

**WORKING
WITH
DESTINY
II**

**THE
GOLDEN
BLADE
1998**

50TH EDITION

THE GOLDEN BLADE

WORKING WITH DESTINY II

RUDOLF STEINER LIBRARY



VYDZ014148

1998

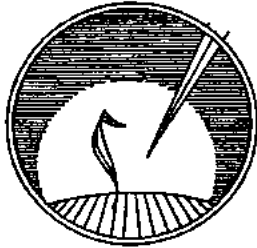
50TH EDITION

RUDOLF STEINER LIBRARY

65 Fern Hill Rd.
Ghent, N. Y. 12075

Working With Destiny II

Edited by William Forward, Simon Blaxland-de Lange and Andrew Wolpert



The Golden Blade

Anthroposophy springs from the work and teaching of Rudolf Steiner. He described it as a path of knowledge, to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.

The aim of this annual journal is to bring the outlook of anthroposophy to bear on questions and activities of evident relevance to the present, in a way which may have lasting value. It was founded in 1949 by Charles Davy and Arnold Freeman, who were its first editors.

The title derives from an old Persian legend, according to which King Jamshid received from his god, Ahura Mazda, a golden blade with which to fulfil his mission on earth. It carried the heavenly forces of light into the darkness of earthly substance, thus allowing its transformation. The legend points to the possibility that humanity, through wise and compassionate work with the earth, can one day regain on a new level what was lost when the Age of Gold was supplanted by those of Silver, Bronze and Iron. Technology could serve this aim; instead of endangering our planet's life, it could help to make the earth a new sun.

Contents

First published in 1997 by The Golden Blade
© 1997 The Golden Blade
All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced without prior permission of
The Editors
The Golden Blade
Emerson College
Forest Row
East Sussex RH18 5JX
England

ISBN 0-9531600-0-9
ISSN 0967-6708

Printed in Great Britain
by Gearings Printing, Forest Row, East Sussex

Editorial Notes	7
A Fiftieth Birthday Salute <i>Owen Barfield</i>	12
Karmic Experience, Karmic Research and the Power of Empathy <i>Baruch Urieli</i>	14
Anthroposophical Medical Work and Karma Consciousness <i>Maurice Orange</i>	20
Biography Work <i>Margli Matthews</i>	35
Research Techniques and Life Events <i>Jostein Saether</i>	45
Discerning Destiny <i>Harlan Gilbert</i>	63
Reincarnation Therapy <i>Trui Derwig</i>	70
Karma and Altered States of Consciousness <i>Willem Veltman</i>	75
The Uses of Adversity <i>Christopher Clouder</i>	81
Touchstone <i>Elizabeth Attwell</i>	89
Book Review <i>Simon Blaxland - de Lange</i>	91

Editorial Notes

This is the fiftieth Edition of *The Golden Blade*. As many of our readers will be aware, we have invited Simon Blaxland - de Lange to join our editorial team, and are very glad that he accepted. We have also taken the step of publishing the journal ourselves, and this has been made possible by the moral and practical support of our friends. With great appreciation for all the circumstances that have allowed us to be in this position of responsibility for the continuation of this journal, we offer this issue as a contribution to the spiritual cultural life of today and for the future. These times do not call for an anniversary edition that is merely self - congratulatory, and we decided to continue the theme of last year as its scope is not exhausted and its relevance not at all expired. Getting on with the work seemed the most appropriate way of celebrating the jubilee.

The first issue of this journal appeared in 1949, which was, incidentally, also the year in which two of its present editors were born. 1949 was the bicentenary of Goethe's birth, and among the three articles marking this event was an essay by Owen Barfield entitled "Goethe and the Twentieth Century". Barfield begins his contribution, somewhat ominously, by remarking: "Few English people know much of Goethe, and of those few most rather dislike him". After devoting much of the space allotted to him to examining, and giving full weight to, the reasons for this contention in the context of the years immediately following the Second World War, he concludes by referring to the outward circumstances surrounding Rudolf Steiner's own love and reverence for Goethe:

"Rudolf Steiner's life was neither sheltered nor leisured. It was one in which poverty played no inconsiderable part, in which selflessness was at all times

paramount, which must have been, at all events in his later years, one of almost uninterrupted suffering. Yet the finger points tranquilly to that other life in Frankfurt, in Strassburg, in Rome, in Weimar. These are bad times for a philosophy of joyous experience; yet it would be surprising indeed if we looked carefully where that finger points and found no elixir."

The "feel-good" factor of the dying months of 1997 contains, arguably, even less nourishing soil for a Goethe-like "philosophy of joyous experience" than the post-war climate of 1949; for uncertainty and anxiety are very close to the surface in virtually every sphere of life. It is awe-inspiring, therefore, to be in the presence of one who, like Owen Barfield, has lived through the whole of the twentieth century so far and was born three years before the end of Queen Victoria's reign. To us "juniors" the Victorian era seems to have an aura of such solidity and confidence, and to look back at it might perhaps be an exercise comparable to that undertaken by Barfield in 1949 with respect to Goethe. However, it behoves us this year as editors and readers of this journal of anthroposophy not so much to look back as to try to encompass and bring to consciousness whatever it may be that is responsible for the underlying uncertainty and anxiety referred to earlier. 1998 - thrice 666, the number of the Beast in the Book of Revelation - is, according to Rudolf Steiner, to be a particularly auspicious year for the preparation for the incarnation or incorporation of Ahriman on Earth.

From the perspective of his long life, in a recent conversation, Owen Barfield discerned on this theme of the year 1998 the rapidly intensifying vacuum at the core of modern social life, a trend which - as Dorit Winter described in her article in last year's issue, "Karma and the Internet" - has now become a frantic gallop. He deplores the fact that many par-

ents increasingly no longer see the bringing up of their children as their own priority:

"Sometimes they come home to an empty house, both parents are at work - it's awful, just when they want to have the feeling of security... It's rather a formidable atmosphere in social life generally now, and in economic life as well for that matter. And this growth of technology, communications technology, is very much emphasising the isolation of the individual from any real social contact... [It's] like the War of All Against All. Yes, it's not a very cheerful outlook at the moment... These new technologies are over-rated in their convenience, so to speak, but... I don't think people realise enough about their significance."

Thoughts such as these may make it apparent that the articles assembled in this issue represent no mere idle enquiry or narrowly personal interest but, rather, vital building-stones for a "philosophy of joyous experience" for our time; for, to quote from last year's editorial, "knowledge of reincarnation and karma is the foundation of our future culture". Weaving through all the contributions in the present issue is the conviction that the quest for this knowledge, together with the readiness to face the challenges that it evokes, is a fundamental part of modern life. Moreover, it is not for nothing that the great majority of the contributions are written out of the practice of one or another profession: Baruch Urieli as a priest, Maurice Orange as a doctor, Margli Matthews as a counsellor and biography researcher, Trui Derwig as a regression therapist and Christopher Clouder as a teacher; while Harlan Gilbert and Willem Veltman likewise respectively are or used to be teachers by profession. Giving a personal framework to these seven reports from the frontiers of pro-

fessional work are the three offerings by Owen Barfield, Jostein Saether and Elizabeth Attwell, the two last of which are bold testimonies of intimate details and - albeit in different degrees - seem to herald the dawning of a new world of experience.

When *The Golden Blade* was first thought of in 1947, the aim was - in the words of its first editors, Arnold Freeman and Charles Davy - "to publish writings which bring the outlook of anthroposophy to bear on questions of the present time". It is a curious fact that, while it is almost certainly harder to achieve such public dissemination of an anthroposophical viewpoint than it was then (one has only to compare the number of anthroposophical books published by mainstream publishers in the 1940s and 50s with the present situation), the "questions of the present time" are by the same token no longer to the same degree the preoccupation of - or even visible to - the communications media. The cultural realm where "questions of the present time" are discussed has very much changed, and is largely permeated by a politicised fog of illusion and diversion. There is a task for journals such as *The Golden Blade*. The authors who have written here out of their professional experience - professions which have been enormously enriched by spiritual-scientific research of varying degrees within anthroposophical institutions since the 1940s - affirm the value of sharing their questions of the present time that arise wherever human beings are living and working together out of a conviction of the validity of moral imagination as a path of knowledge and activity. (The present collection of articles is not intended to be representative of all the work along these lines that is going on, and additional articles could well be written out of other realms of activity.)

Herein lie not only the seeds of a future culture but also the wellsprings in our time of a threefold ordering of

society; for such an ordering of society is a possibility only where an active cultural life is being nurtured. Such was the vision which inspired Arnold Freeman in 1921 to devote his life to Anthroposophy, as Charles Davy reports in his account of "How *The Golden Blade* began":

"In that year [1921] he [Arnold Freeman] came upon an article in the Hibbert Journal entitled "Spiritual Life: Civil Rights: Industrial Economy". It was a translation of an article written for a Swiss journal by Rudolf Steiner: in it he outlined his ideas for a Threefold Social Order... Much later, in a small book called "Who was Rudolf Steiner?", Arnold described how this encounter with Steiner in the pages of the Hibbert Journal had changed his life: "This article made an immediate and profound impression on me. I underwent something like an instantaneous conversion. Here was a thinker altogether greater than the Shaws and the Webbs and the Wellses. Here was somebody who saw all round the social problem. What Steiner had to say in this connection led me to consider what he had to say in other connections. It swiftly came upon me that for me there was now only one question in my life: 'How can I help that man?'"

It seems fitting to recall these words of the founders of *The Golden Blade*, and also those of one of its first contributors, as we celebrate our fiftieth year and seek our path into the future.

S.B-d L.
W.F.
A.W.

A Fiftieth Birthday Salute

Owen Barfield

Congratulations! It's wonderful that *The Golden Blade* has been going for fifty years, and I hope it will go on for at least another fifty. I remember the conversations with Charles Davy and Arnold Freeman preceding the birth of *The Golden Blade*, how we discussed its aims, and the significance of the title from the Persian legend. I have always been a keen supporter of its purpose to make anthroposophy more widely known in the world, and a very willing contributor. At their best, the articles have been alive to what is going on in the general world of thought, and usually readable also by those with only a brief acquaintance with the work of Rudolf Steiner. My own, now somewhat limited, opportunity to follow cultural events tells me that there is an ever growing yearning for the sort of approach offered by spiritual science, but that it will not be realised unless we can also smash the materialist paradigm. This journal has been faithfully dedicated to that aim.

I was brought up as a non-denominational Christian, with no doctrinal relationship to Christianity. It was Rudolf Steiner's book *Christianity as Mystical Fact* that convinced me. I became a member of the Anthroposophical Society in 1923, and heard Steiner lecture in London in 1924. I clearly remember how the anxiety for his health and strength disappeared as soon as he began speaking, and striding youthfully about the platform. He lectured himself into life!

At 98 my thoughts often turn to the spiritual world, not without some puzzlement. What is one to make of the descriptions of life between death and rebirth? We are told that through death we are led out beyond the temporal into

the realm of "duration". What does "duration" mean?

I'm not afraid of dying, but there is some apprehension at the process of transition. If I look at the world, in a way I suppose I'm a short-term pessimist and a long-term optimist. For oneself, it is a good thing to imbue the soul with imaginations of what lies beyond the Exusiai, and belongs only to the realm of duration. In the meantime, I am very glad of this opportunity to offer future contributors and readers of *The Golden Blade* my heartfelt very best wishes for continued inspiration.

Karmic Experience, Karmic Research and the Power of Empathy

Baruch Urieli

It is a dominant factor in the life and work of a priest that the vicissitudes of life will be brought to him. The heights of life, the joys of life, the platitudes of life as well as its depth and abysses will have to be experienced, borne and suffered by him or her. When there arises, however, the need for guidance, help and healing, the priest will have to realise that this vast realm of life consists of three more or less distinct parts: There is a large part of life situations where guidance and assistance can be given by any person who has life experience, common sense and a concern and love for people - grannies or uncles, old friends, teachers or comrades can make very good counsellors if they have these qualities. And where such people are not available or specialist help is required, the person in need can turn to a professional counsellor. There is a second part of the vicissitudes of life where medical help is called for and no layman should mess about with his or her half-knowledge. And there is a third realm which is clearly the concern of the priest. That realm is characterised by the fact, as pointed out by Rudolf Steiner in the Pastoral-Medical Course, that karmic factors of a previous life reach into the life of the individual seeking for advice and help. The great question is, how does one recognise that the factors come from a previous life and not from the present one?

Life experience has taught me that such old karmic factors reveal their presence by the fact that they do not fit into the general makeup of the person concerned and/or they jar with his or her life circumstances. In other words - they do

not make sense, they are illogical in the context of these lives.

To find such erratic blocks of old karma in a new life can thus be seen as detective work. The good detective finds the culprit through inconsistencies in his actions or statements. But in the realm of karma it needs more than the sharp intellect and power of observation of the classic detective. It needs those qualities which are uniquely depicted in Agatha Christie's book "The Mysterious Mr Quin". Mr Harley Quin enters unexpectedly into twelve life settings, often in the diffused coloured light of an afternoon sun which gives him the motley appearance of a harlequin. In order to solve the origin of a crime or a human disaster which occurred in years past, he does not only encourage people to remember the facts and circumstances of a particular event, but he tries to call up people related to the event, the memories of this event and its circumstances that stand out in their recollection. And it is the after-image arising in the one or the other individual concerned with the tragedy that occurred which lets the seemingly unrelated observations and facts fall into place. In this way Mr Quin, the unexpected guest, and his friend Mr Satterthwaite, a very British observer, unite the human concern of a group of people whereby not only a past crime is solved, but some aspects of its karmic consequences are redeemed.

It should be added to the above that Agatha Christie managed to write these twelve outstanding stories, as she herself tells, over an early period of her career as a writer, when she stood at the cross-roads between becoming a poet and novelist or a writer of detective stories. She chose the latter and when she tried later to let Mr Quin come back in a further story, the product was nothing but an empty shell. Her earlier access to karma had been irrevocably lost.

The above considerations may be of some help to understand why Rudolf Steiner calls the work of the psychoanalyt-

ical school of his time an amateurism. Being good detectives, the classic psychoanalysts managed to uncover childhood events which are mirror effects of old karma and to dissolve them. Since, however, the course of these mirror effects remained unrecognised, the mirror effects would return in some way, sometimes in redoubled force (compare Lk.II, 14-26). Nevertheless, much good has been achieved by the depth psychological movement as the result of the earnest healing will of its proponents and the growth of the power of empathy during the 20th Century which has opened new gates into many aspects of the work with human destiny.

Empathy is not synonymous with sympathy. It is a newly developing faculty of man. What is entirely soul experience in sympathy, becomes permeated with a selfless will to help, to care, to love - and thereby starts to gain a spirit quality. The stronger this self-less will becomes, the more possible it is that in the space of selflessness thus formed, a cognitive faculty may grow. The empathetic person begins to behold more and more consciously the inner reality of the person or of the interacting group of persons and the setting he or she returns to. After-images begin to arise and these after-images begin to speak an unmistakable language.

The term "empathy" was coined in 1912 at a meeting the Academy of Arts by an art critic who tried to describe the faculty which is needed in order to appreciate a work of art and to become consciously aware of its inner meaning. Three years before this event Rudolf Steiner speaks for the first time about the reappearance of the Christ in the etheric, and five years before it he speaks in an esoteric lesson (GA 266/1-18 & 23/10/07) about the Organ of Gabriel, the organ formed in the age of Gabriel which can become active in the 20th Century in the beholding of destiny, if human beings open themselves to the Etheric Christ, thus forming the space of selflessness in which the new cognitive faculty for destiny

can unfold.

