things take time, though. The books you sent titled *How to Know Higher Worlds and An Outline of Esoteric Science* were very insightful and align with my other occult studies that embrace the universal law of love. *Gabriel, Chipley, FL*

Your books and generosity have helped me find the path to my inner self. I was looking in all the wrong places for happiness. I'm grateful for the candle you've provided me to light the way to a much better place. *Anthony, Grovetown, GA*

I want to start off by saying that I am pleased with the APO newsletter and all the aid that this outreach has accomplished in the simple lives of myself and prisoners all around. In the times that we are at our lowest, these wisdom words and knowledge that we discover make us hunger and thirst for more understanding of meditation, spirituality, and the human being. I am blessed to receive correspondence from you guys. *Pablo, Menard, IL*

I study a lot of different religions and cultures and see a lot of the same philosophies, but anthroposophy has really helped explain things better for me and I feel that it is good for me, especially since I'm in a locked down area. It has taught me meditation, how to stop focusing on our physical being all the time and to look inside of myself. I was really a person that was careless, but hid the pain and suffered the consequence by being depressed, wondering: why do I even try to live this messed up life? I wasn't happy: I wanted drugs, women, money, freedom, food, fame, and basically it was just me having an urge for happiness through a materialistic realm. My negative pattern was worrying about when and if I'll ever get out of prison, and being depressed about it 'cause I basically would sit here feeling sorry for myself. I don't worry anymore. I just accept this time and don't look too far ahead. One day at a time. Every day I remind myself that I can be free on the inside and it's up to me how I see life. *Jess, El Dorado, KS*

After beginning my journey with anthroposophy, my attitude in how I speak with prison staff has changed. I'm not as combative as I was and I find reasons to say 'thank you' when I can. *Ronnie, Tillery, NC*

Studying/reading the APO newsletter keeps me humble, knowing that the Anthroposophical Society has so many conscious beings raising their inner self from lower to higher mentalities. *Mario, McAlester, OK*

The service that APO offers is unique, the study material is uncommon and radically potent. The personal touches your letters lend to the work cause many to feel united to the anthroposophical community. Rudolf Steiner is a spiritual genius of the highest order. I am thankful that I am able to access the material. I would love to have the opportunity to read the entire body of his literature and embody it as I believe he did during his editorship of Goethe's writings. *Martin, Avenal, CA*

I started studying anthroposophy in IMU. It's actually what allowed me to open up to grander things in life. *Seven, Clallam Bay, WA*

First and foremost I have started applying the virtue of listening to others and to my conscience. I have been practicing self-observation in order to become more aware of my way of thinking so I can develop more self-control over what I think, say, or do, and this is fueled by my meditation practice. I have tried to be more open towards others and spend more time trying to help in any way I can. *Joshua, Airway Heights, WA*

My name is Kenneth and I have been picking up your Prison Outreach Newsletter from the day room tables, and even out of the trash for three years now. I have to write to let you all know that it has been rough for me at times, but I escape through these newsletters, knowing that others are experiencing tough times from the inside of a five-by-nine cell, and still keep up a calm and positive attitude while being surrounded at all times by so much negative energy. My life is a strange place and when I have had a chance to read your newsletters, I believe I have the ability to lift myself above my everyday environment and the harshness of my reality by lifting my ways of thinking beyond my current state. I thank you for having a newsletter and giving hope to my life through it and for all the help you didn't know you gave to a guy like me. *Kenneth, Cleveland, TX*

Occult books are so hard for me to get a hold of because I have no family outside. So your program is such a blessing to me. *Occult Science* did surprise me; Rudolf Steiner explains the seven planetary stages with such detail it actually clarified a lot of questions that I was left with after reading other leading occult authors. I enjoyed this first book so much. *Gregory, Rosharon, TX*

Anthroposophy helps me see the love in myself as well as other people! *Ronald, Crawfordville, FL*

I feel more at peace, hopeful, and positive. I do everything with the thought in mind that it affects my present and future life in the material and spiritual worlds. I gave up trying to be physically imposing by doing weight training. I value my life more. Anthroposophy reduces my stress and gives time to just "be" without trying to be anything. I like spending time with my "true" self. *Kevin, Waynesburg, PA*

I'm an Eastern Orthodox Christian and I'm really into the Rosicrucian outlook of life. The last books I got from you were very powerful. They made me think about stuff I've never had before. Not just that, but also think in ways I've never thought possible. With my Eastern Christianity mix and the new ideas I'm learning from spiritual alchemy, I am really growing as a person. I've been on Death Row here in Georgia for some time now, and I would have never thought that I would find true life here. Whatever happens or does not happen, from this point I have learned something I *know* I've been looking for for many, many lives, and just maybe I'm finally mature enough to deal with it. Thank you for your help. *Joshua, Jackson, GA*

