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Title: MEDITATION AND THE ANTHROPOSOLOGY OF RUDOLF STEINER – What is the Connection? First Questions

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Meditation and Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy:

What is the Connection?

First Questions

For several years, meditation seminars have been offered in various Anthroposophical contexts. What had previously been frowned upon, now seems to have become firmly established. The fact that there is dissatisfaction with primarily the study of books has been around for a long time, especially among younger people, but now wanting to push Anthroposophical meditation forward directly into the holy of holies of Anthroposophy raises a few questions. Are we really dealing here with Anthroposophical mediation?

"Anthroposophical Meditation"

In recent years, more and more institutes and internet portals have been established¹ that in seminars, workshops, multi-year courses and conferences want to offer an "Anthroposophical Meditation".² Here, the term "Anthroposophical Meditation", which the representatives themselves gave to this form of work, will be continued.³ Groupings, which initially formed independently of the Anthroposophical Society, were able in this way to bring themselves together with the "Center" (i.e. the Goetheanum), i.e., with the Anthroposophical Society. The institutions, forums and group meetings, which were mostly founded outside of the Society, appear together in organized events and conferences that are organized and supported by the Anthroposophical Society.⁴ Yes, the Anthroposophical Society as well as the newspapers and magazines published by it seem to have increasingly become the bearers of this stream. Thus one of the most important meditation portals even comes from the center of this Society, from the Goetheanum.⁵

What forms the basis of this development?

With their interest, the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" encounter a widespread phenomenon: Meditation and meditating today belong to the commonplace recreational and relaxation practices. They expressly distance themselves from the widely known "Eastern-inspired meditation".⁶ On the webpage "Anthroposophical Meditation – the Western Spiritual Path", the following can be read:

"Unlike forms of meditation inspired from the East, Anthroposophical meditation is not only concerned with healing the inner world, rather also explores our environment in its different levels of reality. The goal is to develop an inner, soul instrument, with which both the inner and the outer world can be observed in far more extensive ways than our everyday thinking and perception are capable of. Consequently, Anthroposophical meditation has both a

*calming and healing effect, but at the same time also focuses on non-sensory levels of our existence, which can thus be consciously included in practical everyday questions."*⁷

There is supposed to be an extended advantage that differentiates "Anthroposophical Meditation" from the "Eastern inspired" one and makes it superior. While the Eastern one "only" brings about a "healing" of the "inner world", "Anthroposophical Meditation" also wants to train "a soul instrument", thanks to which even everyday questions can be answered.

Such a project corresponds to a great extent to the needs of the modern human being: health and well-being are to be attained, as well as the ability to respond to the many questions that everyday life poses in a way that is more relevant than the answers coming from "ordinary thinking and perception". For this reason, it is quite understandable that this direction of working attracts many interested parties. There is now finally a possibility of enlivening what had previously remained only dry theory! A path appears to have opened up for transforming the content of Rudolf Steiner's books and lectures that have remained stuck in "head-fixed" [verkopften = made head], dead ("stone-ified")[i.e. a word play on "ver-stein-erten", Stein=stone in German; thus either 'made into stone' or 'made into Steiner' - tr.] ideas, a path for experiencing the ideas themselves and thus for living up to two of Rudolf Steiner's repeated demands; for he had repeatedly stressed that Anthroposophy would only enter the world correctly if it is experienced and not just inwardly imagined; and that no one, if they are simply of goodwill, would have to accept the contents of these on the basis of blind belief rather would be able to verify them themselves.

The essence of Anthroposophy seems to be fully fulfilled in this form of work, and indeed: In a flyer is to be found the following "feedback from participants":⁸

"Your work has revitalized and refreshed me and after a long time finally showed me a way back to the painfully missing Anthroposophical roots."

And another participant:

"What did I find important? The bringing of Anthroposophy out of intellectuality and moving it within the heart."

The representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" expressly base themselves on and refer to Rudolf Steiner, who for most of them functions as the starting point and foundation, although it is believed that the form of meditation given by him can certainly be enriched by those forms influenced from the East. Above all when concrete exercises are given, almost always other "techniques" are included.⁹

For those who have come together under the portal "Anthroposophical Meditation – the Western Spiritual Path"¹⁰, the difference between "Anthroposophical Meditation" and those inspired from the East is supposed to consist in the fact that "Anthroposophical Meditation" seeks "to build up a soul instrument, with which both the inner and the outer world can be observed in far more extensive ways than our everyday thinking and perception are capable of."

The "soul instrument" to be developed is, as will be seen from the text below, the observation of "non-sensory levels of our existence".

Imagination Inspiration Intuition?

The representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" claim not only to mediate, rather at the same time to conduct meditative research. This is why for most of the representatives, the development of the higher stages of knowledge that Rudolf Steiner calls "imagination", "inspiration" and "intuition" is the central concern. The "higher stages of knowledge" to be developed are regarded as the starting point and the end point in one. A "meditative knowledge" is striven for that is supposed to lead directly to "supersensible research".