It would exceed the frame of this essay to describe on how many occasions, and from which different angles Rudolf Steiner attempted to make his contemporaries aware how they could make themselves "a stronger vessel for destiny". Suffice it to say that since the 50's, hearts have begun to open in the world and so in anthroposophical circles. It is a growing faculty, and decade by decade more people learn to use this new faculty whereby it becomes possible that untold erratic blocks of past destiny within individuals, or within groups, can eventually be dissolved.

At this point one may remember that questions about the knowledge of previous incarnations nearly wrecked the Anthroposophical Society in the 30's. Why can it be so counter-productive to become aware, or to be made aware, who was who? It appears to me that the power of empathy in man today has not yet grown strong enough to be able to cope with such knowledge. We have to learn to cope at first with problems, attitudes, hang-ups, challenges and the like, which reveal through their jarring with the flow of life that here is past destiny that clamours to be transformed. Thus we become gradually aware that the issue we are facing is the question: how can my own or my fellow man's debts or aims that arise from a previous life be integrated harmoniously and effectively into the web of destiny of our fellow men, our country and our time? Since the Fall man's being has always been affected by selfishness, whether we are aware of it or not. There will always be a grain of "doing our own thing" even in what appears to us as an entirely selfless action. That is why it is so difficult to fit our own destiny into the web of destiny which we meet. Life can be compared to an extremely difficult jigsaw puzzle, or more correctly to a symphony into which our own tune will fit only if we modify it first and then transcribe it into the scale in which the relevant part of

the symphony is composed. We are ever and again like singers who are out of tune or who miss the correct point of entry.

This is why we discover karmic realities at first as erratic blocks or as jarring notes. But therein also lies the great challenge and wonder of destiny. Eventually we start to discover that just our most difficult problems, our most unbearable qualities, are our most precious possessions, though not in the form we and our fellow men experience them at first. In darkness and death our greatest potentials are hidden, for if light shines into darkness, colour will appear and a rainbow may be born.

This can lead us back to Mr Harley Quin and his rainbow effect. He exemplifies that healing force of empathy. Human love unites with the spirit force of the Christ stream of our time and thereby becomes able to order and transform the etheric web of old karma until it becomes a light-filled part of present life. This is a realm where human encounter can become a sacrament - and human encounter is to become a sacrament in a not too distant future, as Rudolf Steiner repeatedly pointed out. A true priesthood of our time is called to be pioneers on this path.

But there is another realm where a present day priesthood is to an ever greater degree called upon. A few generations ago piety, devotion and love for God were still as natural to men as love for their family and for their neighbours. Now this has broken down and if it still exists in some more remote corners of the world, it is on the point of breaking down. This old world is irrevocably lost or being lost. Man will have to learn to direct the new power of empathy towards the divine-spiritual world. That world has become a foreign and frightening world to man of today, just as strangers, neighbours and even family members have become foreign and frightening. There is no way back into previous piety and religiosity.

But mankind can learn to turn the new power of empathy towards the Divine-Spiritual world. Prayer, meditation, sacramental consultation and more than anything else, Holy Communion can become expressions of man's empathy for the divine-spiritual. Where this happens, be it even in first hesitant steps, a new world is being born. For in this world individual human destiny can not only be transformed and transmuted to find its constructive place in the destiny of mankind, but it can be transubstantiated. In the last lecture cycle which Rudolf Steiner gave to the priests of the Christian Community, he said that karma and reincarnation can be seen as a process of transubstantiation. In this process man can take an active part if he or she learns to turn the fledgling power of empathy that wants to grow in man, not only towards his fellow men, but also towards the divine-spiritual. Then the divine-spiritual world will begin to reveal its secrets and the script of destiny will become an open book whereby men will order their ways.

I trust that this can and will eventually be achieved.

Anthroposophical Medical Work and the Development of Karma Consciousness

Maurice Orange

Introduction

In *Fundamentals of Therapy*¹. Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman succinctly describe the aim of anthroposophical medical work as follows: “.. with the help of a knowledge of spiritual man, we may try to gain an exhaustive and *penetrating (thorough²) picture³* of the illness, so much so that the very diagnosis teaches us the remedy to be applied. *The illness begins with an irregularity in the constitution* of the human organism, with respect to its several parts which have been described in this book (*physical-, etheric-, astral-, and ego-organisation⁴*). It has already reached a certain stage when the patient is received for treatment. Our object must now be to bring about a reversal of all the processes which have taken place in the organism since the beginning of the illness ..”

In that chapter a number of case-histories follow wherein is shown how such a spiritual knowledge of man is applied in diagnosis and therapy. Biography is only described insofar as it is part of a medical history. Interestingly enough, karma is *not* mentioned anywhere in the book. This book was Steiner's last contribution to the medical work and was published after his death. It was the only book on a specific professional field and the only one that was co-authored. Rudolf Steiner gave many medical lectures between 1921 and September 1924; in none of them are karma and re-incarnation, as such, addressed, until Steiner introduces the theme of karma to the doctors in a very particular way in January

1924⁶: i.e. just after the Christmas Foundation Meeting, when he started to describe karma and re-incarnation to the members more fully than ever before, including directives for karma *research*, being spiritual investigation that leads to a perception of former lives⁷.

Many questions are raised by this. Why does Steiner introduce this theme so late to the doctors? What enabled him to do so then, and in such a particular way? How does karma enter the medical work? How does karma *research* relate to anthroposophical medical practice? Should karma *research* be part of the medical interface with patients?

There are many divergent views as to the nature of anthroposophical medical work; some think that spiritual investigation of former lives is intrinsically part of a medical consultation and a process one goes through with an anthroposophical doctor; others object strongly to that notion and believe that the doctor should confine her/himself to the medicines, and that taking up the theme of karma is a transgression and doesn't belong in the consulting room. Still others propound that after Steiner no-one has been able, or is likely, to develop the necessary spiritual skills to research former lives, or has the spiritual or moral authority to do so. For a long time a 'conspiracy of silence' has prevailed on the subject.

I would like to introduce a case history and see where that can lead in relation to these questions.

A Patient⁸

A tall, 30-year old man enters the room; he has a big impressive frame: particularly his hands and feet are disproportionately large; he has shoe-size 48! His posture is striking; he 'hangs' in his skeletal frame, with stooped upper back, and tilted pelvis. His physical appearance is that of an adolescent, 15-17 years old, when the limbs are caught up in the

puberty growth mode, and become long and lanky with oversized hands and feet - before they regain a certain harmony in the following years. It is literally a 'fall' into earthly 'gravity' as it takes hold of man at that time. This patient 'feels heavy' and his whole appearance is 'tired'. His skin is well vascularised, his complexion warm and red; it looks like a sustained blush. His short and stubby hair is ginger-fair.

He describes feeling tired most of the time, almost continuously. He needs a lot of sleep, and still feels tired in the morning. 'My body feels like dough with stones in it', he describes. He admits to frequent bouts of depression. He speaks with a warm, sonorous voice; he is concise and clear; his out-breath is laboured. He is a friendly, tired giant.

He tells me that he had none of the normal childhood illnesses and he only had 3 bouts of swollen lymph glands in the first 3 years of his life. At age 9 he got his first glasses for nearsightedness and started having regular headaches which persist to the present day. At 16 he contracted rheumatic fever and was very ill indeed for 6 weeks; it took him the best part of a year to feel somewhat stronger again, but left him with heart valve damage. From about 18 onwards he continued to have recurrent infections of head and chest every time accompanied by fever. This occurred after times of strenuous work and study. He also noticed that he became a little more short-sighted after such episodes and this went on for years, until recently.

So, this gentle and tired giant had no childhood illnesses apart from the rheumatic fever which left him with a damaged heart, chronic tiredness and recurrent chest infections. At this point, during the consultation the doctor becomes very concerned about his patient's well-being, now and even more so for the future. This feeling is interesting and on closer inspection can (and did in this case) contain a mixture of medical concern or seriousness, as well as a sense of sadness, for

the gravity of the human situation.

Diagnosis - Imagination

So, how does a doctor come to a diagnosis? I can only be cursory here. He can take his cue from what is striking, in this case for instance in the patient's physical appearance: the adolescent build, the 'giant with oversized feet'. That gives a way in, that is a window through which we can retrace the historical development of the above-mentioned 'irregularities' in the composition of the sheaths. Perceiving *the* striking phenomena is, as well as a personal affinity or talent, also the result of a training of the diagnostic gaze. This ability to discern essential from non-essential is an all-important and ongoing education.

To help develop this diagnostic gaze and enhance the skill to build pictures, Steiner gave the doctors a number of meditative tools. One such meditation addresses the relationship between 'weight' and 'light' (power of weight and force of light)¹⁰. Working with this mantra allows phenomena that relate to the viewpoint to reveal themselves. The doctor gains the possibility to orientate in the extended realm of cognition that has to do with building living pictures; such pictures gain a life of their own, and yet retain an 'exactness' that we are used to in our everyday sense-perception. In *Fundamentals of Therapy*, this extended faculty of cognition is described: "The faculty of man to perceive in this (etheric)¹¹ world, attainable as it is by exercise and training, is called in Anthroposophy the 'Imaginative' faculty of knowledge. 'Imaginative' - not that we have to do with 'fancies' or imaginations in that sense; the word is used because the content of consciousness is filled with living pictures, instead of the shadows of thought."¹²

Comment: The steps of extended cognition don't have

clear and comfortable boundaries, as it may seem in the various descriptions that Steiner gives; (provisional) elements of Imagination are always part of our everyday consciousness; in Imagination there are always aspects of Inspiration (feeling) and Intuition (will) present; the way in which a 'striking gesture' is 'decided' upon, for instance, has an intuitive side to it. To orientate ourselves it is justified, however, to distinguish and see where they interweave and intermingle.

We can now allow this singular and striking phenomenon (symptom) to 'mature'; it then 'attracts' other phenomena, other themes from his history for instance. With our patient, several at first unrelated symptoms start to relate to and potentise each other - the adolescent build and posture, the tiredness, the depression, the 'dough and stones', the absence of illness prior to 16 and so on. They all become part of a coherent picture and start to make sense as a totality. In this way an 'exhaustive and penetrating' *picture* arises. This 'living picture' is an Imagination, and appears as a mosaic wherein all qualities mirror; those of the astral and those of the ego-organisation imprint themselves. Diagnostically, with our patient a certain 'confusion' of light and weight becomes apparent, whereby the weight (forces of earthly gravity and earthly orientation) dominates over the levity-forces, the force of light. Translated into 'member-language': the physical-etheric members come strongly under the influence of earthly forces, and the astral and ego organisation 'buckle' and succumb under this.

From the point of view of time, the diagnostic attention is drawn to the transition from the second into the third 7-year period, puberty; it is here that a 'confusion' comes to light. The absence of childhood illnesses suggests that his hereditary model is insufficiently individualised and overcome, which is the theme of the first 7-year period; he takes that problem with him into the second 7-year period, and still

nothing happens. Then, with puberty at 16 his physical-etheric body is violently attacked by the astral-body: his physical-etheric (heart) is wounded in the attack, and his astral body weakens in that battle. The astral organisation loses its grip progressively, as he becomes more tired and nearsighted, which in turn is a symptom of resignation of the astral body and ego-organisation. The ego-organisation tries to compensate for and assist the weakened astral body through the feverish infections, i.e. through an intensification of warmth-processes. One feels the seriousness of this weakening of the bodily instrument.

Empathy: Feeling for Karma - Imagination and Inspiration

The diagnostic picture of the patient is of a (provisional) imaginative quality. With our patient a feeling of concern and sadness accompanies the diagnostic considerations. The doctor will become aware of such a *feeling*-experience that is born out of (or into) this picture, and this feeling gains a particular and definitive shape. Within the picture one grasps a distinct feeling that holds an exact diagnostic signature. This 'feeling-picture' (picture-imbued-with-feeling) is like a *sense-organ*, with which the doctor senses and apprehends the particular gesture of an illness. This *feeling* experience is *empathy*. The 'empathetic understanding' takes on an enhanced and specific quality, and on closer inspection shows two aspects - the one aspect of 'diagnostic gesture', but also an aspect that reveals a 'karmic signature'; they are the same, but appear in a different light, depending on one's vantage-point. Empathy thus felt reveals a distinct *feeling for karma*, that appears as specific as does the diagnostic gesture. Empathy is a sense organ: both for grasping the illness gesture within the living picture *and* for karma; insofar as karma expresses itself in these 'constitutional irregularities'.

In the *Leading Thoughts*¹³ Rudolf Steiner describes this step in the following way: "In the manifestations of the will, karma works itself out. But its working remains in the unconscious. By lifting to conscious Imagination what works unconsciously in the will, karma is apprehended. *Man feels his destiny within him*"¹⁴. This feeling for karma is the first experience of karma and accompanies the daily diagnostic activity of the medical work¹⁵. When this is experienced in this way, the patient will also have an experience that mirrors or complements that of the therapist or doctor: The patient *feels* the reality of his/her karma, and this experience could be expressed as: I feel differently about my illness (problem), and can grow to become more specific and formed.

A threshold - from Imagination to Inspiration/Intuition

In the transition from Imagination to still further steps in cognition, Inspiration and Intuition, a threshold is experienced. Two descriptions seem relevant here. First in *Fundamentals of Therapy*: "These exercises leading to higher powers of perception (Imagination¹⁶) can be carried further. Just as we exert a heightened force in concentration, so we can apply a greater force again to *suppress*¹⁷ the Imaginations (the pictures of a spiritual-etheric reality) attained by the former process. We then reach a condition of completely emptied consciousness. We are awake, and aware, but our awareness to begin with has no content.Our consciousness, emptied as it is of any physical or even pictorial impressions, becomes filled with a content that pours into it from a real spiritual world, as before the impressions from the physical world pour into our physical senses"¹⁸. There is a reversal of direction; in attaining an imaginative perception, we build and paint living (and feeling-imbued) pictures, an activity that extends from, but still includes the exactness of

the sense perceptible world. This activity still is, as it were, on *this side* of our consciousness. Within it, the sense impressions and phenomena take on a new dimension, a *new life*. Then, we are asked to *reverse* this process, to suppress these pictures, and *from the other side* a new dimension pours in and fills this distinctly emptied consciousness; thus Inspiration 'arrives'. In this process we have 'jumped' over a threshold; Inspiration already announces itself in the feeling that arises in an imaginative picture; it is not 'the real thing' as yet.

We can exercise our latent faculty of Inspiration by using the night. When a degree of saturation and maturation of a living picture is reached, we can suppress this or empty our consciousness from it actively as we fall asleep with it; we say that we 'take it into the night'; the next morning, or more likely during the next day, we can find ourselves 'inspired' in relation to the picture, and harvest what comes out of the night in this way in the form of enhanced feelings or will-impulses. The picture gains a new momentum. Working with the material in this way is like doing finger-exercises, preparing for the real thing. We can now compare how these steps are described in the *Leading Thoughts*: "When (*the faculties of*)¹⁹ Inspiration and Intuition enter the Imagination, then, beside the impulses of the present, the outcome of former lives becomes perceptible in the working of the will. *The past life is revealed*²⁰, working itself out in the present."²¹

Summary: at this point an intriguing congruence is becoming visible. The doctor researches his medicines *with the same faculties* that, if applied from a different vantage-point, can and will reveal a karma perspective; the diagnostic activity yields an imagination, a living picture; it is accompanied by a distinct feeling; taken a step further, the inspiration harvests directions 'from the other side'. The doctor's intention to heal is met with directives that translate into sub-

stance, medicine. When the will to heal is suppressed, karma reveals itself, *neat*, and in that instance does not translate into therapy.