I really like what this outreach is doing for inmates and I enjoy myself with the knowledge that is to be gained. I am twenty years old with a twenty year prison sentence and I believe that if I had received just half of what I have received through inner development and this outreach, I would not have lived the lifestyle that lead to this incarceration. There is a passage in the Christian Bible that says "My people perish for a lack of knowledge", while this holds true, the APO program offers knowledge that will help in one's life which is priceless when grasped and applied. *Chris, Madison, FL*

*So much anger,
So much rage,
Locked down,
Inside my rib cage.
Keeps me calm,
Keeps me sane,
Having locked down
All my pain.
Breathing deeply,
Soft breaths flow,
When I breathe out,
Let it all go.
Can't stop thinking
Thoughts so fast,
Close my eyes,
Peace at last.
Escape this cage,
Let go of rage,
I will accept peace
In spite of this place.*

*Kenneth,
Cleveland, TX*

- STEPPING ONTO THE PATH -

I READ ONE OF STEINER'S BOOKS many years ago (but was not ready for the material at the time). I then came across the Prison Outreach program in a resource list. I now feel ready for the material. My ultimate goal during this, or any, incarnation is the development of my soul. My second goal is assisting others on their paths. This program has the potential to positively impact both of these goals. *Chris, Loretto, PA*

I HOPE TO GAIN new insights, and new coping mechanisms for dealing with stress. *Kirsten, Ocalo, FL*

TO BECOME A BETTER PERSON. More insight of me and to understand how to change a drug mind, such as mine. *Timothy, Grafton, OH*

A WAY TO HELP control the anger and prejudgment and to make my thoughts slow down. *Troy, Connell, WA*

I HOPE TO GAIN CONTROL over my life, to whatever extent may be possible and to overcome bad habits and my old way of life. I want to discover who I really am and I want to be able to change. I have a lot of fear so I want to overcome that and be responsible to myself and for my daughter and family when and if, I get out. I want to refine my character and really change my life; I do not want to waste my life. The whole APO program is based on getting to know one's true being; this is my main goal. *Nathaniel, Tehachapi, CA*

I HOPE TO GAIN wisdom, knowledge, and to better my relationship with my fellow man. *Paul, Raiford, FL*

I HAVE DONE a lot of searching and come to realize that the only place I have not searched very well is within. I hope to learn more about myself. My interest is the perfecting of my character, in being a better being, not just for myself, but for everyone *Victor, El Dorado, KS*

YOUR RESOURCEFULNESS and willingness to bridge the gap between darkness and light, for me this is a newfound insight. *Prince, New Boston, TX*

I AM VERY INTERESTED in reincarnation and consciousness. I like reading, helping people, and I enjoy legal work (criminal appeals), but most of all I love learning and practicing things to improve my inner self. I hope to gain application of the principles set forth in the books. Also, I would like to meet people that are on the same path. Hopefully this program will help me get to know myself so I can be a more aware, loving, and a better human being. I hope to gain understanding. *Quentin, Freeland, MI*

I HOPE TO GAIN knowledge, wisdom, and insight. *Shawn, Bismarck, ND*

FROM A YOUNG AGE I have always read as much as I could about esoteric knowledge. I have been searching for spirituality and everything that I have read is like a new puzzle piece so I feel as though I could learn a lot through your program and I have the time to do this properly. I hope to gain knowledge, clearer understanding and gain spiritual strength. *Daniel, Pittsburgh, PA*

DEVELOPING CONCENTRATION, focus, meditation skills, mental clarity, and peace of mind. *Christopher, Draper, UT*

I WANT TO LEARN the benefits of self-rehabilitation and to stay healthy in life as a productive citizen. And learn to stay in touch with the spiritual forces that help me on my meditation path. *Victor, Tennessee Colony, TX*

I WANT TO OBTAIN knowledge on a lot of aspects of life, especially Christianity, which is the real reason I wrote. I really want to settle down as a person, make better decisions, and be equipped with a sharp mind on a lot of aspects, so self-development and knowledge is the goal. *Christopher, Milton, FL*

I AM TRYING TO CHANGE my life and rehabilitate past incarceration. I appreciate an aiding program such as this. I want to understand coping with a felony on my record and dealing with stresses in society. I think this is a great start. *Joseph, Hudson, CO*

MORE KNOWING and help with self-discipline. *Stacy, Ypsilanti, MI*

IT CAUGHT MY ATTENTION because the way my friend explained it made me think that there's higher spiritual beings out there and I would like to learn more about self meditation and self-knowledge. *Samuel, Hutchinson, KS*