On the above portal, one can read the following:

"Through concentration and strengthening the imagining or 'placing something before one's mind', it becomes possible not only to look at the meditated contents as finished objects, rather to experience the forces that work within them. Thus the forces of growth of plants can be experienced or even the subtle reactions of the body to certain foods or to technical devices. The forces that act in health or illness can be differentiated in perception, as well as forces that shape social contexts. Rudolf Steiner described the ability to present such operative forces in internal, dynamic images, as imagination.

If through meditative practice, feeling is refined and opened to the ability to perceive, then one can thereby arrive at a deep, empathic understanding of the mediated contents, their meanings and connections (which Steiner designates as inspiration). Finally, by surrendering one's own will to the existence of the meditated content, one can attain a secure, inner knowledge about the other being (intuition)."

In summary, the following overview is given:

Imagination:

SOUL ABILITY: Imagining, representing or placing smth. before one's mind

EXERCISE: concentration and intensification

RECOGNIZING: Experiencing the forming forces of nature, the health giving forces, the social shaping forces

Inspiration:

SOUL ABILITY: Feeling

EXERCISE: Carefully refining and opening

RECOGNIZING: A knowing feeling of the meanings and connections of what is meditated

Intuition:

SOUL ABILITY: Willing

EXERCISE: Dedication to (letting oneself be filled by the other)

RECOGNIZING: Certainty about the inner being (such an existence) of what is meditated

The following relationships are considered fundamental:

1. Imagination and imagining or placing smth. before one's mind,
2. Inspiration and feeling,
3. Intuition and willing

These relationships are presented by the most diverse teachers of "Anthroposophical Meditation". In numerous articles, seminars and study announcements and descriptions, they appear again and again in a similar form. The essential thing is that they are active completely in the sense Rudolf Steiner intended; if they are mentioned, it usually happens with a reference to a text by Rudolf Steiner.¹¹

Numerous seminars today offer observations in the sense of imagination, inspiration and intuition. For those who are less familiar with it, quotes from such a seminar offer will be given, thus making it clearer how they are attempting to work with it. This can only be regarded as one of many examples, however, since there are definitely certain differences between the individual representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation"; and yet it can become clearer to the uninitiated from such a concrete description how what is referred to as "imagination", "inspiration" and "intuition" are being dealt with.

Thus the director of the "Year-circle - Practice and Research Association", Dirk Kruse, gives an invitation in several seminars to "supersensible perception of the bird songs of spring".¹² The main concern of these seminars is the "*observation of birdsongs (in early spring) in imagination – inspiration – intuition*": Explicitly, it is not an exercise for achievement, rather for the application of these (already existing) abilities.

The observation of the bird songs is to "*come about in a differentiated manner in three steps of feeling*". For this purpose, the following information is given:

"IMAGINATION: impression of the force – type of substance, type of consistency, vitality, dynamic form gesture, motion, type of light, type of image"

"INSPIRATION: feeling into – mood, feeling character, type of emotional value, intentionality and wisdom of worth"

"INTUITION: standing within – being it!, state of consciousness, wisdom, intentionality "

Each of these steps is described in more detail; here only the explanation of "intuition" is given:

"What produces (what changes and leaves behind) the entire choral singing, the single song and the single song phrase – as echoing presence – in total a) in the space, b) in the soul world – as c) (total) presence of the being, d) as power of the songs, e) as meaning of the songs?"

Let us now take a closer look:

In the sense of an "imagination", the singing of birds is to be perceived as something visual, indeed, as an *"impression of force before the eyes"* (!). In order to move on to "inspiration", the feelings to be experienced take center place, whereby here also the one "type of emotional value" (?), as well as the "intentionality" (of the birdsong? why does the bird sing?), and the "wisdom of worth" (the worth of birdsong?) are named. Particularly puzzling, however, is the description of the "intuition" to be experienced: Here is to be perceived what the "choral singing" (of the birds) in the echo ("echoing presence") in "space", in the "soul world" as "power" and "meaning of the song" changes and leaves behind – probably within the "being active intuitively".

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What the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" understand by "imagination", "inspiration" and "intuition", how one practices and works on them, was developed and presented by Anna-Katharina Dehmelt in the magazine **Die Drei** in 2009.¹³ A few years earlier, Dehmelt, together with Sebastian Gronbach, Jelle van der Meulen, Alexander Schaumann and Michael Schmock, founded a "Firm for Anthroposophy", which is to be understood as *"an experimental field for new ways of working in and with Anthroposophy"*.¹⁴ It was within the framework of this firm that Dehmelt carried out the studies described by her.