The doctor between healing and karma

Let us now return to the way that Steiner introduces the concept of karma to the doctors, very late in the development of the medical work. In the lecture of 9 January 1924²², Steiner 'suddenly' starts to speak about the karma of the doctor as well as the karma of the patient. The karma of a patient is taken into account, insofar as Steiner stresses that the doctor cannot heal *against* karma; the patient, and for that matter also the doctor himself, remain subject to their karma so far as their own health and illness are concerned. Furthermore, Steiner emphasises that the will (attitude) of the doctor must be pervaded with an '*unconquerable will that karma be fulfilled*' ('Karma-Wille'). This is obviously not meant as a passive, fatalistic acceptance of karma; but rather as active respect. The other side of the doctor's attitude lies in: "*that the will-to-heal must always be present. This must never, under any circumstances, weaken. It must be at work in therapy all the time, so that it can be truly said that everything possible is being done, even when one is of the opinion that the patient is incurable(!)*".

These are the two faces of the will of the doctor: unrelenting will to heal and unconquerable will (respect) for karma itself. In a certain way karma is addressed here with no separation between the doctor and the patient; both are subject to their karma and the general laws of karma that hold sway. Also in their shared karma that evolves. Insofar as the doctor engages medically with the situation, he connects his will (karma) with that of the patient and new karma is forged. The doctor will do everything possible that would be right

and appropriate to bring about a cure, and becomes part of the karmic origin and karmic outcome.

Summary The doctor's task is to address the illness, the 'irregularity' in the constitution and to find an answer, a medicine or therapeutic advice. The diagnosis is reached in an imaginative picture, saturated with a distinct feeling of a (provisional) inspirational quality. Inspiration gives him the 'wings' to search the cosmos for answers: he then grasps or 'intuits' the medicine. He does not come to a perception of former lives, as the faculty of Inspiration/Intuition would enable him to do. Beyond the imagination and a distinct *feeling* for karma, born out of the inspirational realm into the imaginative picture, the next step of *conscious* perception and *conscious* investigation of karma becomes a therapeutic perception and action: *The conscious perception of karma transforms into the medicine*. In the medical work, karma perception is therapy. We come to an empathetic *feeling* of karma, and that feeling can grow into a very clearly defined experience, that provides an orientation for the medical work. It takes a strenuous effort of will to *reverse* that 'medical habit' of transformation, and make the imaginative experience available to karma perception.

Cross-roads: therapy or karma research? Raphael or Michael

These aspects of the will gain another, deeper perspective if seen in the light of what happened later in 1924. The second part of the *Young Doctors Course* was held over Easter of that year²³. The next significant event was to come in the month of September during the Pastoral Medical Course²⁴. For some time already some of the so-called young doctors who participated in the courses had become increasingly aware of the particular quality of the co-operation between Steiner and Wegman. Indeed, it became clear that what was

karmically at work between them needed acknowledgement of some kind. Ita Wegman conveyed her pondering to Steiner and he was elated. This enabled the formation of a core of seven practising doctors who formed the esoteric core within the Medical Section. One of the first tasks that Steiner gave these doctors was karma research, pertaining to themselves.

It seems that Steiner's intention was that after the Christmas Foundation Meeting, all the medical work that came out of the Medical Section was to be based upon the mutual revelation and recognition of karma; initially that of Steiner and Wegman. The book *Fundamentals of Therapy* was a first externally visible fruit of this co-operation. Dr W Holtzapfel²⁵ has researched the coming about of the book in great depth and has found that certain chapters of the book come forth out of, and re-connect with a particular (medical) mystery stream. Every one of these chapters addresses an aspect of the human being and reveals a particular karmic theme out of a mystery centre. So, for instance, the chapter 'Blood and Nerve' appears in the light of the Hibernian Mysteries. The active karma research between Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman formed the basis of creating a new mystery medicine. The book and, more importantly, the way in which it came about, was a direct answer to Dr Ita Wegman's question to R Steiner in August 1923: 'can we have a new mystery-medicine?' Mutual karma is mobilised as a tool of perception and spiritual research. This research enables the spiritual world to be grasped in a way that is not possible on one's own. In *True and False Paths*²⁷ this is described as the Saturn way of research and initiation, the so-called Saturn Path.

There are clear indications that a second book was planned wherein Steiner and Wegman envisaged taking up the metals as the central substances for medicine. Perhaps we can have a glimpse of what that would look like when we study the Pastoral Medical Course²⁸ and the way 'case histo-

ries' are described there, which clearly integrate a karmic perspective. Here, perhaps, we would have been given a tool in the development of a modern mystery medicine, where substance and karma research would be described in the same breath.

The Patient

As a doctor our gaze remains within the realm of the bodily constitution; everything mirrors itself in this field of what Steiner called 'Nature Karma'²⁹. Within it we have impressions of how karma expresses itself in the realm of the sheaths. As doctors we will find distinct indications for medicines, for instance gold is asked for at some stage and in some form or another. With our eye for karma, we find a certain 'karmic motif' or theme in relation to the Sun-sphere, where the formation of the (spirit) heart comes to a certain conclusion in closest collaboration with the Beings of the Second Hierarchy. We can ponder on the 'birth' of the etheric heart at puberty, in his case at 16, and how the heart is wounded at this time when personal karma starts to work. As researchers, we can also take account of karmic laws; for instance, lack of interest in the surrounding world in one life leads to a weak constitution in a subsequent life. That puts our patient's health in a very particular light. We could further muse upon the fact that the Second Hierarchy starts to work very strongly at puberty, at first together with the Third Hierarchy. All these are points of view that can help to direct our gaze in this tapestry of constitutional karma. It is beyond the context of this article to further investigate this here.

Last Thoughts

As soon as a patient enters the room, my karma as the

doctor meets and engages with that of the patient. My karma enables me to grasp the situation in a particular way; my karma will reveal my own affinities as to what I can bring to the situation diagnostically and therapeutically. This is not only a result of an ongoing training but equally dependent on my karmic background. My karma is as formative in shaping the therapeutic process as what the patient brings. One continuously assesses whether awareness of karma *distracts* from therapy, even *paralyses* therapeutically, or whether it potentiates and enhances a therapeutic process.

“By lifting to conscious Imagination what works unconsciously in the will, karma is apprehended”³⁰. It is a matter of situational spirit-judgement to discern to what extent this ‘lifting into consciousness’ allows choosing a medicine, or enters the consulting space as feelings, impressions or pictures in which karma is apprehended. As we have shown, essentially they are of the same substance and will at any time interweave in a very subtle way. The levels of trust and responsibility will shift accordingly, and gain heightened conscious intensity and mutuality, when the process moves towards the awareness of karma. In the process of such an interface, a subtle awareness of timing and pacing will develop, in which the doctor ‘is informed’ and guided through the ‘karmic material’.

It was Steiner’s intention that the practising doctors take mutual responsibility for each other as colleagues, within the Medical Section; this goes very far, and is based on an honest attempt to perceive and work with each others’ karma: to ‘bring order’ into karma and, as was achieved in the collaboration with Ita Wegman, to make the mutual karma available for the responsibility of carrying spiritual research. Perhaps herein lie the beginnings of a *healing of karma* itself.

As anthroposophists and doctors, we stand in the tension between two Beings. On the one hand Michael, bringing

insight through karma research and karma perception; Michael as the stern countenance of Christ, the Lord of Karma. On the other hand stands Raphael, firing our will to heal. In working *in this tension*, awareness of karma will develop into pure revelation of karma, pure revelation of substance.

¹ R Steiner & I Wegman: *Fundamentals of Therapy*, Anthroposophical Publishing Co., London 1925. In new translation: *Extending Practical Medicine*, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1996. (GA 27)

² Alternative translations are possible.

³ Italics by author.

⁴ Added by author, in the context of chapter and paragraph.

⁵ See 1, chapter XIX.

⁶ R. Steiner *Course for Young Doctors*, Dornach, 1924 (GA 316): Mercury Press, New York 1994.

⁷ R. Steiner *Karmic Relationships* (volumes I-VIII) Rudolf Steiner Press, London.

⁸ For reasons of confidentiality, this case-history has been ‘composed’ out of a number of actual people, whilst preserving the essential gesture.

⁹ Of course, a full and often extended medical history and physical examination is obtained.

¹⁰ See 6.

¹¹ See 4.

¹² See 1, chapter 1.

¹³ Rudolf Steiner: *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, (GA 26): Rudolf Steiner Press, London 1973.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no 95., 21 September 1924

¹⁵ Note that the ‘Leading Thoughts’ here point to the feeling for my karma. My karma as a doctor is just as relevant and formative as that of the ‘client’; the point here is that karma perception announces itself as a feeling. See ‘last thoughts’.

¹⁶ See 4.

¹⁷ See 3.

¹⁸ See 1, chapter 1.

¹⁹ See 4.

²⁰ See 3.

²¹ See 13, no 96, 21 September 1924.

²² See 6, Lecture 9 January 1924.

²³ See 6.

²⁴ R Steiner: *Pastoral Medicine*, New York 1987 (GA 318).

²⁵ Walter Holtzapfel: *Medicine and Mysteries*, Mercury Press, New York 1994.

²⁶ For an excellent account of this, see: E Zeylmans van Emmichoven: *Who was Ita Wegman?* Mercury Press, New York, 1995.

²⁷ R Steiner, *True and False Paths of Spiritual Investigation*, Torquay 1924, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1985, (GA 243), especially lectures 10 and 11.

²⁸ See 24.

²⁹ R Steiner, lecture of 17 February 1924, Dornach. *Karmic Relationships Vol 1*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1981 (GA 235). In this lecture Steiner separates out 3 levels of karma, relating to the 3 members; in relation to the ether body, he describes the karma of one's 'inner consistency', one could say: constitution in the narrow sense of the work, expressing itself as '(inner) feeling of well-being' or its opposite. The relationship to the sense of life seems obvious here. 'Nature karma' pertains to this.

³⁰ See 21.

³¹ See 6.

Biography Work : Awakening to Destiny

Margli Matthews

Biography work is a quest for meaning. It arises in human hearts out of the certainty that life itself and all human lives are of significance, and that the events and processes in our lives will reveal their meaning if we learn to observe them. Biography work with groups or with individuals, as adult education or in a one-to-one counselling encounter, has developed since the middle of this century as increasing numbers of people live with the existential questions: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my task? What can I contribute? What does my life mean? These questions today express a yearning to reach beyond our daily sense of self, with its fears, prides, comforts and illusions, to discover a comprehensive and objectively reliable picture of who we are. We seek to contact our own creative centre that includes our deeper aims and intentions, to find a certainty of self that cannot be shaken, a light in ourselves that cannot be extinguished.

Vaclav Havel, in a talk on "The New Measure of Man" says: "Experts can explain anything in the objective world to us, yet we understand our own lives less and less. We live in the post-modern world where anything is possible, and almost nothing is certain the only real hope of people today is probably a renewal of certainty that we are rooted in the earth, and at the same time in the cosmos. This awareness endows us with the capacity for self-transcendence."³¹ In this passage Havel captures something of the impulse behind biography work. On the one hand, it is a response to the loss of certainties and supports from the past; on the other hand it results from and stimulates the growing sense of individual freedom

and self-determination. Our past no longer gives us our sense of identity nor can it guide us in the multitude of choices that confront us daily. Our experience and education, the moral and emotional codes of conduct that we have inherited, are often inadequate to help us to cope with the events and crises that meet us with such force today. No one's life is simple, few are spared major life-disrupting events. The boundary between our daily sense-bound consciousness and the inwardness of the world, including the different layers and levels of our soul world, shifts and dissolves. New, sometimes confusing, spirit perceptions, together with unfamiliar feelings, wishes, longings and impulses invade our consciousness. They may overwhelm or disturb us but they also speak of deeper aspects of the world and of our own nature that ask to be understood and integrated with the picture of who we are.

Facing this situation, we are both vulnerable and potent, and it becomes urgent that we find a sure ground in ourselves from which we can meet whatever life brings to us with a strength and certainty that cannot be diminished or undermined. We need to expand our normal ego-consciousness to include an awareness of the spiritual reality that works within and behind the phenomena of our lives.

Biography work is a path towards this new awareness. It is a way to become active and awake to our own life story, entering into a dialogue with it, questioning and listening to it so that it begins to reveal to us its secrets and riches. It is not about speculation as to who we were in a past incarnation, nor is it about continually circling around our past in this incarnation. Rather it enables us to find a new, free relationship to our past so that we can awake in the present and meet what comes towards us from the future with openness and expectancy. It is a path to discover and express the truth of our own being.

When we review and try to decipher the inner and outer

circumstances, the events, phases, relationships and themes that make up our story, the guiding intentions and underlying motifs appear, and begin to speak their meaning. This can lead us to a sense of the Director or Writer of our biography, the one whom we meet and work together with each night and after death to digest and transform our past into new opportunities for development. When we review our life in the context of the laws of human development, of karma and reincarnation, the invisible realities of our life become visible; we awaken to our own eternal and ever-evolving nature and to the activity of the supersensible world in our destinies.

To find our way to this source of our development and to be asked to identify with it, is to become ever more sensitive to the working of karma from both past and future; it enables us to place ourselves freely and fully in our karmic connections and circumstances and to turn our attention to the service of the world.

Biography work, then, is about discovering "who am I", "who are you", and "who are we". It can awaken in us an interest in the world around us, in our times, and in the people we meet in life. We can come to the living experience that our lives are brought to us by others, that self development and social development are two sides of the same activity. Through working with our own life material we develop new soul capacities; we awaken the faculty to meet the world with imagination.

Rudolf Steiner spoke of reviewing one's biography as an activity to counterbalance the growth of anti-social forces which are necessary for the development of one's freedom and individuality, but alone lead to increasing misunderstanding and division between people.² Sitting together with others and sharing aspects of our lives - in an atmosphere of disciplined and attentive listening and speaking - creates a heart

space, a practice ground, where interest in others can grow and conscious social forces are cultivated. The strongest experience people take away with them from a Biography workshop is often an expansion of their capacity to meet others with tolerance, compassion and trust, and the gift of being met in this way. When others listen to us with attention, without criticism, analysis or curiosity, when they meet us with open-hearted interest in who we are, as well as what we say, their listening facilitates our meeting with ourselves and we can express ourselves more clearly and confidently. Others often hear our quest and perceive the connecting thread running through our life better than we can, and when they reflect this to us we feel seen and acknowledged. We can do this for others; listening to others often gives us a new perspective in our own lives. We can also put ourselves aside and listen with inner stillness to another, stepping into their shoes, walking in their world, uniting ourselves with their experience. We can receive their life as a gift, which awakens in us wonder and appreciation for the particular ways of their destiny and often gives us a new perspective on our own lives.

The predominant experience from a workshop, then, is often seeing and being seen. To be seen is a blessing, which engenders in us new strength to listen to our deepest calling, the courage to search for what our heart seeks and the capacity to take responsibility for our life. To see truly we need imagination.

John Keats wrote: "I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart's affection and the truth of imagination. What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth."³ Biography work awakens this faculty of imagination, the ability to see with the eye of the heart. And it is only through a heart seeing that we can perceive our own or another's meaning and potential, the truth of karma and the interweaving of our destinies.

The method of working with biography is important if it is to be a path to awaken a sense for karmic realities. Primarily we need to work to picture the events and experiences of our past with devotion to all the details of the situation, and as if from a distance, as though we were a stranger, not ourselves. We need to observe our life with a chasteness and discipline, approaching it without intellectual judgement, analysis, interpretation, without emotional replay, but rather as a selfless witness, letting the phenomenon itself speak its message.