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING of life from my eyes and understanding humans, to be able to communicate better with people because I don't click well with a lot of people. I'm not lonely, I just put myself in solitude because of my past experiences. How to better understand myself and why I'm the way I am. I want to better my life and the situation that I'm in at this present moment. *Gjuan, Tutwiler, MS*

KNOWLEDGE and understanding, and get a better grip on my temper and feelings, and get more control on my decision making skills. *Marcus, Tillery, NC*

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING of myself and who I am, why I feel as I do, and why I see life and experience life the way I do. Hopefully an explanation about a lucid dream I had involving a beautiful blue lady and an angel whose face was partially obscured by a shadow. *Terrence, Ely, NV*

THE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING and insight of things concerning the evolution of the human soul. And insights into Biblical texts. To become a better person for the good of humanity. *Garrick, South Bay, FL*

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND as an individual, my own spiritual path of self-development and esoteric training. The enlightening of its moral teachings. *Sheldon, Wewahitchka, FL*

I'm a seeker; I like to know who I am, why I'm here, to make sense of this crazy life. What is my purpose? To seek truth, a self-confidence, forgiveness, peace. *Jeffrey, Centralia, IL*

THE FACT that you're willing to help us prisoners find the answers to what we as human beings all want to know. A better understanding of who I am, why I'm here, and what exactly am I to be doing while here on Earth? *Jeremy, Westville, IN*

I HAVE BEEN SEEKING deeper enlightenment and I need more guidance. I need a source to tap into for more knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. I want to learn more mental, spiritual, and physical balance. *David, Wrightsville, GA*

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING of myself and of that which is around me and others. *Robert, Bismarck, ND*

I try to walk upright
in spite of stumbling
down
never look down
but always up
to the sky
to the stars
to the sun
to the moon
to higher consciousness
sometimes
I just stumble
and fall
but my thinking
my consciousness
arises in me
to walk upright
and my hands
are always
extended
to greet
to give
to share
and that's the only way
my hands should be used
I sit, I smile, I think
and the joy would always
surround me.

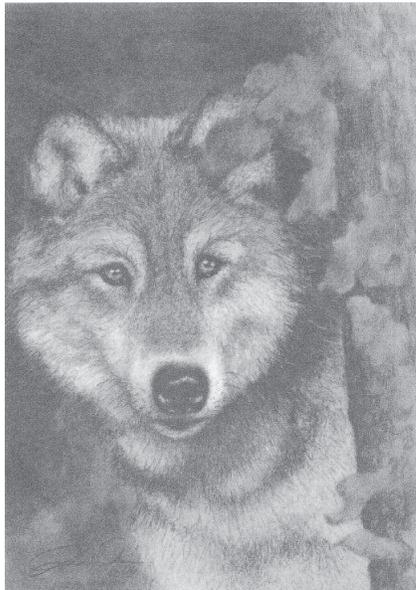
Ruben, White Deer, PA

Art and Poetry

Reflect Perfection

I strive for perfection
 The breath of life
 Has sparked my ignition
 I see God when I look at my reflection
 The womb, a cocoon
 A fortress of protection
 After nine months of gestation
 The physical earth is my destination
 In reality it's just a brief vacation
 It's just an incarceration
 Of a re-conglomerated manifestation
 Eons of repetition
 This time I strive for life's definition
 Through speech I speak
 I walk with two feet
 And I'm a man with two hands
 But the power that moves it all
 Is the direction of cognition
 Peace, love, compassion are my intention
 It's time for the Christ mind
 To become part of my mind
 So I can give it to you.

Anthony, Coal Township, PA



Jason, Holdenville, OK

Deep in the interior of darkness
 A flower opens itself to receive life
 Nourished by a strange mystical light
 It grows
 Alone, longing for life like itself
 Alone, suspended in a cimmerian cleft
 Oh, to be free to travel the cosmos again
 Free to surf the solar wind
 To arrive at last at the beginning,
 Sanctified

Horace, Beeville, TX



Lawon, Winnfield, LA



Eric, Palestine, TX

The Truth Within

From within the darkest forest I emerge free,
 My eyes were covered and blind but now I see.
 That the shroud of ignorance must now and forever be shed,
 If I wish to walk alive in the land of the dead.

For within myself lies hidden the I-being;
 This I-consciousness that yearns to recite angelic mantras and sing.

There is a balance of polarities deep within all of us,
 The balance taught by the great Essene Master Jesus.

I never will forget what it takes to become true Anthropos
 Is to understand one sees through what lies between spirit and soul is the Nous.