Like a book that links the various representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" together, these connections elaborated in writings by Dehmelt appear in the numerous books and articles published since then on this subject, as well as in the announcement of seminars, colloquia and conferences on "Anthroposophical Meditation". The study by Dehmelt published in **Die Drei** can therefore be regarded as fundamental to the current practice of dealing with "Anthroposophical Meditation". This is why I will take a closer look at this study below.

The Rose Cross Meditation and Its Consequences

The first of the two essays by Anna-Katharina Dehmelt, published under the title "Meditation and Research", presents itself as a *"fundamental introduction"* to the question of the peculiarity of a "specifically Anthroposophical Meditation." This is to be given by the example of the Rose Cross Meditation as developed by Rudolf Steiner.¹⁵ This is why the study refers directly to the *"example of an inner contemplation"* described by Rudolf Steiner in **Occult Science - An Outline**, which *illustrated* this – according to Rudolf Steiner himself – *"with a symbolic representation"*.¹⁶ With this symbolic representation is meant a rose cross, which is why this presentation is now called "the Rose Cross Meditation".

The study thus claims to have been developed based on a written work by Rudolf Steiner and to be built up on this. Her *"many years of experience also in interaction with other people"* made possible for Anna-Katharina Dehmelt, however, that she has been able to pursue this question *"not only theoretically"*, rather also to connect it with her own experiences.¹⁷

In order to give the reader an idea of Dehmelt's activity, her approach will be briefly outlined as a first step. In a second one, we then turn to the questions arising from this approach in connection with Rudolf Steiner's remarks in **Occult Science - An Outline**.

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The study begins straight away with the three stages of consciousness described by Rudolf Steiner as "stages of higher knowledge." Right in the first few paragraphs, Dehmelt explains that Rudolf Steiner *introduced* the Rosicrucian Meditation "*as an exercise for the state of consciousness of imagination*" in order then to lead this on to the area of inspiration as well as intuition.¹⁸ After this introduction, she comes to the questions that have arisen for her. She writes:

*Rudolf Steiner's instructions, especially for inspiration and intuition, are not easy to follow. What exactly is the soul to direct itself to when it sets the image aside and moves its own soul activity into the middle point?"*¹⁹

With these words she had earlier above, following Rudolf Steiner's remarks, described the exercise for inspiration; and she continues:

*"Certainly many things may be found in the soul, but what exactly is meant? And even the preparation for intuition: a great deal opens up in the 'empty' consciousness (with this the exercise for inspiration is outlined – I.D.), but is this already something new or rather an echo, a reminiscence?"*²⁰

Let us make the situation clear in which the writer of these lines found herself: Thanks to her experiences in meditation, she had reached a crucial point. At that point, namely, at which she had to realize that what she had extracted from Rudolf Steiner's work **Occult Science - An Outline** about "inspiration" and "intuition" was beyond her. She realized that the nature of "inspiration" and "intuition," as she found it while reading this work, she cannot find within her own experience; she does not know how to sort out, to bring about and to assess the activities and experiences that make up "inspiration" and "intuition." How did she deal with this situation?

Immediately after determining her non-understanding, which means in the immediately following sentence (1), appears her answer. And it looks like this:

*"It turns out, however, that already in the very first activities to be performed, namely in the buildup of the symbol, not only its meaning, rather also the three higher stages of imagination, inspiration and intuition, are laid out."*²¹

Dehmelt therefore claims to have recognized that in the buildup of the Rose Cross symbol described by Rudolf Steiner, "*the three higher stages of knowledge of imagination, inspiration and intuition*" are already laid out, and on the basis of this assertion, she develops her approach that is the content of the whole study: All statements, both of the first part (meditation) and the second part (research) are based on this assumption, yet this is not all, for the work thus developed by Dehmelt is until today the foundation for the so widespread and as incontrovertibly recognized, valid conceptions of the nature of what Rudolf Steiner designated as "imagination", "inspiration" and "intuition".

Anna-Katharina Dehmelt, after having to realize that the nature of "imagination" and "inspiration" is hidden from her, thinks that she is able to find precisely that in the presentation by Rudolf Steiner about which she cannot formulate any (clear) concept at all! And specifically, in such a presentation by Rudolf Steiner (namely, on the structure of the Rose Cross symbol) in which neither imagination and much less inspiration and intuition is basically even begun with.