Every experience of our lives contains the mystery of our whole existence. It is a crystallisation, a condensation of past and future, of what we have been, and what we can become. When our experiences remain undigested and unintegrated they work unconsciously in us, drawing our life energy and attentiveness and continually interfering with our meeting with the world. They act as a screen through which the outer world is filtered; we meet the present through what has happened to us, through the insecurity and fears and burdens of the past, as a lonely nine year old, an angry fourteen year old, and so on. We look into the world, but see only ourselves: our egotism is continually strengthened.

However, when we make the unusual and large effort to bring our memories to consciousness, and to create them anew through our free thinking activity, we allow what is essential in a particular event to emerge and the rest to dissolve. In this way we digest and let go of our past so that we can stand free of it. We "shell out the ego from its experiences"⁴ and can meet the world with openness and immediacy. Our ordinary sense based memory expands towards what Rudolf Steiner calls "will remembering."⁵ That is, we begin to awaken to the reality of karma, as we meet it from within, through our constitution, temperament, likes and dislikes, abilities, habits of mind and heart attitudes; and as we meet

it from without in all the people and events that come towards us. We begin to experience our life not as something random and haphazard that happens to us, but as a uniquely unfolding story that belongs to us and that we have created and intended, including the trials, difficulties and obstacles. We grow to realise that our meetings also are not chance events but the result of our active intentions and resolves, arranged by us together with others to solve, resolve or take further some aspect of our development.

Working with our biography, we can put ourselves in our various life situations in the centre of our awareness, but another approach is to focus our attention on all of the people who have been part of our life, influencing our development. All the many individuals in our lives move into the centre as we picture who they were, their outer and inner ways of being, their ideals and deeds and their particular impact on our life, and how this lives on in us. If we practise this often with all the different meetings of our life, we gradually learn to forget ourselves and become aware of how much of our life we owe to others, that the whole soul-substance of our life has been and continues to be created by others. This gradually awakens us to the fact that we are interconnected with each other and with the whole of the created world, that our joys and possibilities are linked to another's limits and suffering, that the steps we take in our own development can open doors for someone else. This leads us naturally to a feeling of thankfulness - thankfulness to others and to the spiritual powers of existence who bring us our life, even the hurts and obstacles, for all that comes to us enriches us. Gradually out of our work on ourselves we come to find that in our difficulties lie concealed our particular tasks and opportunities.

In working with our biography in this way, separating ourselves from and becoming a witness to our own experiences,

picturing the people in our life and discovering how our development depends on others, we awaken a new level of interest in the people that we meet in the present. We can meet people free of our usual sympathies and antipathies. We can see more clearly who they are in their reality, what we can make possible for them as well as what they bring to us and what we have to do with each other into the future.

When we review our lives and make our biography into a study and research, we participate consciously in an activity that we are busy with every night and after death, when we look back at the events of our day or life in order to gather, evaluate and transform the fruits of our past acting into new tasks and opportunities for development. We do this together with our karmic companions and with all the spiritual hierarchies who are intimately concerned with our individual development and with the unfolding of human, earthly and cosmic evolution. We work especially with Christ, the Lord of karma, Who by living a human biography on earth, going through death, and connecting Himself with the Earth has made it possible for all individuals to become creators of their own lives and initiators for each other.

So when we work with the material of our lives and become interested in the stories of others, we do consciously what we do after death and in sleep. Through our activity we bring the world of the night into relation with the day. We enter into a dialogue with the beings concerned with the creation of our destiny so that they engage with us and reinforce our activity. We connect with Christ, Who works in the etheric sphere of the Earth and is available as a source of support and transformation to all human beings today. We thereby create the conditions for our destiny to come into movement; what was necessity comes increasingly into the sphere of our freedom. Working with our biography, we move from being onlookers of life, victims of circumstances, to being partici-

pators, creative and responsible together with others and with the hierarchies for our future becoming.

Even in the space of a short 4 day workshop there can be many experiences of karmic knots loosening, of seeing what was stuck come into movement. Difficulties surface, dissolve or resolve; work opportunities may arise, unexpected telephone calls or letters renew contact after times of estrangement; words of acceptance or forgiveness are spoken. As individuals work on their life questions, this radiates out, touching absent friends, colleagues and family and inducing small steps and changes in thoughts and feelings which are then echoed back to the one 'working'.

So working with biography can awaken us to the unnoticed miracles that fill our days. It schools us in patience, teaching us that we need to wait for things to reveal themselves. It both requires and instills a mood of reverence and respect for all the details of our human stories, which after all are manifestations of karma, divine substance and the sphere of action of higher beings. After working intensively on her biography, one woman came to the conviction that "our lives are guided". She discovered that this work is an inner training out of which the "new human being will arise", that it is the necessity by which we can reach towards our true potential and freedom. This is a great aim; but the practical work, while helping people to get in touch with their ideals, usually leads to a quiet gratitude for new perceptions of the world and for the small concrete steps that can be taken. People do not usually become preoccupied with themselves, but experience a new openness towards their particular place and responsibilities,

To make our life the subject of research and to speak to people who may be complete strangers about the intimacies of our life is not a natural activity. Like all karma research, it requires endless effort. It is much easier to maintain our

usual approach to life, judging an experience by our prejudices and emotions, liking or disliking what "happens to me", feeling it to be "fair or unfair". To become a selfless witness of our own life, making concrete detailed pictures, observing it from the outside as though it were another's, requires that we exercise and expand our soul faculties so that they become expressions of our true I and organs to perceive the world. Working with our biographies and listening to those of others', we train our thinking so that it may grow to be what it essentially is - an activity of love, clear, warm and direct, able to see deeply into the heart of things, enabling us to meet others with tolerance and interest.

As thinking becomes imagination, the events, turning points, meetings, joys and sufferings of our lives become ever more transparent, revealing the gesture and meaning living within. And as we find the inwardness of these outer circumstances, we come to the possibility of acceptance and forgiveness, of compassion for our destiny and the destiny of others. This leads us to a new trust and confidence in life, out of which can be born new ideals and an enthusiasm to carry out the tasks that our love seeks.

As we come to be able to identify with our own biography, we discover the face of our True Self, with its unique history and a future that is always new, and we can act ever more deeply out of this truth that we are. We are able to get in touch with the intentions that brought us into life, intentions to take on a particular body, family, people and place, and to make a contribution to our community out of the opportunities and possibilities life has given us, in ways that announce our love and devotion to the world. Facing and wrestling with ourselves, our I expands so that we are able to embrace and carry others. Through working on our own development our life becomes substance for others, a source of light and warmth that rays out into the world. And only

when we can turn in love towards the world will our true I in its full karmic reality be revealed to us.

¹ Sheehy, Gail, *New Passages, Mapping Your Life Across Time*, Random House, N.Y. 1995, p.15

² Steiner, Rudolf, *Social & Anti Social Forces*, Mercury Press, N.Y.1992. (GA 186) esp pp 12-15

³ *Letters of John Keats*, ed. By Robert Gittings, Oxford University Press, pp. 36-37, "To Benjamin Bailey, 22 November 1817".

⁴ Steiner, Rudolf *Social & Anti Social Forces*, op. cit. p 14.

⁵ Steiner, Rudolf, *Theosophy, An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London 1989. (GA 9) pp 16-67

Research Techniques and Life Events

Jostein Saether

Translated from Norwegian by William Forward

In contrast to the external "Virtual Reality" of data processing, it is possible today for the anthroposophical researcher - by means of Michaelic art and technique - to seek out and develop "Real Virtuality". The necessary supersensible tools for this can be developed through individual meditative work, and they may be granted as a true gift in freedom and love to the seeking human being by a spiritual leadership that is kindly disposed to us in the dramatic and decisive times in which we live.

Tales from the past describe in picture form the encounters the modern human being can have which are nevertheless real spiritual meetings, events and processes. Thus a folk tale in all its concrete detail can be seen as a prophecy of the drama of soul and spirit within which each of us now stands in our own biography.

Soria Moria (a legendary castle to which Askeladden, the hero of Norwegian fairy tales, journeys) is a picture of the spiritual house which may be painstakingly constructed in co-operation with spiritual beings and may provide a space within which the spiritual researcher can make room for himself meditatively and from there find a way to explore various times and events in human evolution both in earthly lives and in forms of existence between them. This meditative base can of course be secured and made accessible by inventiveness and ingenuity. One has to start from the crises in one's own biography, from moments of grace and from consciously practised exercises with Rudolf Steiner's language, meditations and mantras.

What follows should be taken as an example of how it is possible, using the karma exercises indicated by Rudolf Steiner in conjunction with events in one's own life, to do research into historical and karmic connections. Until other researchers come to similar or conflicting results which can be used to verify or contradict what is set out below, I shall consider my research and references to past incarnations as possible assumptions with some degree of probability.

The situations I propose to describe seem to me suitable for general discussion, even though the presence in them of several historical personages may make it difficult for some to consider them impartially.

I am convinced that anthroposophy can only live and be developed further if the results of independent spiritual research are published which can complement and confirm Rudolf Steiner's work, and it is for this reason that I dare to put forward here the results of my own meditative work. One of the examples, Mary Stuart, may be of particular interest in the English-speaking world. I am fully aware of the temerity of touching on this famous woman's destiny in the hope of finding deeper karmic motive forces within it, but I choose it specifically for the typical karmic profile revealed in her life.

The extent of the evidence of previous incarnations from prehistoric times to the present and the fact that it is possible to go back and look at the same situation from a different point of view seem to me to confirm what can be achieved by studying and researching in historical records generally available today. The complementarity of thinking research over a long period of time and the consideration of spontaneous images arising from time to time, together with what is apparent in human encounters, all contribute towards building confidence in the results.

The most decisive factor in determining the identity of an

individual in karmic research lies in the possibility of following the individual through various changes of state between death and a new birth.

In the early stages of research this layer of experience is not immediately accessible, since one is concentrating too much on earthly persons and events, but after a dialogue has been developed with Christ as the ruler of karma (whether one sees Him or not - and an artistically and intellectually objective study of anthroposophy is a great help in this), the individual angel helps to mediate the themes to which the researcher may be entitled access according to his maturity.

In this context it is also necessary to see through the relationship of one's own double to one's previous incarnations and by inward struggle to wrest from Ahriman the problematic aspects of reincarnation which he wishes to keep for himself, such that one can be tempted into Lucifer's power. These complicated but essential stages on the path of anthroposophical karma research I can only refer to briefly here; the reader is referred to Steiner's comprehensive research in these matters, such as is found in the Mystery Plays for instance.

I shall now first of all describe some biographic aspects of my path to this research so that the specific previous incarnations to which I shall refer can be set against a background of contemporary events.

An Experience during Adolescence and Early Encounters with Anthroposophy

Already as a child I was familiar with the notion of reincarnation. Several intimations in meetings with other people and in experiences of nature seemed to me to point to the possibility of my having had previous lives. As a seventeen year old I had an unusual inner experience at a critical moment in my life. Whilst completely awake, I had the feeling that death

was approaching. As I met this apprehension without fear it metamorphosed into inner pictures of a life in America last century. The name of the person I had been was also clearly evident. The experience concluded in a kind of inner movement towards the date which corresponded to my conception for the present life. For 25 years after this, I had no recurrence of this or similar experiences.

Half a year after this experience, I met anthroposophy through an elderly anthroposophist. The decisive factor for me was that here I encountered Christianity and the concept of reincarnation united in a synthesis. Alongside my work as a teacher and artist in the area of colour combination, lasure painting and murals, I have spent the intervening years working with anthroposophical ideas and have also written articles in journals about art, history of ideas, literature and films.

Of Rudolf Steiner's works it was particularly the Karma Lectures of 1924 which inspired me in my daily life. Working trips in Scandinavia, to England and Germany gave me the opportunity to get to know a variety of anthroposophical environments, Steiner schools and homes for the disabled. For three years I myself worked with mentally retarded adolescents. Besides other meditations, I worked particularly with some of Steiner's karma exercises from time to time though without any evidence of results in the form of inner pictures or other symptoms.

In the middle of the 1980's I began once more to immerse myself in the question of the Platonic and Aristotelian streams as Steiner describes them as an important theme for the end of our century. Inwardly I felt drawn to the Chartres stream and tried to identify its members in my surroundings. I encountered very little understanding among anthroposophists for this endeavour. A close friend went as far as to say this question no longer had any relevance. So I let this work rest and continued for some years to devote all my ener-

gies to family duties and practical, artistic and pedagogical tasks. For seven years I left all my writing activity to lie fallow.

Meanwhile I found myself increasingly working in social situations that turned out to be blind alleys and was eventually obliged to seek work elsewhere. In these dramatic, and in my experience, tragic years (1992-96) I turned my attention with renewed interest to history and the theory of modern art. I read widely about Atlantis and all the cultural epochs. I spent a great deal of time on Egypt, particularly at the time of the 19th Dynasty. On study trips to England, Italy, Crete and Greece I experienced peculiar déjà-vu situations.

In the wide circle of acquaintances in anthroposophy, particularly in Scandinavia, which over a period of 25 years caused me both joy and sorrow, I was confronted with many questions of karma. I was often puzzled that I got on well with many people who went out of their way to avoid each other. I often saw myself in this role of a go-between, but with no deeper insight into the destiny background. I was constantly faced with great riddles and tragedies in my social surroundings.

Historical Studies

Several intuitive indications, including enigmatic remarks by people who later seem to have forgotten them, led me to take up my study of the Middle Ages and in particular the 1100s. Not only the schools of Paris and Chartres attracted my interest but also events in England and France, such as the murder of Thomas à Becket. Moreover I was increasingly drawn to figures such as Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, Frederik Barbarossa the Holy Roman Emperor and Pope Alexander III and all the complexities and conflicts within the Holy Roman Empire between the second and third

crusades, i.e. around the second half of the 12th century.

Thus I discovered a comprehensive network of human relationships between the various countries and eventually developed a picture considerably further extended than that of the Chartres teachers and pupils portrayed by Steiner in his karma lectures. For instance in Master Gerard Pucelle, who was a close friend and collaborator of John of Salisbury, I discovered a human link between the Chartres and Staufer streams. Master Pucelle worked for a short time in Cologne as an advisor to Barbarossa's chancellor Rainald von Dassel in the conflict with Alexander III. In my subsequent karma research I found all these medieval figures again in this century. Gerard Pucelle I see today as an English born anthroposophist with characteristic artistic and dramatic skills.

The more I researched in specialist literature and historical sources, the more I could see relationships with our time and could think my way to possible karmic connections between people in the Middle Ages and people of today. Only by constantly extending my knowledge of history could I find meditative paths on which to strengthen the intuitions I had received in thought. Thus it was during this period, in March 1995 that I had an intuitive experience of the fact that I myself had been Christian von Buch, the successor to Rainald von Dassel, who died in the malaria epidemic in Rome in 1167, as chancellor and one of the Emperor's most eager diplomats and generals up until his death in 1183.

Rudolf Steiner's Karma Exercises and the First Imaginations

After a period of unemployment I got myself into a serious life-crisis followed by a period of convalescence. I recovered, largely as a result of my own efforts and of caring for two goats we had acquired, and then made contact again with friends from a previous phase in my life. This gave me the

opportunity to start working again with Rudolf Steiner's karma exercises.

Encouraged by a friend who was working with similar questions I started to work virtually daily with two in particular of Steiner's exercises from the summer of 1996 onwards. I did so with a new dedication, consciously and methodically. One day it happened suddenly that my inner sight was awakened. As an artist and lasure painter it was a gratifying moment for me and yet at the same time one that was filled with a kind of pure matter-of-factness: I received as a gift the first imaginations out of my own meditative work.