Jason, Florence, CO

LIVE THROUGH LIFE

*Live through life.
 Life of love.
 Concealing the future,
 in the heavens above.
 Angels fly
 and demons drone;
 Goodness lives
 Straight to the bone.
 Heirs of these,
 Love and joy,
 Smiles and hope;
 A girl and a boy.
 Clean like soap.
 Oh we smile
 As we walk a mile.
 Uglies cease,
 We overcame with peace
 Come and go.
 We get and we give some,
 Living through life,
 'Til we get back to the
 heavens where we
 came from.*

Kenneth, Taylorsville, NC

SELF AWAKENINGS

EduCareDo Correspondence Course Response Summaries

Lesson 1: Introduction

The whole concept of anthroposophy is new to me. I learned that to “free” ourselves and help others with their problems we need the process of change. This was most important to me. I’ve personally never done well with any form of change, but I’m starting to see how important it is to growth. I will open myself to all forms of change and learn to adapt to each change in order to help my fellow man and myself. *Ashley, Raleigh, NC*

Lesson 2: First steps in the Light on the Path

The three divine gifts were new to me in the way they were described in this lesson. After reading page one, I was forced to think, feel, and it made me want to change some things in my own life. The process of developing my own exercise is most important. The questions are excellent. *What do I know? How do I care? What can I do?* I can learn from my life experiences and share them with not just my children but others as well. I have written down a list of my personal issues and I’m in the process of facing them so that healing can come. Over the past three months I have faced my past and present and I know that I’m on the right path. *Tamika, Ypsilanti, MI*

Lesson 3: Understanding, Caring and Developing the Human Senses, Part 1

New to me in this lesson was to realize that without perception we would be walking blind, the twelve senses most of the time are taken for granted. As my desire grows on the path of knowledge of the nature of things, I have a better awareness of perceiving my surroundings. I will reflect on the perception of awareness, experiments to ascertain which senses helped to achieve consciousness. Having a positive attitude can make all the difference. *Edgar, Only, TN*

Lesson 6: The Threefold Human Constitution and Control of Thinking

To begin, I was unaware of the notion that our head, with the center of our nerve-sense system, is the “least alive” of the three systems explained (Nerve-Sense system, Rhythmic-Sense system, and the Metabolic-Limb system). Also, never have I considered the nerve-sense system to be the “opposite pole” to the metabolic-limb system. The establishment of the trinities (threefoldness) is a fundamental truth that I’ve held to be also universally applicable to most things found in nature, by being able to analyze different examples of this fact, I was caught up in the moment. Well, certainly I plan on expanding my very own comprehension of the different trinities known throughout the ages. *Derrick, Carlisle, IN*

Lesson 7: The Human Being in its Relationship to the World

What I learned in this lesson that was really new to me was that there are actual defined meanings for the experiences I’ve already perceived but had a hard time trying to explain to myself. I like the fact that lesson seven showed me that I can widen my worldly relationship and how to do so through soul, body, and spirit. What was closest to my heart was the connection between our lifespan and breaths with the rhythmic system of the Earth, Sun, and Cosmos. I’m truly connected with the cosmos on a real micro-macro way. That kind of affirmation gives me even more confidence in what I’m doing and the path I’m taking. What I can do with this finding is expand on the new information by practicing the exercises shown in the workbook and meditating on the results. I will also continue on any path it presents to me. *Robert, Rosharon, TX*

Lesson 9: Development and care of the four Members of the Human Being

Some of the ideas on inherent and developing etheric forces were new to me. Closest to my heart in this lesson were the considerations about the care and development of the child, artistic colors, exercises and natural laws. I will research, better know what to look for and can listen better as well. I will always facilitate art for kids. *Sean Tokarz, AZ*

Lesson 10: The Human Being, the four Temperaments, the four Elements and the four Ethers

Studying these temperaments, while looking within, and trying to see these temperaments in myself, I realize that what was previously thought of as a relic of medieval mysticism is indeed real. Realizing there are more than just one stage of these temperaments fills me with great hope that despite my predispositions, I can turn these into a source of virtue. I’m going to focus on rising to higher stages with my dominant temperaments, and I think the “Equanimity of Feeling” exercise will be an important part of that. *Carl, McAlester, CA*

Lesson 11: Elements, Ethers, their Origin and their Evolution on Earth

Being in prison I am often reminded that without help, we struggle and stress so much more, so I allow myself to be fueled by hope and love instead of that hate I once felt. I always heard that it was easier to hate as opposed to love, but I couldn’t understand that until I was faced with my darkest feelings in my darkest hours and I was forced to grow mentally, but above all I finally became man mentally. *Mike, Soledad, CA*

Lesson 12: Experiments with Elements, Ethers, and their Effects in Nature and in the Human Body