In summary, she determines that *"with meditating, four levels are to be distinguished:*

a) Anchoring within the object consciousness

b) For imagination, the 'placing before the mind' made porous and receptive (...)

c) For inspiration, the feeling made porous and receptive (...)

d) For intuition, the willing made porous and receptive (...)" ²²

"Spiritual Research"

The second part of the study presents the transition from meditation to "research", which Dehmelt carried out with others within the framework of the "Firm for Anthroposophy". From the insights gained from the Rose Cross Meditation, a scheme was developed that was transferred *"to other contents as a methodology"*.²³

With a view to an imagination to be developed, she explains:

"To begin with, it is a matter of burying a fully penetrated idea within the object consciousness, which can then be remembered. In a second step, what is initially unconsciously experienced about this idea is described in a comparative way in pictures, which can gradually become imaginations." ²⁴

And the process of how imaginations are developed she describes as follows:

"In order to get into this sphere, it is helpful to clarify for oneself what the material of such imaginative characterizations can be. Here come into question, in principle, all areas of the senses, from colors to sounds and smells, to movements or heavy-light sensations, but also fairy tales, myths and legends, weather moods, landscapes, any images of nature at all – in short, everything that is perceptible and can be used as an eloquent comparison to what is characterized. (...) A corner of the mouth may look like a dark mountain cave, a ribcage can speak like a sunrise, and an overall shape may sound like the very high and very low tones of an organ. The pictorial ideas occur spontaneously in many people; on the whole, too much material is available at this level rather than too little; the production of images comes about with no great effort. For each individual, it is often indistinguishable what they have produced from the image and what has entered their consciousness without their own intervention. That does not matter at first. It is important that for the individual the image is so taken hold of that it really captures their inner experience with the object. With this critical question, some images evaporate very quickly; the images and qualities about which the participants can communicate well, prove themselves. The goal is achieved when the images and qualities of the others are comprehensible, even if you yourself had not come to them." ²⁵

Before we turn to Rudolf Steiner's explanations in **Occult Science - An Outline**, let us summarize what has been worked out so far: Dehmelt claims:

1. Rudolf Steiner described in **Occult Science - An Outline**, using the example of the Rose Cross Meditation, the path from imagination over inspiration to intuition.
2. For inspiration and intuition, the instructions for practice remained unclear from the text, but one further step could be taken than explicitly presented by Rudolf Steiner: A description of how to work on the three levels of higher knowledge was already to be found in his presentation of the building up of this meditation.
3. From this it would result that a "*placing of smth. before the mind' made porous and receptive*" leads to imagination, a "*feeling made porous and receptive*" to inspiration and a "*willing made porous and receptive*" to intuition.
4. The insights made in the buildup of the Rose Cross Meditation could be applied "*to other contents as a methodology*", i.e., it could be transferred over.
5. On the development of imaginations: What is "*unconsciously experienced*" of the ideas that occur in the object consciousness (also called "*ordinary consciousness*" by Rudolf Steiner) could, by becoming "*described in a comparative way in pictures*", gradually become further developed into imaginations.
6. In order to build up such ideas, "*everything that is perceptible*" and what can be applied "*as an eloquent comparison*" ("*a corner of the mouth may look like a dark mountain cave*", etc.) could be made use of. It is the applying of this 'what is perceived' and 'as eloquent comparison', which could be developed further to imagination.
7. That an imagination has emerged is shown by the fact that "*the images and qualities of the other meditators are comprehensible*", i.e., it is the group that decides whether an imagination has been achieved or not.

Rudolf Steiner and No End

The chapter "Knowledge of Higher Worlds (Concerning Initiation)", from which Anna-Katharina Dehmelt proceeds, begins with the characterization of a "*third state of soul*" to be acquired in addition to the state of waking and sleeping. Rudolf Steiner describes this state of soul as follows:

"A person gains insight into higher worlds when, besides sleeping and waking, they acquire a third state of soul. While awake, the soul is given over to sense impressions and the ideas that are stimulated by those sense impressions. While asleep, the sense impressions say nothing, but the soul also loses consciousness. The daytime experiences sink into the sea of unconsciousness. – Now imagine: the soul would be able to come to an awareness during sleep in spite of the fact that the impressions of the senses, as otherwise in deep sleep, remain excluded. Yes, even the memory of the day's experiences would not be present. Would the soul now find itself in a nothingness? Would it not be able to have any experiences at all? – An answer to this question is only possible if a state can really be established that is the same or similar to this. When the soul can experience something, even when there are no sensory effects

and no memories of such present within it, then the soul would find itself with regard to the ordinary external world as in sleep, and yet it would not sleep, rather it would be as when it were awake in front of a real world." ²⁶

This characterization of a *"third state of soul"* given at the beginning of his presentation is the foundation on which everything that follows is built up. Only when the reader has worked out a conception of this state of soul can Rudolf Steiner's presentation be understood. If this foundation is passed over or misunderstood, then the explanations that follow will be falsely understood. Everything that is said in what follows about imagination, inspiration and intuition is based on this foundation.

What is the essential nature of the *"third state of soul"* characterized by Rudolf Steiner in this way?

It is a state that bears the consciousness of an awake state, but from the state of sleep bears the complete exclusion from itself of any sensory effects. Every sense-effect, also every memory of it, is excluded, and yet the soul experiences it as if *"it were awake in front of a real world"*.