Starting from a particular human encounter, which had left me with a strong feeling of sympathy, I reconstructed meditatively a clear and colourful recollection. I followed Steiner's indication to nurture this image for a further 3 days. I was also able to register and take in those feelings and other apprehensions which followed the night's sleep. The recollected image was now joined by another image which seemed inwardly connected with the first: a medieval knight in the clothing of his time!

In the work that followed I was able to recognise this knight as Willibald, who for many years was active in the circle around the Archbishop of Mainz, Christian von Buch, the person I had earlier associated with myself. Karma research later also revealed that Willibald's death in an ambush near Modena was not prevented because Christian and another knight, Giorgio, left him in the lurch to save their own lives.

I now began to practise another exercise of Steiner's daily during this period, which I had also used without apparent results for many years. I traced my own biography back until I reached my first recollections of childhood. I tried to concentrate hard enough to penetrate further back to the moment of my birth. Clearly I had been far too passive in my previous attempts at this. I now began to develop characteristic

themes, both joyful and sorrowful, from each seven-year period, made them the object of meditations and thus in a series of artistic images found my own way back through birth and conception, a path which I had probably taken from above the 1900 m high Norwegian mountains to my present life.

After these efforts followed a long sequence of imaginations which showed situations from a life in Greece around 400 BC which clearly indicated certain events in relation to the Eleusinian mysteries.

Using Rudolf Steiner's exercises, I had now found my way to my own imaginative consciousness and soon discovered that I had to develop special individual meditations of my own, firstly in order to give this work its research character, and secondly in order to find a meditative form which could protect the results of my research from attacks of various kinds and varying intensity. I was also able to compare my own work with a form of regression meditation as practised by an anthroposophical friend of mine.

From September 1996 I continued to develop my meditative method in the direction I indicated above. In supersensible co-operation with friends who have crossed the threshold of death, and above all with the help of one particular elemental being and meetings with higher spiritual beings, I was able gradually and methodically to build up an overview of my previous incarnations and at the same time of those of some of the individualities with whom I have been connected since the beginning of the Lemurian epoch.

Likewise a number of generally human themes which I have encountered in the study of anthroposophy have appeared to me in detailed karmic relationships and detailed patterns of metamorphosis. The material I have gathered in the course of this research and which has progressed from being purely imaginative in character to having elements of inspiration and intuition, has become quite comprehensive.

The big question is how to transmit it to a wider audience - whether in the form of a literary, artistic work or as a scientific treatise.

As a first beginning I have chosen to quite simply stand up and tell something of what I have learned in the most matter-of-fact way possible, not shrinking from referring to historical persons who seem to have been the previous lives of friends or indeed of my own. Whilst it may appear provocative or indeed exposing oneself to possible criticism or ridicule, I have chosen to follow Joseph Berry in publishing karmic relationships to do with one's own life. In so doing it should become possible within the anthroposophical movement to progress from the stage of describing from without all that is generally human to one where one takes responsibility for what one passes on in the way of concrete spiritual examples and experiences. From this stage it will be fruitful to return once more to Steiner as the fundamental researcher in this area. Meanwhile the "quotation stage" can be overcome. The very act of communicating my own experiences and encounters seems to me now to be the most important thing.

For this reason I shall now continue with my account of particular karmic relationships as I have perceived them in my imaginative research laboratory.

Karmic Relationships

I have already referred to the kind of spiritual co-operation which it seems necessary to develop in order to carry out karma research that is in harmony with the Michaelic leadership of our time.

When I wished to research into the destiny of a brain-damaged pupil with whom I had worked during the 70's and who died unexpectedly in a swimming pool before he reached

adult years, I was helped by a former curative teacher, who also died at that time, to find the right place in the Akashic record. She had been his teacher at the time and during the research she pointed out that another pupil who was in the institution with him would have to be taken into consideration in order to find the karmic thread applicable to the first boy.

This female curative teacher had lived during the 1100's as a chronicler and law enforcer in Italy. He was one of Christian von Buch's supporters there. This Acerbus Morena had two men in his service. The first was big and fairly strong. Imaginatively I see him standing by a stove in a kitchen, lifting a big cauldron of boiling water from a flagstone. As he turns to the door to go out with the cauldron, the other man comes in, small and effeminate in his movements. The latter moves swiftly towards the former who has come to a halt. The big man deliberately tips some boiling water so that it scalds the smaller man. The latter is shocked and makes a hand movement up towards the kettle with the result that the big man loses his grip and all the boiling water pours over the smaller man.

This event of course had its consequences in the form of shock and burns for the small man but also worked on into our time so that the child who had cerebral palsy had to bear a body that was as if he had suffered from severe burns since birth. During the meditation I experience that a deeper layer of karma must be at work between these two men in the Middle Ages. That thought give rise to a question and in reply I received the following imagination.

It is the time of the Romans. A river runs through a landscape. Nearby there is a little village. By the river's edge a woman is squatting, washing her clothes. The river is deep at this point and has a strong current. Another woman comes up from the village with her wash basket. She puts it down

and briskly greets the first, not by saying anything but by giving her a playful push from behind. There was no ill intent, but the first woman loses her balance and falls into the water. She cannot swim and drowns.

The woman who causes the drowning accident in Roman times is thus the man who gives the other the burns in the Middle Ages, who in our own time finds rest within his cramped body by drowning in the way that caused us to wonder so over ten years ago.

Historical Incarnations - a Problem?

There was at least one incarnation for these two between the Middle Ages and the present. In the 1500's both lived as women under the spotlights of history in England, whilst the counter-reformation was in full swing in Europe.

It seems to be a fact that applies to many of the people whom I have investigated, that every individuality seems to be a leading role at one point in their development in the events which are later recorded as our history. This thought suggests that all human "I's" are created equal and each in their turn experience the joys and sorrows of every layer in the stream of evolution.

Part of the intention of the cultural development of humanity is to overcome the hierarchical structure which out of creative necessity has been present from the beginning. By developing the experience of equality on earth and achieving the harmony of all streams, directions and impulses it may in future be possible for man as the tenth hierarchy to initiate the transformation of the hierarchies of the spiritual world.

I venture to suggest that I have found my previous incarnations back to a beginning in Lemurian times. After the middle of the Atlantean epoch I was connected with the Mercury oracle and thus enabled to gain insight into the Atlantean cul-

ture of that time, the various oracles and settlements on that huge continent. I have described this in detail elsewhere. Two later Atlantean incarnations followed. One as a woman who emigrated to Alaska and another as a man who travelled eastwards with a large group of people via Ireland. This was about 9000 BC and for various reasons I stayed behind with some others on the island of Crete, whilst the larger group continued eastwards towards the interior of Asia. Around 5700 BC I lived as a female elephant tamer. It was the woman who began the work of domesticating the elephant in India. Around 2400 BC I was once again a woman, this time in a Chinese village where they plied the silk trade. About 1200 BC I worked as a scribe and papyrus keeper - during the 19th Dynasty. Then about 400 BC I was again born as a boy amongst farmers at Delphi. As a coachman or driver I went to Olympia, was later a member of a chorus in Epidauros and Athens, then served as a runner under Pericles throughout Greece. That life ended as an old man in Eleusis.

I experienced the dramatic and tragic events in Rome during the first century AD and as an old woman met Christianity for the first time as a grain of salt struck me in the forehead from a fistful that one of St. Paul's disciples threw out into the crowds during a rally in the Forum Romanum in 47 AD. There followed a longer period in the spiritual world during which I had important encounters with the Grail impulse and certain themes of transformation that had to do with what was happening on earth, after which it was time for a new life in the dramatic and culturally rich period of the 1100's.

Christian von Buch [1135-1183]

In addition to what is historically documented about Christian von Buch, I was able with my form of research to discover other material such as a particular dramatic event in

his adolescence. As a fifteen year old, Christian saved his cousin Johanna from being raped by the miller Beowulf. Christian carved a cross with his knife into the startled miller's back. I have found both personalities again in this life, Johanna as a class-mate and Beowulf as a teacher.

In imaginative consciousness I have been able to rediscover many of the places and have confirmed many of the acquaintances that went with Christian von Buch's position as a peace-broker in the conflicts in Italy and Germany from the 1160's onwards. Something that is not covered by the historical sources I could see in the Akashic record, namely that he acquired his extensive knowledge of languages with the Abbot Wibald von Stablo in the 1150's.

I could also see the dramatic events in Rome in 1167, most of which are of course well-documented historically, among others by Boso, Alexander's biographer. When Christian and Rainald von Dassel were about to install the rival Pope Paschalis III, Alexander III and his close supporter Cardinal Hyacinth and their followers were able to make good their escape in the pouring rain by taking a boat down the Tiber, I discovered many elements and details here, such as Alexander's red pointed slippers with golden seams awash with the water on the deck. Once he had landed safely in France, the pope caught a cold from whose after-effects he suffered until his death in 1181. Such quite unmistakably clear details in the Akashic record simultaneously provided the key to corresponding relationships and details in the present. This enabled me to find the incarnations of the above-mentioned churchmen in the anthroposophical movement at the turn of this century.

I was further shown that after the conflict within the Church had been resolved Christian von Buch took part in the third Lateran Council of 1179. Here he was able to be in the presence of both the Chartres teachers Alanus ab Insulis

and John of Salisbury. John, who was a strong critic of the German side, had previously referred to Christian in a letter with a satirical tone to it as the antichrist. Thus it may be seen as karmically helpful for the present that the two churchmen were able to meet and talk with each other at that Council in Rome.

One of Christian's closest friends and collaborators was the knight and minstrel Friedrich von Haussen, who outlived his patron by seven years. In imaginative consciousness I could see how Christian's spirit-soul followed his friend from the other side of the threshold as he travelled to Asia Minor on the Third Crusade. The soul sees his friend on horseback heading up towards the Taurus mountain range. It sees how the horse suddenly rears up and throws its head from side to side. The horse has been frightened and throws its rider forward to the right. Friedrich von Haussen falls with his neck against a rock and is killed instantly. Christian's soul sees a gentle flame rise up out of the minstrel's open mouth. The singer's soul making its way across the threshold of death via the singer's mouth. Thus the two befriended souls can reunite on the other side and turn together towards their future tasks.

In the Spiritual World between Two Lives

After this striking medieval destiny there comes a decisive moment in the life between death and rebirth for Christian's individuality. His soul is surrounded by the rose, and the knife which he had always carried in a leather thong is spiritually exchanged for a rose which hangs about his neck. This spiritual process means that another way of acting and other painful experiences are expected of him in the coming life.

Closer to the new incarnation the soul experiences how

its ether body is formed for it by other souls which are connected with it including those whose task it will be in the coming life to bring the painful experiences to him. Several times there grows out of his head a crown-like form which Christian in his supersensible form pushes backwards off his head. Out of his inner being arises the idea that will inspire him, and the incarnating soul's will-forces treat it as an obsolete idea that it no longer wishes to be associated with in a future earthly life. In his previous life Christian had been the most enthusiastic supporter of Frederik Barbarossa in his plans to crown his son Henry King of Germany. It now becomes the task of this incarnating individual to contribute to the transformation of the monarchy as a social form in the midst of the continuing strife in Europe at the time of the Counter-reformation.

I saw the same soul as it progressed down to the expected conditions in Scotland. The macrocosmic human being (still Christian's spirit-soul) in all its gigantic dimension stands there peacefully for a moment with its feet on the microcosmically rotating globe of the earth and in a moment of the cosmic present embraces the impulses of destiny from the surrounding stars. Immediately it is carried by groups of angels and, steadily diminishing in size, the incarnating human being is borne down through an indescribably long tunnel. The individual angel follows all the way down and waits by the bed in which conception takes place as James V and Mary of Loraine confirm their parenthood by providing the earthly seeds of the human being.

On a dark winter's day, 9th December 1542 when the fog blanketed the windows like a reminder of ancient Atlantean conditions, their daughter Mary was born. When the news of his daughter's arrival reached the King of Scotland, he turned his back to it all and fell asleep. Death spared him involvement in all the intrigues to come.

Mary Stuart [1542-1587]

This is not the place to depict the historical drama that was played out in Europe around the Queen without a throne, Mary Stuart. The many riddles which conventional historians are still quarrelling over may, perhaps, be accessible in the Akashic record. What has been of greatest interest to me are the threads of destiny going back and forth in time. Thus I have enquired into who the individuals were who surrounded her. Some of the people referred to in connection with Christian von Buch were there in different guise around Mary Stuart. The cousin Johanna took the form of Lord Darnley, her second husband. Their son James, later being James VI of Scotland and James I of England, had been Rainald von Dassel. The knights Willibald and Giorgio were to be found in Spain as Elizabeth (Isabella) one of Philip II's wives and Don Carlos, the Spanish King's son by an earlier marriage.

I saw how in the summer of 1561 Mary Stuart spent some critical weeks at the Spanish Court just before she returned to Scotland in August of that year. Pope Pius V turned out to be the former Wilibald von Stablo. This Pope naturally strongly supported the Catholic cause in England and thus also Mary Stuart.

I have of course asked to be allowed to see into several of her life-situations during my meditative research. When I researched into the execution on 5th February 1587, I found the following:

The rheumatic Queen goes into the Great Hall at Fotheringay with the aid of crutches. There she finds the scaffold which has been erected overnight. Without fear she lies down and waits for the headsman's axe. It has been said that three blows were required to behead her.

In the Akashic record it appears that Mary Stuart sees the executioner and his assistant come towards her with black

hoods over their heads. She does not know which of the two is to carry out the execution and prepares herself for blows from both sides. After the first two blows, she realises that the headsman is standing to her left and that is where the fatal blow is delivered. To experience such an event from within during meditation is something so unique that it can scarcely be put into words.

At the moment of death Mary Stuart understands that whilst she was the clerk Ray during Egyptian times, she was in administrative control over Nubia and there gave consent to the execution of two Nubians who had been accused of theft by their Egyptian overlords. She recognises the Nubians as the executioner and his assistant. Thus her death in Fotheringay gives Mary Stuart a deep insight into the laws of karma. Now Michael's scales have been brought into equilibrium.

It is possible to follow Mary Stuart's experiences after death, as for instance she weeps over her dog which jumps around desperately with blood-spattered coat and causes confusion among the maliciously delighted officials and plotters. The dog is put to death after a while.

Mary Stuart's first thought after this is that next time she wishes to live and work anonymously, out of the glare of the spotlight of history.

In a spiritual vessel she is borne up over England whilst a light proceeding from it seems to ray down towards earth which over time spreads across Europe. Inspired by this light poets and dramatists have written words which time and again have raised up this woman's destiny at the dawning of a new era.

To Experience the Dragon Beneath One's Feet

The next life for this individual took place against the

background of the last phase of the Indian wars in America last century. It would however be beyond the scope of this article to pursue in any detail the experiences of this Irish-born man among Quakers and Indians where new and interesting themes of transformation were initiated particularly in relation to Atlantis.

Anthroposophical karma research can create quite new possibilities for us to understand and contribute to the mighty drama which is unfolding at the turn of the millennium. To see one's previous lives in relation to each other and in relation to those whom we are working with and against is to experience the dragon beneath one's feet. Knowledge of karma can bring it into humanity's service and it can then give back to the individual "I" the stored up resources of its previous incarnations. The good helpers in the Norwegian folk tale about Askeladden suggest in humorous pictures the manner in which such a modern Michaelic initiation takes place.