Fortunately, I have a guitar handy. I listened to the resonance of the fourth and fifth, I always heard of the music of the spheres, but never reduced to such a fundamental concept as arranged here. It makes me think of the zodiac and how the stars align and as some composers receive music, astrologists can forecast a horoscope. It makes me think of gifts from the muse and the whimsy of inspiration, those moments fleeting to all of use even not in the practice of thought, it could just be an idea, but it gives me hope that learning spiritual science I can learn how to be more attuned and those thoughts may not prove so fleeting. I will Court the muses pursuing spiritual science in seeking the fruits of this devotion. *Domenic, Waynesburg, PA*

Lesson 18: The Arts and their Mission, part 1; Living Words part 2

The five qualities of the soul that I must acquire in this training were new for me. Like keeping control over the directions of my thoughts, with the control of my impulses of my will, and equanimity in the face of pleasure and pain, and lastly these two: staying positive in my attitude to the world, and being ready to meet life with an open mind. These five steps were most important to me because exercise really does give the key to achieving equilibrium for my soul, and assisted me in seeing that I am the one that painted the world in unfavorable lights. So now I strive daily to be a bright star in this dark place, as my soul has found inner balance through these steps. Daily I am in control of what I create through my thinking, feeling, and acting, which allows me to see everything in a positive light, no matter what. It becomes easier as I make it my conscious effort to be positive. I also enjoyed the lesson about the gift of human speech, the way it reminds us that words are our companions. *Carlos, Menard, IL*

Inspired by your Reading

The Stages of Higher Knowledge is a book that everybody should read and own if possible. It made me really look at things from a different view. To always have my mind and soul in tune, and to look at things in a different way. To look further, never settle for what has been taught or said, to look further, deeper. It's kind of like taking blinders off a horse. This book has made me realize I have been living with those blinders to only see in front of me and to accept what has been taught or said. Thank you for sending this book, it was wonderful. *Richard, Tennessee Colony, TX*

I found *Christian Rosenkreutz* to be very informative and even fascinating at times. I have some familiarity with Rosicrucianism, but it was a cursory knowledge and I knew very little of Christian Rosenkreutz in particular. Steiner's book was faithful to thoroughly cover in a general way many of those things I was previously unaware of. I am truly grateful for all that you at the Anthroposophical Society are doing for those of us who are incarcerated. May you all be blessed for your service to the imprisoned. I sincerely appreciate all you do. *Ryan, Grafton, OH*

Thank you so much for these two books, they certainly opened my eyes to new ideas about *Life after Death* and what goes on while we dream. I will continue to research *The Near Death Experience* book. We all would like to know what happens when we are finished with our current bodies. The account of those who have died and come back to tell us about it are mesmerizing. *Ricky, Gatesville, TX*

You sent me *An Introduction to Anthroposophy* by Francis Edmunds and it has been so very enlightening to me. Through extensive studies over the years, I have blended the occult, Kabbalah and Christianity. Even so, things were still missing. I had never heard of Rudolf Steiner or anthroposophy, when my friend recommended your outreach program. About twenty pages into Edmund's book I was completely engrossed. By the end of it I couldn't wait for more. Some things I had to read two or three times to grasp the concepts, but I was awed by the ring of truth in the words. I know that I am only at the beginning and have not even scratched the surface, but I truly believe I have found my path that I've so long struggled to find. I know it won't be easy. I know I have to work on changing things about myself and life to truly walk this path in all my being. But so strong are my convictions about what I've read, that there is nowhere else to go. A new dawn has arisen in my life. For that I thank your prison outreach program. You all have my deepest gratitude and respect. *Bryon, Chino, CA*

I enjoyed reading *An Introduction to Anthroposophy* by Francis Edmunds. The way it explains the beginning of mankind and their development; the book was very easy to understand. Francis opened my mind to a whole new way of viewing life and the way I handle everyday situations. I now meditate every day. It gives me a calm from the many problems I have every day in prison. I find this book to be quite revealing as to how my thoughts, concepts, and ideas are formed. *Alexander, Huntsville, TX*

I very much enjoyed *Stairway of Surprise*. Very much in alignment with my thinking and feeling, leading me to the place of observation I now occupy. *Stairway of Surprise* made me consciously realize that I'm thankful for life's challenges. I've been very fortunate to taste the sweet taste of success in its many forms. However, it's the struggles that make success

sweet, the rain that makes everything so green, and the wind that makes trees (and me) strong. *Steven, Loretto, PA*

It's been a great honor to learn from the books that I've received from Prison Outreach. By reading the books I've realized that our existence is connected with the universe. Through the lectures I've read, they have shown me knowledge that is beyond this world. And how to gain self-control over my feelings. Most of the meditations help center myself to cope with reality. By reading these lectures I've come to understand the true meaning of Christ and the relationship he has with the human soul. The book by Rudolf Steiner, *Christ and the Human Soul*, has revealed so much about the connection we have with Christ. I wish to continue my studies and receive more knowledge about my spiritual side. *Jamar, Lawton, OK*