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Such a foundation is missing in the presentation of Anna-Katharina Dehmelt, who believes she is giving a *"fundamental introduction"* to Anthroposophical Meditation. Dehmelt begins her presentation directly with the so-called *"three stages of higher knowledge"* without first even having inquired about the principle difference that exists between ordinary consciousness and a higher one. Yet if one places the foundation given by Rudolf Steiner at the beginning of the considerations, a clear picture immediately emerges: It becomes clear that the experiences and exercises described by Anna-Katharina Dehmelt and the other representatives of an "Anthroposophical Meditation" pass right over what Rudolf Steiner is speaking about. The exercises given or offered by these representatives are based on the assumption that the first stage of "higher knowledge" is immediately and directly derived from the observations made from sensory objects and the ideas built from these: namely, that of imagination. But this is impossible if one takes seriously the characterization of a "higher consciousness" given by Rudolf Steiner, which, incidentally, turns up again in all his explanations – albeit always in a slightly different form.²⁷ "Imaginations" cannot be immediately formed from physical-sensory ideas; that is simply impossible. The ideas formed with the help of ordinary consciousness, such as that of the Rose Cross, can merely serve to "train" the soul for a new state of consciousness, to prepare the soul for it.

Only in this sense is the sensory image meditation of the Rose Cross to be understood.

The ideas *"that the soul should devote to the goal of spiritual training"* Rudolf Steiner characterizes like this:

"They are designed in such a way that they do not depict something external, rather have the peculiarity within themselves of working awakingly on the soul. (...) For it is not a question of what the ideas contain, rather simply of the fact that the soul directs all its forces to having nothing else in consciousness than the idea in question. While in the ordinary life of the soul its forces are distributed over many things and its ideas rapidly change, with spiritual

pupilship it is a question of the concentration of the whole soul life on one idea. Not what is presented is essential, rather what matters is that, through the way of representing, what is presented releases the soul from any reference to a physical." ²⁸

Anna-Katharina Dehmelt claims that Rudolf Steiner showed the path through imagination, inspiration and intuition based on the Rose Cross Meditation. The uninformed reader might therefore think that, immediately following the description of the Rose Cross Meditation and its buildup, he would have presented the three stages of a higher knowledge. However, this is not the case. Precisely because a "higher knowledge" cannot arise directly from such a meditation, Rudolf Steiner explains the following:

"You will usually have to do such exercises for a long time before you can perceive their results yourself." ²⁹

Imaginations cannot be "developed" at all; they meet the seeker "from the other side" – as a kind of grace and a gift.

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For the description of the meditation, the fundamental connections that Rudolf Steiner initially characterized appear again, as if transformed and developed further. Comparing the sleep and the awake state of the human being are brought forth, but now applied to the meditation:

"The most clarity can come through comparing the process of meditation with the state of sleep. It is similar to this on one side and completely opposite on the other. It is a sleep which in comparison with day-consciousness represents a higher awakened-existence." ³⁰

The point is that the soul should develop such a force within itself that is capable of breaking away "*from sensory perception and from the instrument of the brain to which the understanding is at first bound*", and not some "imagination" is experienced that is in any way related to the previously developed (sense) image when this process of "breaking away" has taken place. Quite the opposite:

"This breaking away cannot happen earlier than when the person feels: Now through forces I am placing before my mind something through which my senses and the brain do not serve as tools. The first thing a person experiences on this path is just such a being freed from the physical organs. (...) This is the first purely spiritual experience: the observation of a soul-spiritual I-being." ³¹

And then Rudolf Steiner characterizes the first appearance of imaginations, namely like this:

"The first experience is therefore in a sense a self-perception. It belongs to the nature of spirit pupilship that the soul, through the self-education practiced on itself, at this point of its development has a full awareness of the fact that to begin with it perceives itself in the worlds of

images (imaginations) that occur as a result of the exercises described. While these images emerge as living in a new world, the soul has to recognize that they are nothing else to begin with than the reflection of its own being intensified by the exercises." ³²

In their content, these "worlds of images" have nothing to do with the symbol first meditated on; instead the soul experiences therein its own "*being intensified by the exercises*" – and also this as grace and a gift, and not then when the meditator intends to bring this about.

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Of course, it is not possible to reproduce the entire text of **Occult Science - An Outline** here; the interested reader can only work on this for him or herself. Here, however, a central element of this presentation will be indicated:

After Rudolf Steiner has characterized the newly born "second I", in long passages of the book he goes exhaustively into the role of the thinking that is to be trained up. Yet not about a thinking that – as is usual – brings itself about from the observation of the physical-sensible world:

"The inner solidity of the imaginative stage of knowledge is achieved through the fact that the soul contemplations (meditations) presented are supported by what one can call habituation to 'sensory-free thinking'. If one makes a thought on the basis of observation in the physical-sensible world, then this thought is not sense-free. Yet it is not so that the human being is only able to form such thoughts. (...) Through the fact that one unceasingly makes into one's own what spiritual research says, one becomes accustomed to a thinking that does not create from sensory observations. One learns to recognize how thought weaves thought into thought, how thought seeks thought, even when thought connections are not affected by the power of the observation of the senses." ³³