If the angel stood behind the human being's left shoulder when he was driven out of paradise, then in future the transformed double will appear as the guardian of the "I" ahead of his right side, ready to defend its spirit-man against all attacks in the coming times on earth.

In this picture there was also hidden a positive and fruitful interpretation of the image of the war of all against all. It must not be waged outwardly with earthly weapons. The war of all against all can be a riddle of the very finest transforming will. Meditative encounter is a spiritual weapon and a battleground which means that blood is not spilled but etherised. Karma research is the science which is closest to the heart of the Christ in our time. It was for this reason also that Rudolf Steiner called this Being the Lord of Karma, the helper of human individuals' destinies in the etheric sheath of the earth.

Discerning Destiny

Harlan Gilbert

All human beings have evolved out of a background of previous lives. The decisions, experiences, failures and accomplishments of the past provide the basis for future lives, which will extend, compensate for, evolve from and transform present existence. When we consider others (and ourselves, of course) in this light, much becomes comprehensible which would otherwise seem arbitrary, mysterious and inexplicable. Their character, nature and development take on a new and deeper significance for us out of our awareness that they are beings who develop from life to life, carry an immense history and prepare for a far future.

Should we wish to go beyond this general appreciation of their position (which is also our own), the concept of reincarnation can begin to awaken in us a variety of experiences, even to open a new possibility of perception for us.

For some these experiences come almost - or completely - unbidden; for others, hard work is necessary to achieve slight results. Just as there are people who come to this life with artistic gifts, so that from the very first beauty seems to flow from their brush or pencil, while others must labour for years to begin to achieve the most modest accomplishments, so there are those who seem to have an inborn talent for experiencing connections between the various lives of an individuality.

The cause of an inborn artistic gift lies in the hard work performed in a previous life. A Raphael has the gift of spiritual sight, a Leonardo exactitude in observation in the material, sense-perceptible world; each comes with certain already acquired capacities and must work to win those not yet

formed. An 'innate gift' is but the fruit of previous work, be this gift what it may. Through our current life's work, however, we prepare the basis with which we will begin our next life. In this sense, it is as important for the untalented as for the talented to develop themselves in a given realm.

So it is as well with the slowly awakening perception of destiny connections; we can work to develop this capacity wherever we stand in regard to our current abilities here.

A path of development of these faculties can be described in analogy to artistic processes and development. Let us turn towards the artistic process itself; let us become, for a moment, painters.

We begin (having already chosen what we wish to paint, whether this be outer object, soul or colour mood or spiritual entity) to consider and become familiar with the chosen subject. For simplicity's sake let us say that we have chosen to portray a human being. All that relates to the person will interest us whether or not it appears in the finished portrait: outward appearance, gestures, character, social context, etc. Certain characteristics will seem more typical and significant, others less deeply a part of the whole, more superficial in nature.

In the attempt to understand and perceive an individuality's destiny we can follow this same approach. By way of example: we observe that a person has an unusually broad face with extraordinarily wide-set eyes, resulting in an unusual openness and breadth of gaze. He is an artist and paints correspondingly large canvasses; in fact, this seems typical for his whole being.

Certain significant-seeming details having been chosen (these can be of character, physical make-up, temperament, interests, all are accessible to our sense observation and ordinary understanding) the next stage can begin. The artist will now try out various colours, forms and gestures. What would

suit the characteristics in question: a dark or light colour, a large or small form, a quick or slow movement? In imagination, through trial and error on the canvas, various possibilities may be explored. Their aptness or inappropriateness becomes visible; the 'proof' lies in how the laid on colour, form or gesture fits with the figure as a whole and clarifies the aspect that is to be depicted. This may not exclude various possibilities being equally satisfactory!

Research into destiny can also proceed to the stage of imagining possible characteristics from a former life which seem to clarify and express the personality before us. These characteristics are, of course, products of our creative fantasy and as such are not to be confused with perception of past incarnations. This imagining is not idle speculation, but serves as the first stage of a process that will be described.

In the case of the person with the broad face, an attempt can be made to picture a life situation or activity in a previous life which might result in such a wide gaze in this life. One possibility might be a seafarer gazing out over extended horizons. We can begin to build up collections of these imaginations.

Traits can often be seen in a countenance or figure which seem to be independent of the hereditary stream of family, nationality and race, which seem indeed to point to wholly different parts of the world: a Swiss citizen who looks Scots, an American who could pass for North German. It can be a useful exercise here as well to ask what seems to be shining through. Is it European, African, Asian, American, Indian? How far can I narrow this down in time and space? For example, can I say: South-eastern Mediterranean, some centuries before Christ?

Once a picture begins to be built up, it is useful to compare the image with the personality in question once again. New impressions may verify or contradict the sketch as it is

developing, help with difficult details and deepen the sense of the whole. If the image of a particular area, time or occupation has been found, for example, enquiring about the subject's relationship to these may help. In the above case, the person spoke with great fervour of the Phoenician people, seafarers of the Mediterranean and beyond who settled in Venice, a city which he'd often visited. His knowledge of details of the life of this people was startling.

A breathing process can begin to develop between outer observation and inner imagination. Imaginations which cannot be corroborated through observations remain idle fantasy. Outer observations not penetrated and enlivened by creative imagination remain sterile fact.

An inner picture of a variety of peoples, epochs, landscapes and occupations is fundamental to being able to link a feature of a present life with a source in a past life or a result in a future life.

The exercise of active imagination described above strengthens the ego's activity and presence. It is a precaution against atavistic passive perceptions since these depend upon a weakening and loosening of the ego. Some present-day psychotherapeutic and meditative techniques for approaching the perception of past lives encourage the suppression of the ego. There are also people whose egos are by nature loosely and weakly incarnated and who are thus natural mediums and visionaries.

The images of active imagination are built up by clear and conscious choices. Precisely through the recognition that these are one's own constructs, one can practise the ability to disregard them and clear them out of one's own consciousness. If the images can be cleared away effectively after they've been carefully built up, the *activity* of imagination itself is strengthened and remains vitally present but without an image *content*. The images that we have created are no

longer available to our imaginative activity for we have consciously dissolved them. The imaginative process itself remains as pure, content-less activity.

What happens when the imagination is active but the created images are no longer available? A moment can come for the artist when, having worked with the subject of his painting for some time, he gives up his search for the true depiction. In this moment it can happen that he suddenly truly *sees* with a depth and clarity, with a realness that all his attempts to *look* could never provide. *His* images of the subject are released; the true image becomes visible.

This moment of inspiration, famous for occurring at that moment when one least expects it, when the subject has been completely forgotten, can be opened by consciously dismissing the images that we ourselves have forged. The image that appears to us in this state is no longer our conscious creation. Its source, however, depends upon the activity which preceded it. If the preceding imaginative activity was to a certain extent simply associative, drifting, not fully taking place in and shaped by a clear ego-consciousness, then the source for the inspiration that follows is likely to be from the organic activity of the body rather than an objective world picture. It will then tell more about the 'seer's' organic condition, wishes, and past experiences than about the subject. If, however, the active imagination has been truly conducted in clear ego-consciousness, a stage of experience independent of the body's organic activity has been drawn upon. The imaginative activity can then continue to search for its content in this objective world.

During the artistic process, a sense of the whole work, its rhythms and its structure, may be felt independently of any details. A poet may 'hear' a verse or stanza's flow before the words to fill this out are found; a painter may sense pattern and organisation before colours or forms are defined. This

more musical experience can be felt as an in-breath from a higher realm where the work's (or the subject's) archetype lives. Inspiration lives thus in two ways, musically and pictorially, breathing in a sense of the quality of the whole from high realms as it breathes out images into the realm of imagination below.

In looking at a person's destiny we can move from the activated thinking of Imagination to the more qualitatively experienced but equally conscious feeling world of Inspiration. Intensity or quietude, directness, tones, qualities and colours may be encountered here. This can be experienced as a sounding space, a musical experience, a particular harmony of the spheres. Once experienced, these qualities may also be translated back down to the imaginative realm. It may be necessary to live a long time with a felt quality of an individuality before an adequate image is found to fit this.

The processes up to this point have been ones of sketching images and finding rhythms and compositional qualities. The final step leading to the completion of a portrait is to find the connection to the being to be portrayed, and to bring the whole preliminary work into harmony with the higher being of the subject. This can naturally only be possible if both a capacity to penetrate into the realm of true individuality is achieved and the careful exactitude and moral technique to bring this encounter into a proper picture have been developed. This is the stage of Intuition. Only at this stage is a true picture achieved. Few artists reach the height of a Mona Lisa, a Sistine Madonna; only a very few in each generation come near to achieving this height of perception combined with the power of artistic capacity. This difficulty in achieving a masterpiece of art of spiritual research is daunting enough to keep us humble, but not, one hopes, to keep us from exercising our capacities. The activity itself, performed for its own sake and not for the sake of a hoped for result, is

worthwhile, as those who attempt it will testify.

Anyone seriously interested in pursuing research into destiny questions will soon discover the necessity of undergoing an inner transformation accompanying this work.

*The first thing that a person can do to awaken powers is to unite morality and deed.*¹

The distinction between illusion and objective spiritual vision is dealt with in Steiner's lecture of 25 February 1912.² The lectures of this period³ and the book *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*⁴ can be of tremendous help to clarify the nature and various levels of spiritual experiences.

Finally, the necessity of exceptional honesty, responsibility and discretion in regard to such research should be obvious to anyone considering it.

¹ Steiner, Rudolf, *Erfahrungen des Übersinnlichen* (GA 143), lecture of 15 January 1912 author's translation.

² Steiner, Rudolf, in *Psychoanalysis and Spiritual Psychology*, Anthroposophic Press 1990. The lecture in question is contained in GA 143.

³ Steiner, Rudolf, *Erfahrungen des Übersinnlichen* (GA 143), especially the lectures of 14 and 15 January and 25 February 1912.

⁴ Steiner, Rudolf, *A Road to Self Knowledge and the Threshold of the Spiritual World*, Rudolf Steiner Press 1975 (GA 16/17)

Reincarnation Therapy

Trui Derwig

An edited version of an interview by Frans Olofson
from the magazine Jonas. Translated from Dutch
by Antoinette Reynolds

I have always become involved with people with difficulties, who haven't quite 'made it' in the eyes of the rest of the world. I really cannot bear it when people get left behind in their development. It turns me into a sort of terrier, wanting to help them back on the rails.

People never find their way to regression therapy through idle curiosity. They have a problem and that is their starting point. But behind this problem lurk deeper questions - who am I? why am I not doing what I really ought to be doing? why don't I get enough out of life? Many people nowadays have these kinds of troublesome, rather vague questions. Even children have them. I also have clients with depression, who are really searching for meaning in their lives; or people with phobias. Still others come here with feelings of guilt. They are carrying old pain which prevents them from finding their true selves.

In the course of lengthy preliminary conversations my client and I look for themes that keep recurring during his or her life and which worry them. Take, for example, someone who always suffers from jealousy. With such a person I search for what lies behind that feeling. What do you feel when you experience jealousy? What sort of emotions are behind it? It could be a fear of having too little, or anger because others always appear to have more than you have. People often take these kinds of negative feelings with them when they die and

in the spiritual world these problems are not always resolved. I think this is because in our time people sometimes reincarnate very quickly. People want to have more and more experiences on earth and, because of this, the period of digesting these experiences in the spiritual world has become much shorter.

During a session my clients lie down and close their eyes. I don't work with hypnosis because this restricts individual freedom. No, simply by talking and at the same time concentrating intently on them I help my clients make contact with their ever-recurring life theme, and the physical feelings and emotions that are part of that. You cannot always predict where it will lead - it could be their childhood or the moment of birth; even the time during pregnancy can be revived, including the negative thoughts that accompanied the mother or the father during that particular period. Sometimes one can even get a glimpse of the moment of conception - the pivotal point between cosmic and earthly life, where people often have a total survey of their lives. Subsequently, in later sessions, specific events connected with the life themes that are being focused on can be recalled from previous lives.

In regression therapy, the transition from this life to previous lives takes place very spontaneously; and although experiences from past lives can be strange and confused, the patient nevertheless feels that they are an inextricable part of him. He is also very conscious, at such moments, that it has nothing to do with present life experiences.

At first the events themselves rise up into consciousness - but that is only half the story. I also try and make people take on responsibility for the next phase. So we take a look at why certain themes keep recurring, and ask ourselves - do I dare to take responsibility for my life? Do I dare to get in

touch with the less pleasant parts of myself? These are then the important questions, by answering which the client can get to know his shadow side, the part that is hidden deep within him. But there aren't many people who have the courage to work through this further phase.

Some people think that through regression therapy people enter a world of illusions, that they lose touch with their true selves and only encounter themselves as princesses or pharaohs from previous existences. But in reality you have to confront yourself and clear away past obstructions, and in most cases people in fact come across very modest past lives.

Outsiders also often criticise the way people describe the images that appear before them. They might say "I was Robin Hood" and such like. But in order to be able to express here and now what occurred in a past life, you need to use today's language and symbols. As you continue with a session, characteristics appear that belong to a particular image: 'Robin Hood', for instance, turns out to be the archetypal image for any brave deed. Slowly it becomes clear what *really* happened and the nomenclature is left behind. On the other hand, sometimes the images *do* retain their symbols; when this happens you know that the images have nothing to do with a past life but are instead a symbolic reflection of the emotions which the client is currently wrestling with or has wrestled with in the past. Physical symptoms will often appear if an event from a previous life is being discussed, such as the appearance of a red neck if the client is talking about having been hanged for instance. What happens in these sessions is without question quite genuine; yet I never feel that I am playing with fire. When people take their leave from here they are invariably more truly themselves. We make a point of never working with people who have addictions, with workaholics or with people suffering from mental disorders. In any case such people don't approach us. In order to come here you need a lot

of courage and strength to dare to confront yourself.

Some anthroposophists I know think that this kind of therapy leads to total alienation from reality - they regard it as extremely 'Luciferic'. But if a person has his feet firmly on the ground and expresses his love not just intellectually but through his body and his actions, this fear is absolutely without foundation.

I know no fear, I don't know what fear is. Anthroposophists say that I am naïve but I do know my shadow side, the monsters living inside me. These are my own creations: they don't have an existence outside me. Other anthroposophists think that such a therapy moves too fast, that you skip all sorts of necessary stages of consciousness. But the times we live in demand that we throw these objections to the winds. After all, we are all collectively in the process of crossing the threshold, quite unprepared. We aren't prepared for the illnesses that we get, for the partners we lose, for all those terrible wars. Hell is already upon us. Anthroposophists have a rather melancholic attitude and keep dragging their feet about all these things: ..'have you thought of this and that?'...'steady and sure wins the race' etc. But where there is love there is no more fear; not a love that lives in the head but a practical sort of love. That is the greatest protection against evil. Quite apart from that, it is of course rather disconcerting if you have been trying for years to go down a meditative road and nothing happens, and then a group of strange people comes along who allow you to experience a past life by means of such a therapy.

Through anthroposophy I started out on a path of development and, as far as medicine and education are concerned, I certainly found the right path. But in the long run, it was all a bit too slow for me. I was born during a bombardment in the war and I always feel that there is no tomorrow. Anthroposophy is very beautiful and noble but too introspec-

tive. For many people time is running out. For people today there is an ever greater need to search for the realities behind the outer phenomena. I see regression therapy as a positive stepping stone towards finding these realities in a completely acceptable and legitimate way.