Esoteric Christianity gave me a glimpse into the actual ideas and practices of the Rosicrucians and who Christian Rosenkreutz was as a historical person. Among other great things I found throughout the book, the chapters on faith, love, and hope gave me insight to the meanings behind the words. *Anthroposophy in Everyday Life* is a good introduction to anthroposophy. I liked the "Practical Training in Thought" and "The Four Temperaments" lectures the best, as this was my first time learning of the four temperaments! I took a lot of notes from each book and really enjoyed them both. *Roby, North Wilksboro, NC*

I write in regards to *David's Questions*. One of the things that stands out to me the most is the level of opposition between religion and science. I have a friend that is a biochemist and he told me that the more in-depth he studies, the more complicated the experiment, the more he saw God in the results. I've always known that the Bible had meaning other than the literal. Most of the science described in this book was a chore for me to read because I have very little interest in science, but I became very interested when they began to match it up to the Bible scripture. It gives new meaning to the phrase "Christ is in the light". *Joseph, Tennessee Colony, TX*

I borrowed a book called *The Burning Bush* and I immediately perceived a sense of self-discovery that I never had felt before, and I felt renewed. I hope I can understand myself, who I am, how to use my life to the fullest extent, to advance my mission to the next stage of my journey. I hope to be able to control my emotions and not be ruled by apprehension, and be useful or resourceful to others. *Jose, Florence, AZ*

Thank you for sending me *Rosicrucian Wisdom* and *An Introduction to Anthroposophy*. I found them to be enlightening and insightful. I read about truths I have felt within myself, but haven't seen published before. It's great to receive that confirmation. I was beginning to feel like I was alone in my spiritual journey. *Jonathon, Pendleton, IN*

An Introduction to Anthroposophy has opened my mind and forced me to ponder my existence here on planet earth. Francis Edmunds' easily comprehensible rewriting of Rudolf Steiner's world view has acted upon my life as a modern Buddha, making me see things to which I was previously blind. All the claims and points of views in this book are either supported with physical evidence, historical facts, or spiritual awareness. *Derek, Somerset, PA*

Studying Together

Where two or more are gathered

Thank you once again for the books and opportunity you and APO make possible. I love the books and will likely ask to read many over again and again. My celly was also very impressed with APO as a library. He did read them all and found some points we were able to discuss together. All the way from Michigan, you have built a bridge of awareness towards the inner and upper. Thank you. *Oscar, Tennessee Colony, TX*

Not together per se, but there are others involved in APO and we discuss our experiences with it and other things on our path. *Jacob, Tehachapi, CA*

We meet in library time, recreation, or dorm and discuss like-minded or enlightening subjects. *Perry, Richmond, TX*

We can only talk about what we've read when we're on the yard. *Robert, Delano, CA*

I want to be an inspiration to the younger guys and get them to use your program as well, so that we can organize like a book club. Get together and discuss the books that we have read. *John, Clio, AL*

Book Reviews



Spiritual Turning Points in North American History Rudolf Steiner

This is a very good book for the serious reader. I would say to you to first read a few books on Steiner and the spirit world and learn more about frequently used terms and their definitions to get the most out of this book. The Popol Vuh is real and an accurate text. Here it is broken down. There is a lot of coincidences in here, if that's what people would call them. I see the evolution of the races and cultures and it inspires me to dig deeper for my personal growth. *Jesus, El Dorado, KS*

The Friend of God from the Highlands Wilhelm Rath

I was intrigued by this book in its documenting the travels and insight of a man known to this day as a friend of God. It is almost like he was a visitor, a wanderer from the spiritual realm that took human form so as to guide our thinking and spiritual teachings so we may move closer to understanding and one day reach the spiritual realm. But I finished the book with a question in my mind: Are we all not a friend of God? If so, then can we also reach the state of consciousness and understanding shared by the friend of God? *Robin, Petersburg, VA*

Becoming Aware of the Logos Georg Kuhlewind

Becoming Aware of the Logos was very insightful in its structure of how all things being spoken are already in existence. It's like the phrase, "it was written", the concept that all things being done were already designed that way. The same concept applies to the words or language; all things being spoken were designed that way. Everything comes from the universe first. *Steve, Menard, IL*

Art and Human Consciousness Gottfried Richter

Art and Human Consciousness by Gottfried Richter is a pleasant surprise with its introspective correlations between Egyptian, Greek, and Christian art. Richter guides you along the evolution of human consciousness through insight into sculpture, painting, myth, and legends portrayed in developmental art. I actually experienced the emotions involved with his explanation for the psychology behind temple entrance structures and their significance. The symbolic use of space and form by various cultures are described in comprehensive text with diagrams and photographs. The information in this book is powerful and moving. *Dale, Winnfield, LA*