For Rudolf Steiner, the education and training of thinking is fundamental, and indeed so fundamental that he points to a second path, also based on a training of thinking, which also fundamentally prepares the imaginative level of knowledge:

*"It is the path that leads through the communications of spiritual science into sense-free thinking, a thoroughly more secure path. There is another path, however, that is safer and, above all, more accurate, but more difficult for many people. It is presented in my books **Goethe's Theory of Knowledge/The Science of Knowing**, and **The Philosophy of Freedom**. These writings reflect what human thought can work out if thinking does not give itself over to the impressions of the physical-sensible external world, rather only to itself. Then pure thinking is at work on itself like a living being, not merely on the memories of what is sensible that goes on within people."* ³⁴

Thus, according to Rudolf Steiner there are two paths that are able to lead into an imaginative state of consciousness: One goes hand in hand with the training of sense-free thinking, the other with so-called "pure thinking". The exercises given by the representatives of an "Anthroposophical Meditation" for the achieving of "imaginations", however, are aimed at

the exact opposite: a thinking is not intended there at all; all the instructions that are made for the achieving of "imagnations" are limited to ideas that take their start from what was physically-sensibly perceived, and in fact to such a perceived that can be transformed into fantasies. (Dehmelt: " *A corner of the mouth may look like a dark mountain cave, a ribcage can speak like a sunrise, and an overall shape may sound like the very high and very low tones of an organ.*" ³⁵

Reading Cookbooks

Rudolf Steiner repeatedly warned against reading his books "like cook books" – if you read them like that, you would do better to actually take up cookbooks instead of the books written by him.³⁶

As laid out above, the foundation of the work that Dehmelt has developed is based on the view that in the buildup of the Rose Cross Meditation the exercises are already laid out for all three stages of higher knowledge. She consistently assumes (and with her the other representatives of an "Anthroposophical Meditation") that a direct relationship does exist between feeling and inspiration. This view is based on the fact that Dehmelt believes she has discovered an exercise for achieving inspiration in what Rudolf Steiner described as a "feeling" to be experienced during the building up of the Rose Cross Meditation. On this foundation, for example, it was determined that the experience of the feeling of chastity, which is supposed to be present at the imagination of the green juice of the plant, is already an exercise for achieving inspiration. Dehmelt explains:

"This includes, of course, the requirement that one actually follows Rudolf Steiner's instructions. (...) It is not enough to know green as an expression of chastity, rather to actually bring to birth a green in the soul that one can experience for oneself as an expression of chastity. (...) One should borrow things in the sensory world, such as the different greens of different plants or different meadows (...) One can also take other sensory qualities to help: What is the consistency of the green liquid? Which temperature? How translucent is it? How does it smell, and how does it move? (...) It is the same with feelings. (...) How does the green liquid feel within me as an expression of chastity? Does this have something to do with the feeling of bliss/blessedness?" ³⁷

Anna-Katharina Dehmelt emphatically emphasizes that she is directly following Rudolf Steiner's statements, which she describes as "instructions", by "immersing" herself in the different ideas that arise for her from what is physically-sensibly perceived and begins, starting from that, to make thoughts. So she enriches the "material" further with sensory impressions, which she then attempts to saturate with "feelings" and the ideas (fantasies) that subsequently connect on to them.

Rudolf Steiner, however, describes exactly the opposite path. The meditator, starting out from the qualities of soul that one has acquired in the exercise of sense-free or, better yet, pure thinking, has to struggle to break free from the ordinary consciousness that has formed in the experience of what is physical and sensible. It is about achieving a third state of consciousness,

which only occurs *"when the soul can experience something, even when there are no sensory effects and no memories of such present within it."*³⁸ These words of Rudolf Steiner, which are already on the first page of his explanations about "Knowledge of Higher Worlds" in **Occult Science - An Outline**, are and will remain fundamental. They occur throughout – reappearing again and again in modified form – all of his subsequent remarks. There is no question of getting tangled deeper in sense perceptions that are then saturated with the elements of fantasy in the belief of freeing themselves from it. No, it is a matter of, just as this happens in sense-free (or better yet, pure) thinking, also freeing perceiving in this way from the foundation of the physical-sensible brain.