Karma and Altered States of Consciousness

Willem Veltman

Translated from Dutch by Antoinette Reynolds

During the final years of the twentieth century, two contrasting developments are taking place in western culture: on the one hand the world-wide expansion of information technology and 'computerisation,' and on the other hand the growing belief in reincarnation. Computerisation concerns our external life - communication, planning, financial dealings and a thousand other things to do with our daily or business activities; it equally bears upon study, the waging of war, management, recreational activities etc. Reincarnation concerns our inner life, with questions such as: Who am I? Do my experiences, accidents, illnesses, psychic disorders have anything to do with my previous earth lives?

Nowadays, a firm belief in reincarnation doesn't usually change peoples' lives in the way it did at the beginning of this century, when, for example, the German poet Christian Morgenstern wrote: 'Reincarnation - this is the gate through which I entered and saw everything as changed.' The conviction that we have lived on earth before has been slumbering in our souls for a long time; as we become more conscious of this feeling, the concept of reincarnation becomes self-evident. We have so-called 'memories', images which can only be explained if we accept that we have experienced something in a previous life which is somehow connected to these 'memories'. We can visit regression therapists, who help us trace traumatic experiences from earlier lives, in order to cure us of our current illnesses.

At the same time, however, our vision of the world changes but little. We have important inner experiences but

neither the concept of reincarnation nor the apparently concrete experience of a previous existence opens our eyes to a spiritual reality. No knowledge is acquired of life before birth or after death, despite the ability to perceive a sequence of lives upon earth. It would appear that we can't get away from the earth.

The way the computer affects us outwardly is not dissimilar to the way our belief in reincarnation affects our inner life. We have access to an apparently infallible, incalculably vast store of information; we can make complicated calculations in seconds; we appear to be able to uncover and extract all conceivable knowledge - while at the same time actually knowing nothing at all. Our ordinary thought processes are not engaged in this information-gathering on the computer, just as this passive belief in reincarnation doesn't engage the mysterious sphere of the will, because it is impossible to see and recognise the connections between the different, successive earth lives.

Present-day 'experiences' of reincarnation are, in more cases than not, an impediment to a true perception of reincarnation; or to put it slightly differently, in most cases such 'experiences' actually constitute an obstacle to a true perception of the connection between different earth lives, as they neglect the concept of karma.

What is karma? Karma is the organic connection between consecutive lives on earth - in this context I am only speaking of this particular aspect of karma; in reality the idea of karma should be understood in its much wider context. Karma is probably the one thing that cannot be extracted from a computer. No doubt there are certain anti-human spiritual forces that are out to accomplish this as well but for the moment this is not yet possible. Why not? It is because the weaving of karma is the work of higher hierarchical beings that inhabit the spiritual world, who are in charge of our des-

tinies and whose most important task - after having had the responsibility for the creation of the world - consists of guiding human destiny in such a way as to enable each one of us to become a free individual being, on the strength of the laws of compensation and redress that govern karma.

In the evolution of mankind, the time seems to have arrived for human beings to become aware of the mystery of compensation and redress that lies at the heart of an understanding of karma. But instead this other, widely held attitude to reincarnation is emerging, which is threatening to obscure the true mystery of how karma works. This can be seen, for example, through the rather curious notions which appear again and again in the context of regression therapy, which are in stark contradiction to the spiritual-scientific insights with regard to karma and reincarnation. I discuss this phenomenon in some detail in my book 'Reincarnatie en Regressie', (Zeist, Holland, 1993); [German translation 'Reinkarnation', Stuttgart 1996].

With regression therapy there is almost always a rather straightforward causal connection between a complaint in this life and its cause in a previous life, a connection which I would call 'rectilinear'. To give a couple of examples: a woman suffering from a phobia of violent winds turns out (according to regression therapy) to have been killed in a storm. A man with chronic headaches was apparently scalped in a previous life, and so it goes on.

In the spiritual-scientific views on karma that we find in Rudolf Steiner's works, that such a 'rectilinear' connection between cause and effect is very rare indeed. On the contrary, we always see karma working through metamorphosis, a transformation of causality. To give an example: someone receives such a shock to his psyche that his mind is unhinged, and he is born in a subsequent life with a club foot (Lord Byron). Conversely, someone who during his medieval incar-

nation fractured his knees through constant prayer is metamorphosed in his next life into a philosopher whose mind becomes spiritually clouded in the course of time (Nietzsche).

The fundamental law of karma is that of metamorphosis: the head in this incarnation is the transformed trunk and limb system of the previous one - not, of course, in the literal sense but in its form tendencies. What is more, it would appear that whatever manifests itself psychically in one life is transformed into a predisposition towards an illness in the next; or vice versa.

Life between Death and Rebirth

As I have already mentioned, another key aspect that arises out of the issue of karma and reincarnation is the so-called life in between lives on earth. Rudolf Steiner often speaks about 'the life between death and a new birth', and in his lectures Steiner devotes an enormous amount of time and attention to the soul's journey through the spiritual world between death and a new birth. In regression therapy, however, there is almost nothing to be found on this theme. In other words, the method that supposedly guides someone back through childhood and into a previous existence takes account neither of the change of consciousness that takes place after death nor of the process of being taken up into the spiritual world.

In his many lectures on karma, Rudolf Steiner concentrates not only on human beings as they appear on earth but reveals them in their cosmic, supersensible light, as belonging to a divine, spiritual world which is wholly involved in their destiny on earth. If we, as human beings, really wish to gain an insight into the mystery of destiny and repeated lives on earth, then we must learn to transform our thinking into an organ that is capable of 'perceiving' spiritual realities; by this I mean creating a spiritual organ that is able to enter into and

inwardly experience the spiritual processes which an initiate can describe from his occult knowledge and research. For the act of thinking is a capacity that is, in essence, clairvoyant. We always tend to forget this, or we are simply not even aware of it. The study of spiritual science awakens this clairvoyance in our thinking.

Altered States of Consciousness

On the other hand, what occurs during a regression session? It is true that the 'patient' is no longer brought under hypnosis, as happened when this kind of therapy first began. However, he or she is brought into an awake state of sleep. It is an established fact that brain activity during regression treatment is similar to the so-called 'delta' rhythms that occur during sleep. Thus the ego, despite our being apparently awake, is not altogether present in the brain during the treatment. In the lecture series entitled 'True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation', given in Torquay in August 1924, Rudolf Steiner describes what happens during hypnosis, when the ego is not functioning in the brain: ahrimanic beings can enter the 'vacuum' left by the ego and give full scope to their activities. These ahrimanic demons then try to influence human beings in such a way that they are prevented from being able to make the distinction between a true or a false path towards a spiritual reality. They are the spirits of falsehood of old, who are out deliberately to confuse human perceptions.

I cannot prove that this whole regression therapy movement is all sham, as a result of which the true nature of reincarnation and karma is obscured. But my spiritual-scientific training warns me that these regressions (which are undeniably sincerely felt) do not necessarily point to true experiences of reincarnation.

Nor can I say, with any degree of certainty, what does actually happen during these sessions. There are several plausible explanations. What is more, one has to maintain a certain amount of open-mindedness about the possibility of real reincarnation experiences being at play here. We are left with a rather awkward situation in which no clear and definite opinions can be voiced from an anthroposophical point of view about either spontaneous or regression-induced reincarnation experiences. However, the point must be made that it is only through the activity of clear thinking that we can interpret the phenomena adequately.

Regression therapists - in so far as I have got to know any of them - seem to be totally unconcerned or remarkably non-committal about the thinking process. They believe that the fact that their treatment works, and cures the patient of his or her condition, is proof enough that the memory pictures that are acquired during the treatment are real experiences. Their conviction is unequivocal.

I remain sceptical. I would not wish to argue with anything that is seriously undertaken in this respect by serious-minded people, but I am anxious that the activity of thinking about these phenomena is not disregarded and ignored.

While I welcome the assistance computers give in preparing documents or making calculations, I do not accept that they can replace my moral intuitions when it comes to making judgements. In the same way, I must reiterate my conviction that the proponents of regression therapy - however rigorous their studies and arguments - will side-step a crucial aspect if they continue to ignore the essential element of spiritual thinking.

The Uses of Adversity

Christopher Clouder

When St Nicholas of Myra came to the earth he knew his destiny. The legend tells that a few moments after his birth he stood up, much to the astonishment of his mother and the assembled midwives, and proclaimed with great assurance his future task in the church. Few of us experience any such certainty in our lives yet at the same time we retain an impression that somehow our personal way in the world has been chosen. An anecdote relates that when Jean-François Champollion, the first great decipherer of Egyptian texts, was eleven in 1801, Jean-Baptiste Fourier, a renowned mathematician who had been on Napoleon's Egyptian expedition, was struck by his preternatural intelligence during a school inspection and invited him to his house to view his Egyptian collection. The boy was enchanted and asked about the hieroglyphic inscriptions 'Can anyone read them?' Fourier shook his head. 'I'm going to do it. In a few years when I'm able to. When I'm big.' Such childhood wisdom is rare and leads to a single-minded purpose that is not easily turned aside in spite of life's vicissitudes. Champollion had to experience toil and denial to the point of starvation, he suffered disappointment and undermined his own health but his determination and conviction in his self-imposed task did not waver and all his efforts were directed to solving the riddle.

When we survey and reflect on our past a path emerges that has taken us to where we now stand. We can feel a sense of gratitude for that which has led us through this personal biography and we can begin to discern the forces behind it. Yet the future remains vague and uncertain and we cannot extrapolate what is to come from what has passed. There are

however moments in all our lives when this futurity reaches out to us with a force and urgency that is palpable, even if confusing. For a few individuals this growing awareness of vocation is so strong that their obduracy wins through in the face of the inclement views of either their parents or the adult world around them. Michelangelo's father found the idea of his son starting as a mere workshop apprentice, with the aim of becoming a craftsman and thereby socially inferior to the family's rightful standing, hard to accept. This led to a battle of wills and ferocious arguments between them and we are deeply indebted to the victor and his consequent ability to depict the human body, its movement and relationship to states of the soul. Perhaps this very opposition was a factor which brought out this indomitable sense of purpose and imbued his art with the characteristics of human and spiritual struggle because it had to be personally experienced at a formative age. Michelangelo acknowledged this by always referring to him as 'dearest father' or 'most revered father' regardless of incessant reproof, correction and criticism. In a letter to his father of September 1509 he wrote, 'Get on with your life and let your belongings go rather than suffer hardship, for you are more dear to me alive than would be all the gold in the world, if you were dead.'

For most of us in adolescence we are driven by a sense of vocation even though this vocation is not at all visible. When working with young people there are times when one can strongly feel their potential and yet not be able to encapsulate such feelings into any clear thoughts or prognostications. You know with unshakeable certainty that a particular individual has something to offer the world, that this is yet to unfold and that the process can be trusted to eventually reveal itself. This is where karma touches us as a consequence of previous lives. For an adolescent the world is often one of adversity, where a turbulent inner life with its ideals meets

up with a world where 'realism' and the impracticality of ideals are taken for granted. This opposition helps in the creation of the individuality and thereby remains as part of our lives through adulthood, if we are able to retain our clear awareness of selfhood.

This theme is depicted vividly in Shakespeare's mystery drama of the consciousness soul '*As You Like It*'. Duke Senior has been banished from his rightful inheritance by his younger brother and forced to live in exile in the inhospitable and wild Forest of Arden. At the beginning of the play the forest was mentioned as a place far removed from the '*golden world*' of the court and a haunt of danger, but also simultaneously a place of freedom. Rosalind, daughter of Duke Senior, is also banished by the usurping and corrupt Duke Frederick, because '*her very silence, and her patience / Speak to the people*', patience being the virtue to accept one's fate. Frederick's daughter Celia feels herself to be '*coupled and inseparable*' from Rosalind and both voluntarily and secretly embraces her fate so together '*go we in content / To liberty not to banishment*'. It is at this point that Duke Senior appears with his attendants and describes the woods as '*more free from peril than the envious court*' going on to declaim that in spite of '*the seasons fang / And churlish chiding of the winter wind*' they do not feel the '*penalty of Adam*' because:

'These are the counsellors

That feelingly persuade me what I am.

Sweet are the uses of adversity,

Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,

Wears yet a precious jewel in his head'.

It is through this realisation, which his retainers can only perceive as the '*stubbornness of fortune*', that he is able find the capacity to find '*tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, / Sermons in stones, and good in everything*'.

Karma is the medium whereby we are tested to find some-

thing greater in ourselves. Faced with difficult circumstances we must find the solution in the quality that 'feelingly persuades' us what we are, and not seek an apparently satisfactory intellectual explanation for the situation so as to avoid the lessons provided by it. The forest is what we take it to be either 'uncouth', full of 'bleak air' and a 'desert' or a place of transformation. The choice is ours, as we like it! The play starts with endless opposition, brother set against brother in murderous hatred, and yet resolves itself in concord that is a promise of regenerated life:

*'Wedding is great Juno's crown,
O blessed bond of board and bed.
'Tis Hymen peoples every town;'*

It is only the melancholy Jaques who absents himself from the general jubilation and retires as a hermit back into the forest because his pessimism is such that sees in this promise of 'true delights' little hope of its fulfilment in 'the foul body of th' infected world'. His well known and much repeated soliloquy is actually evidence of his misreading the human situation, as we can see by the context in which it is placed. The play as a whole tells us that life is not the mechanistic process he describes with seven absolute stages of personal development through which we as 'merely players' must all pass, only to end up in 'mere oblivion / Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything'. Reciting this speech as if it were the last word in Shakespearean wisdom is a travesty of his clairvoyant insight into the human condition. Redemption through truth, loyalty, love and sacrifice is possible and this is made explicit in the text. Through our capacity to be 'co-mates and brothers in exile', which are Duke Senior's first words in the play, we can reach the point of his final statement where those 'That have endured shrewd days and nights with us, / Shall share the good of our returned fortune'. Finally, having arrived at this stage we can appreciate the fruitfulness of

what at first seemed a painful fate when directly experienced and begin to comprehend the lessons that were prepared for us, or that we ourselves prepared. The wildness and barrenness are a necessity to provide a new beginning. The play concludes with this awareness: *'First, in this forest, let us do those ends / That were well begun and well begot'*.

The play starts with fraternal discord where Oliver's jealousy towards his younger brother, Orlando, causes him to neglect the terms of his father's will to educate him well, and instead to treat him like an animal and even to plot his death. He can give no rational explanation for this attitude except that he is thrown into the shadow of Orlando's 'gentle' qualities, a word that appears repeatedly in the play. The old and faithful family retainer Adam warns Orlando that virtues such as gentleness, strength and courage *'Are sanctified and holy traitors to you./O what a world is this, when what is comely / Envenoms him that bears it'*, because other people find it impossible to bear their own shortcomings when highlighted by another. They then together seek a haven from the 'pompous court' by fleeing to the forest as well, where they suffer much hardship through the pangs of hunger. When Orlando then chances on Duke Senior's company he threatens them with violence in order to obtain food for the dying Adam. Duke Senior's response is at total variance to the behaviour at the court: *'Your gentleness shall force,/ More than your force move us to gentleness... Sit down and feed and welcome to our table'*. Orlando then experiences a moment of transformation: *'Speak you so gently?... Let gentleness my strong enforcement be... I thank ye, and be blest for your good comfort.'* Duke Senior is alive to the suffering of others and can see the remedy, hence the reason for his own banishment, nor is he immersed in the sorrows of his own plight: *'This wide and universal theatre / Presents more woeful pageants than the scene /Wherein we play.'* Jaques'

speech which then follows is a product of his blindness to what has transpired around him and the song which comes straight after his gloomy analysis with its deeply ironical tone, *'Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly. / Then heigh-ho, the holly, / This life is most jolly.'* is immediately negated with the picture of Duke Senior's sincerity *'Give me your hand / And let me all your fortunes understand.'* The acceptance of one's lot exemplified by Corin the shepherd and much mocked by the courtly circles as *'shallow'* is the true lesson of this interior forest: *'I earn that I eat, get that I wear; owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness; glad of other men's good, content with my harm;...'* Corin can find an accommodation with his karma and is content.