The Mysteries of the East and of Christianity Rudolf Steiner

The Mysteries of the East and of Christianity was an excellent read. Simply put, this book is about initiation, but with some clarification. The general idea being that initiation is usually a ceremony which makes one a member of a secret society; which can be conferred upon anyone willing to pay a certain price, a sum of money in most cases. While this is true of the so-called initiations of fraternal orders, and also of most pseudo-occult orders, it is altogether erroneous when applied to initiation into various degrees of a truly occult brotherhood such as the Rosicrucian Order, which in this case makes one a Christian Mystic. Initiation, therefore, is an inward experience, entirely separate and apart from any ceremony, and therefore, it is an absolute impossibility for anyone to confer it to anyone else. There is no key to spiritual attainment; merit alone counts. Initiation can positively never take place until the requisite inner development has made the aspirant ready to be shown how to use his accumulated power. Initiation changes the person's whole life. It gives you a confidence that you never possessed before. *Dennis, Bismarck, ND*

One Language Arnold D. Wadler

One Language was deeply insightful. It's a book that should be in schools everywhere. As one who studies languages, I found this book both captivating and illuminating from beginning to end. Perhaps humanity will one day take note of each culture's similarities to their own, appreciate the differences for their beauty, and take pride in what we have to offer of ourselves in return, because only when we are divided with strife over our differences, can those who would wish us harm most effectively hurt us. *Gary, New Boston, TX*

- Reverence for Selfless Service -

We welcome your stories of another who has touched your life

A Prime Example of Man's Goodness

In a world so riveted on violence and destruction, with the daily news steadily feeding images of catastrophe, we find ourselves believing that the entire world is corrupt and that there is no longer any good in mankind. But I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge a jewel amongst the jagged cold stones of the world. I want to celebrate the embodiment of some of man's finest qualities; righteousness, honesty, and compassion. I know such a man by the name of Edwin Shick. When I was ten years old he took me into his home while my mother battled a drug addiction that eventually terminated her parental rights. I was separated from my two younger brothers, the only siblings I knew, though I had others. I never knew my father and had no relatives who cared to have me. At age 13 I was a troubled youth with a violent temper and no regard for any authority. I was more of a burden than anything, but this man adopted me into his family as his own son. Edwin was born to a dysfunctional family torn by alcoholism, poverty, and many siblings. He had already raised two children of his own by the time I came along, and housed many orphaned children until the proper homes could be found for them. Edwin allows God to work through him in many ways. He operates a homeless shelter for men and ex-cons and serves as chaplain for the local police department. I've witnessed him give money to fatherless families behind on bills. He participates in a program that teaches Christian morals to the young boys and is deeply involved with the families of his congregation. I could go on, but the point is that this man has been a positive point in people's lives since before I was born. He becomes involved with each person he shelters, counsels, or encounters. I want to give my own gratitude to him, for he has influenced my life for the better to such a degree that I cannot express. Meeting this man was a highlight in my life. So I say 'thank you' to Edwin and all the people he represents. May God bless your soul. *Richard, Milton, FL*

Parzival & the Mystery of the Holy Grail ~ Does it Still Live Today?

cont. from pg 1

of bizarre and almost humorous escapades, playing out various entanglements with women and other temptations, which seem to mirror human soul experiences in their confusing and puzzling variety. These seem to represent on a soul level what Parzival, who suddenly fades into the background of the story for a few chapters, is experiencing on a spiritual level. Gawain undergoes a soul purification that is like a trial by water and fire, for passionate or egotistic love cannot exist in the presence of the Grail.

But what of the illness that is at the center of the story, the wound which plagues Amfortas, the Fisher King and current guardian of the Grail, how has he sinned and what can cure him? We could say that in Amfortas we see a picture of the human dilemma, the choice between the love of the body (of the world, of matter) and the love of the spirit, which, ultimately, is the choice between illusion and reality, and which for our time as for Amfortas ('robbed of strength'), the illusion seems so much realer than the reality that stands hidden behind it. Walter Stein tells us that 'his illness consists in his being unable to bring to fulfillment the process of inner development that he has begun.' In the time between his first experience of the Grail and his second fulfilling encounter, Parzival has completed all the steps that lead from dullness to doubt to final spiritual enlightenment. For us today it is no longer a question of belief in some external system of codes and dogmas, but of a personal experience of the spiritual along a path that leads, inescapably, to a death and a resurrection of one's own.