Only on this foundation can what Rudolf Steiner wrote about the work of preparing an inspirational or intuitive consciousness be understood at all. Because Anna-Katharina Dehmelt, however, took exactly the opposite path – that of today's psychology and psychotherapy saturated with elements of New Age practices³⁹, the meaning of these statements remains closed to her. She confesses (as already quoted above):

*"Rudolf Steiner's instructions, especially for inspiration and intuition, are not easy to follow. What exactly is the soul to direct itself to when it sets the image aside and moves its own soul activity into the middle point? Certainly many things may be found in the soul, but what exactly is meant?"*⁴⁰

With Rudolf Steiner, on the other hand, – immediately after his presentation of the Rose Cross Meditation – one can read,

*"...that not the images of the sensory perceptions are what leads to the awakening of the higher faculties of soul, rather that this effect is caused only by the manner in which these details are combined; and this combination does not depict something that exists in the sense world."*⁴¹

Did Anna-Katharina Dehmelt, who has been working with Rudolf Steiner's Rose Cross Meditation for many years and offers her work in countless seminars, overlook all this? And all the co-workers and participants of their seminars: Did they even read what and how Rudolf Steiner talks about it? Or were they satisfied with what Dehmelt offered?

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In *"the manner in which these details are combined"*, which makes up the Rose Cross Meditation, is established the force that then, when one delves deeper into this, can lead to the *"awakening of the higher faculties of soul"*. The exercises that are supposed to lead to inspiration thus concern the nature of the meditations given by Rudolf Steiner. He describes these exercises as follows:

"While, however, in those exercises that lead to imagination a connection takes place to the impressions of the sensible, physical world, with those for inspiration this connection has to increasingly fall away. In order to clarify what has to be done, think again about the symbol of

the Rose Cross. If one sinks oneself into this, one has before one an image whose parts are taken from impressions of the sensible world: the black color of the cross, the roses, etc. The composition of these parts into the Rose Cross is not, however, taken from the sensible-physical world. If now the spirit pupil tries to make the black cross and the red roses as images of sensible-real things completely disappear from consciousness and to maintain in the soul only the spiritual activity that placed these parts together, then one has a means to a meditation of such a type that gradually leads one to inspiration. One should lead oneself into ones soul in something like the following way: What did I do inwardly in order to add the cross and the rose together into the symbol? What I have done (my own soul process), I want to firmly hold onto, but let the image itself disappear from my consciousness. Then I want to feel everything in me that my soul has done in order to bring about the image, but I do not want to imagine the image itself. I now want to live quite inwardly in my own activity that created the image. Thus I do not want to immerse myself in an image, rather in my own image-generating soul activity." ⁴²

In fact, in Rudolf Steiner's text the word "feeling" also appears, albeit in a completely different context: "*What my soul has done to bring about the image*" is supposed to be felt. In the middle point is supposed to stand one's "*own image-generating activity of the soul*", but not some feeling or other, which, like the green color of the plant sap, accompanied the buildup of the symbol. Not the feeling of the "*impressions of the physical-sense world*" stand in a relation to the development of an inspirational state of consciousness, rather quite the opposite, since these impressions have to more and more "*fall away*". Instead, however, it is a matter of experiencing that spiritual activity "*that placed these parts together.*"

*

Those working with Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy can only prepare themselves for a higher state of consciousness; whether, how and when they obtain this depends on many elements that (still) escape their everyday consciousness. Fundamental to this path is a training of thinking that goes hand in hand with a learning to read the writings of Rudolf Steiner. Here it is important not to want to seek and find (again) in these writings what has been learned about and experienced from a completely different side. That other side is based on an interest that is opposed to the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner. Neither a feeling of well-being can be the goal of a truly Anthroposophical work, nor an intensification of physical-sensible consciousness that has been so far dispersed with elements of fantasy that it has lost all relation to any reality, even to the physical-sensible one.

(to be continued)

Irene Diet, March, 2018

Footnotes:

1. Here are the most important ones: (1) Anthroposophical Meditation - A Western Spiritual Path: www.anthroposophical-meditation.org; (2) Anthroposophical Meditation (Th. Mayer and A. Hardorp): www.Anthroposophische-Meditation.de ; (3) Institute for Anthroposophical Meditation (Dehmelt): www.infameditation.de ; (4) Goetheanum Initiative Meditation Worldwide: www.meditation.goetheanum.org ; (5) Association for Formative Forces Research: www.bildekraefte.de ; (6) D.N. Dunlop Institute: www.dndunlop-institut.de ; (7) Akanthos Academy: www.akanthos-akademie.de ; (8) Gesellschaft für Angewandte Geistesforschung (Society for Applied Spiritual Research) (Frank Burdich): www.geistesforschung-gmbh.de ;
2. Thus took place from February 23 to 25, 2018, the annually organized conference by, i.a., the Anthroposophical Society in Germany on "Meditation as a Path of Knowledge – the Diversity of Anthroposophical Approaches" in Stuttgart.
3. Of course, there are differences between the individual representatives who have come together under the common motto of "Anthroposophical Meditation." Here, these differences cannot be discussed in detail, but an attempt is made to ask such questions about the nature of this form of work as it has entered the world today.
4. The General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany, Michael Schmock, founding member of the "Firm for Anthroposophical", has been one of the central representatives of this field of work since 2012. Every year since 2012, a working colloquium on "supersensible perception" has been supported by the German national society and quite particularly by Schmock. On December 13, 2017, at his invitation, they met again in Stuttgart. – What is offered by the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" have also in the meantime become supports for different Rudolf Steiner centres, thus for example in Berlin, Hamburg and Stuttgart.
5. www.meditation.goetheanum.org
6. As already indicated, there are differences between the individual meditation teachers. While most claim to represent a specific Anthroposophical meditation, Thomas Mayer emphasizes that the differences between Anthroposophical and eastern inspired meditation are small. In an article published in "Anthroposophy Worldwide" in October, 2013, he clarified: "From around 1900 on, esoteric masters worldwide became public and opened esoteric schools, for example: Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophy), Peter Deunov and Mikhael Aivanhov (Universal White Brotherhood), Hazrat Inayat Khan (International Sufi Movement), Swami Sivananda (Yoga) or the masters of the various Buddhist schools, the real masters of Hinduism and later shamans of all continents. These esoteric schools complement each other and belong together. There are various starting points, approaches and tasks, but no real differences."
7. See: www.anthroposophical-meditation.org
8. See the flyer "Anthroposophical Meditation." Program 2018, organized by Thomas Mayer and Agnes Hardorp.
9. See, e.g. the contributions of the individual interview partners, especially towards the end of the interviews, at: www.anthroposophische-meditation.org
10. www.anthroposophical-meditation.org
11. This "turning" towards Rudolf Steiner is striking. Mostly quotations from Rudolf Steiner are already appearing in the flyers of the conferences and seminars. For example, see the flyer for