'O how full of briers is this working-day world!' sighs Rosalind the *'gentle niece'*; *'people praise her for her virtues'* and it is she who becomes the main instrument of redemption. She disguises herself as a man, taking on the name of Ganymede who was loved by Zeus and became the cup-bearer of the gods, in order to survive in the forest. She can therefore not respond to Orlando when he falls in love with her except by taking on the second disguise of impersonating herself. Orlando is thereby tested in the endurance and truth of his love to prove the falsity of Celia's premise that *'The oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster'*. Rosalind freely chose this role and she has to face its tortuous consequences in spite of her own reciprocal feelings of love that are so deep that they *'cannot be sounded.'* She suffers because she has to seem that which she is not and must take on herself all the duplicity of the situation. At the same time she wishes to be assured of the other's sincerity having lived in the two-faced nature of the court. Oliver's remorse, Orlando's forgiveness and their joint reconciliation, Duke Frederick's penance and his turning into a holy hermit in the forest, Duke Senior's regaining of his position in a

cleansed court and the tidying up of the secondary love complications among the dwellers in the forest are the results of her deeds in subjugating her feelings to the greater good. She is the agent of karma in making it possible for others to find their true selves which could not happen in the *'painted pomp'* of the *'envious'* court with its codes of comportment which were just a mask over the underlying real nature of the relationships between people and where even a quarrel had to be conducted *'by the book'*.

As an audience we have been observing our own personal forest, with all its ambiguities, in which there lurks an unnamed magician who has the power to make *'convertites'* (One that hath abandoned a loose to follow a godlie, a vicious to follow a virtuous life - *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues 1611*). Nor are we alone because *'every day / men of great worth resorted to this forest'*. We too are *'obscured in the circle of the forest'* in which Orlando attaches his love poems to the trees: *'O Rosalind... in their barks my thoughts I'll character, / That every eye which in this forest looks, / Shall see thy virtue witnessed everywhere'*. In this context Rudolf Steiner's meditative verse on the Motto of Social Ethic becomes more than a practice of consciousness whereby we can bring a greater health to our relationships to each other, but also a key to a truer understanding of our karmic relationships:

*'The healthy social life is found
when in the mirror of each human soul
the whole community finds its reflection,
and when in the community
the virtue of each one is living.'*

Shakespeare's genius was to put these truths into deep and moving images that transform our consciousness through our feelings of sympathy and antipathy, and permeate our language and the world. In the Forest of Arden, which is a state

of soul, there is *'No enemy, / But winter and rough weather'*. There is however one greater danger: *'Blow, blow thou winter wind, / Thou art not so unkind / As man's ingratitude'*. It is the gratitude for the wisdom of karma that enables us to face courageously the transformative processes of uncertainty and opposition so that, like Oliver, we can struggle to find our own identity with the help, devotion and forgiveness of other people and to seek a better brotherliness which can *'feelingly persuade'* us who we are. *'Twas I. But 'tis not I. I do not shame / To tell you what I was, since my conversion / So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am.'*

Touchstone

Elizabeth Attwell

Nic and I met at university when we were twenty. Tension was obvious from the outset: he was practical and pragmatic, and I was much more of an idealist. My reaction to this caused us endless trouble and I was always blaming him for not being more like me.

After five years we split up, largely because I would not accept him as he was. Since we were unable satisfactorily to commit ourselves to each other, it seemed futile to go on. We stayed in touch and tried to remain friends. I went to Emerson College, and he to study for a Masters in Business Administration.

In the summer term I studied *Manifestations of Karma* with Adam Bittleston. One day while I was reading this in the library, Nic rang me at the College. I left my book and went to the telephone. During the conversation we fell out, as often happened, and I put down the receiver, angry, sad, and frustrated. In my heart was a longing to find harmony with this man.

I went back to the book and came upon a sentence that described how events in this life often have their roots in a past life, and I was at once overtaken by a vivid experience. I was standing high up overlooking a landscape. The sky was a brilliant blue, and I could feel the heat of the sun. My body was that of a young man, it felt quite unlike my own, but very natural. I was filled with a tremendous sense of well-being and elation, such as one feels at touchstone moments in life. This was connected intimately with the person standing next to me, another young man. As we stood together looking across the landscape, I saw only his shoulder and his long

dark hair, lifted by a light breeze. I knew this man was Nic. Between us was a feeling I have only ever been able to describe as comradeship, a deep love and sense of brotherhood. This experience lasted for perhaps a couple of minutes. I felt that I had been reminded of the essence of our relationship. If I could remain true to this reality which had lived between us, then our destiny with each other could be fulfilled.

That was ten years ago. We have been married for eight years and have two children. It was that glimpse and the context that enabled me to make sense of it that allowed me to perceive the foundation of our karma together in this life.

Book Review

THE CASE OF VALENTIN TOMBERG
SERGEI O. PROKOFIEFF

**Translated by Richard Michell, published by
 Temple Lodge Publishing, 1997**

In this relatively short book, Prokofieff has sought to clarify certain issues surrounding the life and work of the Russian-born writer and occultist Valentin Tomberg which are of relevance to students of Anthroposophy. In the first place there is the issue of Tomberg's own life's path, with its seemingly abrupt contrast between the anthroposophical character of his early life and his later devotion to the Jesuit stream in the Roman Catholic Church. Secondly, and arising out of this, there is the more general question as to the relationship between Anthroposophy on the one hand and Jesuitism on the other.

The author has succeeded in explaining what appears to be a puzzling dichotomy regarding the first

issue; he shows that Tomberg's rejection of Anthroposophy in his later years had its roots in certain attitudes which he displayed earlier. He has also given considerable documentary material which enables the reader to make a clear distinction - and therefore also consciously to choose - between the spiritual paths of Anthroposophy and Jesuitism. He makes no pretence that this matter is one to which he is indifferent or regarding which he does not feel very passionate.

In this latter circumstance lie the seeds of a third issue evoked by this book, even though it is not explicitly discussed in the book itself. This issue has come to the fore through the reception that the book has received in its first German edition: law-

suits have been threatened, the original publisher has withdrawn and the author is regarded by many of his fellow anthroposophists as a troublemaker. The issue itself could be expressed somewhat as follows: Is it permissible in our time to make distinctions (in the sense of value judgements) between one spiritual stream and another? Can one really say that one spiritual stream (in this case Anthroposophy) is in alliance with good, progressive spiritual beings, while another (in this case the Jesuit esoteric stream in the Roman Catholic Church) is under the guidance of spiritual beings who would seek to hinder mankind in its further development and are in this sense evil? It is clear that anyone attempting such a task is courting deep unpopularity. Many people do not like anything to disturb the ecumenical mood of peace with which they wish to greet the new millennium, whether this be between the Churches, between Anthro-

posophy and other spiritual streams, or between a spiritual conception of man and that prevailing in the modern world. The tragedy is that if the differences of this kind that do exist are not fully explored in a spirit of free enquiry and expression, they work divisively between one person and another. It is possible to have a strong disagreement with someone about a spiritual belief or point of view, but there is no reason for this to impinge on one's relationship with this fellow human being. If, however, the disagreement is buried or the relevant issues are not even brought fully to consciousness, an insuperable obstacle is placed between the individuals concerned.

The problem here is that the very existence of that capacity of thinking and independent judgement with which alone such distinctions can be made is being challenged as perhaps never before. Mankind is paying for unbridled libertarianism

(often confused with freedom) with the unprecedented sovereignty of cultural conformism: where moral individualism is lacking, "morality" has to be imposed from outside. The result of this is that what one may think of as the cultural sphere (the most adequate rendering of *freies Geistesleben*), tends to disappear altogether in a fog of political correctness, through which it ceases altogether to be possible to say what one means or even - ultimately - to have thoughts which do not accord with the prevailing dogma of the time.

By its very existence, *The Case of Valentin Tomberg* serves to point to the reality of this problem and to clarify the issue surrounding it. Not least for this reason, it is an important and timely - as well as a courageous - book. One would wish, nevertheless, that the need for this book to be written had not arisen.

Simon Blaxland-de Lange

Notes on the contributors

Baruch Urieli has been a teacher and curative teacher in the Camphill Movement and is a priest for the Christian Community.

Maurice Orange works as a doctor at the Park Attwood Clinic, in Trimpley, Worcestershire.

Margli Matthews is a practising biographical counsellor who runs workshops and professional courses.

Jostein Saether is a freelance artist, author and lecturer working in Sweden.

Harlan Gilbert is a teacher at Wynstones Rudolf Steiner School.

Trui Derwig is a regression therapist working in Holland.

Willem Veltmanis an author and former Waldorf teacher living in Holland.

Christopher Clouder is a Waldorf Teacher and currently the Chairman of the Steiner Schools Fellowship in Great Britain.

Elizabeth Attwell is a wife and parent at Michael Hall Rudolf Steiner School in Forest Row, Sussex.

Simon Blaxland - de Lange is a translator and musician now teaching at Philpots Manor School, West Hoathly, Sussex.

Back numbers 45 - 49 are available from Floris Books
15 Harrison Gardens Edinburgh EH11 1SH
£6.99 each

Back numbers 41 - 44 are available from The Editors
Emerson College Forest Row East Sussex RH18 5JX
£3 each - £5 for two

The Golden Blade 49 1997

WORKING WITH DESTINY
The Practice of Karma Research

The Karmic Core of Anthroposophy
Virginia Sease

Karma Research
Nick Thomas

Intimations in Images
Nothart M. Rohlf

Trauma versus Karma
Hans Peter van Manen

Angels Amongst Us
Hartwig Schiller

Karma and the Internet
Dorit Winter

Shakespeare and World Destiny
Richard Ramsbotham

Karma and the Mystery Dramas
John Gee

The Golden Blade 48
1996

THE IMAGE OF BLOOD

The Mystery of Blood
James Dyson

The Bleeding Wound of King
Amfortas
Karal Jan Tusenius

D.H. Lawrence's The Rainbow, The
Lion, and the Blood of Sophia
Andrew Welburn

Mithras, The Bull, and
the Transformation of the Blood
Christopher Clouder

Of Blood and Money
Christopher Houghton Budd

Money - The Christ Blood of
The Threefold Social Order
Jack Foster

Chosen Destiny
Rudi Lissau

The Golden Blade 46
1994

**CHAOS, RHYTHM AND
FLOW IN NATURE**

The Universe as Organism
Lawrence Edwards

Chaos Theory and Projective
Geometry
Nick Thomas

Our Heart: Sounding, Serving,
Unifying
Philip Kilner

Learning to Enhance Sense-perception
Olive Whicher

Flow Design Research
John Wilkes

The Golden Blade 47
1995

**THE QUEST FOR THE
GRAIL**

The Matter of Britain
Richard Seddon

The Polarity of Parzival and Gawain
Frank Teichmann

The Emergence of the Grail Legend
Hanah May Thomas

The Temple of the Grail
John Meeks

Eschenbach and Michelangelo
Andrew Wolpert

"Redemption for the Redeemer"
Alex Naylor

The Play of the Planets in Eschenbach
William Forward

The Quest in New York City in 1994
Barbara Francis

The Golden Blade 45
1993

**CHANGE IN A
CHANGING WORLD**

Celebrating Columbus
Paul Law

Upheaval in Adolescence
William Forward

Centring the Teacher
Dorit Winter

Mystery Play is Now
Christopher Marcus

Regenerative Grammar
Andrew Wolpert

Losing Ground
Ria Freiermuth

Finding One's Place
Stephen Briault

The Flowering of the Soul in Florence
Charles Lawrie

The Golden Blade 44
1992

EUROPE AND THE WEST

The Spiritual Contribution of the West
Virginia Sease

Language and Nationhood
William Forward

Are we detached?
Andrew Wolpert

An Interfering Interest
Peter Tradowsky

Breathing and Circulation
Jenny Josephson

First Aid at the Turn of the Century
Jenny Josephson

Prometheus Unbound
Andrew Welburn

The Golden Blade 42
1990

FREEDOM AND DESTINY

Man, Offspring of the World of Stars
Rudolf Steiner

The Observation of the Stars
John Meeks & Michael Brinch

The Life between Death and Rebirth
Elizabeth Vreede

The Bridge of the Green Snake
A. Bockemühl

Rainer Maria Rilke
Rudi Lissau

Deeds in the Life of William Mann
Roswitha Spence

William Mann - The Teacher
Ted Roberts

Addiction as an Impulse towards
Renewal
J. van der Haar

The Destiny of the American Indian
Brian Gold

The Golden Blade 43
1991

EUROPE

Central Europe between East and West
Rudolf Steiner

The Spiritual Tasks of Central Europe
Sergei. O. Prokofieff

The Heart and Lungs
Jenny Josephson

The Emergence of Europe
Coenraad van Houten

For the Conscience of Europe
Charles Lawrie

The Soul and Spirit of a People
Athys Floride

Present Tasks of Central Europe
Manfred Schmidt - Brabant

In Memoriam for Adam Bittleston

The Golden Blade 41
1989

THE EARTH AS A SEED

What is the Earth in reality
Rudolf Steiner

David Newbatt- An Artist in
Midstream
Carola Kindle

Three Great Ideals in our Time
Rudolf Steiner

The Light of the World
Owen Barfield

Technology and the Earth
Nick Thomas

Puppets Help in a Mixed-up World
Gisela Bittleston

Man and Nature in Different Cultures
Andreas Suchantke

The Many Faces of Water
Mark Riegner

The Powers of Sorrow
Georg Kühlewind

DATE DUE

MAY 3 1998			
JUL 8 1998			
JAN 9 1999			
APR 9 1999			
JUL 12 1999			
JAN 20 2001			
JAN 20 2006			
NOV 10 2016			

RUDOLF STEINER LIBRARY
65 Fern Hill Rd.
Ghent, N. Y. 12075

WORKING WITH DESTINY II

Knowledge of reincarnation and karma is the spiritual heritage that we must lay claim to consciously : it is the foundation of our future culture. The ethos prevalent in both main-stream science and also in most modern alternative paradigms does not readily admit that experiences of previous lives and the apparent lawfulness of destiny can be the object of scientific research.

This issue of *The Golden Blade* challenges that ethos, which threatens to disconnect us from our unfinished evolution.

The contributors to this collection have written out of their spiritual research in a wide variety of professional and private contexts. This is a continuation and expansion of the theme of last year's *Golden Blade*, which generated the enthusiasm and response that warranted a sequel.

A Fiftieth Birthday Salute

Owen Barfield

Karmic Experience, Karmic Research and the Power of Empathy

Baruch Urieli

Anthroposophical Medical Work and Karma Consciousness

Maurice Orange

Biography Work: Awakening to Destiny

Margli Matthews

Research Techniques and Life Events

Jostein Saether

Discerning Destiny

Harlan Gilbert

Reincarnation Therapy

Trui Derwig

Karma and Altered States of Consciousness

Willem Veltman

The Uses of Adversity

Christopher Clouder

Touchstone

Elizabeth Attwell

The Case of Valentin Tomberg by Sergei O. Prokofieff

Book Review by Simon Blaxland-de Lange

Cover picture : Gahmuret and Berncane by David Newbatt
and by kind permission of Wynstones Press

ISBN 0 - 9531600 - 0 - 9

ISSN 0967 - 6708

£7