Though one feels the instructive intent of the writer, and that he takes his task seriously, he is vague about how he came to hear the story, though clear that he is not the author; in fact, he says, he is himself illiterate. Rudolf Steiner had much to say about Parzival and the Grail, but one of the most important is his assertion that Wolfram, along with being a traveling poet-musician, was an initiate himself and that he has brought the story into a poetic form having learned it from esoteric Eastern sources, one Kiot, through Flegetanis (both mysterious figures), well-versed in ancient astrology and astronomy. As a result, the story has a definite relationship with the zodiac and the planets and the world of the stars, references to which are woven throughout. It is no mistake, for example, that Parzival stumbles on the holy hermit, Trevrizent, to confess his grief and despair after wandering alone for five years, on Good Friday, though he is unaware of it and has lost touch with any religious practice. Finally though, the Grail calls him to Montsalvat and names him King of the Grail, because he has inwardly transformed his own human nature and thereby is capable of a love that is a healing and a nourishment for those who seek it.

How does Parzival accomplish his goal of finding and serving the Grail if not, in a sense, becoming the Grail himself, that is, by becoming a vessel emptied of all selfish motivation and personal craving, and by persevering steadfastly in that goal. As Rudolf Steiner put it in one of his Easter lectures: "If man would have again a vision of the spiritual, he must exert himself inwardly and draw it forth from the depths of his own soul." This is the task for all of us today if we would become a Parzival.

WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF ANTHROPOSOPHY FOR YOU?

IT HAS LED ME to open the door to Jesus Christ so I can let him into my life. The fruit that it has yielded is that I have become a vessel for God and others, a servant. *Richard, Fort Stockton, TX*

I'M OPEN TO FIELDS of study, discipline, focus, but I've never been opened to that through religion. Anthroposophy has given me vision and courage to grow, mature, and be responsible for my own inner development. *Andrell, Joliet, IL*

I HAVE BECOME A PERSON who no longer responds to events in my life in a flash of anger. I know that all events are a product of my own creation, thus I can calmly find a solution. *Nathan, Vacaville, CA*

THROUGH THE STUDY of anthroposophy, my life has been opened to deeper meaning in myself, a creation. The fruit it has yielded me is an improved self-image and higher self esteem. *Joseph, Rosharon, TX*

MY FAMILY SEES the change and explain how they see the growth as well as the mild temper, and they like it. I learned so much about myself, how to deal with anger, stress, fatigue. It gives me a sense of peace and harmony, and people respect the change I made within myself. *Edward, Huntingdon, PA*

STUDYING ANTHROPOSOPHY has assisted me in redefining my true self. The fruits vary, for instance: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, self awareness, love, empathy, intelligence, self control, a much cleaner way of thinking, my attitude, etc. *Francisco, Richmond, TX*

FIRST, THE FACT that your organization exists and assists prisoners in the way you do is an overwhelming thing. It makes me want to help someone. And secondly, I have come to see the larger scope of things. I try to see from a holistic view. *Clay, Crawfordville, FL*

IT'S TAUGHT ME to not embrace or worry about a fictitious world. I've learned to let go of a lot of things. It's sharpened my views and broadened my insight with what's inside of me. I'm also able to control emotions with respect to other inmates. *Melvin, Bonifay, FL*

IT HAS ALLOWED ME to understand that I am more than just a body. I have acquired an inner peace I did not have before. *Kendrick, Tennessee Colony, TX*

What New Ways of Thinking, Feeling, and Willing are you Applying?

Thinking: I think about the world and the spirits within it. My thoughts are of a much higher level. Feeling: I feel awe and gratitude for God, Jesus, and the spiritual hierarchies. Doing: I am being more compassionate to others and the world. *Colleen, Ypsilanti, MI*

I am thinking along the lines of spiritual growth; feeling more optimistic, practical, and patient with life and others. Doing things with more awareness and intuition. *Eric, Represa, CA*

I wake up in the morning and follow my own path, not necessarily do what everybody else is doing. I feel a lot better about myself knowing I'm doing something positive and constructive with myself. Studying! *Allen, Milton, FL*

I'm thinking before acting, controlling thoughts, emotions, and striving to reshape old thinking patterns that have proven to be detrimental to a more positive mental state. Freedom. *Victor, Lovelady, TX*



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Illuminating Anthroposophy
Anthroposophical Prison Outreach Newsletter



Parzival (Opening Words)
by *Wolfram von Eschenbach*



If unfaith in the heart find dwelling
Then the soul shall reap but woe;
And shaming alike and honor
Are his who such doubt shall show,
For it standeth in evil contrast
With a true man's dauntless might
As one seeth a magpie's plumage,
Which at one is black and white.
And yet he may win to blessing,
Since I wot well that in his heart,
Hell's darkness and light of Heaven
Alike have their lot and part.

(Jesse Weston's translation)