the annual conference on "Meditation as a Path of Knowledge – the Diversity of Anthroposophical Approaches" organized by the Anthroposophical Society in Germany, which took place from February 23 to 25, 2018, in Stuttgart.

12. For this see carpathian-spirit.org/dirk-kruse. More details about it in, i.a., the essay by Dirk Kruse: *Spiritual Observation in Nature*.

13. Dehmelt, Anna-Katharina, *Meditation and Research, Part I: Meditation*, in: **Die Drei**, 3/2009; Part II: *Research*, in: **Die Drei**, 4/2009.

14. See Dehmelt, A.-K., *Meditation*, *ibid.*: **Die Drei**, 4/2009, p. 48, footnote 12.

15. Quoted from: Dehmelt, A.-K., *Meditation*, *ibid.*: **Die Drei**, 3/2009, p. 53.

16. Quoted from: Rudolf Steiner, **Occult Science – An Outline**, GA 13, p. 309.

17. Quoted from: Dehmelt, A.-K., *Meditation*, *ibid.*: **Die Drei**, 3/2009, p. 53.

18. Quoted from: Dehmelt, A.-K., *Meditation*, *ibid.*: **Die Drei**, 3/2009, p. 54.

19. Quoted from: *ibid.*, P. 56. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

20. Quoted from: *ibid.* Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

21. Quoted from: *ibid.*

22. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 67.

23. Quoted from: Dehmelt, A.-K., *Meditation*, *ibid.*, in: **Die Drei** 4/2009, p. 48.

24. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 51. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

25. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 49. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

26. Quoted from: Rudolf Steiner, **Occult Science**, *op. cit.*, p. 299f. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

27. See especially the essay by Rudolf Steiner on "Knowledge of the State between Death and a New Birth", which appeared in 1916/17 in the magazine **Das Reich**. Today reprinted in: Rudolf Steiner, **Philosophy and Anthroposophy 1904 -1923**, GA 35, p. 269ff.

28. Quoted from: Rudolf Steiner, **Occult Science**, *op. cit.*, P. 308. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

29. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 316.

30. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 318.

31. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 319. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

32. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 319f. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

33. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 340 ff. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

34. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 343. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

35. Quoted from: Dehmelt, A.-K., *Meditation*, *ibid.*, in: **Die Drei** 4/2009, p. 49.

36. See Diet, Irene, *Rudolf Steiner-An Author of Cookbooks?* article in: www.ignisverlag.com

37. Quoted from: Dehmelt, A.-K., *Meditation*, *ibid.*, in: **Die Drei** 3/2009, p. 61f.

38. Quoted from: Rudolf Steiner, **Occult Science**, *op. cit.*, p. 299f.

39. The "Katathym-Imaginative Psychotherapy – KIP" (Guided Affective Imagery)(Katathyme Bilderleben), which was developed in 1954 by Hanscarl Leuner, can be regarded as one of the most important foundations for the way of working of the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation". This has been nourished by, i.a., elements of the New Age and has also fertilized these in turn. How close the exercises practiced by the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" are to those practices, anyone can experience who has dealt with both.

40. Quoted from: Dehmelt, A.-K., *Meditation*, *ibid.*, in: **Die Drei** 3/2009, p. 56.

41. Quoted from: Rudolf Steiner, **Occult Science**, *op. cit.*, p. 314. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.

42. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 359f. Bold emphasis mine - I.D.